

BAD FRUIT

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Ali Subotnick in conversation with Kathleen Ryan

ALI SUBOTNICK: My first introduction to your work was when you were in the ceramics department at UCLA. Were you primarily focused on ceramics when you started out?

KATHLEEN RYAN: I did ceramics in high school and college. I didn't go to art school, I went to Pitzer in Claremont and the ceramics classes were my favorite during under - grad. I minored in archaeology.

AS: That's interesting, considering that you've been doing a bit of excavating in your work recently. But let's start from the beginning: After college, did you know that you wanted to be an artist?

KR: I knew I wanted to make art, but it seemed like an unrealistic dream. Growing up, I never knew anyone who made a living as an artist; the only thing I thought I could maybe do was be an art professor. So, I looked for a job in the art world, and ended up at [art fabricator] Carlson & Co. I started as an administrative assistant to the production manager, so I made sure the OSHA paperwork was up-to-date and took care of the fabricators' timecards. I was out in the shop, so I saw what was happening. And then I got promoted to be the project coordinator on the Jeff Koons plastics projects [the Celebration series]. *Cat on a Clothesline* (1994–2001) was the main piece [we worked on].

AS: That's a pretty rare opportunity to go behind the scenes of a major artist's production process, like a crash course in fabrication and engineering and materials ...

KR: Oh my god, it was incredible! It was stressful, as a twenty-one-year-old, one of maybe seven women in a shop of like 100 dudes, and I had to clock in by 6:00 a.m. every day, which was absolutely miserable, but what I learned was insane. Charles Ray was in there all the time, and that's when I got interested in his work.

AS: Were you a fan of Koons before Carlson?

KR: I was, yeah. In undergrad I was attracted to Koons's early work, especially the kitsch. He would come to the shop like once a month. I learned that you can make anything ... I didn't go into these projects with any technical skills. I had to Google how to do things, but you can always find someone who knows how to do what you want done, if you dig deep enough.

AS: There's no dream that can't be made into reality—that applies particularly to Koons and Ray and their notorious perfectionism and determination. Those two artists are arguably the most important makers of objects in their generation, but they have quite distinct approaches and processes and use different materials, so to have that kind of access to them and their production must have been invaluable. That's your grad school right there.

KR: What deeply influenced my work that's common to both artists is the importance of the choice of materials. For example, with Koons's plastics project he wanted to make these giant toys out of

roto-molded polyethylene, same as Little Tykes stuff. But it was practically impossible to make those shapes in that material. We tried to come up with experimental technologies and mold-making to produce these shapes out of this material, and we would go to these roto-molding facilities and the producers were always asking why we were trying to make it with this material. We could make it out of fiberglass instead, and it would look exactly the same, and nobody would know the difference, but of course Koons said it had to be that material. Many people just couldn't get it, but I understood the difference. The material can carry so much meaning. Two materials might look the same but feel very different. Also while I was there Charles Ray was making *Father Figure* (2007), the enlarged toy of a man sitting on a tractor, milled out of solid stainless steel, and then painted to look like plastic and no one even knew that it was solid stainless steel, but he did. Standing in front of it, you can feel the gravity, and that wouldn't happen if it weren't for the material and the way he did it. I wasn't working on those projects, but I would see him there.

AS: Why did you decide to go to grad school?

KR: After working at Carlson for three years, I worked as the registrar at David Kordansky Gallery for a year, and I saw how young artists were able to have careers and realized that I could do it. The artists we worked with at Carlson were just so major and it seemed impossible to enter the field, but when I saw what was happening at Kordansky I was like, "If they can do this, I can do this."

AS: That makes sense. Those experiences, the gallery and Carlson, really prepared you for a career in a lot of ways. So, tell me about going to UCLA. Did you feel like you needed more technical instruction, or did you just want the time to work in the studio and enter into a deeper dialogue?

KR: Yeah, in grad school I could just make work full-time, which I'd never been able to do, and I knew I needed time to make work and to talk about it.

AS: Did you want to focus primarily on ceramics at UCLA?

KR: I knew I wasn't a painter or a traditional ceramicist, but it was the medium that I had the most experience with at that point, and I had a feeling that Adrian Saxe, the ceramics professor, would respond to the work I had made at that point.

AS: Have you always been interested in making objects?

KR: Yes, and ceramics at UCLA is a three-year program and sculpture is two and I wanted to go for three years. I needed the time and in the ceramics department you get access to all the ceramics facilities as well as all the other ones, but if you're not in the ceramics department, you don't have access to the ceramics facilities.

