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SHOTGUN REVIEWS

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Fallen Fruit: Fruit Machine at Catharine Clark Gallery

Shotgun Reviews are an open forum where we invite the international art community to contribute timely, short-format responses to an exhibition or event. If you are interested in submitting a Shotgun Review, please [click this link](#) for more information. In this Shotgun Review, Calder Yates reviews Fallen Fruit's video Fruit Machine at Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco.



Fallen Fruit (David Burns, Matias Viegner, Austin Young). Fruit Machine, 2009; Still from video, edition of 3 + 3AP, dimensions variable.

Visual depictions of gustatory sensations are currently on view at [Catharine Clark Gallery](#). Deborah

Oropallo's paintings, which portray digitally altered images of pigs, chickens, and Holstein cows, fill the two

main galleries, while a quirkily risqué video by the decade-old Los Angeles arts collective Fallen Fruit is on view in the media room.

The fourteen-minute video, *Fruit Machine* (2009), consists of brief portraits of individual teenagers eating fruit in front of a bright white background while facing the camera. The 12-to-17-year-olds hold their assigned fruit next to their heads, make eye contact with someone behind the camera, and then proceed to eat. The fruits are pedestrian: apples, bananas, cherries, and grapes (no durians here). After each teenager takes a few bites, the video cuts to a three-second montage of all of the kids eating fruit, and then settles on a new teenager. It's as if the viewer was watching a single reel of a slot machine, but instead of stars or bells, it's the images of kids eating fruit that spin, arbitrarily stop, and then begin spinning again.

The simple, stark depiction of kids' eating habits begins to resemble other videos, especially those of Rineke Dijkstra, who filmed European teenagers dancing individually in front of a white backdrop in *The Krazyhouse* (*Megan, Simon, Nicky, Philip, Dee*), Liverpool, UK (2009). Unlike in Dijkstra's videos, the teenagers in *Fruit Machine* clearly receive direction from someone behind the camera, and then proceed to joke around. Each kid takes a bite and then slowly chews, at times keeping eye contact with the director, and at other times shyly looking away. Some playfully peel a banana; others hold a cherry between their lips for a brief second before chewing and swallowing. Eating is an intimate act, and watching teenagers do it slowly on video while the viewer sits in the dark backroom of a gallery is suggestive. The viewing experience is akin to watching porn.

The girls, some with straightened hair or wearing makeup, take small bites, hold their free hand in front of their mouths while chewing, and laugh and smile for the person behind the camera. The boys never laugh. Some of them, dead-eyed, mindlessly chow down without hesitation. They are unconcerned with how wide they open their mouths or how quickly they work through the fruit. The girls are distinctly aware of being looked at. The boys are oblivious. On the one hand, the video is revealing of the dynamic between the director and the teenagers. On the other hand, it is a disturbing implication of the larger cultural forces that create the dynamic of a masculine gaze, one in which the producers of *Fruit Machine* have unwittingly entangled themselves.

Fallen Fruit's *Fruit Machine* is on view at Catharine Clark Gallery through May 31, 2014.

Calder Yates (b. 1985) is an interdisciplinary artist who lives and works in San Francisco. He received an MFA in studio art and an MA in visual and critical studies from California College of the Arts and has exhibited work at Recology SF, Southern Exposure, and the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts. www.calderyates.com