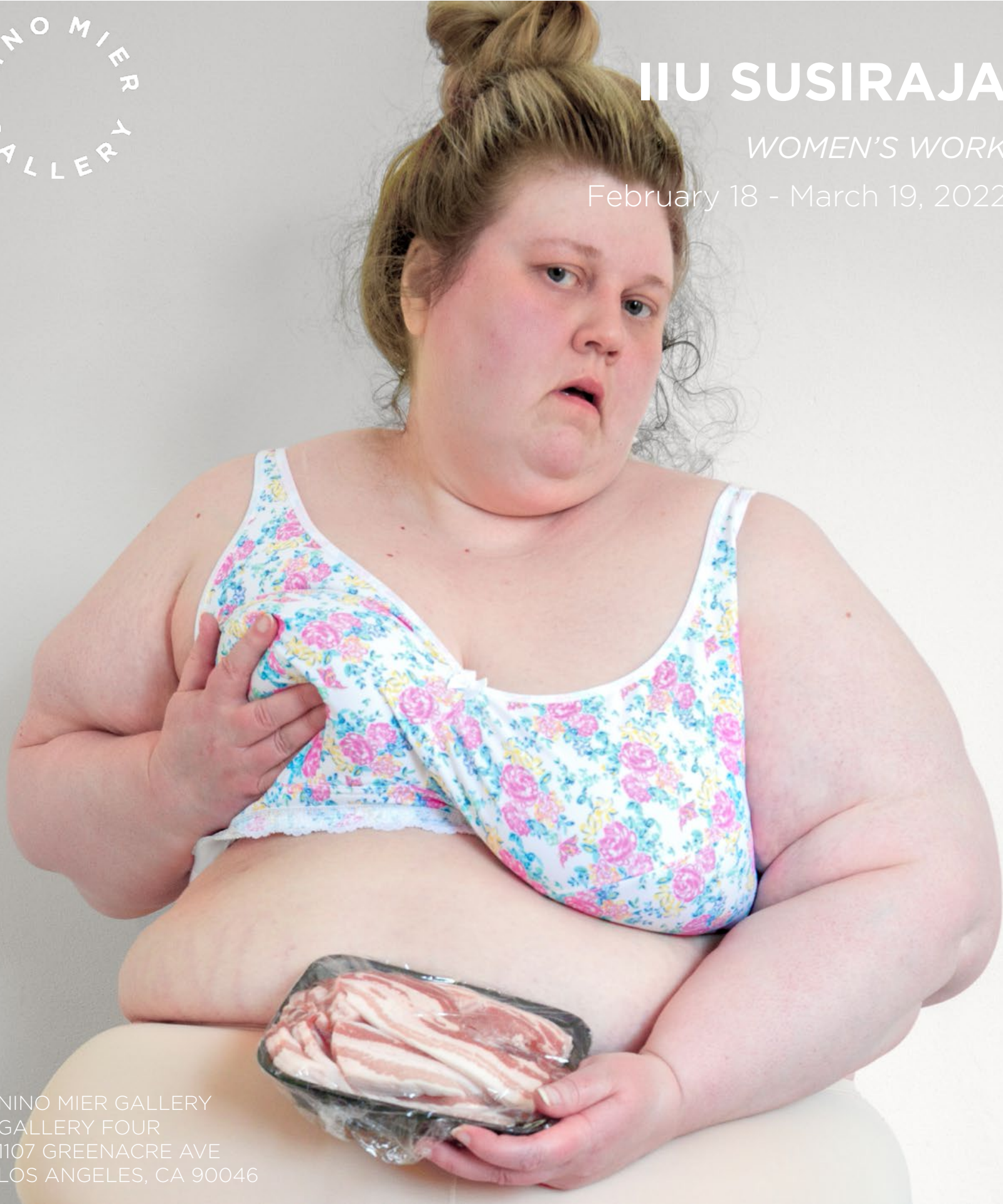


NINO MIER
GALLERY

IIIU SUSIRAJA

WOMEN'S WORK

February 18 - March 19, 2022



NINO MIER GALLERY
GALLERY FOUR
1107 GREENACRE AVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90046



IIU SUSIRAJA

WOMEN'S WORK

February 18 - March 19, 2022

Nino Mier Gallery is pleased to present *Women's Work*, an exhibition of photographs and videos by Finnish artist Iiu Susiraja. Susiraja is known for her still and moving image portraits, which capture the artist in her own home or her parents' home, interacting with items such as housekeeping tools and pantry staples with prurient, deadpan humor. In *Women's Work*, which will be on view from February 18 - March 19, 2022 in Los Angeles, Susiraja brings a sense of irreverent, macabre irony to the type of labor which extracts value from the display of women's bodies.

