

# artillery

Vol 4 Issue 1, September/October 2009 FREE

KILLER TEXT ON ART

FALLEN  
FRUIT IN  
PARADISE



KALUP  
LINZY'S  
HOTEL  
CALIFORNIA



DANGER!  
MOUSE  
AND LYNCH



GUEST  
LECTURE:  
KERRY  
JAMES  
MARSHALL

ALL HER  
CHILDREN

SUSAN ANDERSON'S  
HIGH GLITZ PHOTOGRAPHS

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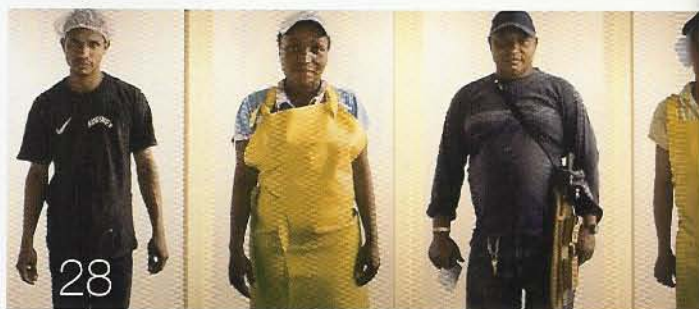
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ON THE COVER: Susan Anderson, *Katy (profile), age 5, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2006* © Susan Anderson Photography / Courtesy of Kopeikin Gallery, ON THIS PAGE, clockwise from upper left: Susan Anderson, *Mary Ashton, age 9, Nashville, Tennessee, 2008*, © Susan Anderson Photography / Courtesy of Kopeikin Gallery; Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (female painter), 2009*, (detail), courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY; Fallen Fruit, *Union Workers Portrait Series, 2009* (detail)



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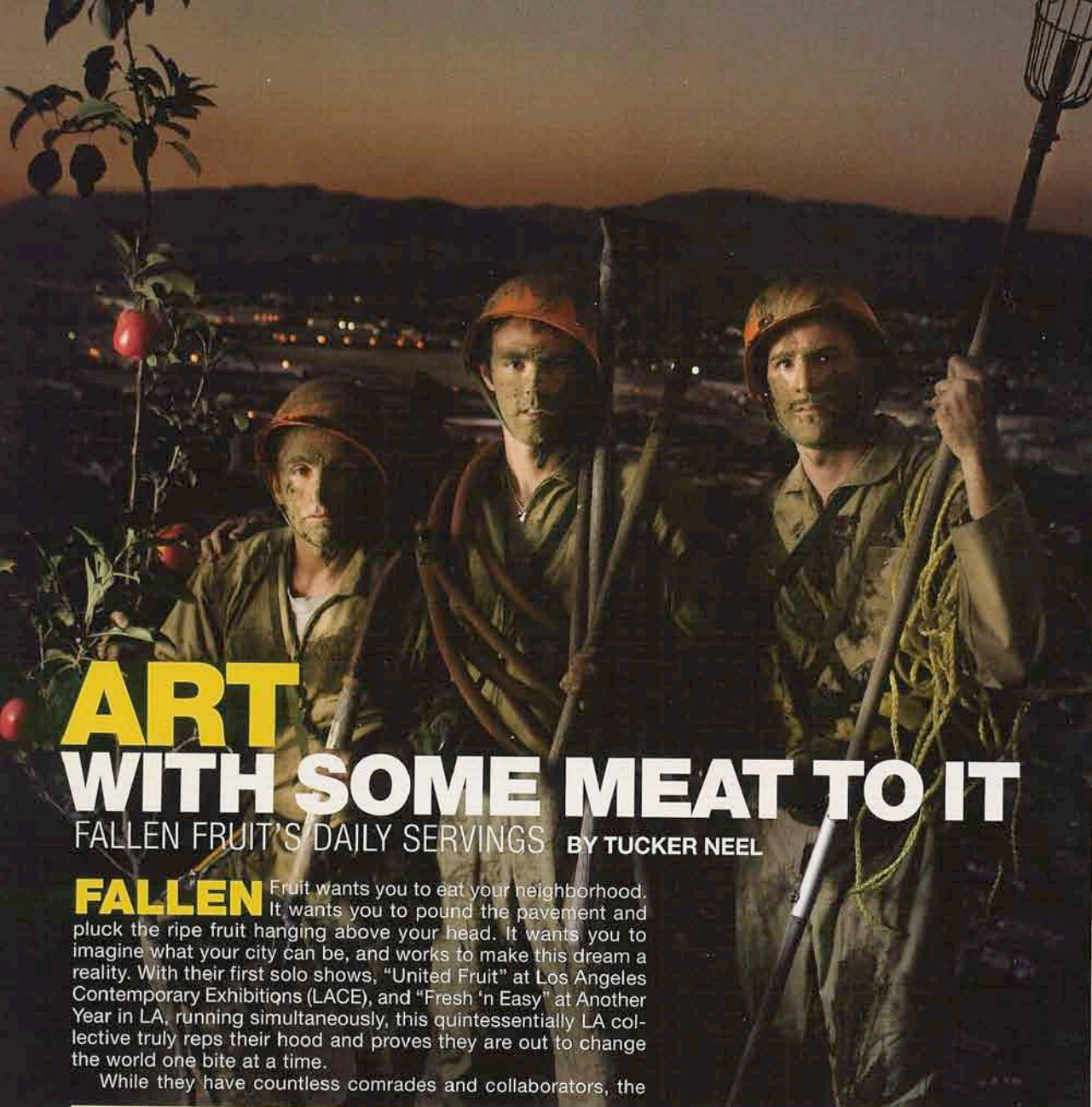
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# ART WITH SOME MEAT TO IT

