

Shelf life; Expiry date, 2023

Shelf life; Expiry date, 2023 is a single photographic image which has been digitally altered, printed on photographic pearl paper and mounted on cardboard, 8 x 8 Inches (20 x 20 cm). Food expires and in an instant turn from a cure to a contaminate. Riding with Death (1988) by Jean-Michel Basquiat is recreated with deleterious foods to confront the viewer with the similarities between the voluntary ingestion of rotten food and the taking of harmful drugs, which lead to the tragic overdose of Jean-Michel Basquiat at the age of 27.

I want the viewer to be confronted with a plate of harmful food, which has been doctored to seem as edible and appealing as possible. Why would anyone eat this? That is the question I wish to pose to the viewer. I want to ask this question to draw parallels between consciously ingesting harmful food, and consciously ingesting harmful drugs. Is the viewer to blame if they harm themselves through ingestion of this food, despite it being presented to them in an unsolicited manner? Perhaps the creator of the food, the adulterer of the image is to blame. For it was them who manipulated the content to appear appealing to viewers who may not understand the harm contained within.

Despite his passing before I was born, the artwork Jean-Michel Basquiat created during his life has left a permanent impression in my being. Knowing his death was preventable, at moments brings me to tears. I feel a loss of what could have been. This work allowed my frustration to gain agency, giving me the opportunity to grieve, while advocating for harm reduction.