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## UH-OH: FRANCES STARK 1991-2015

### Wall Labels

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Frances Stark (born in 1967) has been hailed as the “poet laureate of the Internet age.” Words and images lie at the heart of her practice in works that move between analog and digital modes of assemblage. Autobiography is her primary mode of expression. From self-examination—sustained meditation on what she’s reading, making, consuming, doing—comes reflection: on literature, music, architecture, art, sex, domesticity, labor, pleasure, and pedagogy.

*UH-OH* is the most comprehensive survey to date of Stark’s work—tracking the Los Angeles-based artist’s 25-year career from early carbon-copied text-based works to more recent video installations, digital slide shows, and projects that transform private Internet correspondences into compelling art and poetry. Featuring more than 100 works, the exhibition provides an in-depth exploration of Stark’s singular artistic voice, as she shares her knowledge of cultural topics high and low, including dissections of art history, modes of communication, and her creative contemporaries.

In a world of animated GIFs and statements of just 140 characters, Stark’s work rewards deep looking. While often immediately catchy, her meanings and references can be appreciated on many levels: from persistent visual motifs, to repetitive phrases and titles, to obscure citations, allusions, and puns. Unlike a traditional chronological survey, this exhibition is designed to aid us in our own close reading of Stark’s work by highlighting recurrent jokes, rhymes, metaphors, and cultural references. The title *UH-OH*—a simple response to a complicated problem—contrasts the usually lengthy or pithy titles Stark gives her works. Familiar and percussive, the utterance demonstrates our instinctive awareness of a difficulty, and here encourages us to look deeper, think harder, and listen more carefully.

*UH-OH: Frances Stark 1991–2015* was organized by the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

The exhibition is curated by Ali Subotnick, curator, with Emily Gonzalez-Jarrett, curatorial associate. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's presentation is organized by Liz Munsell, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art & Special Initiatives, a position supported by Lorraine Bressler

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The exhibition was originated with support from Brenda Potter, along with generous support from Karyn Kohl and Maurice Marciano.

***Chorus Girl (a part)*, 2008**

Paper collage, graphite on paper

A dizzying spiral pattern vividly activates Stark's *Chorus Girl* works, generating the illusion of mobility. Spread throughout the exhibition, they seem to prance across the gallery. The girls grasp pages displaying text fragments from Witold Gombrowicz's satirical novel *Ferdydurke*—about a writer turned into a teenage boy by an evil professor and his fight to regain his adulthood. Stark's girls only appear to move, embodying what Gombrowicz described as “the torment of aspiration, of interminable apprenticeship... the dull torture of a psychological cul-de-sac.” The work serves as a metaphor for an artist's struggle to make sense and meaning for a viewer—the continual effort to shape many parts into a coherent whole.

Private collection—Turin, Italy

***Nothing is Enough*, 2012**

Single-channel digital video (black-and-white, sound); 14 minutes

Although Stark's online encounters may start out as flirtations with strangers, they often result in deeper connections. This video developed from the artist's online sex chats. Rather than animate the characters, as she did for *My Best Thing* (also on view in this exhibition), Stark adopted the format of a silent film. Complex, layered, and unconventional, the production was a four-way collaboration between Stark and men she met online: the architect featured in the work; the editor of the film (also a character in *Osservate, leggete, con me*); and the pianist (also a character in *My Best Thing*), who provided the improvisational music.

Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York

**Push**, 2006

Collage, latex paint, tape, and graphite pencil on panel

The impetus for *Push* came from two sources: a lyric from the song “Dice Man” by the post-punk band The Fall (“They stay with the masses, don’t take any chances...but I push, push, push, push...”); and painter Hans Hofmann’s “push-pull” theory, which advocates creating the illusion of depth through use of color and shape rather than through traditional means, like Renaissance perspective. Here Stark employs promotional material—exhibition announcements, invitations, and the other mail that constantly flows through the slot in her door—to speak to the struggle to command attention in an age of visual and informational over-saturation.

The nearby painting, *Pull After “Push,”* takes us into the studio, using the door and glass windows, covered with Mylar, to frame the space and create an illusion of depth. The third painting in the series, *Push After “Pull After Push,”* also inside the studio, situates us behind the open door, generating the sense of three dimensions. In addition, the words “push” and “pull” conjure alternate meanings related to sexual innuendo and the crossing of boundaries between personal life and work.

Whitney Museum of American Art. Purchase, with funds from the Drawing Committee and partial gift of Tina Petra

*How does one sustain the **belief in total babes** (power/recognition) which has been recognized for its debilitating effects on that person who lacks the **total babe** (embodiment of power/recognition) and access to the **total babe** by means of one’s own **total foxiness/power?**, 1991/2014*

Hooked rug

When she was first learning photography, Stark used a copy stand to photograph a page from her junior high school yearbook on which she had written “Total Babe (bad picture)” next to a classmate’s photo. That comment inspired the densely layered rhetorical question embodied in this work. “The phrase speaks to a very basic problem,” Stark reflected. “When I first learned about postmodern art, the photograph turned into a question . . . at that point, my experience of being female outweighed my experience of visual art by far.” She further remarked, “It’s about lack and fulfillment in a mash-up of my lifelong boy-craziness with some of my earliest contemporary art influences: the class-oriented politics of Mike Kelley, the dictionary definitions of Joseph Kosuth, and Michel Foucault’s interrogation of power.” This probing question was featured on the announcement card for her first solo exhibition, and its characteristically bold form of address demonstrates a precocious start to her career.