AS: I guess I was just trying to figure out if moving away from working with clay was a major transition for you, but it sounds like that wasn't the case.

KR: Yeah, my undergrad thesis project didn't involve any ceramics. I made a roadside attraction—it was a human-size pack rat's nest. I collected branches and made a two-chambered tunnel-like structure that you could climb through. One room was like a crystal cave with giant oversize pink quartz crystals that I cast out of pink bubblegum-scented wax and they glowed like the inside of a geode in a

natural history museum.

AS: So, the crystals have been there from the start!

KR: Yeah, I guess that was the first real work I made.

AS: I have a vague memory of a large wreathlike sculpture in your UCLA studio. Was that ceramic?

KR: No, that was a steel armature with epoxy putty over it, so it was claylike, and had my finger impressions in it. I never really made traditional ceramics at UCLA. I was trying to make these gate- or fence-like structures out of clay. I experimented with making steel structures and covering them with clay and firing them together to get the clay into forms that defied its material. I was trying to push the boundaries of what clay could do. I would make these fence-like walls out of thin spindly forms that looked almost like drawings. I was covering them with clay and putting them in the kiln. They were sagging clay structures and barriers, but they were fragile and sunken, sort of like a play on what you expect of the materials.

AS: And were most of the metal parts found or did you make them?

KR: I started out making them and then I switched to finding them. I made one that was like a scaffolding covered in clay and then fired. But I didn't install it like a normal scaffolding, I stacked the structures on top of each other, so it became a kind of gate or tower or threshold.

AS: Those works were quite large and imposing; were you trying to create a tension between the visitor and the work?

KR: Sure, but they are also fragile and broken. The clay would always crack, and I would use really juicy or lustrous glazes over these utilitarian forms. I haven't thought about these in so long, it's hard to remember ... I'm glad you asked about them.

AS: Well, it's related to something I was thinking about that seems to run through your work—the tension or opposition between the materials and subject matter, like when you're making a representation of something organic, but out of synthetic materials or vice versa. That applies as well to the fragile nature of something that's also seemingly robust or confrontational or imposing and you consistently vacillate between two poles.

KR: I can't really articulate it, but it has something to do with the psychological or emotional weight of the materials versus the actual weight and presence. Like putting clay on top of a decorative utilitarian object, so it appears fragile, and then I would make large spindly barriers as a contradictory gesture.

AS: That makes sense and it also goes back to your experience at Carlson, and the importance of the materials and your interest in exploiting materials, in a way.

KR: I think one of the reasons I wanted to go into ceramics was a reaction to my experience working at Carlson where everything was so technical and planned. I was desperate to work with my hands and try to take some of those things that I learned and experiment with them on my own. I hate working things out on the computer and emailing with fabricators and vendors, and I was desperate to get

some sense of humanity into my work.

AS: Does that play into the organic side of your work, like the theme of nature, from snakes and birds to grapes and watermelons?

KR: I guess so. It's funny looking back. I guess it wasn't ...

AS: ... intentional?

KR: Yeah. I don't even particularly like fruit, it just often seems to be the thing that can convey what I'm trying to communicate, like the sculpture *Between Two Bodies* (2017) in my first solo show with Ghebaly. The piece consisted of two three-ton granite blocks with three glazed ceramic oranges between them.

AS: That's still one of my favorites. The tension is so palpable and it's also confounding and magical to see these little oranges bearing the weight of something so large and heavy. Can you talk about the evolution of that piece?

KR: I found the granite blocks on eBay, and they were sitting in the parking lot of my studio for a couple of years while I stewed on what to do with them. The blocks were mounts for machinery from Northrop Grumman, and I think they were used for some sort of precision calibration, so the tops of the blocks had been ground perfectly flat, within microns. There was just so much in those blocks for me, they really opened things up. It was like a chunk of the earth that was forced into this extreme precision and then used to manufacture fighter jets. They were just so loaded, they felt very heavy ...

AS: ... metaphorically and literally.

KR: Yeah, and then I got the idea to flip one on top of the other, to bring the perfectly flat tops together, mirroring each other, separated by ceramic fruit. It goes back to playing with our assumptions of the material of clay, and incorporating something fragile, juicy, and sexual like fruit felt like a good way to create that tension.

AS: Was that the first thing you thought of—fruit?

