

# Albright College

## Class of 2021

# Artists



albright  
a.m.  
waking up the arts

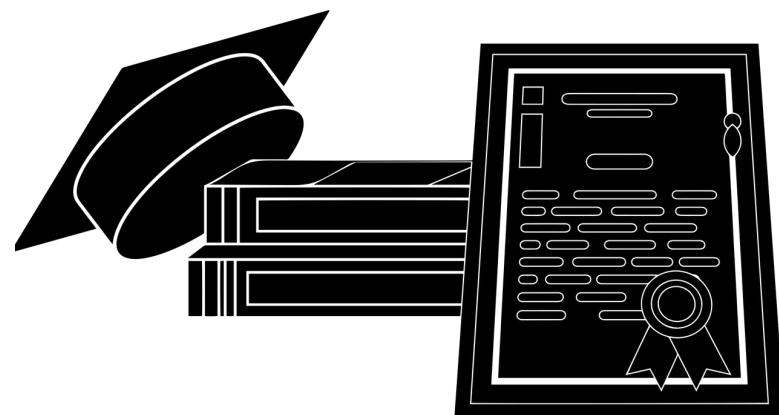
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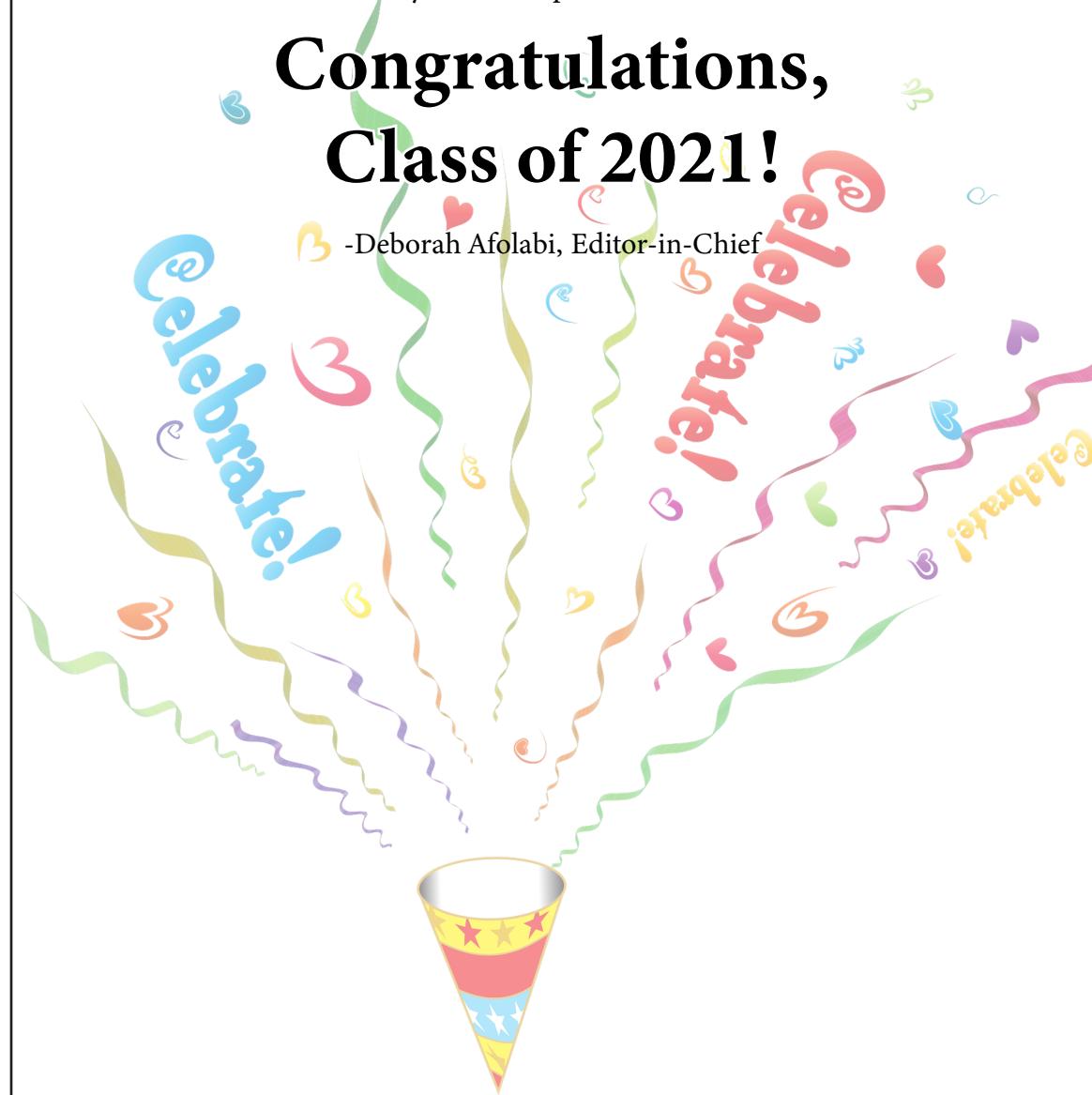


