

ReadyMade

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

STEP 1

MAKERS • MAVERICKS • MATERIAL CULTURE



Agents Orange: Burns and Viegner forage for ripe fruit. In all of the group's press pictures, the pickers are packed in plastic, while the fruit remains in its natural state on the branch.

Sweet and Low

Guerrilla fruit pickers take on Los Angeles.

by Sarah Rich | Photos Austin Young

CalArts professors Dave Burns, Matias Viegner, and Austin Young are accidental farmers. After discovering an arcane Los Angeles city law that makes any fruit overhanging on sidewalks public property, the trio founded Fallen Fruit (www.fallenfruit.org), a mapping project that promotes access to the city's free and forgotten oranges, bananas, and apricots.

"[The project] started with a very small, idealistic local action, and it's moved quickly," Burns says. Upon finding his fruit-for-all calling, Viegner promptly drafted a manifesto, and the group began plotting picking routes and photographing its activities.

After Fallen Fruit got written up in the *Journal of Aesthetics and*

Protest, its maps and photos became part of a nationally touring exhibition. But the group's sweet ambition didn't end there: Its Web site will soon feature an interactive guide for locating sidewalk pickings in cities around the country. Eventually members hope to plant their own trees along the cemented L.A. River and establish a project in Brooklyn to chart various other landfill-bound freebies, like unused restaurant leftovers and day-old bread from bakeries.

"Leave no tree or neighborhood resource untapped," exhorts Burns, who hopes people will use the maps to "pick their fruit and share with their neighbors." And so it seems there's no need to hoard the bounty: With the Fallen Fruit team on the case, the possibilities for free pickings are endless.