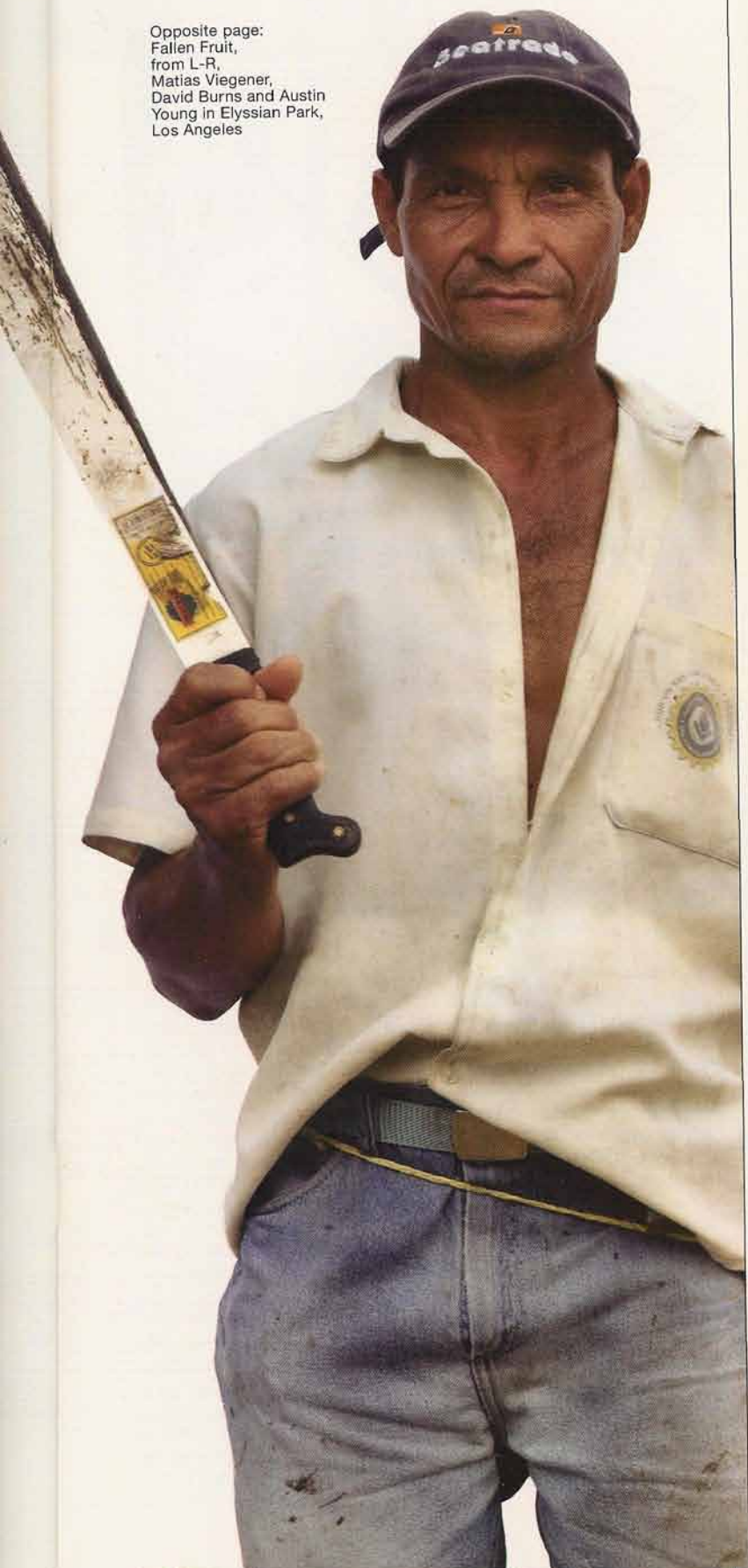
FALLEN FRUIT'S DAILY SERVINGS BY TUCKER NEEL