The photographs and videos in *Women's Work* share what Hal Foster calls an anti-aesthetic, or the denial of an essentialist understanding of classical beauty and its delectation. Composition and light are not so precious to Susiraja, who favors photographs that surprise and disturb, rather than those that placate with their meticulous tableaux. Her work seeks to capture something felt, but is as yet inarticulable, about feminine performance and self-presentation. In an interview with Paula Korte, Susiraja noted "I don't actually do much consciously at all, other than list objects on paper and go and fetch them. The end result is a momentary dash that ends up on the camera screen. I don't deliberately think that I want to achieve a specific mood in any given picture: if the mood doesn't come, then it doesn't. Taking a picture is spontaneous, trusting in the moment." This aesthetic of the haphazard—of the unrehearsed and unrestrained—saturates her images with an energetic impudence, amplified by Susiraja's captured gestures.

Within her works, Susiraja dirties herself with food, lets her bare skin bulge and fold, and leaves her hair unkempt. She places some objects in and around her genitals—a turkey in front of her groin in *Snooker*, a buttered baguette sticking out from between her legs in *Baguette*—and others pressed against her breasts—plungers in *Road Trip*, a lollipop in *Zoo*. By approaching the habits and wears of domestic life so lewdly, she renders the actions and materials that make up daily rituals perverse. Amidst these gestures, Susiraja maintains a flat affect, as though bored by the demands placed upon her body, her habits, and her surroundings by the many cultural forces that push us to self-optimize. "I try to reach as blank a state as possible. I try to not have any facial expression [...] For me, being blank is the same as being real," Susiraja has disclosed. Her claim to the truth-value of her expressionless face, coupled with her typical front-facing composition, recalls the visual mode of 19th and 20th century ethnographic photography, which sought to display the "strange" and "exotic" appearances of colonized peoples to European subjects. Susiraja follows in a long tradition of modern and contemporary art photographers, from Rineke Dijkstra to Diane Arbus, that take on the lexicon of such photography, only to scramble its significance. In Susiraja's self-portraiture, the binary of self and other, beholder and viewed object is troubled. One is either in on Susiraja's joke, or is the butt of it. As critic Alex Jovanavich put it in *Artforum's* February 2022 issue, "by seeming to humiliate herself, she pointedly calls out those who cling to cruel misperceptions about

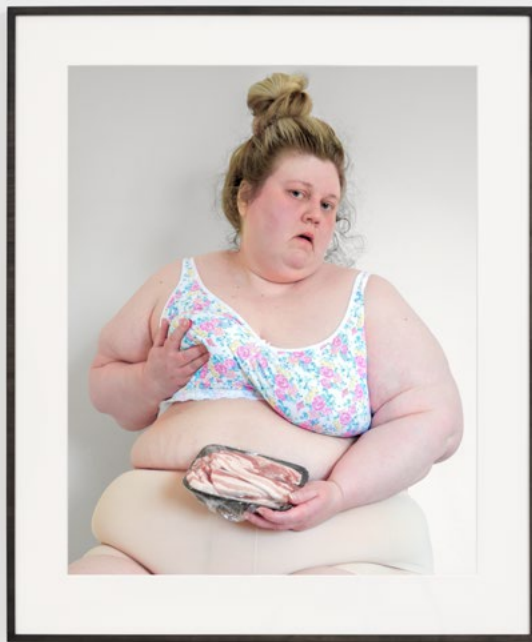
the obese—that they’re stupid, lethargic, gluttonous, etc.—by exaggerating such notions to pre-posterous degrees.”