Collection of Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip Aarons

***The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, 1993**

Carbon transfer on paper

For this work, which was exhibited in her MFA show, Stark traced T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" exactly as it appeared in a used book. Stark explains:

*Here, one past reader's handwritten annotations in the margins of T. S. Eliot's poem . . . appear to be hastily transcribed bits of a pedagogue's voice, useful tools for opening up an otherwise difficult and carefully wrapped package. Annotations are like arrows pointing where and how to look at what may otherwise go unnoticed. . . . Whether spontaneous thoughts or ready-made insights delivered from a teacher, marginalia show a reader perching intermittently on the body of a text, leaving reminders to "reenter here!" or summaries to say "no need to cover this ground again."*

The Museum of Modern Art, New York Purchased with funds provided by The Judith Rothschild Foundation

***Why should you not be able to assemble yourself and write?*, 2008**

Asian or mulberry paper, paper, and ink on gessoed canvas panel

Around 2006, Stark decided to take a break from writing professionally. Since she was a respected writer and a profoundly engaged critic of artists and other writers, the absence of her voice was deeply felt by many of her readers. One reader (and friend) sent Stark the email (featured in the piece *Music Stand*) that inspired this self-portrait, imploring her to write for his publication: "I have watched and heard reports of your strategic maneuvers on slowly withdrawing from writing and focusing on making 'work.' After seeing your show, where you tend to excuse (to me) by means of Gombrowicz: 'If only I could write words like that,' I can only think, my God woman, why don't you? you know you can, just because you are a (Koonsian) victim, with a different construct than Witold Gombrowicz, why should you not be able to assemble yourself and write?"

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Purchase

***Oh god, I'm so embarrassed*, 2007**

Poster (Sean Landers, 1994) and collage on paper

Frances Stark has consistently followed and admired artist Sean Landers, who, like Stark, frequently incorporates his own writing into his paintings. The two share a tendency toward candid self-reflection, self-deprecating humor, and endearing oversharing. The poster for Landers's 1994 exhibition at Regen Projects gallery in L.A. features an anxious fax that Landers sent to his gallerists expressing his shame and embarrassment for his creative block. Stark anthropomorphized the poster years later with the simple gesture of adding a hat and moustache, evoking a character out of a film by Charlie Chaplin or Jacques Tati. The collage alludes to Magritte as well as to Landers himself, who was later panned by critics for making figurative paintings during a period when painting (especially figurative) had been declared dead.

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***Werther's Letters*, 1996**

Carbon drawing on possibly Wezhou paper

Writing about this and a related drawing, *W is for Werther*, based on Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Stark noted that that work was "constructed apparently without the labor or omniscience of its author...but through the character himself by means of his private letters, which the author presents as found." Stark was interested in the format of the epistolary novel and what was considered at the time a radical gesture: presenting the correspondence as if it were written by a real person. The letters that Werther ostensibly wrote to his friend Wilhelm detail his unrequited love for an engaged woman named Charlotte and conclude with Werther's suicide. When the novel was originally published in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Goethe was criticized for romanticizing suicide, since it instigated a rash of copycat suicides.

Collection Dean Valentine and Amy Adelson, Los Angeles

***Erosion's Fertile Debris*, 1999**

Carbon on paper

Stark is an artist-writer in a tradition that includes Donald Judd, Robert Smithson, Mike Kelley, and Barbara Kruger, among others. She cites Smithson's artwork/essay, *Heap of Language* (1966)—which converts words into imagery, creating a landscape of letters—as the inspiration for *Erosion's Fertile Debris*. Like Smithson, Stark draws with words, and in this early drawing series she developed the technique of using letters, repeated horizontally, to vertically spell out phrases borrowed from her favorite writers. Here, like sand deposited at the sea floor, the evocative phrase is repeated over and over, settling at the bottom of the page.

La Colección Jumex, Mexico

***If conceited girls want to show they already have a seat (after Goya)*, 2008**

Mixed media on paper

Stark's 2008 series *If conceited girls want to show they have a seat* was inspired by Francisco Goya's *Capricho 26, Ya tienen asiento* ("Now they're sitting pretty"), which depicts two girls with chairs on their heads wearing the latest fashion, bell-shaped dresses, while men point and sneer behind their backs. A play on words—*asiento* can be read as "sense," as well as seat or chair—the etching's title could also be sarcastically read as "Now they have good judgment," Stark pushes Goya's pun even further with her three paintings, each depicting a single shrouded female figure balancing a chair on her head. Their dresses, made from actual cloth, expose their figures to varying degrees. In this instance, the figure's black eyes, pink nipple, and prominent pubic hair barely hide behind the semitransparent sheet.

The series demonstrates the tension between concealing and revealing, a signature Stark theme. These works also illustrate the carnivalesque impulse to upend societal norms by putting the head at the level of the rear end, placing one's intellect in the zone of base humor, needs, and desires. Humor and pathos always hover close to the surface in Stark's work.