To our Albright seniors,

You are resilient beyond belief. From the minute you stepped foot onto campus as freshman to the moment you take your last final as an Albright student, you have been awaiting the day you get to walk across that stage and show the world that you survived college. Coming to a new place, taking classes, making new friends, joining organizations, holding leadership positions, taking on jobs and internships, volunteering, and being on your own for the first time is difficult. It is even more so when you have to navigate a world shut down due to a global pandemic, and the impact of social injustice. But you did it. Be proud of that fact, and all your accomplishments.

**Congratulations,  
Class of 2021!**

-Deborah Afolabi, Editor-in-Chief





**Deborah Afolabi**, also known as Debbie, and my boss, is someone that is special to me for getting me involved with this magazine to begin with, so, to start, everything has come full circle. Debbie is a senior, majoring in communications with a track in public relations and advertising. She is involved in a couple different things around campus such as being an intern in the Alumni and Donor Engagement Office and a writing center tutor and tutor manager. She's been the President of the Albright Arts Magazine (AM) since fall 2019, was the secretary in Spring 2019 and member at large in fall 2018. She was published in the AGON Literary Magazine her freshman year, and has recently started a new organization called the Black Women's Leadership Association (BWLA).

Debbie describes herself as a major bookworm who loves graphic design. She went to a vocational technical school in high school which helped her to find her major. She is easy going and likes to laugh while sharing those same laughs with others too, however, she can be very dramatic at times. Debbie did theatre for 11 years, however she regrets not doing it during her time at Albright. Debbie is a very strong advocate for social justice and women's rights.

Debbie said that the arts in general have always been there for her, however she grew into a family that was very stem oriented. Growing up she was always reading, drawing, and doing theatre which led to all of these things becoming important parts of her life. She enjoys the aspect of connecting with people due to art and its values. Her favorite type of art is normally theatre, however design holds a special place in her heart, just not painting or drawing. She loves the digital design aspect but overall if she had to choose one form it would be photography as her favorite. One of her favorite quotes is "If you want to learn what someone fears losing, watch what they photograph" (Anonymous). Debbie loves the relationship between the photographer and the model because she can capture the moment of who people are and who they think they are.

Her start with the magazine was freshman year when she was a member at large, in which she did a feature on her roommate for the freshman feature. When she started with the magazine, there was a lot of people, but, unfortunately, as the semester went on it dwindled down. By the spring it was mainly just the executive board working on the magazine and at the end of that school year the president and vice president left the organization. So she volunteered to be the next president in order to try and take AM to the next level. She wanted to give it a new look and feel. This leads to where the magazine is today and the goals and hopes she has left for it in the future. Debbie wants to come back and see the magazine thriving, whether it's digital or print. She wants it to continue to grow including every class year and major for a diverse background. Essentially she wants the magazine to be for everyone who loves expressing themselves somehow and

willing to meet new people.

Albright has provided Debbie with the opportunities to be the AM president and founder of BWLA, amongst the other important things she's a part of. When she created BWLA, she put her all into it and planned it for a whole year. She says that she was thankful for her time in AM, because it gave her some experience to lead and create this organization. As of now, she has her complete executive board and president for the next school year ready, and even created guidebooks for both BWLA and AM so the new executive boards of both organizations can continue to do great things. She created BWLA in particular because she has seen a lot in her years at Albright, and did not feel comfortable leaving the school how she found it. She wanted to create a space for black women to feel safe and have the resources to be the great women and leaders they can be.