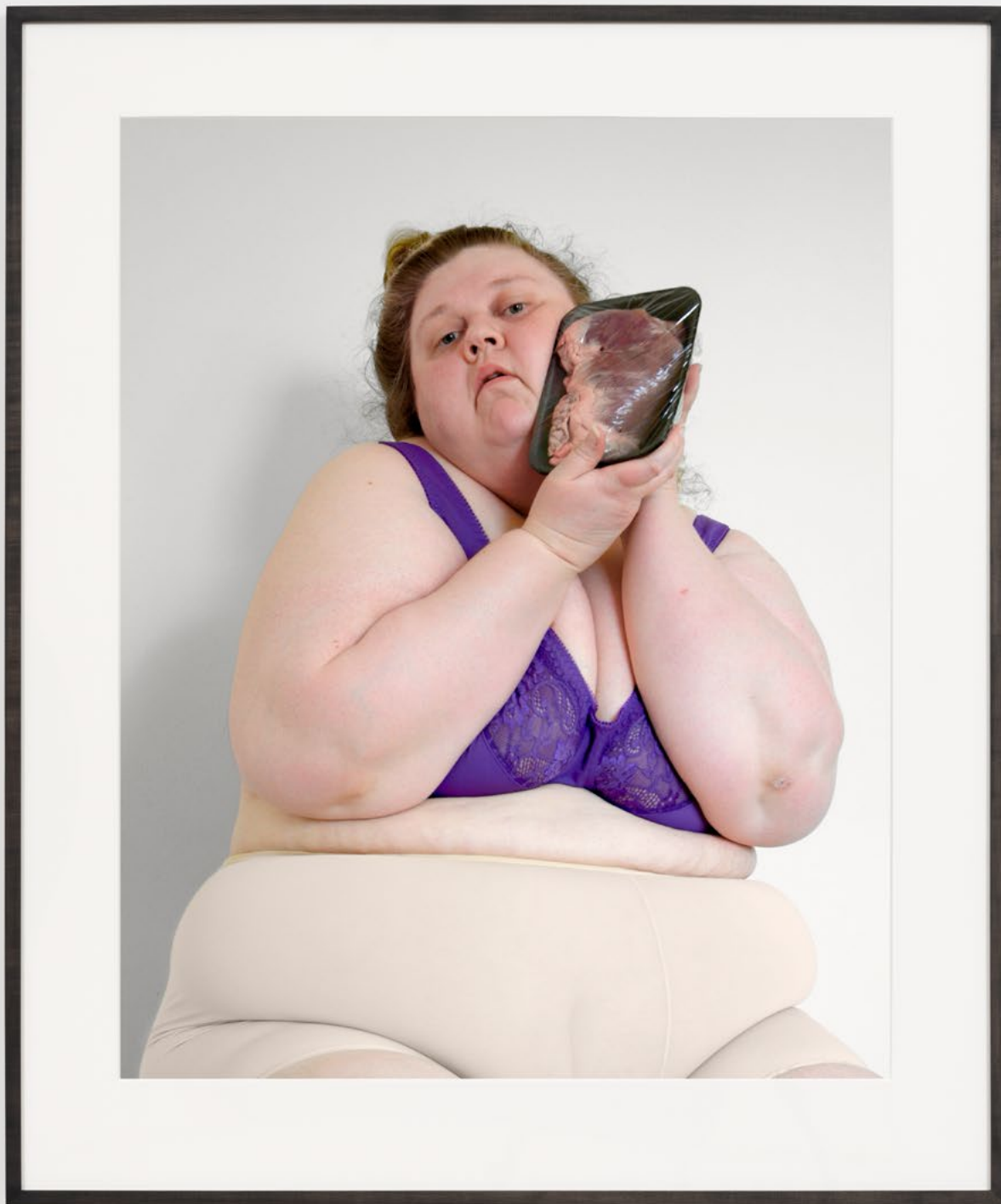
But blankness, propriety, and humor are not the only themes tackled by Susiraja. In *Women’s Work*, Susiraja’s stationary camera captures the artist as she fixates upon objects such as ba-guettes, toy race cars, vases, and hot dogs affixed to drills, deploying the items as props in her tongue-in-cheek charades. In *Play with me 2 (Red Car)*, for instance, she sits on the edge of a bed in a black dress, her legs spread towards the camera to reveal her underwear. Throughout the video, she holds a red toy race car, running its wheels across her body as though it were a prosthetic for an imagined other’s hand, taunting viewers to “play with” her. Perhaps a version of this video, made by another, exists in a dimly lit corner of the internet, meant to se-duce young men into paying money to spend a few minutes with a girl on a livestream. But in Susiraja’s iteration, no such ambience of desire is cultivated. Instead, she looks at the camera with a haggard, alienated expression, and moves mechanically through the motions of a ne-gated seduction.