KR: I think I got to the oranges pretty quickly. Oranges are so emblematic of Southern California, as is the aerospace industry and the materials all came from Southern California, so it's referencing the histories of these fading industries in Southern California.

AS: How did it work technically—are the oranges holding up the block on top, bearing all the weight?

KR: I wanted it to just be the oranges bearing the weight, that was the original plan and that was important to me because the fired clay is incredibly strong, and the compressive strength of the clay combined with the extremely flat surfaces does make it work. The numbers check out, so they can hold that downward force. I worked with an engineer that I knew from Carlson who loved helping artists figure out weird projects, but then—

AS: Are the oranges actually bearing the weight?

KR: They are, but then there are stainless steel rods between the two blocks, because, if there's an earthquake or any sort of lateral force ... in a controlled environment where it would never move it would work, but we had to put more of the weight on the steel rods, which I was disappointed about. But I hope it doesn't ruin it. It was a compromise, but there was no other way to do it safely.

AS: I don't think knowing that takes anything away from the work. It's still magical and baffling, and it accomplishes what you set out to demonstrate.

KR: And it really is six thousand pounds of granite suspended over another six thousand pounds of granite, with three little clay oranges between them. That doesn't go away with the knowledge that there's something else supporting the block. AS: Yeah, it's subtle but fierce. So you weren't particularly interested in fruit as a subject, or nature, even?

KR: No, it wasn't that deliberate or intentional. Of course, I love nature, but, no. The large cement grapes [*Bacchante*, 2015] were the first works I made with fruit and then *Between Two Bodies*. I actually don't like grapes—eating them, at least. I got the idea while I was in grad school. Charles Ray would take us to museums, and we went to the Getty (that's what working with Charles Ray in grad school is like). He was talking about Vito Acconci's *Seedbed* (1972), and while he was talking about it I was looking at this painting of a bacchante (Hendrick ter Brugghen, *Bacchante with an Ape*, 1627) that has this drunken woman holding a bunch of grapes and squeezing them, and they're so bulbous and she's so bulbous and her tits are falling out and everything is swollen with this sexuality dripping out of the grapes and they just have this pressure. Maybe Charlie was talking about pressure and I was looking at these fucking grapes and all the sex and pressure was painted on the skin of these grapes and I was like, "How do I get that feeling of pressure that has to do with sex and that tension on the skin? How do I do that in a sculpture?" I stewed on it for a while and tried a few different things and it eventually turned into the *Bacchante* series. It was less about grapes and more about them being an awesome vehicle for communicating this feeling. I wanted to use concrete and balloons, so there's that juxtaposition of weight and the challenge to get such a utilitarian material to be sexy and lush. They all have chains cast into them and I was thinking about the ball-and-chain metaphor as I was making them. I think of them as figures. They are all titled *Bacchante* in reference to the historical depictions of drunken women. So, there's this sexiness and buoyancy, but also, they're literal balls and chains and that's probably a reflection of my own feelings of heaviness and being chained down at the time.

AS: Chained to your work ... Compared to the later fruit pieces, the grapes were almost minimal, all monochrome gray and heavy. How did you transition to representing decay? Do you think of the rotting fruit works as vanitas pieces, addressing temporality or mortality, or was it a formal decision?

KR: I didn't set out to depict decay, it was more roundabout. I collect all sorts of kitschy stuff and I found these little plastic pin-beaded fruits at thrift stores. I had these things around and I thought of making big beaded fruit using semiprecious stones, but that seemed kind of empty and it sat there as an intriguing but ultimately empty idea until I thought, "Oh, if they're rotten, that adds this layer," and it's just evolved from there.

AS: Were the lemons the first decaying fruit you made?

KR: Yeah. I've mostly done lemons. The lemon has a few meanings, like you call a shitty used car a lemon—it's a metaphor for something that's broken and worthless. There are just a lot of cultural asso-

ciations, like “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” I think the lemons work so well, they sort of pop and they’re so—

AS: They’re tactile and seductive, especially the way you depict the transitions and phases of deterioration in one single fruit with the different colored beads and stones. It must’ve been fun for you to figure out the colors and stones.

KR: Yeah, I’ve really enjoyed making them. They are labor intensive, but there are so many satisfying problems to solve. I’ve definitely noticed a shift in my work since I moved from L.A. to New York—I’m dealing with density in a different way. Like the grape sculptures and the granite sculptures that I made in Los Angeles are solid and dense.

