

# MY MODERN MET

## OCTOBER 23, 2019

### ROTTEN FRUIT REIMAGINED AS MASSIVE SCULPTURES COVERED IN GLITTERING SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES

by Sara Barnes



"Soft Spot," 2019.

Artist Kathleen Ryan reimagines rotten fruit in a collection of grotesque-yet-gorgeous sculptures. The pieces, carved from foam and ranging between one and three feet in diameter, depict lemons, oranges, peaches, and pears in the midst of decay—a fact indicated by her use of glittering semi-precious stones. The tiny materials are used like dabs of pigment in a Pointillist-style painting, and blue-green gems, dark orange baubles, and white stones mimic the mold we might find in a neglected fruit bowl. And as if there was any other doubt, Ryan has aptly titled her series *Bad Fruit*.

Ryan's subject matter is in contrast to the materials she uses in her sculptures. Many of us would discard a piece of rotten fruit without a second thought. But with the addition of gems like iridescent opals, freshwater pearls, and moss agate, we look at the peaches and oranges in a different light—as objects with incredible value. Ryan's work relishes in the cognitive dissonance that occurs. "The sculptures are beautiful and pleasurable, but there's an ugliness and unease that comes with them," she says.