



# Spike Island

VERONICA RYAN  
*ALONG A SPECTRUM*

19 MAY TO  
5 SEPTEMBER 2021

# Spike Island

VERONICA RYAN

*ALONG A SPECTRUM*

19 MAY TO 5 SEPTEMBER 2021

Veronica Ryan is best known for making sculpture that is evocative of shapes, forms and objects from the natural world. Born in 1956 in Plymouth, Montserrat, Ryan moved with her family to England when she was an infant. In the late 1970s she studied at Corsham Court in Bath and then at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. Over the last forty years, she has worked with a variety of materials and techniques to create meticulously handcrafted works that evoke trauma, memory and loss.

Made during an extended residency at Spike Island over the past two years, the works in *Along a Spectrum* explore the fragility of the natural environment and the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the exhibition, everyday objects such as bandages, food containers and medical pillows have been manipulated and repurposed to create works that speak of resilience and attempts at recovery.

A variety of fruits and seeds are cast in clay and bronze, or simply left to dry. These natural forms are recurring motifs in Ryan's work, recalling memories of her youth as much as histories of global trade. Often incorporated — at once contained and displayed — in simple, modular structures, they reveal her ongoing interest in where and how plants germinate, and the conditions that enable them to travel and take root across different environments. They also function metaphorically for Ryan's own sense of dislocation, prompted by a childhood that involved a lot of moving around. She reconnects with her birthplace here by using volcanic ash from Montserrat as a glaze for clay casts of soursop skins and cocoa pods.

Elusive and beguiling, the works in *Along a Spectrum* consider the attachments we form with objects, materials and places; highlighting the porosity between our inner lives and the world around us.

Supported by Freelands Foundation through the Freelands Award

Image: Veronica Ryan, *Drift Seeds* (2019). Fishing line, drift seeds. Photograph by Max McClure. Copyright Veronica Ryan. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Alison Jacques, London

Large print and audio guides are available in the gallery and to download at [spikeisland.org.uk](http://spikeisland.org.uk)

Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design, located in Bristol's harbour area.

Admission to the gallery is free. Join our events and activities online.

Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road  
Bristol BS1 6UX  
+44 (0)117 929 2266  
[spikeisland.org.uk](http://spikeisland.org.uk)  
Facebook: [Spikeland](https://www.facebook.com/Spikeland)  
Twitter: [@\\_Spikeland](https://twitter.com/_Spikeland)  
Instagram: [@Spikeland](https://www.instagram.com/Spikeland)



Supported through public funding by  
ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND



Freelands  
Award

PLEN DERLEITH  
SCANTLEBURY  
SPECIALIST ART FABRICATION