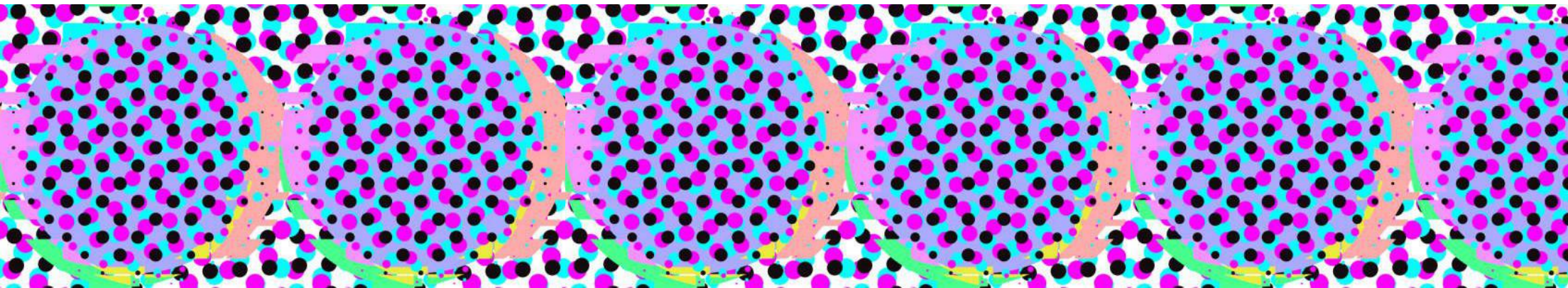


# ALEXANDER LIU

*artist portfolio*



## *artist statement*

My love for art started back in elementary school, where I learned how to document the sights and sounds of road trips onto posters with ink drawings and writing.

Joining the Prospector, I brought along with me my curiosity and desire to create artistically unique yet thematically appropriate and understandable illustrations. Like my posters, I want my audience to scratch their heads a bit, but in the end understand my message.

In my second year, I became page editor, and I also discovered a passion for working with junior staffers at the Prospector, not only because I like seeing them grow and overcome difficulties, but also because teaching them my way of thinking allowed me to sharpen my ideas as well. Like they say, the best way of learning something is to teach it. From this, I began experimenting with different mediums, including animation, 3D modeling software, and digital art software like Procreate. I love variety and newness.

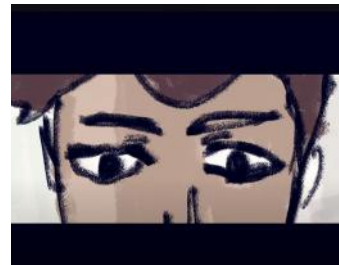
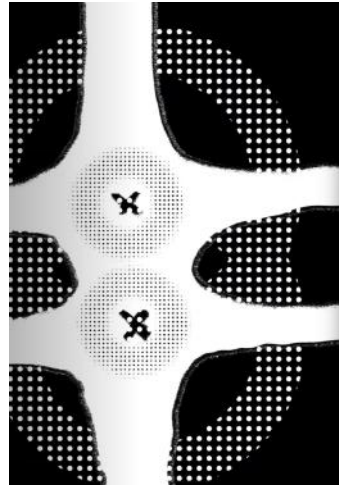
Being a part of the Prospector has taught me a lot in the power of art in journalistic media. I learned to control my ideas and filter out ones that are too obtuse, but remain focused on my point of view.

With my spreads, I hope readers can see them and the writing as two cohesive pieces of the same story. With my cartoons and animations, I hope they can tell a story of their own, and leave the audience with something new after they finish.



# CITY AT NIGHT

*Digital Animation,  
The Prospector YouTube Channel*



An experimental piece and the longest digital animation I've ever created, the video tells a story of a student struggling with reaching their goals. I started this animation to recount my own experience of struggling with grades and sports through a unique storytelling medium.

The main symbolism I had was the car chase, which hinted at the different kinds of motivation a person can have: self-motivation, stepping on the gas; panic, getting chased by a police car; and burnout, which is a motionless car.

*You can watch it here:*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7DfVtRaA6I&t=1s&ab\\_channel=TheProspector](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7DfVtRaA6I&t=1s&ab_channel=TheProspector)



# THE PRESSURE OF BODY IMAGE IN SPORTS

Student athletes talk about obtaining a body suitable for athletics

AMRITA BRAR and BRIAN KUO |  
Writers

For many years, Cupertino High School's sweat drips down the back of your neck, your heart pumping rapidly. You breathe hard, hands braced on your knees. Another long day of training is finally over, and you're one step closer to achieving the body you've been told you need to be successful in the sport you love; but at what cost?

Many students struggle with the pressure to maintain or conform to a certain body type to succeed athletically, a taboo issue that manifests differently within various sports. In basketball, for example, the "ideal body" is often described as tall, with long limbs and a strong back. On the other hand, for a sport like gymnastics, preferable features include being small, with a linear build and narrow hips. The negative consequences of these stereotypes can snowball into athletes experiencing body dysmorphia, disordered eating, dips in their self-esteem and other issues.