Collection of Jacques and Christiane Berghmans

***The Inchoate Incarnate: Bespoke Costume for the Artist*, 2009**

Wearable fabric costume (silk organza), dress form (resin, expandable foam)

Stark's corporeal presence is implied in the form of this telephone dress, which appears to be standing upright, arms outstretched as if getting alterations from a tailor (or being crucified). The work's title, means "the unformed in the flesh." Stark wore the dress in her 2010 performance *I've Had It! And I've Also Had It!*, which was accompanied by two string trios, one playing Haydn's divertimento "Das Echo," and the other performing Lady Gaga's hit song "Telephone" backward. The resulting sculpture is a direct nod to the artist's mother, who worked for Bell Telephone Company from age sixteen until she retired. Stark's career has continued this engagement with communications media, from her early use of carbon and the Ditto machine, to computer applications such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, to social media including Chatroulette, Instagram, and Skype. Both the performance and sculpture reference Stark's insatiable urge to communicate.

Valeria and Gregorio Napoleone Collection, London

***Another Chorus Individual (in the cul-de-sac)*, 2007**

Poster, graphite, and paper collage on paper

A dizzying spiral pattern vividly activates Stark's *Chorus Girl* works, generating the illusion of mobility. Spread throughout the exhibition, they seem to prance across the gallery. The girls grasp pages displaying text fragments from Witold Gombrowicz's satirical novel *Ferdydurke*—about a writer turned into a teenage boy by an evil professor and his fight to regain his adulthood. Stark's girls only appear to move, embodying what Gombrowicz described as "the torment of aspiration, of interminable apprenticeship... the dull torture of a psychological cul-de-sac." The works serves as a metaphor for an artist's struggle to make sense and meaning for a viewer—the continual effort to shape many parts into a coherent whole.

Adam and Mariana Clayton Collection



**Structures that fit my opening (and other parts considered in relation to their whole), 2006**

PowerPoint on laptop; 25 minutes

Work and life, and the gaps between the two, figure prominently in this unconventional slide show, which began a new mode of communication for Stark, combining words and images in a visual essay. Prompted by an invitation to participate in an exhibition (and its accompanying symposium) called, “If I Can’t Dance, I Don’t Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution,” *Structures* begins with parts of a letter she sent to the curators. This is followed by images from a Paulina Olowaska performance, *Alphabet* (2005), which features women forming letters with their bodies (and acting out a poem by Stark). Stark’s domestic life is illustrated with pictures of things amassed on her dresser, including lotion, a class schedule, and Avital Ronell’s book *Crack Wars*, followed by an open spread from Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, which illustrates Stark’s habit of close reading. Images of Stark’s art, with brief descriptions of the pieces, bring us back to her work. *Structures* marked a significant transition for Stark, as she explored new media technologies and sought new ways to continue writing her life. It’s also her first piece to engage timing and rhythm—in effect her first music score.

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

**Untitled (Sexus), 1992**

Paperback books, paper (newsprint), and carbon on newsprint

**Untitled (Tropic of Cancer), 1993**

Paperback books with drawing paper and carbon between each page

*Here a novel and its carbon copy show a piece of literature condensed to “a piece”—namely a piece of post-studio visual art. “The best thing about writing,” writes Miller early on in Sexus, “is not the actual labor of putting word against word, brick upon brick, but the preliminaries, the spade work . . . in short, the period of gestation. No man ever puts down what he intended to say. . . . Words, sentences, ideas, no matter how subtle or ingenious . . . are but crude hieroglyphs chiseled in pain and sorrow to commemorate an event which is transmissible.” Stuffed between each page of two editions of a later Miller book (Tropic of Cancer) are enough pages of carbon and drawing paper for a unique third copy to be made by some future reader.*

—Frances Stark

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

**Promotional Material for “I’ve Had It! And I’ve Also Had It!” (Spoiler Alert!), 2010**

Paint, paillettes, and paper on paper

In 2010 Stark presented a live performance at Aspen’s Wheeler Opera House—*I’ve Had It! And I’ve Also Had It!*—inspired by an Aspen-based musical comedy (*I’ve Had It!*), originally performed at the Wheeler in 1952. As the synopsis here details, the romantic comedy pokes fun at high culture and exposes the disparity between people who work in the service industry and those they serve. The main character, a bellhop, discovers that his girlfriend has become infatuated with her boss, an uptight composer. The bellhop exposes the composer as a fraud for playing a popular hit-parade song backward and presenting it as an original composition.

In Stark’s performance, she appeared on stage in a black rotary telephone costume (also on view) and presented a slide show accompanied by simultaneous string trios, one playing Haydn’s divertimento *Das Echo* and the other performing Lady Gaga’s song “Telephone” backward. The telephone dress, Gaga song, and hunched-over telephone girl depicted in the collage display Stark’s interest in varied modes of communication while also referring to her mother, who worked for the Bell Telephone Company.

