

Buffalo Arts Studio

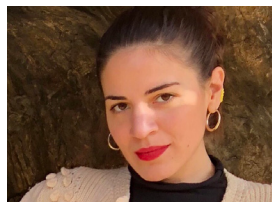
Tri-Main Center
2495 Main Street, Suite 500
Buffalo, NY 14214
(716) 833-4450

www.buffaloartsstudio.org

Gallery hours: Tuesday - Friday 11am-5pm, Saturday 10am-2pm



Raised on the East Side of Buffalo, Obsidian Bellis (they/them pronouns) was always enamored with drawing. A majority of Bellis's artistry has developed through self-teaching and mentorship. Bellis's love of nature, spirituality, and imagination have led them to their authentic voice. They move between mediums and find freedom in the ability to tell stories from the places they imagine and their navigation of personal freedom. Additionally, they have established a creative brand entitled Maybe Heaven offering prints, wearable merchandise, and accessories of their original designs.



Annie Bielski is an artist, writer, and performer. She currently lives and works in Buffalo, NY and is a MFA candidate at the University at Buffalo (SUNY). She received a BFA with an emphasis in Painting and Drawing from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been exhibited in cities like Portland, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Mexico City. *Joes & Anns* is her University at Buffalo MFA thesis exhibition.

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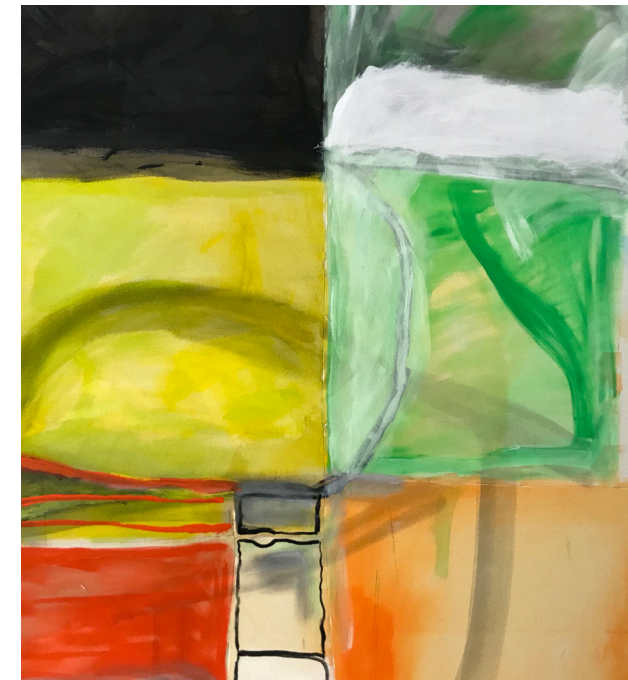
New York State Council on the Arts with
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Buffalo Arts Studio



Obsidian Bellis
Apothecary for Sis



Annie Bielski
Joes & Anns

April 6-May 3, 2019

Artist Reception: Friday, April 26, 2019

Obsidian Bellis, *Apothecary for Sis*

Curated by Emily Owen

Obsidian Bellis uses their art to navigate their feelings of otherness that come from the intersections of their identity as a Black American non-binary femme person. The maternal side of their family is Gullah Geechee (Southern American) and their father and paternal grandmother immigrated from Jamaica. Bellis's exhibition, *Apothecary for Sis*, is an exploration of the nostalgic energy of objects, and the ways that energy has shaped the person they are now. This exhibition exudes a magical spirituality focused on honoring and healing through art, and each object is a reliquary that houses unique energies representing influential relationships in Bellis's life.

Underpinnings of racism, colonialism, and gender also run through *Apothecary for Sis*, just as they run through most of contemporary culture. Many of the elements allude to homeopathy, spellwork, and domestic activities. The embroidery, as well as the medicinal and culinary herbs and spices, pay homage to the magic connected to these objects and their perceived femininity. Bellis also questions the ways that bodies of knowledge were exoticized, demonized, and even destroyed through Western colonization. Bellis is dedicated to researching methods of naturopathy and folk medicine that have gone largely unrecognized because of the gender and race of the people who labored over their creation. Through *Apothecary for Sis*, Bellis transforms familiar curio cabinets into sacred altars through which they hope to viewer finds insight into how to navigate their own personal freedom.

Cover image: *Treasures for Young Hearts*, 2019, painted wood shelf, glass jars of toys, snacks, beads, buttons



The Phoenix, 2019, assemblage in a painted wood cabinet



Dressed (detail), 2019, sunned tarp, curtain, cotton thread, plastic

Annie Bielski, *Joels & Anns*

Curated by Emily Owen

Bielski works across mediums, using painting, sewing, and writing to construct objects that explore the hierarchies of gender, production, and consumption, while noting ways that these structures flow through both retail and art spaces. Using material drawn from both industrial and domestic spaces like canvas, curtains, towels, tarps, bricks, and polyethylene, Bielski plays with the dichotomy of commercial and cultural presentation.

Bielski also makes lists, which she incorporates into her paintings, assemblages, and self-published newspapers. She even paints over the lists, leaving shadow messages for those willing to work to read them. The words weave together what to do and what to buy, further blurring the line between production and consumption.

In *Joels & Anns*, Bielski un-constructs and reconstructs her materials, using gestural seams bearing the flaws of heavy pedal foot. She sews with a joyful abandon, and the resulting puckers and pockets serve her composition. The unstructured wall pieces allude to figures and garments whereas the stretched canvases recall the abstract expressionists of the last century; by placing these objects together in the gallery, she draws attention the economic and cultural disparity in the often gendered labor that produces each.

Cover image: *TEST* (detail), 2017-19, acrylic, cotton thread, sewn canvas, sticker