

Frances Stark

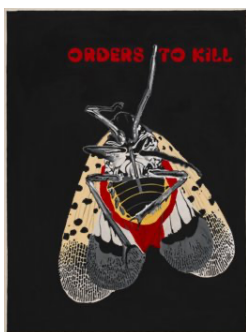
Orders to Kill

1 June - 27 July 2024



Agonizing yet blissful..., 2024
acrylic, paper, gesso on canvas
160 x 120 x 4 cm
FS/M 2024/02

*I made a book called *Collected Works*, an exhibition catalogue which ultimately became an artist's book, an exhibition in itself. This is a scaled-up rendition of the collage on its cover. The text is from Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*. It's kind of like an apple with a lot of bites out of it. There is a chrysalis on the leaf element.*



Orders to Kill (Lantern Fly Extermination Campaign), 2024
acrylic, gesso on canvas
160 x 120 x 4 cm
FS/M 2024/01

The State of New York waged an extermination campaign against the Lantern Fly. I saw this guy laying there on its back, alive, motioning in a way that seemed to signal an exasperated submission. I am not the type to stomp on such a beautiful creature even if the state tries to convince me it's my duty.



Bankers Boxes, 2024
 acrylic, ink, gesso on canvas
 160 x 120 x 4 cm
 FS/M 2024/04

In earlier drawings and collages, I used to depict stacks of bankers boxes, just crude outlines, suspended in space, and they'd repeat to form a cage or lattice. Sometimes I'd perch some birds on there. The ubiquitous boxes had a curt little set of words in one of the descriptor fields: "destroy date." A way to keep track of when you are legally allowed to stop storing a certain amount of evidence that you might need to defend yourself against an audit by the state. But also poignant. When is it ok to let this go? At the time I began repeating the boxes I was thinking of my dead friend and the dead friend of Thomas Bernhard's main character in Corrections. I also associate them with catch-alls of life where things get stowed in no particular order and represent the chaotic accumulation of files to be filed, eventually. And if you don't get to it during your own lifetime others are burdened with the question of what's actually in there and worth piecing together.

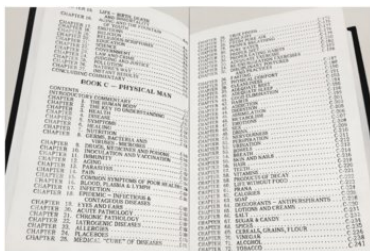
DeWayne was my father, born in 1941, who died two years ago. I have many of his things in boxes, many of which belonged to my great-grandparents whose small contracting business, Stark Bros, relocated from Ohio to Los Angeles in the 1920s.



File, 2023
 acrylic, graphite, gesso on canvas
 160 x 120 x 4 cm
 FS/M 2024/03

The figure (yes it's me) holds a Life Magazine out to the viewer, the caption on the cover reads "The Flapper", the new female of the boom time. The implication is of metamorphosis, from crawling worm-like creature to majestic beauty in joyous, short-lived flight. Maybe I slip into the archetype and create something of a droste effect, maybe even a droste effect of 20th century American decade-ism.

In this transhuman era of biotech and artificial intelligence, maybe my body is just human goo with no purpose and all that matters is for me to continue perceiving life through the black mirror corporate media holds up to me so that my reactions can be mined ad infinitum.



Physical Man, 2024
 acrylic, sumi ink, gesso on canvas
 160 x 239 x 4 cm
 FS/M 2024/09

I saw this book at the flea market and fell in love with the manic way it Tabled its Contents. I didn't buy it or read it, but I am very acquainted with the subject of most chapters.



The Book is Empty, 2024
acrylic, enamel, gesso on canvas
160 x 120 x 4 cm
FS/M 2024/07

This is me with my robe open reflected in the glass refrigerator door that serves as the window in my bedroom. On the wall behind me is a portrait of me by Henry Taylor and a work by Jason Meadows. The tote bag speaks for itself.



(Do)lorem ipsum / Tree of Knowledge, 2024
acrylic, sumi ink, gesso on canvas
160 x 120 x 4 cm
FS/M 2024/06

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*Lorem ipsum is text made up of meaningless words used as a placeholder when a final file has yet to be inserted. It supposedly comes from the latin Dolorem Ipsum, which translates to something like "pain, itself." One bubble at the base of the trunk of the Tree of Knowledge has legible text, a sentence from Witold Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke* that I've used before:*

"But the sum-total of all these possibilities, torments, descriptions, and parts is so vast, so incommensurable, so inconceivable, and, what is more, so inexhaustible, that, with the most profound respect for the Word, and after the most scrupulous analysis, it must be admitted that we are no wiser than when we began, Cluck! Cluck! Cluck! as the chicken said."



Crow and Seagull attack Doves released by Pope in Ukraine in 2014, 2024
acrylic, graphite, gesso on canvas
160 x 239 x 4 cm
FS/M 2024/05

Who am I to comment on the wars of our time?



Holding a Hard Copy (Nancy w/ Dictionary), 2024
acrylic, ink, gesso on canvas
160 x 120 x 4 cm
FS/M 2024/11

These are my fingers holding a water-damaged print-out of Ernie Bushmiller's Nancy, with her nose in the dictionary, against the cinder block wall of my studio.



Booksread (w/ cat and my American Pavilion), 2024
acrylic, ink, gesso on canvas
160 x 120 x 4 cm
FS/M 2024/10

This is a print-out that was taped to the brick-and-mortar walls of my studio with invisible tape. The splayed woman in the open book is based on an illustration from a book of early 20th century erotic Ex Libris. The American Pavilion refers to an unrealized but ongoing project where I present my former landlord's Rudolf-Schindler-meets-Scarface house in South Pasadena as my rogue proposal for an American Pavilion modeled after the national pavilions in Venice.

-Frances Stark

Galerie Buchholz is pleased to announce *Orders to Kill*, an exhibition of new paintings by Frances Stark. This is our sixth exhibition with Stark since 2000 and the fourth in our Cologne gallery. Frances Stark (1967, Newport Beach) lives and works in Los Angeles. Stark's work was the subject of a comprehensive survey exhibition at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 2015 and 2016. Recent solo exhibitions and screenings of her work have been held at Chinatown Taylor, Los Angeles (2022), The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2021), The Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2019), the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2018), ICA London (2018), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC (2018), LACMA (2017), the Art Institute of Chicago (2015), Julia Stoschek Foundation Düsseldorf (2013), among others. Stark's work was featured in the 2023 exhibition *Signals: How Video Transformed the World* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2023).