Beth Rudin DeWoody

**Details, Details or This is the gnat that mangles men, 2002**

Graphite and collage on paper, two removable handmade books in vitrine

This work incorporates a men’s magazine (*Details*) that Stark copied for a 1994 exhibition, *Spring for Fall*. Here Stark describes the original piece:

*[Details, Details] utilizes the fugitive material of the Ditto master, an outmoded technology associated with elementary schools, churches, fringe poets and political radicals. A step up from carbon paper, the Ditto machine offered a way to reproduce hand-traced text on a small scale, leaving vivid cast-offs [Purple and I Hate Language] that sometimes asked to be considered as drawings or even paintings themselves. I bought a Ditto machine with the print budget my school allotted for final exhibition cards. . . . Details, a popular men’s culture and style magazine in the early nineties, used a lot of distressed lettering. It was said to have originated as a fanzine. I produced out-of-date highly abridged issues using my Ditto machine, thus copies of a Spring fashion issue were belatedly on offer in the Fall.*

Stark later recycled the copies into this work, displaying them on hand-drawn pedestals inscribed with a phrase lifted from an Emily Dickinson poem.

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

**General and Particular Impotence, 2003**

Carbon transfer and collage on paper

*...the suffering of the parts of the body, and dismay about the hierarchy of its various parts. The torment of aspiration of interminable apprenticeship or, perhaps, the torment of trying to suppress oneself, exceeding one's own strength and the resulting torment of general and particular impotence.*

—Witold Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*

di Rosa Collection, Napa

**What Goes on @therealstarkiller, 2014**

Digital slide show (color, sound); 4 minutes 56 seconds

A little over two years ago Stark joined Instagram with the username **@therealstarkiller**. She has posted more than 2,800 images of anything and everything: flowers, her son, herself, her artwork, what she's reading, what she sees when she's driving, and more. This slide show animates a selection of her Instagram posts.

The impetus to make work out of her own life was prompted by Stark's grandmother, who documented the mundane and the personal in Polaroid photos that she gave to the artist. Andy Warhol was another significant influence, and this work (set to the Velvet Underground's "What Goes On") has a rawness similar to Warhol's Polaroids, screen tests, and films, which captured friends and family, everything and nothing. Warhol was interested in reaching a public beyond the confines of the art world, and Instagram similarly provides Stark with opportunities to break through the class and racial boundaries that typically accompany university and museum venues.

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

**A Bomb, 2002**

Gouache, carbon transfer, collage, and casein on Masonite

*And a poet can squeeze just about anything at all into a ball. Is it the lightness of Emily's 'upon,' the heaviness of her 'bomb,' or just the gravity-defying location of her ceiling?*

—Frances Stark, *Collected Writing: 1993–2003*

The Rachofsky Collection

***Bobby Jesus's Alma Mater b/w Reading the Book of David and/or Paying Attention Is Free*, 2013**

Multichannel projection with sound, inkjet mural, and takeaway offset posters; 7 minutes 20 seconds

Artist and writer Frances Stark taught the next generation of artists at the University of South California for nearly 10 years. Upon leaving her position there, she began to pursue alternative forms of art education. One of Stark's most ambitious and provocative works to date, this video installation features projected text, a printed wall mural, music, and takeaway posters that contain a key to the video's images, which range from Stark's muse/protégé Bobby Jesus to Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, Stark herself, George H. W. Bush, Ice Cube, and Tupac Shakur, artworks including Courbet's *The Origin of the World* (1866), and a still from Ingmar Bergman's film adaptation of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Such a cross section of imagery recalls Google image search, which serves as a form of self-directed education. The scrolling and flashing text is based on Stark's mentorship of Bobby Jesus, a self-described resident of "planet hood" who has become her studio apprentice and friend. In Stark's words, "I offered Bobby Jesus something akin to free school and he offered me free schooling in return."

Purchased jointly by Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago with funds provided by Marshall Field's by exchange and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

***Behold Man!*, 2013**

Inkjet prints and paint on panel

In this work, commissioned for the Sylvia Sleigh retrospective at Tate Liverpool in 2013, Stark reflects on Sleigh's realist paintings of contemporary men and women—often nudes with body hair, tan lines, and other "imperfections"—in counterpoint to the idealized female nudes painted, predominantly by men, throughout art history. Above a line drawing of Stark reclining on her studio couch, a mirror reflects the scene before her: Stark's frequent model, Bobby Jesus, handling a Sleigh nude of Paul Rosano, Sleigh's longtime model and muse. Directly to the left of the mirror is a pencil drawing from one of Stark's life-drawing classes at USC, in which she, Bobby, and a third man, Mr. Martin, themselves become the models. Various other images that reflect on the theme of artist and model, and on the role of the studio, are scattered around the floor and taped to the walls, including Sleigh's *The Turkish Bath* (inspired by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's painting of the same title; it also makes an appearance in an earlier Stark painting, *Pull After "Push After Pull"*). Also visible are works by Paulina Olowka, Silke Otto-Knapp, and Laura Owens, three accomplished women painters of Stark's own generation. *Behold Man!* anticipates Stark's multimedia installation from the same year, *Bobby Jesus's Alma Mater b/w Reading the Book of David and/or Paying Attention Is Free*, on view in Riley Seminar Room.

