

P O R T I K U S – Frances Stark – *The New Vision*
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Frances Stark's (b. 1967, lives and works in Los Angeles) works arise mainly out of a complex system of references comprising texts and images. Thus the metaphorical significance and composition of the written word on the canvas or the paper form the starting point from which her collages and texts draw their creative sustenance. Equally important for her method of working are visual templates from the world of art; they can be derived from classical art, but can also be taken from textual and pictorial material from a more contemporary or sub-cultural genre. She creates networks made up of different found and discovered symbols, cuttings and graphic elements, quotations from literature and autobiographical references in the delicate ornament of her collages. Equally characteristic for the contextual composition of the works is the illumination of and engagement with her own personal creative process as well as with the diverse roles and attitudes she adopts as an artist and author. Stark's approach is accordingly characterized by a repeated self-referentiality within her own work. Motifs and textual fragments, but also complete thematic threads can weave their path through several cycles of work. Frances Stark's two publications *Frances Stark: Collected Writing, 1993-2003* (2003, Bookworks, London) and *Frances Stark: Collected Works* (2007, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, Cologne) trace this development most beautifully. Frances Stark's works are informed for the most part with a fine sense of humour; it manifests itself both in the special choice of motif and in the minimal composition of the respective elements when engaging with the dynamic tension inherent in "public and private" or "gravity and irony, i.e. posing".

Up to now Frances Stark's works have been on view in German-speaking countries in solo exhibitions at venues such the Secession in Vienna (*A Torment of Follies*, 2008) and in the Kunstverein München (*Ich suche meine Frances Starke Seite*, 2000).

The group of works originated for Portikus entitled "The New Vision" shows 17 new works on paper and canvas, which likewise refer partly to models from classical art, partly autobiographical fragments, partly early works and partly texts from her immediate professional environment. Frances Stark's unique method in *The New Vision* clearly demonstrates once more that by constantly varying the aesthetics and dispensations of the game with the lightest of touches, it is possible to adopt one's own role in the art world's system among the range of analytical, conceptual and a playfully poetic approaches.

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