

KATHLEEN RYAN

by admin



Kathleen Ryan, *Bad Cherries*, 2021. Amazonite, aventurine, fluorite, turquoise, malachite, angelite, labradorite, smokey quartz, quartz, rose quartz, citrine, magnesite, aquamarine, green line jasper, sesame jasper, pink aventurine, agate, tiger eye, garnet, carnelian, lapis lazuli, moonstone, mother of pearl, shell, freshwater pearls, wood, acrylic, glass, steel pins on coated polystyrene, fishing poles, lead sinkers, steel pallet cage, 981/2 x 100 x 1101/2 inches. Courtesy Karma, New York.

The decadence and decay of vanitas-style paintings are reimagined within gemstone-encrusted sculptures of fruit in Kathleen Ryan's first solo show with Karma. See, for instance, a pair of plump cherries with fishing-rod stems, rendered blood-red by garnet, red aventurine, pink opal, and rose quartz, among an extensive semi-precious stone-studded medium line. Those stones are pierced and pinned to a core via long silver nails whose shiny heads sit at their surfaces like nubby calyxes, as if each of the hundreds of globules that make up the fruit were its own fruitlet. Embedded alongside the crystals are little easter eggs as well: from a skull to a dolphin to the figure of a woman, who appears to emerge from the coil of an embedded shell.

Some of the pieces of fruit—the sickly sliced *Bad Lemon (Sea Witch)* (2020), for example—are in rough shape, rotted to the core or covered in putrid layers of mold. The putrefied parts of these fruits radiate color: seasick-green stones surrounded by coronae of tiny pearls; large veined, egg-like stones; maroon-black beads; and large, rectangular turquoise rocks. The star of the show might be a crowing Jack-o'-Lantern which commands its own room. Peer through its wasting sockets and witness a swirling array of color and sheen: a marbled agate, crags of crystal, and large, tree-stump-like cross sections of mineral. The pumpkin's moldering top sits off to the side, encrusted with glittering gemstones set ablaze by the skylight overhead. As in the tradition of vanitas, decay here is an excuse for beauty as well.