



BRUISED BUNDLE



Fruits, Unite!

Yö Galleria, Lönnrotinkatu 33, Helsinki

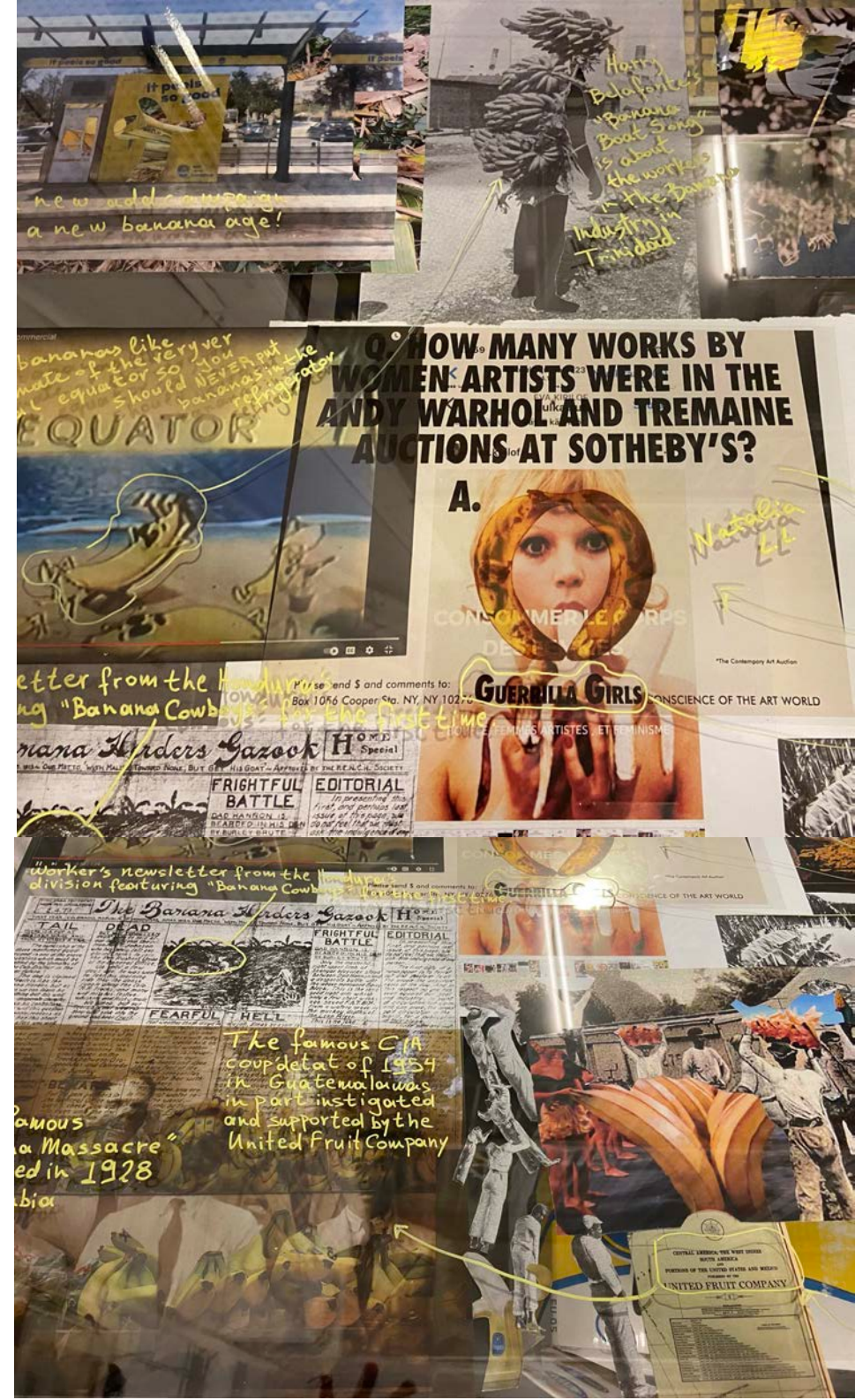
14.-25.2.2024

Alibi Gallery, Sarri 12, Athens 105 53

21.3–30.4.2024

Duo Show with two different iterations in Athens
and Helsinki by Lotta Esko & Naya Magaliou

Fruits, Unite! is a mixed media art exhibition showcasing the work of Helsinki based visual artist Lotta Esko and Athens based visual artist Naya Magaliou. Whilst analyzing the visual symbol of the banana, *Fruits, Unite!* repeats various iterations of the fruit in painting, sculptural, textual and research-based mediums. The artworks are an investigation into colonial history, European food culture and sexual/gender/cultural identities. The banana is used as a pretext to engage with the many ideas relating to the long history of using tropical fruits as symbols in European visual culture. Magaliou, shows large scale acrylic paintings on found materials and Esko shows sculptural pieces again, made with found materials.



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The sculptural objects were produced using my family's discarded mattresses, as well as those of strangers. One of them was discarded by my daughter because she needed a bigger one. Another was my father's; it was left behind after he was moved to a hospice care facility. In the span of its lifetime each mattress has been soiled with bodily fluids and covered in dead skin cells and hair. They are a physical record of the people who have slept on them.

Now, they are human-sized sculptures, broken, turned in and enveloped — a decaying softness wrapped onto itself like tropical fruit cocooned in the bottom of a city backpack. In the process of carving this foam, I myself inhaled the plastic material and the human and pet debris that it contained. My body was intertwined with the sleepers who used these mattresses, whether they are known to me or not.

Various continuums appear.. Food dissolves into the body and the body dissolves into the mattress. People eat and sleep and spend time in their beds and I spent time with their beds. A bed is a symbol of safety and comfort in that —through its use—there is a literal way that safety and comfort are provided to the sleeper.

I foraged these materials from all over Southern Finland, collecting one of people's most intimate possessions. The production-process and the aesthetics of the sculptures oscillate between maintaining the intimacy and safety of the original material and then crudely removing it. For me, these works are about creating tensions and frictions both materially and conceptually.

In my sculptures I use very sharp knives to tame the material, often accidentally cutting myself. I tie them and clip them and hang them. For me, this is an investigation into frictions, a dialogue of uneasy textures and forces.

"As foam breaks down and cuddles, embraces and wears out, its forever-here microplastic existence ironically turns back an image of organic decay, our own decay perhaps, as we ripen, age, and die. The intimacy of mattresses is returned to us in these large bundles, partly as a strange, pungent oversized false fruit, partly as a memory of contention, yet also as a metaphor of our organic, vulnerable bodies. What can possibly hold them together as they break apart?" — says curator Maria Villa Largacha about this work.

