

Public Programs

Opening Reception:

Thursday, October 21, 6-8PM

Pre-reception Artist Talk by Frances Stark, 5:30PM, Bartos Theatre

Additional Programs

Wednesday, October 27, 12:30PM

Lunchtime Gallery Talk by LVAC educator Mark Linga

Thursday, October 28, 6PM

Gallery Talk by LVAC curator João Ribas

Thursday, October 28, 7PM, Reference Gallery

Two Short Films by Emily Wardill: *Ben* (2007, 10 min.); *Sick Serena and Dregs and Wreck and Wreck* (2007, 10min.)

Saturday, November 6, 11 AM

Raindate: Sunday, November 7, 11 AM

MIT Campus Public Art Tour by LVAC public art curator Alis Uptis

Wednesday, November 10, 12:30PM

Lunchtime Gallery Talk by LVAC curator João Ribas

Saturday, November 13, 2PM

Gallery Talk by LVAC educator Mark Linga

Wednesday, November 17, 7PM, Bartos Theatre

Artist Talk by Melvin Moti

Thursday, December 2, 7PM, Bartos Theatre

Talk by MIT Professor Alex Byrne

Wednesday, December 8, 12:30PM

Lunchtime Gallery Talk with LVAC director Jane Farver

Thursday, December 9, 6PM

Gallery Talk with LVAC curator João Ribas

Thursday, December 9, 7PM, Reference Gallery

Two short films by Emily Wardill: *Ben* (2007, 10 min.); *Sick Serena and Dregs and Wreck and Wreck* (2007, 10 min.)

Saturday, December 18, 2PM

Gallery Talk with LVAC educator Mark Linga

Support for *Frances Stark: This could become a gimmick [sic] or an honest articulation of the workings of the mind* has been generously provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Barbara Lee Family Foundation, David Teiger, the Council for the Arts at MIT, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Media Sponsor: Phoenix Communications Group.



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Frances Stark:

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

October 22, 2010-January 2, 2011

MIT LIST VISUAL ARTS CENTER

Frances Stark: This could become a gimick [sic] or an honest articulation of the workings of the mind

The first U.S. museum survey of the work of Los Angeles artist and writer Frances Stark, *This could become a gimick [sic] or an honest articulation of the workings of the mind*, spans two decades of the artist's work. The exhibition features drawings, collages, videos, and sculptures, including several new works produced for the exhibition.

Through both writing and visual art, Frances Stark has laid bare the creative act in all its tedium and enchantment for over two decades. With distinctive wit and candor, her expressly personal language reflects an interest in the relationship between art, literature, and everyday life. Stark proposes that the creative self is a performance, what she calls a "torment of follies" riddled with self-doubt and speculation—with the occasional moment of transcendence. The artist's body of work stands as a self-reflexive inquiry into the nature of creativity as well as the often-elided demands of daily life. Stark wryly yet rigorously foregrounds notions of doubt, failure, and creative anxiety, as well as domesticity and autobiography.

Language, as subject matter and material, has also been a central theme in Stark's work. The elliptical, digressive style that typifies her writing is also echoed in an often text-based artistic practice; her art frequently alludes to reading and writing, as well as the interrelation between image and text. Along with clusters of typewritten letters, Stark employs literary fragments from a wide variety of sources, from Robert Musil and Thomas Bernhard to British post-punk band The Fall. The title of the exhibition is derived from a note the artist found in the margins of a used paperback copy of *The Voyeur (Le Voyeur)* by French novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet.

Along with an articulated use of language and text, Stark's iconography also includes elements drawn from the detritus of her personal and professional life. Fragments of correspondence, writings, junk mail, and exhibition announcements are combined in her intricately textured collages, reflecting an interest in the tactile and handmade, and in divisions of labor and studio practice. This self-disclosive investigation of the relationship between professional and domestic space, and the gender roles associated with them, was also the subject of Stark's influential text *The Architect and the Housewife* (1999).

In *Untitled (Sexus)* (1992), an edition of Henry Miller's eponymous novel is presented alongside Stark's carbon-copied version. This act of transcription suggests an abiding interest in quotation, performativity, and the "anxiety of influence" in the artist's body of work. *If conceited girls want to show they already have a seat...* (2008) takes its visual pun from Goya's 1799 etching *Ya tiene asiento (They Already have a Seat)* mocking female sexuality. Similarly, natural imagery of peacocks and birds is used to mock-heroic effect in many of the drawings, part of the artist's interest in the process of putting oneself on display.

Stark's *Cat Videos* (1999–2002) are a collection of home movies of her cats, set to musical themes ranging from Black Flag to The Supremes. While critically toying with the trope of the artist's studio—a theme running through art history from Courbet to Bruce Nauman—the video presages the contemporary phenomenon of cat videos and domestic banality found on YouTube. *In and In* (2005) is comprised of two strips of cut-up junk mail and flyers, as if piling up on a desk. A collage made from the elements usually thought to be tangential to the monumentality of the work of art, the piece suggests an attempt to render creativity from mundane clutter. *For Structures That Fit My Opening and Other Parts Considered in Relation to Their Whole* (2006),

Stark appropriates the didactic format of the PowerPoint presentation to construct a visual essay from text, works of art, and personal photographs, reflecting Stark's irreverent search for the "kind of 'liberation' I—as a woman, artist, teacher, mother, ex-wife—am really after."

Frances Stark: This could become a gimick [sic] or an honest articulation of the workings of the mind is organized by João Ribas, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

About the Artist

Frances Stark is a Los Angeles-based artist and writer who completed her MFA at the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA and currently teaches at the University of Southern California. She has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, U.K.; Portikus, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany; Secession, Vienna, Austria; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; Fonds régional d'art contemporain de Bourgogne, Dijon, France; and UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco, CA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Tate Modern, London, U.K.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the 2008 Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. Stark is also the author of *The Architect and the Housewife* (Book Works, 1999) and *Collected Writings: 1993-2003* (Book Works, 2003) and has published widely in numerous magazines, journals, catalogues, and artist monographs. Her artworks are included in public collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and Fonds regional d'art contemporain, Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France.