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Gusto



Amanda Besl's painting "Souvenir de la Malmaison" is on view in the Body of Trade & Commerce Gallery through Nov. 1.

Amanda Besl zooms in with new paintings in Body of Trade & Commerce Gallery

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Buffalo painter Amanda Besl popped onto the local artistic radar almost a decade ago, with a series of small-scale paintings of teenage girls that caught the awkward beauty of her subjects' age and presaged our national obsession with the digital selfie. She continued in this vein until a couple of years ago, gradually expanding her subject matter to include girls with horses, girls swimming against tides, girls with piercing eyes staring meaningfully out of the canvas and straight through the viewer.

In her latest series, "Psyche's Knot," which opens at 6:30 p.m. Thursday in the Body of Trade and Commerce Gallery (1250 Niagara St.), Besl is finally leaving the potent subject matter of girlhood behind. Or at least zooming in on it. Her new paintings, exhibitions of impressive dexterity, depict the flowing locks of her subjects surrounded by several curio cabinets' worth of symbols and objects that seem to have been borrowed from some great-grandmother's attic.

"To create her vivid imagery, Besl finds inspiration in late Rococo traditions a la [Fragonard](https://www.google.com/search?q=fragonard&client=firefox-a&hs=kLw&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=sb&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=mx4XVK2qE_eBsQT2oYHQCg&ved=0CAGQ_AUoAQ&biw=1181&bih=862) (https://www.google.com/search?q=fragonard&client=firefox-a&hs=kLw&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=sb&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=mx4XVK2qE_eBsQT2oYHQCg&ved=0CAGQ_AUoAQ&biw=1181&bih=862), Narnia, Victorian eccentricity-hair styles and flower naming, Greek mythology and Miss Haversham ("Great Expectations"), to name a few," BT&C Gallery founder Anna Kaplan wrote. "The result is an intricate visual and psychological landscape. Besl's paintings are both stunning aesthetic depictions and deeper physiological constructs – they only fully reveal themselves after contemplation at length."

The exhibition remains on view through Nov. 1. Call 604-6183 or visit [www.btandcgallery.com](http://btandcgallery.com) (<http://btandcgallery.com>).