In photographs such as *Blue lagoon* and *Zoo*, Susiraja splays out, partially naked on a bed, covered by items like a decapitated, oversized teddy bear and Santa masks including beards and hats. These photographs are representative of the artist’s signature double-trick: first, she unlocks the power of lecherous innuendo in these otherwise innocuous objects, and second, she brings the seduction into the realm of ordinary doldrums — that is, of work — as though she were playing a Jeanne Dielman directed by John Waters.

The phrase “women’s work” refers to the pink-collar jobs employing the soft skills of emotion, communication, and care articulated by critic Louise Kappe Howe in the 1970s. Another prod-uct of the ‘70s was Martha Rosler’s video *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, which critiqued the notion that a woman’s role is in the kitchen, and that, moreover, one should find personal fulfillment there. In the video, Rosler maintains a straight face as she assigns a kitchen utensil to each let-ter of the alphabet, growing more violent in her gestures as she makes her way to Z. Susiraja’s videos and photographs update Rosler’s project to incorporate the texture of an era oversatu-rated with bodies on display. Susiraja is dealing not just with the constrictions of housewifery, but with the constrictions of having a body, overdetermined at all times by various cultural forces: how a body should look, and for whom; how a body should behave, and for whom; what—ultimately— a body is for, and for whom.

Iliu Susiraja (b.1975, Turku, Finland) earned an MFA from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts. She was featured as the cover story for ArtForum’s February 2022 issue. Her recent solo exhibitions include Ramiken Gallery, SKMU Museum, KIASMA, Kadel Willborn Gallery, François Ghebaly Gallery, PS2 Gallery, VB Photographic Centre, Ramiken Crucible, and Fo-togalleriet Format, among others. She is in public and private collections worldwide, includ-ing at the Adam Lindenmann Collection, the University of Chicago, the Rubell Family Collec-tion, the Finnish Museum of Photography collection, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, the Finnish National Gallery, among many others.





Meat Model 1, 2020 | 31 1/2 x 24 3/4 in, 80 x 63 cm | Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) | (ISU22.001)



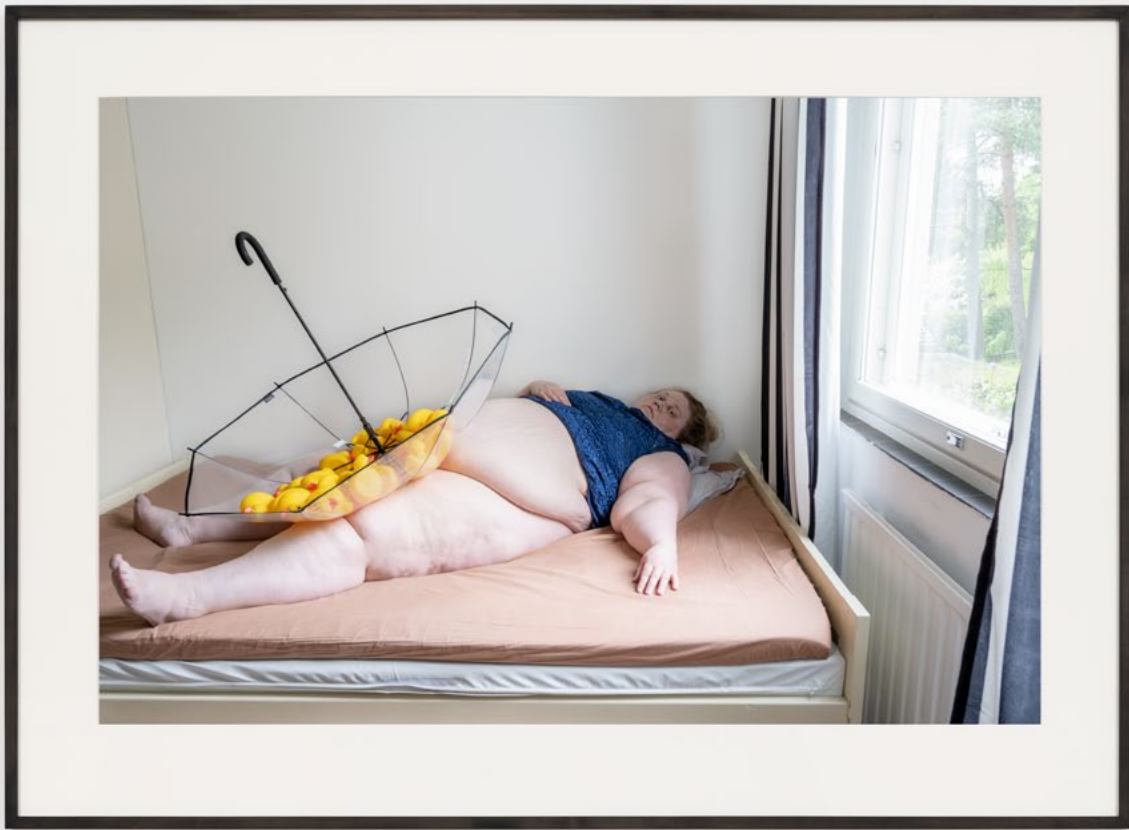
Blue lagoon, 2021 | 26 x 38 in, 66 x 96.5 cm | Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) | (ISU21.088)



