

# Step 1: rid the pomelo skin of bitterness

One of my favorite fruits growing up was pomelo. Sweeter than grapefruit with an aromatic core, it was worth the clumsy unpeeling a child might perform. My mother insisted pomelo rind was never to be wasted. It could be used to wash her hair or to cook with. This metal bowl of soaking pomelo rinds was a commonplace object by the kitchen sink. It was an unglamorous potpourri of sorts.

Though the fruit inside is sweet, its skin is bitter. Whether you are preparing the pomelo rind for hair care or for food, the first preparatory step is to separate the undesirable part (for taste) or the desirable part (for hair).  
"Step 1: rid the pomelo skin of bitterness."

I feel that I have much bitterness to draw out.

In my notes app, I keep a running list of potential artwork title ideas. These days, the list reads more like an inventory for a compost bucket; at some point in the past few years I started to notice that I'd often include things that were pungent, ripening, then overripening, bruising, or fermenting. It is full of fruit existing in this overlapping space of being simultaneously Very Alive and Very Much Dying, and of course, smelling its most fragrant/pungent in this arc.

Every guava season, I distribute the contents of a giant bag throughout my home - in egg cups on the dining table, swaths of them in a fruit bowl, and then in the studio, using the empty holes in bricks as stands for the guavas to sit in. They smell incredible, and fill the room like pomelo would in my mother's bathroom. I let them get overly soft, because they smell even stronger. Eventually, they will bruise and harden and wrinkle into what looks more like small chestnuts.

Summer also feels like this to me. It always smells pungent, and each year the air thickens and swells with old memories as the humidity ripens spring into summer. It becomes a cocktail of smells, lives being lived over each other, becoming and unravelling brilliantly into the cold quiet of fall and winter.

## Preparing the pomelo skin

Steps 1 to 3 are to rid the pomelo skin of bitterness.

STEP 1. Take the skin from 1 pomelo and soak it in water for at least 4h (or overnight). Notice how the skin turns translucent after soaking.



My artwork is a symptom of my obsessions, sorrows, longings, resentments. The bitterness, drawn out from its skin, its separation felt. Sometimes the skin is the byproduct on display, other times it is the bitterness. Sometimes it's the ghosts of things that were once there, sometimes it's the misprints of words, or the things that aren't said, or the lingering silence after something loud has been said. I am interested in the things left behind, things wavering between now and next, and things incomplete.

In my personal life, I am always trying to hold on. I have such a hard time letting go of things. If my art practice has taught me anything, it's that no matter how hard you try to register something, it seems to slip away even more.

The longer you look, the more something might disappear.

I wanted to present an intimate collection of half-baked writing, reference photos, and object arrangements as contextual frameworks for the "resolved" pieces that more often represent my visual art practice. Creating is a miracle, an accumulation of chance gestures and small decisions that layer over each other relentlessly, so what you're ever only seeing is just a snapshot moment of them in constant transformation.

- Hope Wang