

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 single artist series that features a singular work or focused body of work by an artist every four months 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 output ranges from body-size to larger-than-life scale sculptures that cite 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 chooses materials from gemstones and 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 strand of pearls laced together with thirty-five glittering pink and rose-hued bowling balls and sturdy rope. 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 a mega-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 high, *Daisy Chain* dangles from wall to floor. Assembled from found and composed elements, garden hoses for stems, plastic funnels for pistils, and cut vinyl for petals, its materiality alludes to its horticulture origins.

Turning the Atrium into a Leviathan torso, Ryan's titanic 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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