AS: It’s contrary to what you would expect. You were making these solid, dense, and heavy grapes in Los Angeles where you would assume things are lighter and then when you got to New York, where you would think it’s a heavier, denser place, things actually got lighter and more colorful and buoyant.

KR: Yeah, and since I moved to New York the type of density has shifted to an emphasis on quantity or accumulation, rather than the density of one single object.

AS: For the fruit pieces, do you work from photographs or are you looking at actual rotting fruit?

KR: It’s a combo of that and finding stock images online.

AS: How do you approach the color/bead sequencing? Is it like painting by numbers?

KR: Sometimes I’ll start painting directly on the [foam] fruit or sometimes I’ll make a drawing or water-color first to figure out the composition, but in general I just go straight to the fruit and keep painting and repainting it until it looks right, and while I’m doing that I’m also picking out a palette of the bead colors that work together. It’s not totally paint by numbers; it is, but there’s a lot of room for interpretation within that.

AS: Had you worked with jewelry or beading before?

KR: Yes and no. I grew up doing as much as young girls do, crafty stuff.

AS: Looking back at images of your work, I was reminded that you’d previously made the bowling ball necklaces. They’re chunky, sort of absurd (and heavy) versions of something that’s generally delicate and light. Then you began incorporating little precious stones that would normally be used for jewelry to make something that’s quite large and heavy, but also decaying.

KR: Yeah, I don’t really wear jewelry, but I’m drawn to it in a similar way as the fruit.

AS: They’re little balls strung together, like a strand of pearls ...

KR: And it’s familiar. It’s something we all know and it’s something that humans have been attracted to forever.

AS: And like a bowl of fresh fruit, jewelry can have a seductive quality to it.

KR: Yeah, definitely.

AS: It's shiny and indulgent and then you get the repulsion and the rot.

KR: I feel like the things that I'm attracted to have both, they're decadent and common everyday objects at the same time.

AS: Absolutely. There's a lot of oscillation between poles throughout your work: hard and soft, heavy and light, seductive and repulsive, extraordinary and ordinary. Can you tell me more about the specific gemstones, crystals, and beads you're using?

KR: I usually use glass or plastic beads for the fresh parts and then the natural materials for the rotten parts—that's sort of the formula. But in the case of *Bad Grapes* (2020) there are a few glass beads mixed in there, but the whole bunch is rotten, so that one doesn't have that contrast between fresh and turning. And of course there's the association of value that's flipped—using those for the wrong parts [precious for rotten, plastic for ripe], but for me there's also something significant about the fact that those materials are from the earth and they feel like they have a life force or something.

AS: I was wondering about that. Do you know about the different properties of gemstones and crystals? Is that something you're interested in or that's important to you?

KR: I grew up in Venice Beach so by default I know a little bit. I definitely feel that they're powerful materials and I feel good working with them, but I don't know the intricacies. I haven't gotten too deep into it, but it's always there. The first time I used crystals was in those hanging pieces.

AS: The ones you showed at Arsenal that look almost like pendants? What are those?

KR: They're seedpods, the seeds of the queen palm tree. And since for those pieces I only used one stone—

AS: The rose quartz and jade?

KR: Yeah, for those pieces I was a little more attuned to the metaphysical properties of the stones, like how rose quartz is associated with femininity and love, and I was contrasting that with the iron I used for the hook enclosures. That was sort of my entry into working with these materials. That was the first time I used crystals and beads, and jewelry hardware, and got into the worlds of jewelry and bead suppliers. I'm still a novice, but I'm getting there.

AS: *Pleasures Known* (2019) seems to have the most complicated array of beads and gems that you've used up until now. It must have been a major endeavor for you, because instead of making individual fruit pieces, you were creating a sort of still life with grapes, cherries, lemons, and an orange all in various stages of decay, and sitting on a giant steel trailer.

KR: Yeah, it was challenging to get the multiple pieces to work together. Making each individual fruit is like figuring out the composition of a painting on its own, and then getting all the parts to work together as a whole is like figuring out the composition of a painting that works from every angle. Then I had

to get the fruits to fit together so the physical forms flow into each other. I also had to get the colors to work together, and communicate everything to my assistants. It was so complicated, and it came with many aesthetic and technical challenges. It was also the first time I incorporated found objects into the composition—the stems of the cherries are fishing rods and the stem of the grapes is an old gardening tool. That's how I got the title, which references nostalgic American pleasures.

