



Sticker Sheet Design by Kristin Tata.

Cut Fruit Means I Love You in Adele Kenworthy's New Exhibit



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The first taste [Adele Kenworthy](#) can remember is a persimmon, sweet and silky. It left such an impact that the memory inspired Kenworthy's only tattoo: a persimmon branch on their arm.

Fruit wove itself into her life in other ways, too. Growing up the child of an immigrant mom, Kenworthy says their family didn't often say "I love you" out loud. But gestures like cutting fruit for each other helped the family communicate the same message.

That's why Kenworthy, an artist-organizer, is now creating a display-oriented all-around cut fruit. Her upcoming exhibit "[to carry within us an orchard](#)" examines ideas of care and love through fruit. Kenworthy produced it as part of the D.C. art organization [Transformer's Exercises for Emerging Artists](#) program, and the show will run at [Transformer](#) from August 10 to 20.

In the display, Kenworthy examines ideas like: Who works as a caregiver? Who receives their care? When is that care recognized?

“I wanted to bring this idea of cut fruit to transform or to confront our country’s landscape of care as a commodity,” they say.

In addition to the exhibit’s collages and window display overflowing with fruits, Kenworthy intends to show up at the exhibit in person each day it’s open. They’ll cut up in-season fruit — perhaps peaches, pears or a Korean melon called chamoe — and offer it to passersby.

Kenworthy has been talking with others, friends and strangers alike, about the meaning of fruit and the memories associated with it. She wove those answers into the collages by hand, “one by one and piece by piece.”

“It’s incredible how such a small gesture or even a wordless gesture brings so much of a body reaction,” they say. “And it’s been cross-cultural. There’s a friend who shared how their family — their homeland is in the Caribbean, and so they sent me a picture of their aunt standing under their mango tree in their family yard.”

For Kenworthy, using cut fruit as a gesture of love is part of their own Korean American heritage.

“I can never remove like my racialized experience from my work,” she says. “I don’t want to, either.”

Historically, they say, Asian American women have not been in control of whether they were hyper-visible or invisible in any given moment. She wants to change that — wants to help caregivers, whose work is so often overlooked, be recognized.

In developing the project, Kenworthy drew on a number of inspirations: Poet and novelist Ocean Vuong, whose work dives into themes of identity, history and family. Author, activist and filmmaker Toni Cade Bambara, whose quote “My job is to make revolution irresistible” helps motivate Kenworthy.

In line with that quote, Kenworthy planned a workshop on grassroots organizing to be led by [Rising Organizers](#). Sitting on mats on the floor at the exhibit, Asian American femme caretakers and artists are invited to cut fruit for one another and learn about sparking change.

“to carry within us an orchard” isn’t a conventional gallery show. It includes a contained set of pieces, Kenworthy says, but the artwork itself isn’t meant to be the focal point of their exhibit.

“I’m hoping the connections and the interactions will be what fills the space,” she says.

“to carry within us an orchard” will be on display at Transformer from August 10 to 20. The Cut Fruit Circle and Organizing 101 Workshop will take place on August 13 at 2 p.m.

Transformer: 1404 P St. NW, DC; transformerdc.org // [@transformerdc](https://twitter.com/transformerdc)

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