Albright is a liberal arts college that gives a well-grounded education and with this the arts at Albright are very open. Debbie took photography classes which helped her to fall in love with it more and probably why she still loves it so much to this day. During her first semester as president of the magazine her grandma died which majorly impacted her and the magazine production so she took a week off and then came back to finish the work. She attributes situations like that one to being able to think outside of the box and looking at all the options available to her while still being able to make the best decisions possible. As for after college she is interested in a lot of things such as wanting to work for an advertising agency as well as interested in the nonprofit sector because of the difference in advertising for those different types of companies. Corporate global agencies advertise for the revenue but with nonprofit you're doing it for donations and the recognition of the nonprofit. It's a different way to look at advertising, she says.

**With all of her experiences at Albright, Debbie wanted to finish with some advice to future students:**

- check your emails
- get out of your comfort zone (so many people just stay in their rooms and don't go out and do things, college is the time to expand and grow as a person)
- join organizations, there's plenty of them on this campus to find what's important for you.
- Don't sell yourself short, you can be your biggest advocate or your biggest enemy. Always tell yourself that you can do it.



By Derek Estrada '23

Photographs by Dr. John Pankratz

# DEBORAH AFOLABI



Photograph by Dr. John Pankratz

Wesley Cipolla is a communications: journalism track and English co-major from Sinking Spring, Pa. He was first a contributor, then an editor, before becoming the editor-in-chief of the *Albrightian*, a proficient writer and secretary for AM and formerly involved with the Domino Players.

By Deborah Afolabi '21

# WESLEY CIPOLLA

**What are your hobbies/interests?**

Film, journalism, art, literature, trivia, theater, classical music and popular culture

**How long have you been in AM?**

Since 2018, freshman year

**What is your favorite thing about AM?**

The beautiful designs

**What is your favorite thing about Albright?**

Our robust arts/theater programs

**What is your favorite thing about art?**

How it lets us see into a person's inner passions

**What is your preferred art form(s) and why?**

I work in filmmaking and nonfiction writing. Film is like a combination of all of the arts, and I believe that quality nonfiction writing can bring the beauty and emotion of a novel to people's real lives.

**What major projects/works/shows have you done/ been in?**

I did the props for Albright's award-winning 2018 production of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

**What has being at Albright done for your artwork?**

I have gotten to network with a lot of talented and creative people.

**What inspires your work?**

The people, places and things that surround me, especially the nature changing seasons and a sense geographic place and space. Little details, such as a person's clothing or the decorations they surround themselves with, can say a lot about who they are and what they value.

**What accomplishments have you had within your art medium?**

My work has been published in the *Reading Eagle*, the *Pottsville Republican-Herald*, the *Ephrata Review* and the *Allentown*

*Morning Call*. For my work at the *Albrightian* I won the *Albrightian Contributor of the Year Award* in 2019 and the *Ed Flagg* and *M. Cornelius Trayes Award* for excellence in journalistic writing.

**How has your art impacted the world around you, or how do you think it has or can?**

I hope to have increased people's awareness of the sheer humanity and depth of feeling that surrounds them, even in the unlikeliest of places.

**Do you have any advice for future students? If so, what is it?**

Get involved wherever you can, and don't be afraid to make friends.

**What are your plans for the future/after graduation?**

I hope to work as a writer for a newspaper or magazine.





By Deborah Afolabi '21

Photographs by Dr. John Pankratz and Deborah Afolabi '21

Thania Inoa de Jesus is a business administration and communications: public relations and advertising track co-major with minors in Spanish and painting.

#### Where are you from?

I was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. I came to the USA in 2010 to Long Island NY and in 2015 my family and I moved to Allentown.

#### What organizations are you involved in on campus?

I am a member of the Hispanic Culture Club, I am the vice president of the Albright Visual Arts Organization, I am the Social Media coordinator/treasurer of the World Affairs Club and contributor/member

to the AM magazine. I am also a student committee member for Visual Arts Committee for Albright.