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***My Best Thing*, 2011**

Digital video (color, sound); 100 minutes

In this video, derived from online chats with random men, Stark found a new outlet for her voice and a new medium for writing. In each of the 10½ episodes, intimate and often titillating moments accompany exchanges about art, literature, history, music, and politics. The first half of the video features animated selections from conversations and virtual sex between a woman and an Italian filmmaker, who shows her his “best thing.” They talk about dance-hall music, Fellini’s *8½*, politics, making art, and potentially collaborating on this film (which debuted at the 54th Venice Biennale). In the second half, the woman converses with a self-described “lazy son of artists” on topics ranging from film and art to paying attention, the writer David Foster Wallace, and suicide. Connecting cyber sex and/or masturbation and art making, Stark turned leisure into work. *My Best Thing* followed the artist’s self-enforced pause from writing, at a time when she began to feel the metaphorical promiscuity and exhibitionism of her teaching practice. Ironically, by exploring literal promiscuity she found a new approach to writing.

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Purchase

***Music Stand*, 2008**

Vinyl paint and paper on gessoed canvas

Stark’s love of music was an important path leading her to art—from punk rock to the Velvet Underground to Andy Warhol. The music stand, a frequent motif in her work, symbolizes something that visual art lacks: drawings and paintings don’t function in time like music. Here Stark uses a music stand to display two letters, which she has referred to as “a very significant and curious juxtaposition.” One is an email from a graphic designer and publisher friend urging her to return to writing. (A poignant plea in the text is also featured in Stark’s nearby painting, *Why should you not be able to assemble yourself and write?*) The other letter, from artist Mark Leckey, recounts how a recent Stark exhibition reminded him of a dream and made him think of “notes to a pedagogical opera.”

Ioannis Christoforakos Collection

***“The Unspeakable Compromise of the Portable Work of Art”*: Number 15 in a series of 16, double residence, 2002**

Carbon and graphite on paper

This work comes from a series inspired by artist Daniel Buren’s 1971 essay “The Function of the Studio,” which considers how artworks lose their context, history, and specificity when they leave the place where they were made. In the detailed documentation for the piece (also included in the show) Stark comments:

*Recently there was a big Schindler exhibition at MOCA . . . and when the show was over they had tons of these grey frames left. . . . They were screaming out to be incorporated into this series because Schindler has played a critical role in my thinking about this “function of the studio” business. . . . A poignant anecdote about the Schindlers’ personal living situation in their Hollywood home on Kings Rd. epitomized the issues I want to cover. The gist is his wife and he began living in two different sections of the house (originally built for 2 couples) and she put in pink carpet or wallpaper or something very much at odds with the soul of the design and he drafted a letter to her that was ultra business-like, cold, curt, asking that she play by the “rules” & signed it, “R M Schindler, architect” and even if I were to agree with him in principle, I could not deny that utter asshole-ness of that COMMA ARCHITECT. In that lies the unfathomable struggle of human being vs. artist/author. I mean a struggle inside oneself.*

—Frances Stark

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Gift of Shaun Caley Regen

***Osservate, leggete con me*, 2012**

Three-channel digital video for projection (black-and-white, sound); 29 minutes 34 seconds

As with *My Best Thing* and *Nothing is Enough*, Stark’s online sex chats provided the raw material for this video. Its title (“Observe, read along with me”) quotes a line from the so-called “Catalogue Aria” in Mozart’s opera *Don Giovanni*, in which the title character’s servant sings an extensive list of his master’s romantic conquests. An instrumental track of that aria with the vocal melodies incorporated provides the soundtrack for this work. As in the opera, the video’s recounting of Stark’s seductions ranges from humorous to flirtatious to serious. Topics of the nine conversations (each accompanied by the aria) move from a comedic Italian lesson (“You are a beautiful pussy”) to serious discussions of the economic crisis.

Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown’s enterprise, New York

**Cat Videos**, 1999–2002

Video (color, sound); 47 minutes 33 seconds

Stark's *Cat Videos*, produced long before the genre became a staple of YouTube, marked a significant transition in her work. Rather than relying on literary references or her own poetic language, she turned to something more abstract—the moving image. Thinking about structuralist filmmakers (Chantal Akerman's *News from Home*, 1976, was a significant influence), Stark turned her video camera on her cats, the soundtrack being whatever music she happened to be listening to at the time. Though courting banality, these videos are about looking closely and the rewards of patience. We watch the cats' absorption in their own lives as they slowly wander around her home, with moments of manufactured meaning when their movements suddenly synchronize with the music.

Several years later, in *This Is Not Exactly a Cat Video: w/ David Bowie's "Starman,"* Stark shifted the lens to her four-year old son, Arlo, capturing him and a friend in a serendipitous moment, as they respond to the magic of David Bowie.

Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York

***"The Unspeakable Compromise of the Portable Work of Art,"*** 1998–2002

Documents

Included here is the complete documentation, including notes and instructions, that accompanied works numbered 1 through 15 in the series *"The Unspeakable Compromise of the Portable Work of Art,"* as well as a facsimile of number 16, which was a limited edition book. Stark described the impetus for the lengthy texts:

*Answering requests for information can be endless, exhilarating, inspiring, frustrating, fruitless, flattering and/or annoying. Generally I like to give answers and other thoughts, out of respect and gratitude to the questioner. Typing up accompanying documentation to the works in the series allowed me the opportunity to make the rather slippery element of information exchange tangible.*

Please do not remove documents from the gallery.