AS: What about *Bad Grapes*, which you made soon after *Pleasures Known*. Was that the first time you used copper pipes [to represent the stems and branches]?

KR: I made another sculpture with copper pipes soon after I finished grad school. It was a big sculpture of a pair of eyeglasses, made after a pair of smashed glasses that I found on a trail while I was trekking in the Himalayas. I just bent the pipes haphazardly and used the plumbing fixtures as the hardware to connect everything. I've thought about making a whole show after the trash I found in Nepal and making these discarded objects from brass and copper. I'm still sort of stewing on that. So that was sort of in my mind from five years ago as a material or found object that I knew how to work with.

AS: Something about the joints and how they bend—the copper pipes really replicate the characteristics of the stalks and stems.

KR: I think maybe the fact that they're pipes and they're hollow and they're made for liquid to flow through them, both conceptually and tangibly lends them to this. They bend and connect and introduce this flow to the piece, just kind of naturally. I was thinking about a draining in that piece.

AS: And all the moisture has drained out of the grapes. It's quite dazzling, which seems contradictory to the subject—these sagging and deflated grapes in a state of total decay. Were you thinking about the first bunch of grapes, the *Bacchante* [the cement balloon ones we talked about earlier]?

KR: Yeah, I don't know if it's important that anybody knew this, but I showed them basically in the same place in the gallery where the first grapes were exhibited.

AS: Yeah, I remember.

KR: Cool, I'm glad you remembered.

AS: And those decisions add additional layers to the work. Of course, not everyone's going to get it, but I think it's still relevant. *Bad Grapes* is just so juicy and seductive, but at the same time it's also so gnarly and intricate with all the various stones and beads and colors. And then came *Bad Melon* (2020), can you tell me about the process of making that project out of the Airstream trailer? It seems so monumental.

KR: I think *Pleasures Known* felt more challenging than *Bad Melon*. The Airstream watermelon came together pretty naturally, but maybe because I was on a roll already from making *Pleasures Known*.

AS: Acquiring that Airstream must have been a real journey, literally and metaphorically, taking it apart and moving it, etc. Were you always planning on using an Airstream as the watermelon rind?

KR: I knew that I wanted to make a watermelon and that this piece was going to break away from the other fruit works in that I was going to expose the interior instead of the exterior. I wanted to use beads

for the fleshy interior, and I wanted to differentiate the interior from the exterior, and I wanted the exterior to be something that existed in the world already. But it took me a while to think of the Airstream. I went through several other options in my mind first.

AS: Yeah, it doesn't seem like an obvious choice, but that's why it's so interesting.

KR: Yeah, I was trying to think of things that are big and round ...

AS: Like a boat?

KR: Yeah, totally, I looked at a lot of awesome boats. A boat would've looked great, but I didn't know what that meant to me. What's rotten about a boat? It makes me think maybe of immigration right now, but the idea gets muddy. And I was looking at farm equipment and silos and I previously made a bunch of things with satellite dishes, so I was thinking about that, but what's a satellite dish watermelon like? What does that mean? I don't know if I thought of the trailer and then sought it out or if I just saw the trailer during one of my deep dives on Craigslist. But at some point, I was like, "Oh, Airstream, that's perfect." It's the perfect shape, but it's also a symbol of idealized American freedom and leisure and pleasure.

AS: That's interesting, thinking back to your early interest in the Koons kitsch pieces— you both share an attraction to Americana and nostalgia. But it also connects directly to *Pleasures Known*.

KR: Yeah, the Airstream is definitely nostalgic, and it represents the American dream that maybe my parents' or grandparents' generation had. And there has also been a renewed interest in them over the last decade or so. There's a trendy nostalgia for the Airstream that's interesting but also problematic. But they're gorgeous.

AS: And kind of otherworldly, like something from outer space.

KR: Totally. Getting it and chopping it up was really cool, but it was hard for me to start chopping it up once I got it—even though it had already been essentially destroyed— because I gained an appreciation for how it was made. I was like, "Wow, this thing is so simple but thoughtfully put together and using quite advanced technology for the time."

AS: And what about the journey? You mentioned that it was a major ordeal to get it off the property and that the owner—

KR: We bought it from an eighty-year-old flea market dealer, and it had been parked next to his house for twenty years. He stored a small fraction of his flea market stuff in it. He said it would take him a month to clear it out, but I was on a deadline and didn't have that time, so I asked if we could clear it out so we could get it the next week, and he agreed. It was quite disgusting, and I didn't realize how bad it was until we started unpacking stuff. Raccoons had been living in there and several boxes that we hauled out were covered in six inches of raccoon shit. And it was freezing cold and covered in snow and I started to wonder if it was worth it, but the deeper we got into it—

AS: There was no turning back.