#### Any campus jobs?

I am a Resident Assistant at Krause Hall, I am a student ambassador for admissions and an ELCDC Peer Educator.

#### What are your hobbies/interests?

I am a painter and I enjoy drawer. I also enjoy cooking new recipes almost as much as I love eating.

#### How long have you been in AM and what is your favorite part of teh organization?

I have been in AM since I was a freshman. My favorite thing about AM is the diverse group in e-board, and that contribute to new content for the magazine.

#### What is your favorite thing about Albright?

My favorite thing about Albright is the endless possibilities, I was never limited to do anything I wanted to do, like having two minors and two majors.

#### What is your favorite thing about art?

Art is anything you make it. There is no guide on how to create art or how to present it.

#### What is your preferred art form(s) and why?

My preferred art forms are painting and drawing, as well as wheel throwing, because I enjoy to see the process of how the pieces come together, especially in drawing and making ceramics. You can start with one line and end up with an entire world. Or clay you can start with a ball of clay and end up with a pitcher.

#### What major projects/works/shows have you done/ been in?

I have shown my art work in the annual student show at Albright and I had a piece be shown in the Yocum Art Institute for the Berks Art Alliance Member show celebrating Women in the Arts (won recognition).

#### What has being at Albright done for your artwork?

Albright has helped me become more confident is all I want to do. It has opened doors to so many opportunities.

#### What inspires your work?

My work is mostly inspired by people around me and my culture.

#### How has your art impacted the world around you, or how do you think it has or can?

Art helps me see the world around in

with a different perspective. I notice that I see and notice things others might not. Art takes a new form everytime it presents itself. And what many people don't realize is that art is always all around us, they just have to look.

#### Do you have any advice for future students? If so, what is it?

To future students: take every opportunity that crosses your path you don't know where it could lead you.

#### What are your plans for the future/after graduation?

When I am done with Albright I plan to travel, and get back home for a year to work. After that I will start applying for jobs around the world, and possibly apply to teach English in Japan.



# THANIA INOA DE JESUS



By Derek Estrada '23  
Photographs by Dr. John Pankratz

Does the art of fashion interest you? Ashley Hillegass is the person you're going to want to learn more about! Originally from Nazareth Pennsylvania, now living in Bangor Pennsylvania, Ashley is a fashion design major who has been in love with fashion since a 7th grade sewing class. She originally found out about Albright through a friend in high school and the more she looked into the college she thought it would be the place for her. Ashley fell in love with fashion because of sewing. She started off uneasy about learning how to sew but now says it is a comforting outlet for her. Ashley would also always get questions from friends and family members which solidified her interest in fashion as a whole because she started to realize there might be something there for her to enjoy. Obviously she stuck with this gut feeling and now to this day she is Vice President of Club Vogue, one of the main fashion clubs on campus. Ashley got involved with Club Vogue because of her big diamond in her sorority Alpha Delta Pi. Her big had gotten her involved with the executive board and eventually Ashley became the VP of Club Vogue with her friend Bella Torres becoming the President of the club.

# ASHLEY HILLEGASS

The more I talked to Ashley the more I learned about her taste in art. Ashley loves anything that's abstract or has texture, so much that she even incorporates it into her clothing designs. She does this with a good bit of her designs and one of her collections is specifically tailored after this art style. This collection was also in the annual club vogue fashion show, Ethereal, which was hosted on May 22. Ashley's plans after she graduates are to work as a creative director or as a head designer in pattern making. She also wants to start her own brand collection which she is currently planning out now.

Ashley was interested in Albright for a couple of reasons such as small class sizes and individualized approaches to the work. While here Ashley has done 3 acres, was nominated and participated in the fashion week challenge, was interviewed on Professor Pankratz YouTube channel about her acre, and so much more. She accredits Albright with helping her grow as a person and be confident in doing so. Ashley's biggest piece of advice she can give anyone is take every little opportunity that you get. She took construction classes outside of her major, which helped her even more than some of the major classes. Ashley also pushed herself to make a giant Victorian era ball gown. Pretty much just put in the work and time and the

professors will notice it so you'll be given more opportunities. Ashley wanted me to also include a special shout out to professor Oh-Ranc and professor Armato.





