

**Arts4All Florida
Student of the Month
September 2022**



14-year-old **Maia Shockley** is a freshman at Richard O Jacobson Technical High School enrolled in the Commercial and Digital Arts Program. She was nominated by Emily Cipolla, the Varying Exceptionalities Specialist at Maia’s High School in Seminole, Florida. Miss Emily shared that Maia is an “extremely talented digital artist. Her level and quality of work is well beyond her young age. She’s a bright, hardworking, and a dedicated student.”

Arts4All Florida was wowed by Maia’s style and skills evident in her practice. Recalling when she started gravitating towards the arts, Maia said she has “been artsy and creative as long as she can remember.” Prior to her diagnosis with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), Maia had mobility in her hands and arms. She first learned to create works with crayons and paints but today, she’s focused on digital art using a trackpad and computer to create new works. Maia’s recent drawings are based on her

experiences and commissioned projects, such as the self-portrait to the left titled *No. 3: The White Canvas*, 2022. In this piece, a young woman with dark brown parted hair in a white dress with jean jacket stands in front of a large white canvas propped up by an easel. She holds a paint brush at hand dripping with the same color ink as the bubbly magenta background. Although her expression suggests a moment of hesitation, her grip on the paintbrush is firm as she prepares for the first application.

Maia has gained inspiration and learned from other artists by watching them on YouTube channels. The abundance of Maia’s work has led her to create a website where she showcases and sells her works <https://www.masterthumbart.com/>. In March 2020, she won “Best in Show” at the [25th Annual Rembrandt Youth Art Competition](#) with her digital art. In the future, she plans to attend an art college and become a freelance digital artist. Miss Emily shared how “Art has given [Maia] an opportunity in life to go places and meet people she would have never gotten to experience.”





12-year-old **Emily Pulido** is a homeschooled 6th grader from Broward County who was nominated by her mother, Cynthia Ayala. She shared how “Emily loves to draw and in the future would like to become a children’s book illustrator.”

Arts4All Florida was impressed at Emily’s work samples, including the drawn characters in the image to the right. Her drawing skills expand to other media including painting and collage. Emily is a



visual artist who creates a variety of 2D works. She tries to encourage others with her art, especially when creating birthday and greeting cards. Beyond the arts, Emily cheers on a special needs team who have won 2 Special Olympics gold medals. Prior to the pandemic, Emily and her family used to visit home care facilities where she would draw for and play board games with the residents. “Emily believes in spreading kindness and helping others and she wishes one day she can do this by illustrating books and creating art.” – Mrs. Ayala.