

For the month of July 2016, our featured artist was Kirsten Robinson. She is a 2D artist from Kansas. Here's our interview with Kirsten regarding her watercolor work. Happy reading!



*Expectations* -- She comes in a gown of layers and frills. Then with the step sister's claws the gown is torn, layer by layer until no frills remain. Only the expected tightly coiled, compressed, round.

**TL:** How did you get started making art?

**KR:** [I have been making art] Since I was very young. I have a grandmother who paints, and dad who doodled cartoons for us, and an older sister who is an artist.



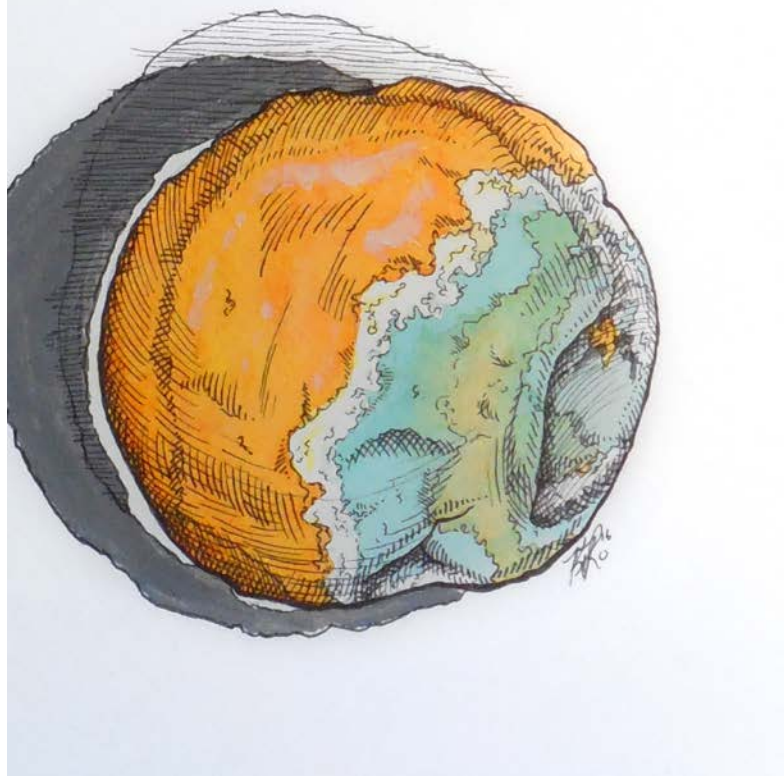
*Mold* -- The spores are always with you, waiting for the surface to break. If allowed, it will disintegrate you from the inside, like a deep heartache.

**TL:** What inspired you to work with rotten fruits and vegetables?

**KR:** On a basic level, being exposed to them on a daily basis at work brought it to my attention. Every morning I spend 2-3 hours culling our entire produce department to get rid of any spoiled goods. Being alone while performing this task, gets me trapped in my mind. Thinking about things my friends, family, and myself are struggling with. I lost a cousin. My friend lost a baby. My own pain. Then I found a pear with a perfectly round hollow rot. That rotten pear represent[ed] exactly what I was feeling for myself and what they were feeling.

*Mold: Color --*

The color is the context. Viewed on an orange brings feelings of disgust. Viewed as a chalk paint prime of "magnolias" it is the most beautiful and sought after color known. Beauty is beauty even without context.