Collection of the artist

***Having an Experience*, 1995**

Ink on paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***Transatlantic #3*, 2003**

Carbon transfer and ink on paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***W is for Werther*, 1996**

Carbon on long-fibered paper

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Gift of Laurence Rickels

***Folder (Blue)*, 1998**

Carbon and highlighter pen on paper

Collection of Rebecca and Alexander Stewart

***Untitled (now, no, paper 1)*, 1999**

Carbon, acrylic, and casein on canvas

Collection of Barbara and Peter Benedek

***Snow*, 1996**

Carbon and gesso on long-fibered paper, linen tape

The Rachofsky Collection



***Momentarily Lifted*, 2001**

Carbon and collage with linen tape on paper

Collection of Jim Hodges

***Birds Harmonizing on an Upended Table*, 2001**

Carbon, casein, and collage on canvas board with nails

Collection of Rebecca and Alexander Stewart

***Bees, Birds*, 1996**

Carbon on vellum, linen tape

Private collection, Dallas

***Not Quite Flying, Not Quite Falling (in parts)*, 1998**

Carbon and gouache on paper, foam core, linen tape

Private collection

***Bisect*, 1996**

Carbon and gesso on long-fibered paper, linen tape

Gayle and Paul Stoffel

***Trödel*, 2002**

Paper, carbon, and casein on canvas board

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Drawing for paper lantern (after Pae)*, 2001**

Collage and drawing on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***This could become a gimmick [sic] or an honest articulation of the workings of the mind*, 1995**

Carbon paper transfer and color pencil on long-fibered paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***Hands*, 1995**

Ink and color pencil on long-fibered paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, 1993**

Carbon transfer on paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York Purchased with funds provided by The Judith Rothschild Foundation

***The emptiness in my head*, 1997**

Carbon, oil crayon, paper

Collection Robert Harshorn Shimshak and Marion Brenner

***A Foreshortening of the Mind's Perspective*, 1997**

Carbon on paper

Drs. Paul and Sara Monroe

***Erosion's Fertile Debris*, 1999**

Carbon on paper

La Colección Jumex, Mexico

***No, no, no, now—Grass*, 2000**

Carbon on paper

Private collection, Cologne

***Not Merely for Repetition's Sake*, 2000**

Carbon and ink on paper

Miller Meigs Collection

***Within a Field, with Yellow Jackets*, 2001**

Carbon, collage, and paint on paper

Miller Meigs Collection

***Understater*, 2002**

Casein, spray paint, collage, and linen tape on canvas board

Private collection

***Unfortunately . . .*, 2002**

Casein, carbon, and collage on canvas board

Sharon and Michael Young

***General and Particular Impotence*, 2003**

Carbon transfer and collage on paper

di Rosa Collection, Napa

***Portrait of the Artist as a Full-on Bird*, 2004**

Collage on casein on canvas board

RSC Contemporary, London

***An Uncommon Rearview*, 2005**

Collage, gouache, and pencil on casein on panel

Pizzuti Collection

***Structure That F(its my opening)*, 2006**

Gouache on paper with silk on panel

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Purchased with funds provided by the Acquisition and Collection Committee

***Structures that fit my opening (and other parts considered in relation to their whole)*, 2006**

PowerPoint on laptop; 25 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***Welcome and Unwelcome*, 2006**

Vinyl paint and collage on panel

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Another Chorus Individual (On Aspiration)*, 2007**

Poster, graphite, and paper collage on paper

Private collection—Turin, Italy

***Modestly Becoming*, 2007**

Inlaid printed matter with linen tape on Asian or mulberry paper

Private collection. Courtesy of greengrassi, London

***Oh god, I'm so embarrassed*, 2007**

Poster (Sean Landers, 1994) and collage on paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***Chorus Line*, 2008**

Cut-and-pasted printed paper and cut-and-pasted colored paper on paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York Purchased with funds provided by the Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, and Committee on Drawings Funds

***If conceited girls want to show they already have a seat (after Goya)*, 2008**

Mixed media on paper

Collection of Jacques and Christiane Berghmans

***Member of chorus (a particle)*, 2008**

Paper collage, graphite on paper

Koenig Books, Cologne and London

***Music Stand*, 2008**

Vinyl paint and paper on gessoed canvas

Ioannis Christoforakos Collection

***Look at the parts (Dickinson v. Whitman with Magritte)*, 2009**

Collage on Asian or mulberry paper

Tina Petra

**Untitled, 2010**

Mixed media

Toby Devan Lewis

***A Woman and a Peacock, Yet Again*, 2010**

Mixed media on gessoed canvas on panels

Collection of John Morace and Tom Kennedy, Los Angeles

***My Best Thing*, 2011**

Digital video (color, sound); 100 minutes

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Purchase

**Untitled, 2011**

Inkjet print

UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, Hammer Museum. Gift of Stacy and John Rubeli