**Raemani McKay** will be graduating Albright College with a degree in Communications with a track on Public Relations and Advertising. She works full-time in addition to being a full-time student. Her preferred art forms include writing, music, painting, and photography. Raemani's major projects involve having a Radio show in WXAC where she is the primary host. She plays music and there are no specific subjects to her shows. She creates a weekly playlist that can include any recently released songs. Her family and friends are the main listeners of her radio show. She also had one of her poems published in the AM magazine. She is an advocate for the Black Lives Matter movement and wrote a poem on

By Thania Inoa de Jesus '21

the subject in hopes to bring awareness to the issues and help others understand from her perspective and educating on what not do when a person of color is in any hurtful situation. Her work is inspired by her family who is musically inclined: her aunt sings, and her dad produces music. Everyone in her family is creative and she grew up with a creative outlet. She writes down every idea and anything she wishes to express. Some of favorite hobbies are shopping, purchasing reusable water bottles, and photography-self-portraits.

At Albright she has learned to not have her expectations too high, she recalled that one of her professors explained the reality of working in the media and how difficult it is to find a job within the media industry because of the competition. "Having lower expectations will humble you and allow you to work yourself up" said Raemani. Albright has prepared Raemani for her future: she wants to continue in the entertainment and media industries. The internship in the radio has helped her tremendously. She will continue to move on to a different internship within the communications department at Albright focusing on social media. At WXAC she did social media, news broadcasting and her radio show. She believes she learned the necessary skills for her future career. She learned what it takes to communicate with people on a regular basis. She learned to enjoy her work in retail when she understood how to communicate better because of communications and her previous psychology classes.

Before coming to Albright, she wishes she had known time management. She

advices future students to set up time to get assignments done on time and to work ahead if it is possible. This helps so that one can have a relaxing day after finishing work on time or ahead of the deadline. After completing her studies at Albright, Raemani hopes to move to Atlanta, Georgia for the opportunities it could provide her, and work at iHeart Media or anything within the public relations field. Raemani feels ready to take on the media industry. "I feel like I have what it takes, [I say it] with all confidence."

**Advice for future students:** "Don't over work yourself because you are going to get overwhelmed. I would say, take it easy, you're going to make it."

**Rewarding experience:** Being put through school by her mother and working hard for herself and her mom.

**People should know to:** "Watch out for me in the next three years, I might be big."



# RAEMANI MCKAY



By Deborah Afolabi '23

Photograph by Dr. John Pankratz

Desiya Smith is a fashion design and merchandising major from Albuquerque, New Mexico but resides in Philly. She has been a member of the Students of Caribbean-African Association since she was a freshman, and has served as the organization's treasurer during her senior year.

# DESIYA

**Any campus jobs?**

My freshman year I worked at Jake's and Peg's.

**What are your hobbies/interests?**

I enjoy sewing, shopping, dancing and spending time with friends and family.

**What is your favorite thing about Albright?**

My favorite thing would have to be the annual fashion shows.

**What is your favorite thing about art?**

I love that art brings out the different perspectives and creates a conversation.

**What is your preferred art form(s) and why?**

I would have to say visual art because of my love for designing and arts and crafts. I would consider performative art a close second because there is more of an interaction with the art.

**What major projects/works/shows have you done/ been in?**

I have participated in every AAS fashion show since I came to the school; whether it was helping back stage, performing with SOCAA, or modeling. I have also modeled for Club Vogue and the fashion department's fashion shows. And just recently I modeled and designed my first collection for the first ever Divine Fashion Show.

**What has being at Albright done for your artwork?**

I have learned so many new skills over the years especially during these last two years of my college career.

**What inspires your work?**

I am inspired by pretty much anything. I take inspiration from trends, nature, events, just anything.

**What accomplishments have you had within your art medium?**

I was recently published in Reading Magazine for my designs that were presented

at the Divine Fashion Show. When performing with SOCAA for the first time for the Annual Airbands showcase, we won first place.

**How has your art impacted the world around you, or how do you think it has or can?**

A small impact that I would say I have made here at Albright was with my bag collection. Not many people knew that sewing machines could do as much as I used it for. In the future I want my work to have an empowering impact on people and make people feel comfortable to wear anything and feel they can do anything in my work.