**TL:** Are all of your pieces in watercolor or did you use other tools as well?

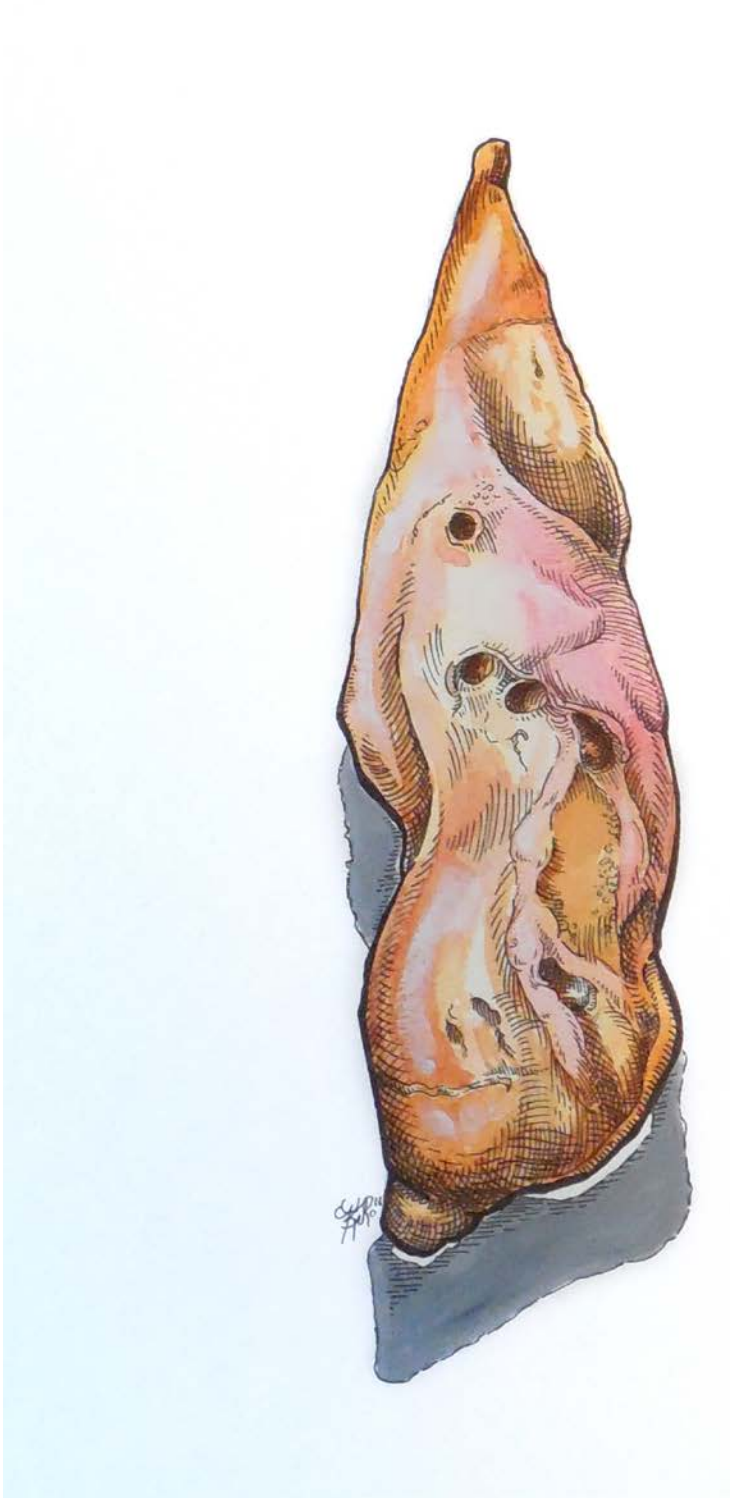
**KR:** The pieces in this series are mostly watercolor, pen, and gesso. I like working in a variety of mediums though. I even did a painting of cherries out of the cherry juice with pen and ink. Very sticky!



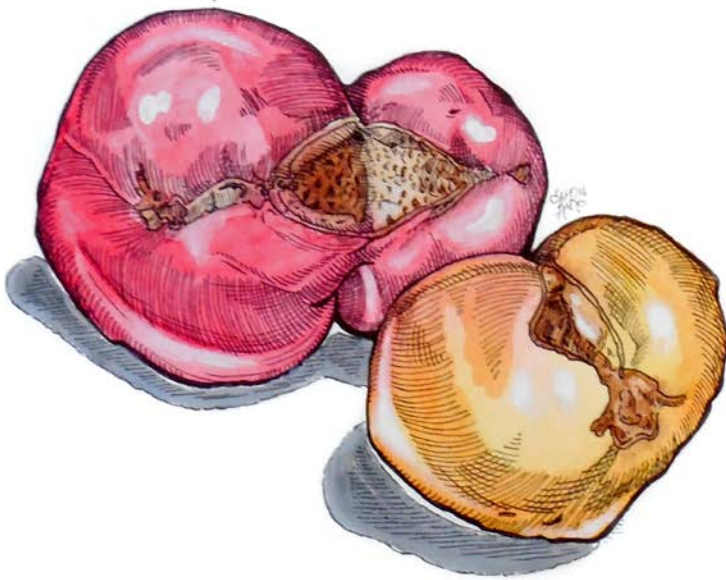
*Pocks* -- The disease is gone but the Pocks remain. Reminders of damage deep beneath. Did You allow this damage to form?

