

# BERNIE BUZZ

News from Senator Bernie Sanders

## **BELLA INGEGNERI**

Junior, Arlington, VT

## ***“Pet Names”***

### ***What interested/inspired you to become an artist? What does being an artist mean to you?***

Being an artist means whatever you want it to mean. To me, being an artist is being hopeful. I live my life trying to see the beauty in all things, trying to find the joy, trying to find the nuance; I believe that if you are not hopeful and excited to live your life each day, something is wrong. That's not to say that you have to be a perfectly happy person all the time, you just need to have something that keeps you going and looking forward to the future. For me, I find that happiness in art.

### ***Do you have any advice for other students and/or people of all ages who are thinking about getting involved in art?***

As someone who has struggled with finding what I want to do in my life, I know it's difficult to get involved in art seriously and as a potential career option. For young people looking to make a career out of art, I applaud you and I encourage you to never lose the joy you find in art and the passion that caused you to begin creating art in the first place. However, you don't need to pursue art as a career to be an artist; for those who just want to have fun and have a new hobby, the best thing you can do is just create as much as you can without being too critical of yourself. Honestly, for professionals and hobbyists alike, the best art is created when you let go of your expectations and don't take yourself too seriously.

### ***Can you tell us a bit about your piece and its meaning? What inspired you to create this work?***

This piece is called “Pet Names.” It's meaning is a little niche and definitely a little strange, but here is an excerpt from my artist statement for this piece: “How we're referred to impacts our perception of ourselves, which makes our names incredibly important. This piece exemplifies the feeling of being significantly detached from your name. In a general sense, it demonstrates the common disparity between the external perception of someone and how that person actually feels internally. This self portrait reveals my own struggles with the identity associated with my first name. I know more toy poodles named Bella than I do people, so associating my name with a domesticated animal certainly impacts how I view myself and how I think others view me.” Essentially, I feel like my name doesn't really suit me as a person. I think it's a pet's name, a name for someone who is pampered and spoiled and constantly treated as royalty.

### ***Why do you think art is important? For our communities, for individuals, for society etc.***

Art is important because it provides individuals with inspiration. Depending on the piece, art inspires people to think, to love, to hope, to admire. It is so subjective in that it provides a different experience for everyone who interacts with it, demonstrating not just the power of art but the diversity of humans. I think that's pretty incredible.

### ***Art aside, what is one other way you like to spend your time, for example: cooking, soccer, hiking, etc.***

Even when I'm not painting or drawing, I never really stop being an artist. On weekends, I work as a receptionist at the Southern Vermont Arts Center; and I spend my free time playing guitar, writing poetry, playing with my dog Oliver, and spending time with my girlfriend, all while listening to something by the Strokes, Lou Reed, or Alex Turner.