**FALLEN** Fruit wants you to eat your neighborhood. It wants you to pound the pavement and pluck the ripe fruit hanging above your head. It wants you to imagine what your city can be, and works to make this dream a reality. With their first solo shows, "United Fruit" at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), and "Fresh 'n Easy" at Another Year in LA, running simultaneously, this quintessentially LA collective truly reps their hood and proves they are out to change the world one bite at a time.

While they have countless comrades and collaborators, the



Opposite page:  
Fallen Fruit,  
from L-R,  
Matias Viegner,  
David Burns and Austin  
Young in Elyssian Park,  
Los Angeles





ALL IMAGES BY FALLEN FRUIT: Above, left to right: *Fruit Machine Portrait*, *Blue Banana*, 2009; *Public Fruit Map*, *Silver Lake*, California, 2004; *Everyday Objects*, *Fucking Hippies*, 2009; Previous page: *Union Workers Portrait Series*, 2009, (detail and close-up); images courtesy Fallen Fruit

## FRUIT continued

official Fallen Fruit collective is composed of David Burns, Matias Viegner and Austin Young. The three joined forces in 2004 in response to *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest's* call for work proposing real world solutions to pressing social and political problems. The trio looked at the sprawling LA landscape and stumbled upon an elegant solution to car-cocoon alienation, malnutrition and the wasted fruit littering public land. They decided to map the locations of publicly accessible fruit in their immediate Silver Lake neighborhood because, according to helpful attorneys, collecting fruit on LA public land is technically "not illegal."

As the collective's mission statement points out, this public fruit is "blessed by neglect," pesticide-free, making it organic. Picking it also circumvents the need for petroleum packaging and transportation, and performs a civic duty by preemptively eliminating fruit waste underfoot.

Their maps, now charting areas far beyond Silver Lake and into other states and countries, actively encourage you to get out of your car, explore where you live and talk to strangers.

Inspired to put theory into action, Fallen Fruit got their hands dirty. Decked out in custom-made uniforms, they led groups on "Nocturnal Fruit Forages," picking produce along the way. They teamed up with Islands of LA to plant tomatoes on traffic islands, and held an unforgettable salsa party at the Center for Land Use Interpretation. And they created intoxicating "Neighborhood Infusions," blending local fruit with liquor. To this day they periodically hold "Public Fruit Jams" with Machine Projects, where people bring in found fruit to make delicious preserves.

Earlier this year the collective participated in a residency in Ciénega, Columbia in South America. In 1928, workers at banana plantations all over Columbia owned by United Fruit (now Chiquita Banana) went on strike demanding contracts and better working conditions. Dur-

ing a peaceful gathering in Ciénega, hundreds of men, women and children were massacred by army machine-gun fire as military troops, requested by United Fruit, attempted to violently put down the strike. Against this backdrop, in this site of past massacre, and with bananas on the brain, Fallen Fruit decided to make work for the LACE show, addressing the personal and political history of a fruit too often taken for granted.