**TL:** Did you try other mediums for this project/Why did watercolors work best for you?

**KR:** Other than the experiment with cherry juice I did not try any other mediums. This project started in a tumultuous emotional way, all of my thoughts broke out and expressed through a medium I have used before in art school and liked the effect of.



*Mutation* -- Almost a standard, now a deviation. Didn't they all start from the same source? Only the outside elements changed.



*Mutation II* -- Growing quickly, the changes happen too fast. The pain stretches and contorts with no time left to heal. The soul is left mutated.

**TL:** What is your goal with these pieces? What do you want the audience to take away from having viewed your work?

**KR:** I want the audience to see something's beautiful where they might not have been looking. Expressed in real life: people suffer but if they look hard enough something beautiful can be seen.

**TL:** Besides these pieces, do you create any other kind of art?

**KR:** Yes, I love playing with lots of different kinds of art! I enjoy ceramics, glass, metals, pastels, acrylics, ink, watercolor, and fabrics.



*Rot* -- Can even the rot which You designed become a symphony of sight?

**TL:** You mention that you find this fruit in your store. Do you take it home with you?

**KR:** I find the fruit in my store and take a photo before tossing them out. Because I am finding them means my produce department is kept clean and fresh!



*Rot II -*

It's inside you  
from the  
moment you are  
taken from the  
Creator. No  
longer growing.  
No longer  
thriving. The  
only option is to  
become  
something new  
before the rot  
sets in.



**TL:** That makes a lot more sense! Have you given thought to drawing the decomposition of insects, animals, or birds? I have no idea where you'd find such things except as roadkill, and that doesn't seem like a good idea to pick that up and take it home.

**KR:** Ha! I am not afraid! I have dug through cow pies with my uncle to find "rare" dung beetles, brought home cow and pig skulls from my grandpa's farm, and once my friend and I saw a rabbit get hit by a car so we buried it in my back yard to let it decompose. Months later [I] dug it up and now I have some nice rabbit bones for drawing studies. Don't worry lots and lots of hand-washing, gloves, and disinfectant were involved.

**TL:** Where would I go to see more of your work?

**KR:** I have started a page on Facebook for my artwork called Kiro's Curiosities ([www.facebook.com/kirocurious](http://www.facebook.com/kirocurious)). I do have some pieces available for sale on that page as well. Visit anytime!

**TL:** What is the worst part about working with decomposing fruit and veggies?

**KR:** Fruit flies and mold make me itch! But only mold/fruit flies on oranges and raspberries.

**TL:** Besides creating art, is there an upside to this work at all? For instance, do you find yourself raising generation after generation of fruit flies?