Ballet is a primary example of a sport wherein athletes' bodies are placed under extreme scrutiny from a young age. With a strict, unbending image of what a "perfect" dancer should look like, an environment where body-shaming is the norm is easily cultivated. "You have to be pretty skinny, with really long legs and long arms. You're supposed to look really light when you're dancing, so I guess the skinnier that you are, the lighter you look, and that could be a plus when you're performing," stated a long-time competitive ballet dancer at Cupertino when discussing how the desirable features in ballet improve one's performance.

Though many athletes put pres-

sure on themselves to attain a particular body type due to social media comparisons or hopes to go professional, constraints are also often placed on athletes by their own coaches and teachers.

"When I was still going to a more competitive ballet school, the teachers would give pretty negative comments about your body type and your weight," the ballerina said. "I know that multiple dancers got an eating disorder from their teachers or from looking at other dancers and kind of comparing themselves."

A figure skater who attends CHS shared the same opinions. In a competitive sporting environment, coaches and parents often pressure athletes to have the desirable body.

Over time, small comments from parents can evolve into athletes experiencing negative body image and insecurity, often leading them to question quitting their sport.

**"YOU DON'T  
NECESSARILY  
NEED TO BE TALL  
A STUDENT  
ATHLETE"**

"There was this one competition right after the pandemic where I didn't compete because I thought I looked fat in my dress, and I didn't want anyone to see me like that," the figure skater said. For this athlete, the pressure had culminated into an insecurity that affected their athletic per-

formance.

For many sports where body shape can assist athletes in performing higher-level movements, a different type of pressure regarding body type exists as well. Even if one possesses a body type deemed as ideal for the sport they play, one may still feel an immense need to uphold such standards. This can often lead to a burden to maintain an unrealistic body and cause mental and physical health problems.

Said the skater, "I feel a little bit [of distress] because I have longer limbs and I feel like people always point that out to me. They're always like, 'Oh, you're so lucky.' And I feel like when people compliment me, I feel more pressure than when people say negative things because I feel like I need to live up to the expectations."

However, some athletes disagree with this notion. "In middle school, I felt pressure [...] you feel pressure to work out arms and take more action to be stronger," said a volleyball player. "But for high school, even for volleyball, you don't necessarily need to be tall. There are other positions, and having a unique playstyle and just [an] understanding of how to play is more important."

In the end, many athletes at CHS still feel pressure to fit the supposedly ideal body type for their sport, which can lead to mental stress. Both coaches and other athletes can contribute to this, and can even lead athletes to consider quitting. And while some athletes may not feel this way, it is undeniable that in many sports, body types play a big part, and teenagers may be affected by the toxicity generated by an athletic environment

■



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# SHADOW

*Spread, The Prospector November 2022 Sports*

I created this spread to accompany the message of the pressure that surrounds students athletes to obtain a perfect body that's suitable for their sport, which sometimes leads to unhealthy comparison. The monochrome color palette and harsh contrast, as well as the large body towering over the girl, represent the heavy expectations that the article elaborates on. An experimental bit was the semi-translucent body of the background man, which is layered from a mockup of a vintage anatomy chart, adding texture and further contrast.

A LETTER TO MY  
13-YEAR-OLD SELF

Writer Ira Lele provides  
guidance to her past self

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Adelyn Su pg. 16

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## THE MIRROR

*Issue Cover, The Prospector March 2024*

This issue cover was made to accompany a column about a writer looking back at their past life living in the East Coast and her transition to the Bay Area. I chose a more fantasy-oriented artstyle to complement the more moody lighting and composition of the photograph. The poppies and bluejays are featured in the column, and I decided to make a branch come out of a crack near the mirror to amplify the fantasy style and give readers a surprise factor, making them wonder what this article would be about.





Delete Phone



The Forbidden Method



Deal with the Devil



...



Location



Body Doubling



Done!



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# METHODS TO PRODUCTIVITY

*Comic strip, The Prospector March 2024*

This comic both celebrates and pokes fun at the many (often unorthodox) methods students try out when attempting to increase their productivity. The methods start off being regular, like choosing a cafe or TikTok trends like body doubling, but it soon descends into madness. Those who are familiar with the first couple of methods may get a good chuckle when reading down the page.

# “FREE SPEECH”

## *Editorial Cartoon*

This editorial cartoon was a personal reaction to the current state of X, formerly Twitter, after a takeover by Elon Musk, especially the negative effects caused by the addition of Twitter verified. The use of wordplay and symbolism is very apparent: Musk, in trying to create demand for the “blue check-mark,” is actually pushing away from his ideal of “free speech” while spurring the rise of a bunch of bad actors. The Onlyfans and far-right misinformation accounts are two prime examples, as portrayed in this cartoon.