***Nothing but Cock*, 2012**

Graphite, Asian or mulberry paper, drawing paper, and paint on canvas

Private collection, Cologne

***Bobby Jesus with a Bullet Proof Vest for Dancing the Round Dance Continuously*, 2013**

Matte laminated inkjet print mounted on aluminum

Collection of Frank Masi and Donna Kolb

***Memento Mori 1*, 2013**

Mixed media

Collection of the artist

*How does one sustain the **belief** in **total babes** (power/recognition) which has been recognized for its debilitating effects on that person who lacks the **total babe** (embodiment of power/recognition) and access to the **total babe** by means of one's own **total foxiness/power?**, 1991/2014*

Hooked rug

Collection of Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip Aarons

***Untitled (Sexus)*, 1992**

Paperback books, paper (newsprint), and carbon on newsprint

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Untitled (Tropic of Cancer)*, 1993**

Paperback books with drawing paper and carbon between each page

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Werther's Letters*, 1996**

Carbon drawing on possibly Wezhou paper

Collection Dean Valentine and Amy Adelson, Los Angeles

***Cat Videos*, 1999–2002**

Video (color, sound); 47 minutes 33 seconds

Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York

***Details, Details or This is the gnat that mangles men*, 2002**

Graphite and collage on paper, two removable handmade books in vitrine

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***This Is Not Exactly a Cat Video: w/David Bowie's "Starman"*, 2007**

Video (VHS) transferred to digital (color, sound); 10 minutes 09 seconds (loop)

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***This Is Not Exactly a Cat Video: w/David Bowie's "Starman"*, 2007**

Video (VHS) transferred to digital (color, sound); 10 minutes 09 seconds (loop)

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Undeveloped Development*, 2007**

Gouache on paper, inlaid collage on Asian or mulberry paper

Valeria and Gregorio Napoleone Collection, London



***Chorus girl folding self in half*, 2008**

Paper collage, graphite on paper

Collection Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner, Promised gift to the Whitney Museum of American Art,  
New York

***Get on the fucking block and fuck. Or don't*, 2008**

Vinyl paint, collage on Asian or mulberry paper backed with Mylar

Collection of Eleanor Heyman Propp, New York

***Get on the fucking block and fuck. Or don't*, 2008**

Vinyl paint, collage on Asian or mulberry paper backed with Mylar

Collection of Eleanor Heyman Propp, New York

***If conceited girls want to show they have a seat. . . (seated)*, 2008**

Vinyl paint, fabric, and collage on gessoed panel

Collection Dean Valentine and Amy Adelson, Los Angeles

***If conceited girls want to show they have a seat. . . (standing)*, 2008**

Vinyl paint, Asian or mulberry paper, and fabric on canvas

Collection Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner, Promised gift to the Whitney Museum of American Art,  
New York

***Pretty Ugly*, 2008**

Collage on linen

Collection Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner, Promised gift to the Whitney Museum of American Art,  
New York

***The Inchoate Incarnate: Bespoke Costume for the Artist*, 2009**

Wearable fabric costume (silk organza), dress form (resin, expandable foam)

Valeria and Gregorio Napoleone Collection, London

***Promotional Material for "I've Had It! And I've Also Had It!" (Spoiler Alert!)*, 2010**

Paint, paillettes, and paper on paper

Beth Rudin DeWoody

***After "The Most Beautiful Woman in the World"*, 2011**

Mixed media on canvas

L. Steinberg and B. Nadal-Ginard

***Osservate, leggete con me*, 2012**

Three-channel digital video for projection (black-and-white, sound); 29 minutes 34 seconds

Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York

***Bobby Jesus's Alma Mater b/w Reading the Book of David and/or Paying Attention Is Free*, 2013**

Multichannel projection with sound, inkjet mural, and takeaway offset posters; 7 minutes 20 seconds

Purchased jointly by Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago with funds provided by Marshall Field's by exchange and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

***Drawing from a Study of Bobby Jesus*, 2013**

Matte laminated inkjet print mounted on aluminum

Collection of Frank Masi and Donna Kolb

***What Goes on @therealstarkiller*, 2014**

Digital slide show (color, sound); 4 minutes 56 seconds

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***In other places light's pitched happy tents.*, 1998**

Carbon substitute, oil, crayon, paper, tape

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Gift of Tina Petra

***A Bomb*, 2002**

Gouache, carbon transfer, collage, and casein on Masonite

The Rachofsky Collection

***Another Chorus Individual (in the cul-de-sac)*, 2007**

Poster, graphite, and paper collage on paper

Adam and Mariana Clayton Collection

***Who's on the other side?*, 2008**

Poster (Scott King, 1998), paillettes, and collage on paper

La Colección Jumex, Mexico

***Why should you not be able to assemble yourself and write?*, 2008**

Asian or mulberry paper, paper, and ink on gessoed canvas panel

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Purchase

***Toward a score for “Load every rift with ore”***, 2010

Paint and printed matter on paper

Collection of Valeria Sorci and Pierpaolo Barzan

**Stark object labels for the Museum of Fine Arts Boston**

**[white for black walls]**

***Push***, 2006

Collage, latex paint, tape, and graphite pencil on panel

Whitney Museum of American Art. Purchase, with funds from the Drawing Committee and partial gift of Tina Petra

