



A young, budding artist inspired by the outdoors

BRAYDON 'S range of mediums is impressive and begs one to wonder what his art will look like in another 10 or 15 years. Arguably, he seems to have so much promise and his versatility already seems to shine like a star.

Photos courtesy of Braydon Maier

by Jim Fossett

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KITTITAS COUNTY – Recently Central Washington University (CWU) shed the spotlight on senior Braydon Maier by way of a solo four-day art exhibit showcasing his talent for “bringing nature indoors,” as a CWU press release characterized it. The *NKC Tribune* caught up with him in early March to find out more about him – and to get a glimpse of his work.

An outdoorsman at heart

Braydon was born and raised in Selah where a fiery passion for the outdoors lit him up.

“My dad is someone who also loves the outdoors, so my brothers and I grew up camping and hiking. That likely explains why I’ve been fond of spending time outdoors for as long as I can remember.

“Once I started to drive, I had a little more freedom to go out any time I wanted, so that’s when it really became my own.



BRAYDON MAIER is not only an artist, he’s also a track and field athlete, an avid outdoorsman. Next year, he’ll be coaching kids at Kittitas High. Photo courtesy of Braydon Maier



“Do others in my family line share my love for the outdoors? My uncle is a retired marine biologist who worked for NOAA, but my dad has definitely been the biggest influence on my interest in nature.

As a young man he was very active doing things like camping, backpacking, rock-climbing. He’s summited many mountain peaks across the Pacific Northwest.”

When asked if there was anything in his DNA passed to him that was responsible for merging his love for the outdoors with his love for art, Braydon said, “My dad’s side of the family tends to be a little more artistic than the average person, but in my family there aren’t any artists or photographers by trade.

How he got to CWU

He said he enrolled at CWU with a full-tuition track and field scholarship.

“That was my main focus. “After completing most of my general education credits, I decided to major in Fine Arts since those were the classes I excelled in and enjoyed most.”

Asked what his favorite medium is, he said it would be hard to narrow it down to one.

“I’ve always really enjoyed the craftsmanship that goes

into woodworking but more recently I’ve taken a liking to oil painting.

“Overall, art gives me an outlet to express myself and it’s a way for me to escape reality in a sense. My mind is always running a million miles an hour, so art is a way I can focus and relax.

The real challenge A student-artist faces?

There is nothing in life that comes without speed bumps. Braydon said the same thing is true about his art.

“The biggest challenge, by far, is finding the time to create.

“Balancing several Fine Arts project-based classes at the same time makes it hard for me to dedicate as much time to each piece as I would like to.

“I think creating outside of the classroom will be more enjoyable. Aside from that I would say the next biggest challenge when creating is getting a project started. At times, it can be hard for me to drown out all the external noise in my life and get that first brush stroke onto the canvas.”

His future

Outside of teaching and hanging his own shingle, there are some limitations on what one can do with a Fine Arts degree. So, what’s his next step after graduating?

“My initial plan was to become an art teacher, and I may still pursue that career path, but the more time I’ve spent in the art program the more I’ve realized how much I enjoy creating art.

“If I could make a living doing that and teaching others in less-traditional ways, instead of in a classroom, I think I would really enjoy it.

“In a perfect world, I would love to build a cabin with minimal tools in the remote woods and live in it for a while.”

But this isn’t a perfect world and someone working toward a dream often is required to get started by taking a practical approach to life, as Braydon seems to understand.

“After I graduate in just a few weeks I’ll become an assistant track and field coach for Kittitas High School, but in addition to that, I plan on continuing to create art in my free time.”

He gets around

Braydon’s love for the outdoors has taken him all over the Pacific Northwest on various explorations that have inspired several of his works of art. The domineering stare of a giant bull elk is one of those. That painting appears with this story.

His adventures have taken him to the Teanaway and the Stuart Range, Mt. Rainier National Park, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, White Pass and the Goat Rocks Wilderness, Olympic National Park, Oregon’s Ape Caves, the central coast of Oregon, the Palisades, the Columbia River Gorge, the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area, the Tanium and the Nanum, Little Naches, Chinook Pass, and the Colockum area.

Asked about his favorite spots, he said, “The Teanaway/Stuart Range area is a perfect combination of picturesque beauty and distance from home. It’s the inspiration for a lot of my work. I have a special attachment to the Stuart Range because my

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