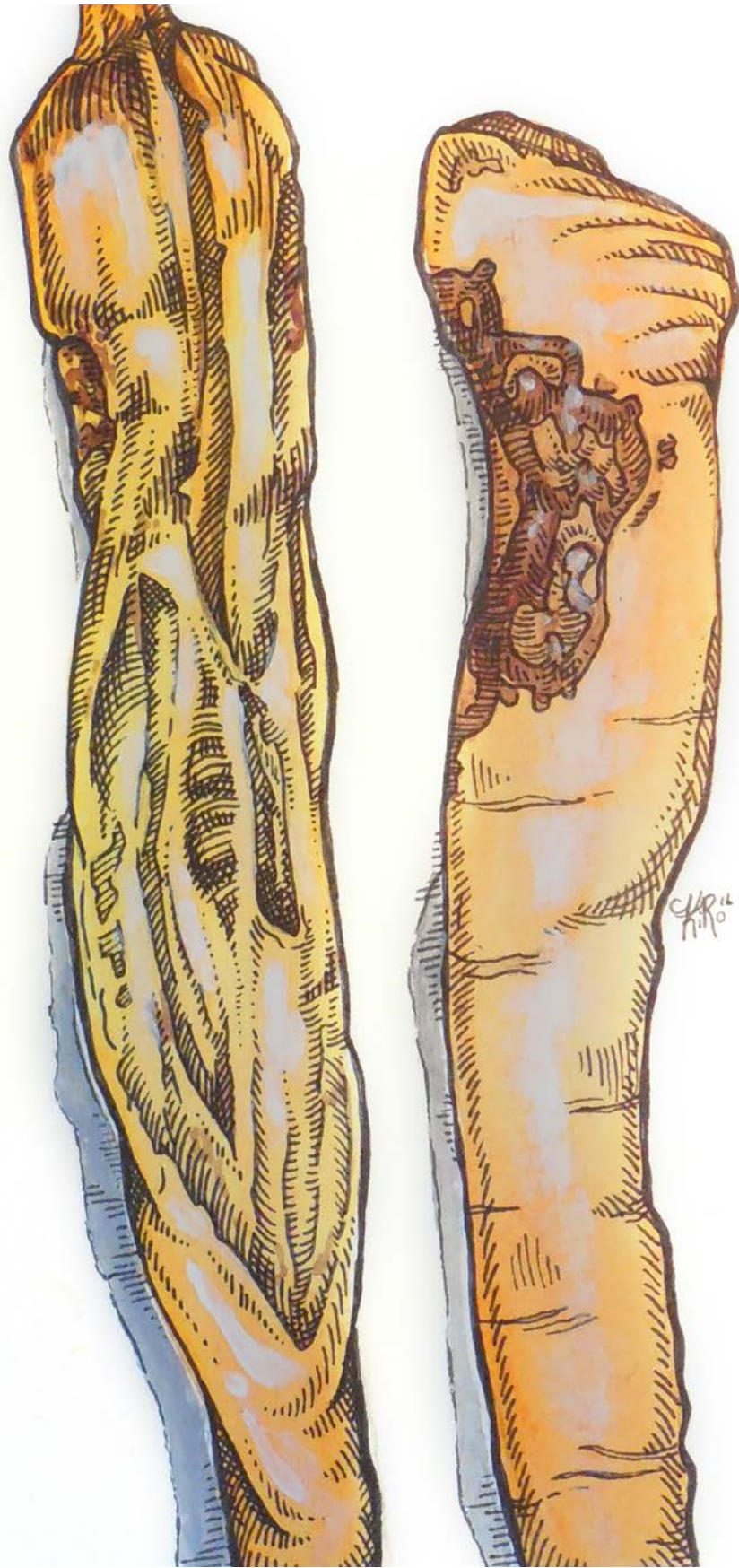
**KR:** Oh, Heck no! Every time I am near fruit flies I break out in hives!

**TL:** Tell me more about the little poetic compositions that you've placed with each piece. What spurred you to write those in connection to the art?

**KR:** All of the rotten fruit was chosen not only for aesthetic interest but because it represented something personal to me. Seeing the pain in others amplifies my own. The fruit and vegetables have become symbols for expression. The words facilitate understanding for what they mean to me.