In the main gallery at LACE viewers are confronted with a humongous photomural of an iconic peeled banana juxtaposed across from a larger-than-life banana plantation worker brandishing a worn rifle. A suite of nine hefty photo portraits of banana workers contrasts with un-idealized images of banana fields. In the back room video interviews with Columbian locals seek to personalize the individual's connection with the banana as a social and historical phenomena. And in the video projection, *The Banana Machine*, adolescents peel and eat bananas in Warholian screen-test silence. Another

projection across the room, *Los Bananeros*, shows workers processing bananas in a factory. The videos invite viewers to contemplate both their personal relation to the yellow fruit, as well as think about the labor that occurs between when a banana is planted, and when it is consumed.

For *Another Year In LA* gallery, the group carried over the visual feel of *The Banana Machine*, exhibiting a wall of photos depicting adolescent youth bearing a variety of fruit in deadpan Caravaggio-like compositions. Additionally, in the commercial gallery, Fallen Fruit literally opens shop, making customized household objects, all associated with food, available for public consumption at affordable prices. With echoes of Jenny Holzer's early truism paraphernalia, each item is emblazoned with a striking phrase. A cutting board reads, "wut a fag." A spoon states, "these guys are obviously anarchists." A knife is etched with the words "fucking hippies." And in keeping with their old school roots, Fallen Fruit has also provided fruit for visitors to take away in exchange for fruit

cont. on page 37

## FRUIT continued

they bring in themselves.

Over the course of a few e-mail exchanges, I asked Matias Viegner how he sees Fallen Fruit's recent LA shows as venues for building on their work practice:

**TN:** *Your work to date has incorporated a lot of "relational aesthetics," person-to-person exchange and community building. Yet the shows at LACE and Another Year in LA don't necessarily embody this kind of relational art approach. In the gallery no one is really there to interact with viewers. I know you have done shows in gallery spaces before, but how did you approach this new situation?*

**MV:** We try to balance the participatory work with what for now I'll call the more traditional work: images, videos, installations, etc. At first the visual work (which we love doing as well) was primarily to attract and engage participants, to get people to come to the fruit jam, mappings, fruit forages, etc. A bit of it was documentation, but that was secondary until spring 2008. At that point footage of ours got edited by KCET and placed on YouTube, which for one or two days made it their "featured" front page video — where it received some scathing commentary. We felt a little like we had lost control of the work (both its participatory nature and its representation) and we realized that it would "enter representation" whether we wanted it or not.

We ended up loving the nasty commentary and also realized that while we had been working with one definition of public and private space, there was another fascinating one out there (seen in YouTube): the anonymity of the Internet which is public and private at the same time. And even more interesting was that we saw a kind of participatory aspect to what might initially seem like a traditional one-way representation.

**TN:** *Was it a challenge mak-*

*ing saleable objects for Another Year In LA, and stepping outside of your traditional practice?*

**MV:** It felt very natural. We're at a point with the collaboration that it takes more time than anything else any of us do. It's always operated in the red, and we accepted that it now had to bring in money one way or another. The core of the Another Year show were the "everyday objects," which are of course consumer objects (practical ones, unlike luxuries such as art). Pulling the text from the *Double Standard* video felt just right: it's a form of recycling, but also harvesting what we find, which was essential to Fallen Fruit from the start.

Maybe another way to engage your question would be to say that the world demands of artists that we produce primarily two-dimensional portable commodities that hold value. Rather than reject that demand (which plays into the necessity of earning a living), we embraced it. Pricing was a big question for us. Are these just nice domestic objects or limited production art commodities? We chose the former. The prices reflect the cost of materials and production, but the "mark-up" is small — far less than any small-scale economy of production would allow.

**EVEN** with two shows up simultaneously, the collective isn't slowing down, so the need for working funds is understandable. Their ongoing "Colonial History of Fruit" project has Fallen Fruit traveling to New Zealand to wrestle with kiwis, and to Norway to tackle arctic berries. With global ambitions like this, Fallen Fruit seems destined to turn the dream of a sustainable, fruit-conscious world into a delicious reality, ripe for the picking. 🍓

See "United Fruit" at LACE thru Sept. 27. For more info on Fallen Fruit visit [fallenfruit.org](http://fallenfruit.org).