

BRICK AUX

The Salt That You Bring to the Table

Nora Chellew

November 14, 2024 — January 29, 2025

Brick Aux presents the solo exhibition of artist Nora Chellew (she/they, b.1995), *The Salt That You Bring to the Table*.

The exhibition title comes from a mondegreen, or misinterpretation resulting from mishearing, of lyrics from Lana Del Rey's song Margaret. "Salt" replaces "soul," reinterpreting Del Rey's metaphorical verse in more practical, culinary terms.

Through material interventions, *The Salt That You Bring to the Table* contrasts preservation/"salt" and action/"bring"—shorthand in Chellew's visual language for the complementary forces of stasis and change. Chellew suspends ephemeral ingredients in time through processes that alter their chemical or structural states, such as drying, baking, hollowing, and coating. Operating through an interest in material history, and queering the influence of a Catholic upbringing, Chellew incorporates age-old craft methodologies that have been culled into modern life: an egg's yolk is removed to keep the shell; a scoby pellicule is cast and cured; a citrus is mummified by cloves into a pomander.

Once Chellew's objects pass through the preservation/"salt" stage, and cadences of decay are exponentially slowed by rapid change, they are shifted into the action/"bring" stage by various stimuli: a circuit moves an eggshell to make a marking, subsequently draping ribbon tails with drama; light illuminates scoby leather engendering a glow; frozen paw prints on vellum filter and soften their surroundings; and pomanders react with caramel and lavender to perfume the air.

The Salt That You Bring to the Table worlds itself into a space of kitchen sorcery and experimentation, where the materials inventoried in the checklist are more like ingredients, and performed operations are evident. The exhibition is simultaneously laboratory, theater, domestic space, and archive of recipes. Beginning on the full moon phase and ending on the new moon phase, *The Salt That You Bring to the Table* embraces magic, timekeeping, and tradition—all important elements in any good kitchen.