**TL:** Do those short poetic compositions follow any particular guidelines that you've set?

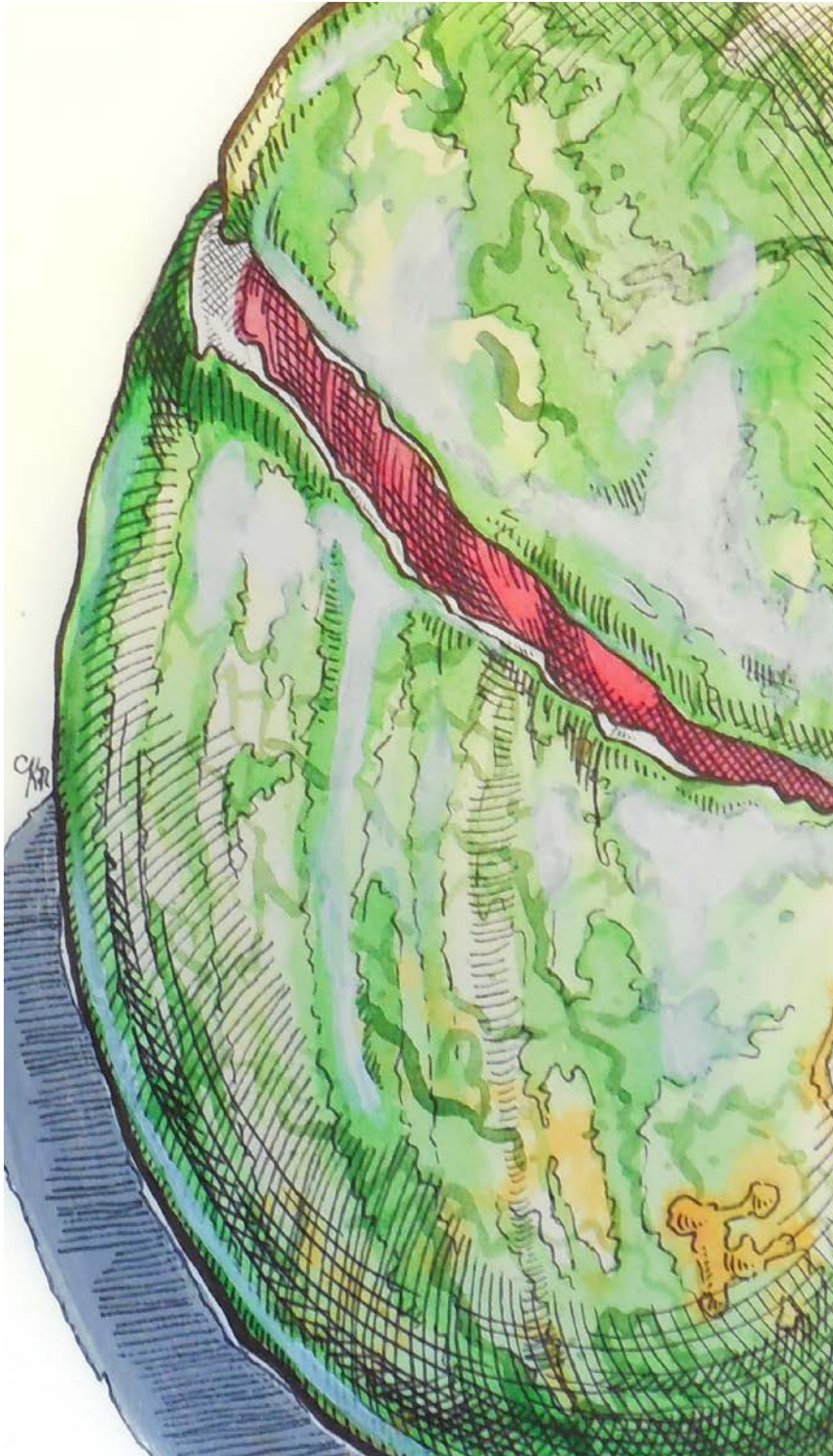
**KR:** Not any strict guidelines. I try to keep it to a few sentences. Often I end with a question.



*Rot III* -- This decay in my soul has a dark loveliness. Discordant melody leading to resolve. For without the rot there cannot be redemption.

**TL:** How do you intend for those to change how a viewer perceives your work?

**KR:** I want the poems to change the view from seeing the beauty of rotten pear or the moldy orange, or the mutated tomato to seeing the reality of the mother with no baby, a family in grieving for loss of a member, the lack of family, the kid who is different and feels no compassion. These broken and miserable people are still whole and just as worthy of human interaction rather than the stifled awkwardness our society often gives to the imperfect.



*Split --*

Split forever, never to be whole. Is it your fault? No, this separation anxiety was caused by an unknown force.

**TL:** You mention that these pieces stem from some pretty emotional situations for you. How did this particular project get started?

**KR:** The paintings and poems are very personal to me. The first one was made by difficult circumstance in my life that brings a great amount of grief and anxiety. But the subject is taboo so it became my way of telling people without telling them. It is therapeutic in a way, helping me sort out reasoning and justice for why things happen.



*Hollow* -- The empty space that follows a holy chord. The quiet before a crashing storm. A hand never to be felt.

*Rebirth --*

The old life destroyed to give birth to something new. Cleansed, the pain of healing is in itself, beautiful.



**TL:** Were you ever discouraged while making your art? How did you overcome those feelings?

**KR:** Oh yes. Time, and thinking, and making art that is just for stupid fun.

**Kirsten Robinson** is an artist who was born and raised in Kansas. She received her BFA from Emporia State University in printmaking with two minors in art history and music theory. Her current body of work deals with imagery of rotten, discolored, and mutated produce items from her work place. The unwanted and unsightly are often tossed aside with no second thought to what value they may have.

She uses this imagery to touch on subjects of faith, human emotion and conditions that she has seen and felt deeply for herself and loved ones. Kirsten hopes these paintings will help others see that even things that by standard definition are worthless can be of beauty and value.