

# COLOSSAL

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### MOLDY FRUIT SCULPTURES FORMED FROM PRECIOUS GEMSTONES CHALLENGE PERCEPTIONS OF DECORATION AND DECAY

by Laura Straugaitis



"Bad Lemon (Creep)" (2019).

Artist Kathleen Ryan creates a conversation between the beautiful and the grotesque in her oversized sculptures of mold-covered fruit. The New York-based artist uses precious and semi-precious stones like malachite, opal, and smoky quartz to form the simulacrum of common green rot on each fruit. Working at a larger-than-life scale, Ryan creates a foam base, rudimentarily painted to map out the fresh and rotten areas on the surface. She then individually places each gemstone, with varied shapes, sizes, and colors that emulate the shift from desirable to disgusting. Lemons are a particular favorite, but Ryan also works with oranges and pears, with each work scaling 6 to 29 inches. "The sculptures are beautiful and pleasurable, but there's an ugliness and unease that comes with them," Ryan told *The New York Times*.

Ryan is represented by London-based gallery Josh Lilley, where she had a solo show in 2018, as well as François Ghebaly in Los Angeles, where her fruit was the namesake for the recent group show *Bad Peach*. This year, Ryan exhibited her work in solo shows at The New Art Gallery in Walsall, U.K. and at MIT's List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as well as part of *Desert X* in Coachella, CA. Two of Ryan's lemons are also on view through October 20, 2019 with François Ghebaly at FIAC international art fair. The artist studied Studio Art and Anthropology at Pitzer College and received a Master's of Fine Arts from U.C.L.A. See more from Ryan's wide-ranging artistic practice on Instagram, and explore more of her work on the gallery websites of Josh Lilley and François Ghebaly.