Snooker, 2021 | 26 x 38 in, 66 x 96.5 cm | Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) | (ISU21.089)



Good morning, 2021 | 26 x 38 in, 66 x 96.5 cm | Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) | (ISU21.090)



Fountain, 2021 | 26 x 38 in, 66 x 96.5 cm | Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) | (ISU21.091)

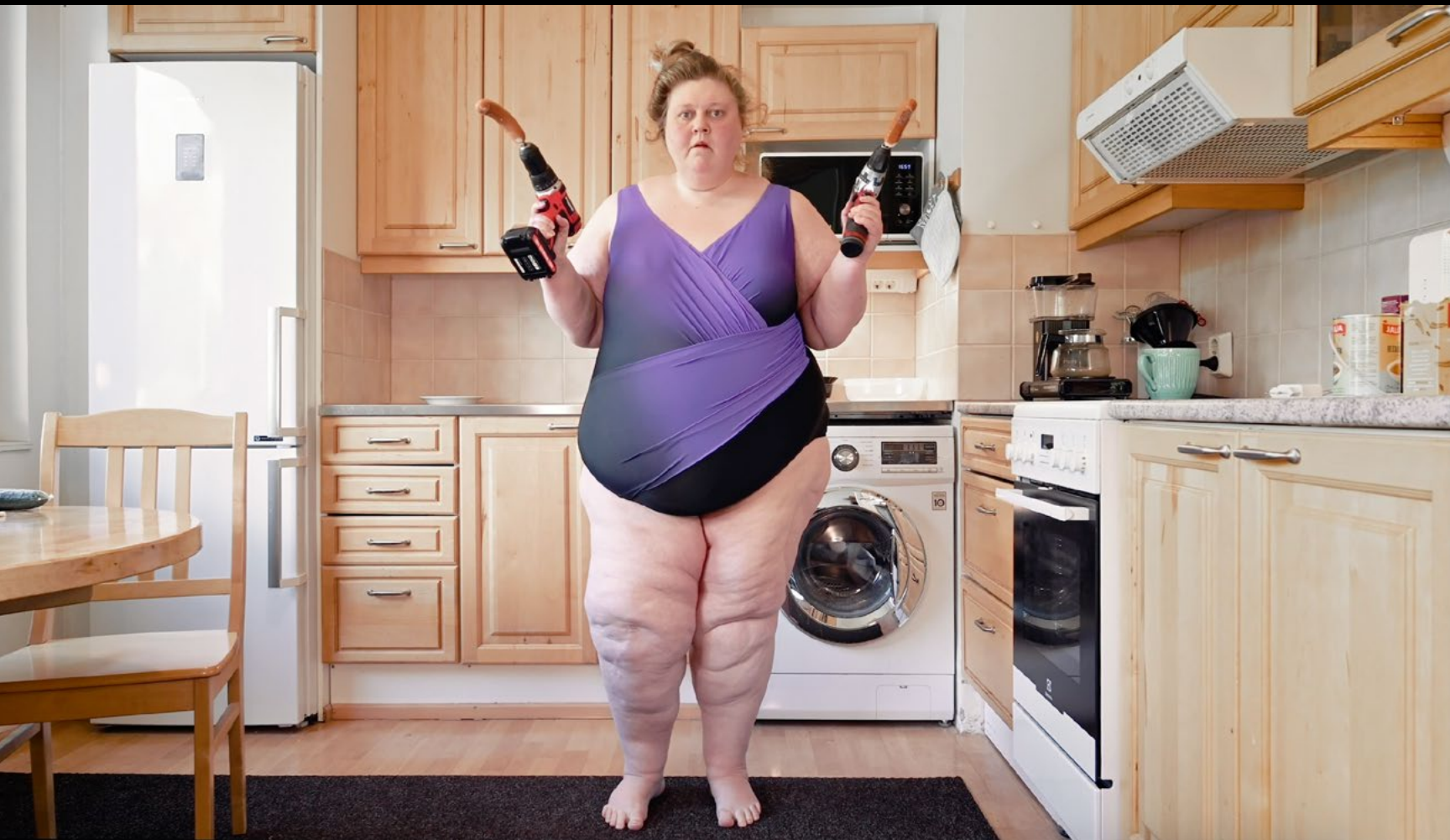


Road trip, 2021 | 26 x 38 in, 66 x 96.5 cm | Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) | (ISU21.092)



Zoo, 2021 | 26 x 38 in, 66 x 96.5 cm | Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) | (ISU21.093)

VIDEO WORKS







Humble Omelette, 2020 Digital color video with sound 39 seconds Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3) (ISU21.016)











IIU SUSIRAJA

Born 1975 in Turku, Finland

Lives and works in Turku, Finland

EDUCATION

2018 MA in Fine Arts, Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, FI

2012 BA, Turku University of Applied Sciences Art Academy, Turku, FI

2005 BA, EVTEK University of Applied Sciences, Espoo, FI

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 Women's Work, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US

2020 Dalmation, Ramiken Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, US
Dry Joy, SKMU Museum, Tallinn, EE

2019 Dry Joy, KIASMA, Helsinki, FI
Iiu Susiraja, Kadel Willborn Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE

2018 What am I?, François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US

2017 of Object and Me, PS2 Gallery, Belfas, IE
Happy hour, VB Photographic Centre, Kuppio, FI

2016 What am I? Ramiken Crucible, New York, NY, US
Be Boring Be Happy, Fotogalleriet Format, Malmö, SE
