

HYPERALLERGIC

ART

Fruits Reborn as Sculpture

At the Scarab Club, Mary Eddy is showing her sculptures made from intricately cut and dried fruit skins, which have been “liberated” from their biological functions.



Sarah Rose Sharp | 24 hours ago



Mary Eddy, “3623” (2017), Hami melon and reed (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic)

DETROIT — To those who consume it, fruit may be among nature’s most delicious treats, but fruits are also reproductive bodies.

“Its [fruit’s] entire design is to better produce the next generation,” said [Mary Eddy](#), one of four participating artists in the group show [May Contain Fruit](#) at the [Scarab Club](#). “That vessel to produce another vessel to produce another vessel, which so closely mirrors our anatomy.”



Mary Eddy, “4312” (2017), Altulfo melon, thread, and reed (left), and “4051” (2017), cantaloupe and reed

Joining work in diverse media by artists Alyssa Bogdan, Ginny Martin, and Manal Shoukair, Eddy’s contributions stand out in part by sheer numbers — of 58 pieces on display in the Scarab Club’s main gallery space, 46 were produced by Eddy — but also in their direct use of the

fruit as a living material, rather than just casting it. In a relatively tight span of two months, Eddy cultivated an experimental and hands-on process of converting fruits from Chile, Guatemala, and Mexico into 2D painted works, with pigments developed from the juice of the various fruits, and 3D sculptural works that use basket-woven reed constructions as the superstructure for intricately cut and dried fruit skins.

“I’ve skinned rabbits before,” said Eddy in an interview with Hyperallergic, “and whenever you cut a pelt from an animal, it’s a very specific process, kind of cutting at odd angles and carefully trying not to cut through the skin and the fur. I had a pineapple and I started to cut out the inside so I could fold the skin flat, and just see that shape — and that’s kind of how it started. I really liked the flattened image. I rarely in my life have to convert 3D images to 2D images, or even visualize that, so it was really interesting to me to see that flattened version of a 3D object. And the weaving came about, trying to get the fruit to dry flat and preserve that shape.”



May Contain Fruit installation view, works by Mary Eddy

There is something evocative and primitive about Eddy's little constructions, forming shapes and configurations that seem at once esoteric and fundamental. The collection of objects looks like the tools for an unknown ritual — some hanging like dreamcatchers, some freestanding like animal skulls — and fall along a continuum between mostly skin and mostly reed. The biodegradable aspect of Eddy's materials reveals patterns of decay, shriveling, and mummification. If one were to enter a forest glade strewn with these objects, one might fairly assume they were about to get Blair Witch'd.

Eddy describes these forms as “vessels of choice” — just as women have an option, rather than an obligation, to reproduce, these fruits take on different objectives other than the reproduction of their own forms. One might say they are the liberated vessels: fruit as woman as artist. No wonder they have a bit of a witchy feel to them. While most of Eddy's works are titled simply with the PLU number provided by the grocery store, one work, titled “Not a Baby Basket,” rendered in reed and painted in menstrual blood, exemplifies this metaphor of the baskets as liberated women.



Mary Eddy, "4320" (2017), bell pepper and reed

Eddy's works are formal feats, requiring such incredible focus and willingness to meet her materials on their own terms, and her basket-weaving is virtuosic for one who, according to the artist, picked up the principles by watching a friend who was studying the technique. But Eddy's conceptual underpinnings are what give her work real impact and resonance, particularly for any viewer who notices the limitations of biological replication, in favor of savoring the fruits that may be borne of reinterpretation.

[May Contain Fruit](#) *continues at the Scarab Club (217 Farnsworth St, Detroit) through August 19.*