***Chorus Girl (a part)***, 2008

Paper collage, graphite on paper

Private collection—Turin, Italy

***Pull After “Push”***, 2010

Mixed media on canvas on panel

Collection Nancy and Joachim Bechtle

***Push After “Pull After Push”***, 2010

Paint, printed matter, linen tape, and stickers on panel

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Purchase

***Nothing is Enough*, 2012**

Single-channel digital video (black and white, sound); 14 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York

***Emergency Exit*, 2009**

Asian or mulberry paper, foam core maquette of Portikus, with insert

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Purple is Fashionable Twice*, 1996**

Carbon and gesso on mulberry paper, linen tape

Collection of Carol and Mark Lerdal

***Relaxed by the residue of my own sad perplexity (from me)*, 1993**

Carbon and watercolor on mulberry paper, tissue, linen tape

Private collection

***Om (On Kerouac)*, 1997**

Carbon and watercolor on paper

Collection of David Kordansky and Mindy Shapero, Los Angeles

***Music is Different*, 1996**

Carbon on paper, tape, tissue paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

**... the gaps between the walls of life ...**, 1999

Graphite on paper

Private collection. Courtesy of greengrassi, London

**Wisdom, Stupidity, Ugliness: 1–4 in an ongoing series**, 2008

Collage and clocks on canvas

Collection of John Morace and Tom Kennedy, Los Angeles

**Purple**, 1996

Carbon in custom frame

Collection of Joel Wachs

**I Hate Language**, about 1995

Ditto master sheet

Collection of the artist

**You, Me**, 1991

Carbon on paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

**Fitter, Happier [from Radiohead: OK computer]**, 1998

Carbon on mulberry, tissue, linen tape

Private collection

***In-box***, 2004

Printed matter, Asian or mulberry paper, linen tape

Private collection, London

***Exhibitionist's Venue***, 2009

Collage on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***The Dense Jungle of the Monotonous Seperate (sic) Parts***, 2004

Carbon transfer, ink, laser, and inkjet on paper

Private collection. Courtesy of greengrassi, London

***Untitled (Green Chorus Line)***, 2009

Screenprint

Collection of the artist

***Untitled (A Trade with Nick & Oliver)***, 2005

Ink and collage on paper

Collection of the artist

***Free Money***, 2004

Ink and gouache on casein on canvas board

Collection of Thomas Timmermanns

***“The Unspeakable Compromise of the Portable Work of Art”*: Number 15 in a series of 16, double residence, 2002**

Carbon and graphite on paper

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Gift of Shaun Caley Regen

***“The Unspeakable Compromise of the Portable Work of Art”*, 1998–2002**

Documents

Collection of the artist

*Please do not remove documents from the gallery.*

***Clever/Stupid Pirouette*, 2014**

Sumi ink on Arches paper with inlay, vacuum sealed on aluminum and wood

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Agonizing yet Blissful*, 2001**

Ink and collage on paper

Anonymous loan

***Godforsaken, after Jacob Lawrence*, 2014**

Collage and pen on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles

**Poster for *Put a Song in Your Thing*, 2011**

Digital print

UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, Hammer Museum. Gift of Stacy and John Rubeli



***Bobby Jesus's Alma Mater, passage from a movement therein: Mighty Swords*, 2014**

Acrylic and digital print on canvas

Stacy and John Rubeli

***The New Vision*, 2008**

Paint pen and paillettes on paper

Private collection, Cologne

***What part of now don't you understand?*, 1999**

In collaboration with Steve Hanson)

Silkscreen on paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***Conceited girl wants to show she has a seat (after Goya)*, 2009**

Digital pigment and silkscreen print on Somerset Velvet paper

UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, Hammer Museum. Gift of Stacy and John Rubeli

***Back Side of the Performance*, 2008**

Paper, paillettes, and escutcheon pins on foam core

Julia Stoschek Foundation e.v., Düsseldorf

***I went through my bin*, 2008**

Collage on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Hopefully all of my cat videos . . .***, 2004

Pencil and collage on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York

**Untitled**, 2009

Giclée digital and silkscreen print, six-color process on Somerset 225 gsm paper

Collection of the artist

***Pull***, 2009

Collage on paper

Collection of Daniel Buchholz and Christopher Müller, Cologne

***Figure/Ground, Reclining Model***, 2014

Sumi ink, inkjet print on Kozo-shi paper on canvas

Private collection

***To a Selected Theme (Fit to Print)***, 2007

Collage and linen on paper

Beth Rudin DeWoody

***False Advertising***, 2007

Screenprints

Stacy and John Rubeli

**Untitled**, 2012

Collage on paper

Julia Stoschek Foundation e.v., Düsseldorf

***Every other eye in this world is dying to hear***, 2014

Collage on paper

Courtesy of the artist and greengrassi, London

***Clever/Stupid Pirouette***, 2014

Sumi ink on Arches paper with inlay

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

***Non-Electrical Telephony and/or Lovers' Telephone***, 2010

Vinyl and paint on wall

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

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