Voin Hyvin, kiitos, Photographic Centre Peri, Turku, FI
Tunteiden niksi-pirkka, Hå Gamle Prestegard, Nærbø, NO

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021 On The Level Or The Man Who Fell Out Of Bed, Krinzinger Schottenfeld,
Vienna, AT

2020 Paranoid Crucible, Ramiken Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, US
Touch, EMMA Museum, Espoo, FI

2019 From the shadows of night to the brightness of day, Makasiini Gallery, Turku, FI
She stares back, Kendall College of Arts and Design, Grand Rapids, MI, US
Considering Finland, Port25 Mannheim, Mannheim, DE

2018 Portraits at Home, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON, CA
Hardcore Erotic Art, Ramiken Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, US
STILL HUMAN, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL, US
10 From the north, Flow Festival of Photography, Helsinki, FI
Circulation(s), Centquatre-paris, Paris, FR
Martin Kippenberger and Iru Susiraja, Ramiken Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, US
EAT ME, Trapholt Museum, Kolding, DK
Bodybuilding, Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku, FI

GRANTS

National Council for the Visual Arts, Artist Working Grant
Alfred Kordelin Foundation, Residence Grant
National Council for the Audiovisual Arts, Artist Grant

SELECTED PUBLIC & PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Adam Lindemann Collection
University of Chicago
The Finnish Museum of Photography
Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art
Wäinö Aaltonen Museum
Finnish National Gallery
Helsinki City Art Museum
Stavanger Museum
Gothenburgh Museum of Art
Päivi and Paavo Lipponen Collection
Heino Art Foundation
Saastamoinen Foundation
Timo Miettinen Collection