KR: Yeah, and the piece gained significance. I've had similar experiences clearing out other peoples'

stuff, and going through everything that someone has accumulated over a lifetime is so emotional. But it can be too much to take care of, so it becomes trash. I felt like this trailer was rotting from the inside with these valuable personal mementos, but it had turned to trash. Like one of the boxes that had six inches of raccoon shit, I was like, “Should I just take this one to the dumpster?” and he was like, “No, no, no, there’s still good stuff in there.” Meanwhile his wife is freaking out like, “We’re eighty, we can’t take care of the stuff, please just let her throw it away.” It was just so painful for him.

AS: And after you cleared it out, did you hitch it to your car or drive it back?

KR: No, we had to get it towed because we didn’t know if it was safe to drive or hitch. And it was an ordeal to find someone who was willing to tow it and it was covered in half an inch of ice, which we had to scrape off, and, coming from California, I had no experience with that. It was cool driving behind it as it was towed back to New Jersey though. I think it was the first day of the impeachment trial, so I have videos of it being towed and we were listening to the impeachment trial on the radio, so that’s the soundtrack. I think there’s something relevant there.

AS: Sure, these works will always remind you of that experience, like if there’s anything you end up making during the coronavirus lockdown, it will always hold that memory. And of course, you can draw parallels between rotten fruit and a rotten president.

KR: Yeah, and everything just feeling broken.

AS: Before you brought the trailer back, did you have a plan for how you wanted to carve it up?

KR: No. I figured it out intuitively. I spent a few days staring at the trailer, looking at the curves and looking at broken watermelon chunks, and I just made the work with what I had. I would carve out a curved piece of Airstream rind, and once I had the slices, I kept adding chunks of foam and sculpting until I built up a form that felt right. Making *Bad Grapes* was kind of the opposite. I had a cluster of grapes in my house and they started rotting and I brought them to the studio, and they decayed into that exact shape and it was so beautiful, and we carved the sculpture to replicate the real one. The watermelon was kind of the opposite—I worked with what I had until it felt right.

AS: I don’t know if you remember the comedian Gallagher, but it feels like one of his watermelons that has been smashed.

KR: Yeah, I was imagining a watermelon that’s been dropped and breaks apart.

AS: Exactly, it’s not broken up into uniform clean slices. Is this the first piece that has flies?

KR: Yeah!

AS: Did that come out of the experience of cleaning out the trailer?

KR: Actually, the flies were kind of fundamental to my original idea. About a year ago I was looking up images of rotten melons and someone posted a photo of a watermelon covered in flies. At first, they looked like seeds, but then I realized they were actually flies and that’s so disgusting and cool. I really wanted to do that from the beginning—the flies/seeds combo. I found them on eBay, but they’re vintage, so I couldn’t find the quantity I originally envisioned, but it evolved in other ways.

AS: And then keeping different elements of the trailer visible, like the lights or a window or an antenna

and even the wires in that one chunk, counters the organic nature of the fruit. I love that you don't try to conceal the original object. When you've used found materials in the past it's maybe not as essential to the piece or you haven't left as much of the original object exposed—was that your plan from the beginning?

KR: I guess so. I wanted it to be clear what it was and the details on the trailer itself are so satisfying, even when they're broken, like the scratched-up window, they're just so—

AS: It's such an extraordinary work (or works), and your experience going to get it and cleaning it out—it seems like a significant moment in the development of your work. So that leads me to what's next. Do you think the lockdown will impact how you make things or what you make?

KR: I think it's too soon to know. Maybe two years from now I'll have better perspective. I'm so thrilled and grateful for the attention that I've gotten the last few years, but I'm also relieved to be out of the spotlight for a while. I need time. I'm not done with the moldy fruit, but I'm also excited to see how it evolves into the next thing and to try some new stuff. The fruit has really taken over my psyche ... maybe it's the crystal energy. Since I started bringing these beads into the studio it's really taken over and I don't seem to be able to move on, but now that my assistants aren't here I've started to reorganize the beads and put them in a different room, so I can contain that energy to one spot. I guess I need to get the fruit out of my mind.