

# COLOSSAL

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### Precious Gems Form the Unsightly Rot of Artist Kathleen Ryan's Decomposing Fruit

by Grace Ebert



"Bad Grapes" (2020), amethyst, aventurine, agate, garnet, pyrite, ruby in zoisite, tektite, tigereye, turquoise, serpentine, obsidian, blackstone, Indian unakite, labradorite, Sierra agate, red agate, black agate, serpentine, quartz, marble, amazonite, rhyolite, calcite, dalmation jasper, glass, steel and stainless steel pins, copper tube, and copper fittings, polystyrene. 59.5 x 90 x 54 inches.

New York-based artist Kathleen Ryan harvests inspiration for her oversized sculptures from natural sources: cherry orchards, vineyards, and mineral mines below the earth's crust. She's known for her fruit pieces that appear to be covered in mold, whether in the form of a deflated bunch of grapes or a pair of cherries spotted with fungi.

Ryan portrays the moldy substances through precious and semi-precious gemstones like amethyst, quartz, and marble. The materials' durability and longevity directly contrast the decay they represent. Whereas the most valuable and lustrous stones cover parts of the fruit, Ryan uses simple glass beads to create the still supple portions, forming the bright red flesh of the cherry or the pockets of yellow rind on the lemon.

A virtual exhibition of the artist's rotting sculptures, which sometimes span as many as 90 inches wide, is available for viewing from Karma. Follow Ryan on Instagram to see more of her work that explores the beautiful and the unsightly.