**Do you have any advice for future students? If so, what is it?**

My advice would be to stay calm even when things seem to not go your way. If you end up on a different path consider it a perfect mistake and make it work for you. Never give up!

**What are your plans for the future/after graduation?**

After graduation I plan to do internships to continue to learn about the fashion industry and gain experience all while working on making my own collections. I want to start my own brand of swimwear and lingerie and eventually have my own store.



# SMITH



Jacob Gragg is a senior digital communications major with a focus in graphic design and minor in English. He is from the Eastern shore of Maryland, from a small fishing town called Crisfield.

**What organizations are you involved in on campus?**

I'm not really involved in any organization per say. I like to join a lot of events, art-related events, community events where I can contribute art. I singed up for the Romeo and Juliet project back when that first came out. Not really into any clubs, but I do participate in a lot of experience events where I can participate in stuff.

**Any campus jobs?**

Yeah! I'm a tutor for the writing center, and I've also done a couple of ACRES, if you count those as jobs.

**What are your hobbies/interests?**

Well, obviously I like to make art

and things like that. I'm a graphic designer. So, this sort of Freedman Gallery art submission was new to me because design and illustration are two different things. I also like to write; I've started writing a novella about six months now and I plan on publishing it sometime. I really want to get into publishing after I get out of college. I like photography, I like to go to the gym, anything that helps me to improve psychologically and physically.

**What is your favorite thing about Albright?**

I feel like there are a lot of opportunities for undergraduate studies, with the ACRES, the credits and things like hat. You have a lot of opportunity to get field experience here at the college if you apply yourself and look for it and everything.

**What is your favorite thing about art?**

Sitting down and having nothing else to focus on whatsoever. It's just you and a blank page. It's really nice to me. There's no bulleted list to complete, it's just you and your computer. And you get to focus on something that's constructive. So, it's more like a psychological thing, I guess.

**What is your preferred art form(s) and why?**

Primarily, I do digital. I'm not terribly god at digital drawings yet. I'm better with hand-drawn, pencil sketches. I'm a logo designer professionally so I work in Illustrator and do decorative images and things like that.

**What major projects/works/shows have you done/ been in?**

Outside the Freedman Gallery submission, I've done the Romeo and Juliet piece. I also had a couple of different clients for my logo designs. There's a non-profit I work for called the Greater Crisfield Action Coalition. I designed their logos and some logos for some of their programs.

**What has being at Albright done for your artwork?**

I've had a lot of professors who either offer me unique criticisms or encourage me to seek out new avenues of inspiration. For my ACRES, I found all these different design styles and Eurasian countries use in their own design that are distinct in one another that I try to incorporate in my own works.

**What inspires your work?**

I take a couple of different sources of inspiration that are not necessarily artists. I take inspiration tonally from a lot of different authors, across any of my work, photography, vector art, writing, what have you. Cormac McCarthy is an author, a big inspiration of mine. I like the tone that he sets across his different novels. As far as artists are concerned, I really love constructivism. I like Alexander Rodchenko, Solomon Teltingater, and El Lissitzky is another great one.

**What accomplishments have you had within your art medium?**

Not terribly successful since I'm just starting my professional career this year, as far as getting a job goes. But so far, like I said the Romeo and Juliet show, the logos I've designed for my non-profit.

**How has your art impacted the world around you, or how do you think it has or can?**

Well, I would not say impacted, but whenever I create something, be it a photograph, a piece of art or writing, I want to give people a feeling that they've never quite felt before when reading or looking at something. I wanted to be kind of like...there's a German word for this...a feeling of nostalgia or something never quite had. It's hard to put into words, but I want to feel unique to them and something that they haven't seen that makes them feel a certain way and they've never really felt.

**Do you have any advice for future students? If so, what is it?**

Take inspiration for a variety of sources in anything you do. Like, look at how, in weightlifting. Look at all the different weightlifters and how they lifted. Or if you're an artist, look at all the different artists, not just native artists, but foreign artists or writers. Just try to keep a wide net over your inspiration.

**What are your plans for the future/after graduation?**

After graduation, I'm still working at the non-profit program. There's this summer learning program that I'm going to be a part of as an assistant instructor. I'm also going to do some freelancing, freelancing logo design. I have a lot of money I saved up from working at the college over the years, so I'll take my time, find what I find. I'm not in much of a rush.

