

Janiva Ellis
StackedPlot

September 19–October 26, 2024

Sites of cataclysm are strewn with the debris of worn cultural myths. Half-veiled effigies and jaded apparitions hover over havoc, populating these scenes with a pulp fueled levity. Angels, sexy and sorrowful, hint that violence cannot be disentangled from the glossy social sagas we fashion and rehash in order to conceal it.

Pillars of light pierce through gray plumes, signals fade in and out. A spectre of uncertainty hangs in the air, static like dust. In a constant stream of symbols, marks, and characters, recognition stalls. Areas of definition can easily veer into abstraction, so that when figures snap into focus the plotlines remain obscured. There's an insistence that when things are viewed in fragments, or glimpsed through a dark glass, greater understanding can be gleaned than when they're seen straight on.

—Stephanie Wambugu

Janiva Ellis (b. 1987, Oakland, California) lives and works in New York City. Forthcoming shows include a solo exhibition at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Cambridge (2025). Recent solo exhibitions include “Sussudio Pseudo Soothe,” Cabinet, London (2024); “Hammer Projects: Janiva Ellis,” Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2022); “Rats,” The Institute for Contemporary Art, Miami (2021); “Tip Drill,” 47 Canal, New York (2019); and “Park Ass Somebody,” Arcadia Missa, London (2018). She has participated in group exhibitions such as the Whitney Biennial, New York (2019); and the New Museum Triennial, New York (2018), among many others. In 2018, Ellis was the recipient of the Rema Hort Foundation Emerging Artist Grant and the Stanley Hollander Award. Her works are in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Rubell Museum, Miami; the Dallas Museum, Dallas; the Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami.