

## For Veronica Leto Art is Therapy

Veronica Leto is the Department of Art and Design's recipient of the 2020 Outstanding Foundations Student of the Year Scholarship. Criteria for the award hinges on a student, whether an art major or minor, having a B average in two completed Foundations-level courses. The student must also be enrolled in a third course at the time of submitting the scholarship application for consideration. For specifics, visit [Outstanding Foundations Student Award](#) or email [Erin.Anfinson@mtsu.edu](mailto:Erin.Anfinson@mtsu.edu).

All art students begin their studies in the Foundations Program, exploring the core elements that underlie all visual arts. Students develop drawing, design, and sculpture skills through an investigative process of traditional, time-based, and digital media.

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**Art and Design (AAD)** – It's great to speak with you today, Veronica. Thank you for your time!

**Veronica** – You, too!

**AAD** – Before we begin our conversation, I want to congratulate you on receiving the Foundations scholarship. That's quite an accomplishment and well-deserved!

**Veronica** – Thank you!

**AAD** – Ok, Veronica, where are you from, and what kind of work do you create?

**Veronica** – I grew up in the New Jersey / New York City area and have called the Nashville area home for the past 10 years. I consider myself a Multidisciplinary Artist and Zinester.

**AAD** – Could you further elaborate on that last part for us?

**Veronica** – Sure. My work is a therapeutic process. It focuses on the intersection of my identities as a fat, queer, depressed, trauma surviving, non-binary woman. It is a painful experience to exist outside of societal norms; this turmoil is often communicated through intentionally unfinished figures, chaotic layers, and deconstructed imagery. I believe one can derive clarity from the distortions. In so doing, I am currently focused on deepening the power of self-discovery in my work while also honing my technical and conceptual skills to draw others into that dialogue.

Therefore, I am drawn to collage as a medium. It literally allows me to rip apart people, events, and spaces that I can then piece back together on my own terms. It includes taking inventory, organizing, processing the material, and then creating a new narrative. That is quite a strong parallel to the therapeutic process.

**AAD** – That's interesting, Veronica. So, how does the Zinester in you play a part in all of this?

**Veronica** – It's a practice based on my focus to deepen the power of self-discovery in my work. It's also another element of my work that has allowed me to hone my technical and conceptual skills to draw others into that dialogue of discovery. I consider my influences to be a DIY mentality, Dadaism, Neo-expressionism, graffiti, and street art. Similarly, I'm drawn to intersectional feminism. And, the radical self-acceptance movement, and of course, zine culture. What interests me most in making creative work is reclaiming power as a lifelong practice.

**AAD** – You’re really synthesizing a great many elements. Do you consider where you are now with your work to be what initially brought you to MTSU?

**Veronica** – Yes and no, earning a BFA has been a dream for a long time -- a dream I put on hold to study something more practical when I was younger.

**AAD** – So, how close are you to achieving your dream?

**Veronica** – I am a third-year studio art major concentrating in printmaking with a minor in psychology. In fact, my dream has evolved so that upon completion, I plan to continue and pursue a graduate degree in art therapy. That will allow me to use my creativity to serve my artistic passions and provide guidance for others who seek to heal themselves.

**AAD** – Thank you, Veronica. Our best to you in your further studies!

**Veronica** – Thank you!

Visit our artist at <https://www.veronicaleto.com/> or on [Instagram](#).

See Veronica’s Fall 2020 Glass Gallery Exhibit [1000 Minutes](#)