By Rachael Sullivan '23

Photograph by Dr. John Pankratz

# JACOB GRAGG



Paige Westra is a digital studio art major with a minor in arts administration. She is from Harrisburg, Pa., plays varsity volleyball at Albright and is an intern for the Center for the Arts.

#### **What are your hobbies/interests?**

Obviously, art is a huge one, Volleyball, I really like to read different books, I like to be outside and enjoying nature, I like to hang out with friends, the usual stuff, I guess. Those are the main things, I think.

#### **What is your favorite thing about Albright?**

I think probably, with me being in the arts, the atmosphere of that department. Does that make sense? The professors and everyone in that department is super awesome and the amount of support and the fun we have daily, I enjoy it a lot!

#### **What is your favorite thing about art?**

I don't know, I guess I would say that my favorite thing about art in general is that there are no rules. And you have complete

freedom in whatever you create and what you create can inspire other people and make them feel something. Which is awesome how people can view your work and one could have a totally different perspective on what it means.

#### **What is your preferred art form(s) and why?**

Primarily, I work with painting. When I do paintings, I usually do an acrylic underpainting, and then I do acrylic paint and then I do some oil paint for glazing. I have worked with oil in the past, but I do not have the proper ventilation places to do it at home, so I do not do it at home very much. I also enjoy watercolor and wash sometimes and charcoal sketching. I think charcoal sketching is interesting especially with subject matter that I am used to. I work with a lot of female figures and with anatomy in general.

#### **What has being at Albright done for your artwork?**

It completely changed it! I came in as an undecided major and I knew that I wanted to do something in the arts, but obviously I put my major as digital studio art. I think that Albright has really pushed me to have a better practice and just really reach out of my comfort zones with a lot of different styles, subjects matters, and it really helped me overall hone my skills into a better, well-rounded education.

#### **What inspires your work?**

So, my work has changed a lot. But currently, my work is mainly focused on the perfection of imperfection. So, it's like, especially with everything going on right now with body positivity movement, female empowerment, female spirituality and the divine feminine and stuff like that. Really into just like using and showing and representing females and different races, different body types, stuff like that. Because we usually do not see a broad range of these things in media, so I'm trying to show that in my paintings, represent them more, and although what society deems as flaws and imperfections, they're actually not.

#### **What accomplishments have you had within your art medium?**

I usually submit my work and try to get selected into the Student Show every year, so my work is in the Student Show every year. I had a solo show in the Student Gallery last year. I mean, I think that's all the accomplishments. I'm currently working on my practice and trying to figure out how I can use that for after Albright.

#### **How has your art impacted the world around you, or how do you think it has or can?**

Like I said before, I'm trying to show representation, and having people see that imperfections are perfect and there is no such thing as perfect. So, I would hope that when people look at my paintings, they think that's beautiful. Because I'm trying to portray

it in a way that makes it beautiful. I also know that I do sell prints and commissions and people really enjoy some of the paintings that I've done. I've sold a couple of prints. I know that when people look at someone's paintings, it pushes them to want to do better in their practice and it serves as inspiration and I think that's really nice.

#### **Do you have any advice for future students? If so, what is it?**

Don't be afraid to try anything, whether you're an art student, or science. I would try a bunch of stuff, in a bunch of clubs, meet new friends, go out of your comfort zone. One of the whole points of going to college is to get your education, but also to grow up as a person and branching out and getting out of your comfort zone and you're not going to do that unless you actually do it. I met a ton of friends here, I am no way the same person I was in high school, so get out of your comfort zone, join a bunch of stuff, don't stress too much about school because it's not that important in the long run.

#### **What are your plans for the future/after graduation?**

I already am selling work and prints so I'm hoping to still do that. But I do need to get a stable job. So, my major is digital studio art, so I do not only paint, but I also do graphic design, and photoshop stuff, logos and stuff like that. So, I'm hoping to get a job in the graphic design and work with a company. But we'll see if that works out or not!

By Rachael Sullivan '23

# PAIGE WESTRA

**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THE  
CLASS OF 2021**

