

# The Bulletin

## The Review's Third Annual Art Contest

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College fourth-year Becca Galbraith majors in Mathematics and Musical Studies. She has also just finished her last season on the women's lacrosse team, sings with the Acapelicans, DJs for WOBC, and works for Concert Sound.

During her second year, she took Visual Concepts and Processes: Introduction to Digital Photography with Joseph Minek, an artist in Cleveland who was a visiting Studio Art professor in spring 2022. Minek's work, as found on his website, is primarily characterized by the exploration and manipulation of light as well as the chemical processes traditionally associated with photography.

This class was where Galbraith created the piece submitted to the Review's Third Annual Art Contest. Although technically untitled, she noted that it could be named *Embrace*, delineating the natural processes of womanhood and coming to terms with it. Galbraith has also sold prints of this piece as part of a fundraising effort with the Oberlin Doula Collective.

The piece itself is an amalgamation of materials arranged on plexiglass, from flowers to poetry torn out from Rupi Kaur's *the sun and her flowers*, displaying poems such as: "look down at your body / whisper / there is no home like you" and "it isn't blood that makes you my sister / it's how you understand my heart / as though you carry it / in your body," though the second poem is partially obscured by one of the flowers.

"When I was initially making the piece, I was thinking of all of these materials I had lying around because I didn't really know what I wanted to do for the assignment," Galbraith said. "I was like, 'I have these flowers and they're almost dead, so I don't really care if I ruin them.'

I had red nail polish, the paper pieces were ripped up from a poetry book; I [wanted to] make it very textural but [ensure] it all ties in together."

In the bottom left of the piece, what at first glance appears to be a pomegranate — a symbol throughout art that has come to mean fertility, life, death, and most broadly has become associated with womanhood — is actually a boba cup Galbraith picked up from DeCafé that she enhanced the color of with red food dye.

"Thinking back to it now, that was probably the weirdest thing ever," Galbraith said. "I had all of these materials, and the professor was like, 'What are you doing?' and I was like, 'I'm in a process, just let me do this.' And it turned out really cool, so I find it worth it to use unorthodox materials."

The piece involved a few different scans until she landed on this one, where all of the components felt as if they were just in the right place, from her hand on the right side to all of the other accoutrements. Part of Galbraith's rationale for registering for the class two years ago was to familiarize herself more with programs that photographers tend to use to clean up their work, such as Lightroom and Photoshop. In the post-production stages, she enhanced the reds and pinks so the colors were vibrant, but not overly so, and removed any extraneous specks of dust from the scanning.

"I think the hardest part was making sure my hand stood really still so you don't get that movement," Galbraith said. "Given how [high-definition] the scanners are in the art department, I think that helps with depth as well as layering on the different materials I wanted and [determining] what should



Untitled, or Embrace

Art courtesy of Becca Galbraith



Pink

Art courtesy of Becca Galbraith

be in the front and the hidden details people can look for."

Galbraith has been capturing the world around her on a Nikon digital camera she's had since she was 13 or 14. In photography, her goal is less so for the viewer's enjoyment of the image and more so for the self-satisfaction in taking pictures that she finds artistically pleasing and meaningful.

"I think growing up, I was a Tumblr kid, and I was like, 'Oh, this is so aesthetic, I want to do this,'" Galbraith said.

Like many students, part of Galbraith's difficulty is striking the right balance between time devoted to creative endeavors, general coursework, and extracurricular activities. However, with her Musical Studies major, much of her artwork infiltrates the sonic sphere.

"With my art in general, everything is very spur-of-the-moment," Galbraith said. "I just randomly always get inspired to do something — it's why I have over 120 voice notes because I like to write music. I'll have little melodies and songs pop into my head and it's like, 'Oh! I've got to record this!' so that I can reference it later. It's that kind of thing: 'Oh, idea! Need to write this down, and eventually, they get created, [or] sometimes they don't.'"

With this piece, and others Galbraith has created primarily

for TIMARA courses she's taken in conjunction with her Musical Studies major, some of the difficulty comes with creating art that's also for a grade.

"I put a lot more external pressure on myself because I'm like, 'Oh, not only does this have to be good for me, this has to be good for a great grade,'" Galbraith said. "Art is very subjective, too, so it's hard to [balance] what I want to do versus what the professor likes, and I don't want to cater to one over the other."

Galbraith created a few other pieces in this class, one titled *Pink* and another, her final, titled *Unbothered*. Since taking the class, Galbraith has felt increasingly confident in her own photography skills, which has enabled her to do things like tak-

ing friends' graduation photos for a cheaper price than those marketed by professional photographers.

"I still have another semester left," Galbraith said. "I don't think my involvement in [student organizations] will change that much other than not doing varsity athletics anymore, so I think that will free up a lot more time for me to do art. I'm hoping to find a balance so that I'm not too focused on art and not academics; finding that balance is what I'm really looking to do. ... When you first emailed me, I lost my mind — I was like, 'Really? My art! That's so cool!' In a lot of my experience, I downplay my artistry, but I really need to be like, 'No, I'm an artist.'"



Unbothered

Art courtesy of Becca Galbraith