

CREATIVE BOOM

Inspiration / Art

Fruiting Habits: Artist Jonathan Trayte creates strange and witty objects for the home

Written by
Darren Clanford



All images courtesy of the artist and Friedman Benda

London artist Jonathan Trayte is presenting his first solo show in America this summer. Entitled *Fruiting Habits*, it's a surreal and psychologically provocative landscape, with living, sleeping and eating quarters.

Clanford, Darren. "Fruiting Habits: Artist Jonathan Trayte Creates Strange and Witty Objects for the Home," *Creative Boom*, May 22, 2018.

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This fantasy world at [Friedman Benda](#) in New York is instantly appealing, but also intentionally strange, and laced with mordant wit. His pieces form a quirky and characterful family of misfits. "The work that I tend to make comes together all at once, like a cast of characters," says Jonathan. "There's always some weird older brother, the 'black sheep,' that doesn't quite fit."

Jonathan comes from a background in fine art sculpture, and also has had broad experience in other fields – including as a chef and foundry metal worker. In this show, he brings his skills and interests to designing functional objects. This is, he recognises, a "fresh take", almost an outsider's view, of domesticity.

Familiar objects, like lamps or a bedroom and dining set, morph into strange compositions where natural forms and glossy synthetic skins of paint converge. The range of materials that he incorporates into this repertoire is extremely wide – painted bronze, leather, wood, marble and neon – as is the scope of his imagery. Most important are consumables like bulbous melons and gourds, confections, and deli meats, all of which he renders with great affection and a tongue-in-cheek sense of humour. The exuberance and sheer sculptural invention of the work amount to a 21st-century return of the Baroque.

Thanks to his background in the catering industry, Jonathan has a visceral feel for the texture of produce, which he applies in unexpected ways to the objects and their mise en scène. He also draws from the visual cues of packaging: candy wrappers and snack boxes that he collects from all over the world.

He is struck by the fact that food, one of humanity's few true universals, is visualised so differently in various cultures. Beneath the bright and playful veneers of packaging, Jonathan finds real psychological depth. He draws from that deep well a commentary on personal desire, cultural habits, and rampant consumerism.

Fruiting Habits will run at Friedman Benda in New York from 21 June until 27 July 2018. Visit friedmanbenda.com for more information.



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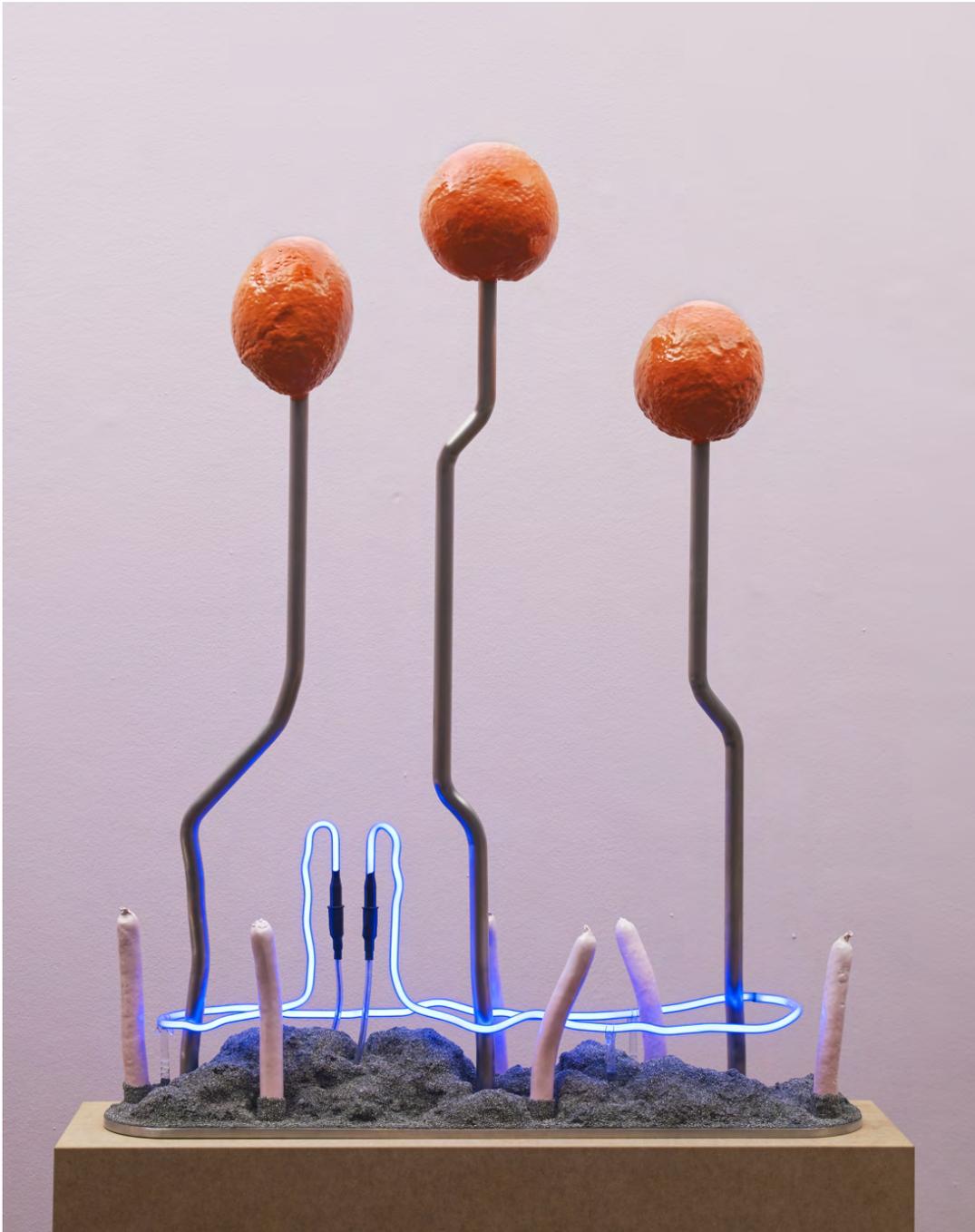


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