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Yasmine Sayre is crafting the art of Omaha's independent music scene and beyond

by Helen Howard
May 1, 2024



Yasmine Sayre shows a copy of Squirrel Flower's album, 'Tomorrow's Fires,' which she designed the artwork, gatefold and liner notes for.

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As long as she can remember, Yasmine Sayre has loved creating artwork. In fourth grade, she began creating pieces inspired by her favorite music.

The 25-year-old artist is originally from Lincoln but currently resides in Omaha. She regularly designs show posters, tour posters, merchandise and album artwork for critically acclaimed independent bands and artists. Bands like Wednesday, Lunar Vacation and Pile commissioned Sayre for her work, but it all stemmed from creating fan art.

Sayre used social media to share fan-made artwork with her favorite bands in her teenage years. The Chicago-based band, The Walters, noticed the artwork she shared online and commissioned her for a show poster, leading to a domino effect of others noticing her work.

“I just happened to be lucky. It takes one band to notice you and give you a chance. That's kind of what sparked it. Fans of The Walters saw me as a fan making art for them, and they would then ask me to make art for their bands. I ended up making a bunch of internet friends through this one band,” Sayre said.



Some of Yasmine Sayre's work includes tour and show posters for bands like Wednesday, Dehd and Stewart Copeland of The Police, shown here.

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While Sayre began creating posters as a teenager, it wasn't until she went to college at the University of Nebraska-Omaha that she started using programs like Photoshop to create her work. Despite formal training, she left the university to pursue her work further.

“It was very corporate, and I couldn't explore the things I wanted to,” Sayre said.

She credits Emily Kempf, the lead vocalist of the Chicago-based band, Dehd, for her commissioned work and her transition from simply making fan-based artwork to creating work for clients.

“I made fan art for them. Emily asked me, ‘Would you make a tour poster for me?’ I was freaking out because they were my favorite band at the time. Then they were like, ‘Make more! We're going to have you as our tour designer now!’” Sayre said.

At the beginning of her career, Sayre primarily created specific show posters for bands, but as bands grow, she can create more artwork for their projects and become connected to more artists.

“I became really good friends with Lunar Vacation. We were both obsessed with the band, Twin Peaks. They would do covers of their songs online, and we bonded over them, so I’d make show posters for them and their friends’ bands,” Sayre said.

Sayre continues to work with local bands from the Lincoln and Omaha areas such as Ex Lover, Pagan Athletes and Bad Self Portraits.

Connor Paintin, who plays guitar and keys in Omaha-based band, Bad Self Portraits, discovered Sayre’s artwork through local show posters in 2018.

“I started going to see more local bands and getting involved in Omaha and Lincoln’s music scene. Yasmine made a lot of flyers for shows at Midtown Art Supply and Lucy’s Pub and worked with our friends in the band, Garst. We knew we wanted to work with her for our next project,” Paintin said.

Sayre subsequently created the album artwork and CD layout for Bad Self Portraits 2022 EP, ‘Fear Of Missing Out.’ She continued to create fliers for their shows and created artwork for guitarist, Cole Kempke.

“I found Yasmine’s art when I moved to Omaha for college. Since then joining Bad Self Portraits, I have been fortunate to have her art featured as album covers on two of my solo projects, ‘Cole Kempcke Experiment’ and ‘Synesthesia,’” Kempke said.

Despite creating work for other artists, Sayre remains the creative guide to her commissioned work.

“Working with Yasmine was so incredibly easy. Early in the process, we sent over a mood board that included everything from lyrics, photos or objects, color schemes and partially finished songs, anything that served as inspiration and what the album felt like to us. We feel very lucky her art gets to live on forever on our EP,” Paintin said.

Outside of tour posters, Sayre created and designed the album artwork, liner notes and gatefold for Squirrel Flower's 2023 album, 'Tomorrow's Fire', released on the Champaign, Illinois-based label, Polyvinyl Records.

"I got into contact with Polyvinyl. It was the first time I've made an album layout to this degree. Ella [O'Connor Williams] from Squirrel Flower was the best. Usually, when artists come to me, they give me a mood board, the vibe and the music. And that's what she did for me," Sayre said.

Originally tasked with all of the album graphics besides the cover, Sayre was later asked to create the album's cover from a photograph given to her by Williams after some collaborative changes, but it came together the way they both envisioned.

"I ended up getting to meet her after the album came out because she played in Omaha. I was in awe, but she was so grateful," Sayre said.

Sayre said being in the music industry while living in Nebraska benefits her, due to its central location. It allows her to stand out.

"There's always gonna be this flow of new artists coming through because it's just right there. That's helped my connection with music because there's always going to be shows. If I was in a bigger city, I would be in competition with so many more connected people," Sayre said.

She said being located in Nebraska allows her to make connections with the artists who play at smaller Omaha venues.

"I would just make posters for shows I was going to in hopes that the band would see. They may have thought it was going to be an empty show, but since someone put in the effort into making a poster for free, they seem



Sayre created the album artwork, gatefold and liner notes for Squirrel Flower's critically acclaimed album, 'Tomorrow's Fire.'

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more excited and realize they have fans here. There's more of a chance for you to meet them. They will remember you because you were the only one they talked to that day," Sayre said.

Recently, Sayre worked on show posters for Waxahatchee's upcoming show at The National in Richmond, Virginia on her Tigers Blood tour and Mount Kimbie's date at Chicago's Lincoln Hall in May, but she is also planning pieces with other smaller acts to continue elevating their work and building her portfolio while working in Omaha.

"I always say, 'If it's not me, then who's gonna do it here anyways?' I want to create my work so badly, so why can't it be me?" Sayre said.

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