

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

KATHLEEN RYAN: HEAD AND HEART January 12 to May 14, 2023

This project brings together two monumental works, *Daisy Chain*, 2021, and *Pearls*, 2017, conceived over a five-year span and sited in the Museum's Leir Atrium

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to announce *Kathleen Ryan: Head and Heart*, the fourth installment of *Aldrich Projects*, a quarterly series that features one work or a focused body of work by a single artist on the Museum's campus. *Kathleen Ryan: Head and Heart* will be on view at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum from January 12 to May 14, 2023.

Ryan's work ranges in scale and includes larger-than-life sculptures that reference seventeenth-century vanitas paintings, Americana, kitsch, and Pop art. She uses humor and instantly recognizable imagery to interrogate the busts and breakdowns of the American dream, an artifice fueled by desire and deception. She sources a myriad of materials including gemstones, fishing poles, automobile parts, to bowling balls, and an Airstream, for their "psychological or emotional weight," crafting objects that evoke a metaphorical churning about the sentimental and debauched.

Coiled on the Atrium floor is *Pearls*, 2017, a behemoth of thirty-five glittering pink and rose-hued bowling balls laced together by sturdy rope, signifying a strand of pearls. Hefty and supersized, it is cast with objects that symbolize one of America's most democratic entertainments—a feminist riff on a time-honored emblem of the pure, dainty, and upscale.

Daisy Chain, 2021, is a giant string of plastic daisies threaded together by their stems to form an ornamental wreath. An age-old amusement, daisy chains were stylized as garlands to be worn as symbols of devotion and eternal love. At a towering twelve feet tall, *Daisy Chain* dangles from the ceiling to the floor. The sculpture is assembled from found and composed elements: garden hoses for stems, plastic funnels for pistils, and cut vinyl for petals—its materiality alludes to its origins in nature.

Turning the Atrium into a Leviathan torso, Ryan's two monumental necklaces express an outsized corporeality that transmits—on loop—an endless track of the heartfelt and fake.



Kathleen Ryan, *Daisy Chain*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Karma, New York



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Kathleen Ryan (b. 1984, Santa Monica, CA) lives and works in New Jersey. She received her MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles. Her work has been the subject of institutional solo exhibitions at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; the New Art Gallery, Walsall, UK; and the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA. Her work is included in public collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Kathleen Ryan: Head and Heart is curated by the Museum's Chief Curator Amy Smith-Stewart.

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