

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Beau Rutland, "Frances Stark," *Artforum*, April, 2012

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

New York

Frances Stark

GAVIN BROWN'S ENTERPRISE 620 Greenwich Street March 3–April 21



Frances Stark, *Nothing is enough*, 2012, single-channel digital video, 14 minutes. Installation view.

MMM I DIDN'T THINK I HAD IT IN ME TO DO THIS. Frances Stark's camsex epiphany also reflects her decision to continue exhibiting her ongoing risqué virtual fixation. "*Osservate, leggete con me*" (Observe, Read Along with Me), the latest exhibition in which she takes herself to task, is more of a continued self-evaluation than a sequel to her engrossing 2011 video *My Best Thing*, which incisively documents Stark's online hedonistic proclivities with two Italian men. The two videos on view are relatively pared down in terms of composition, yet they more fully elaborate the underlying concerns in Stark's oeuvre: language, the everyday, and the self.

Osservate, leggete con me, 2012, a series of nine white-on-black vignettes (think Woody Allen title cards), squarely presents the artist's equal-parts libidinous and comic transcripts, peppered by doubt and concern. Flashing from wall to wall, the choreographed conversations flutter to a sound track of *Don Giovanni's* "Catalogue Aria," while Stark divulges her own tragicomic activities. The score ably ties together topics both flip and grave; musings on the eurozone crisis fade out with comedic timing to the antepenultimate note, then, U WANT SEE MY COCK? Another stroke of the bow: NOT VERY BIG. In the dim second gallery, Stark reconnects with one of her interlocutors from *My Best Thing* in *Nothing is enough*, 2012, the exhibition's pinnacle of self-reflexivity. This awareness often presents itself through a variant, market-reflexivity (A MUSEUM IN LA JUST CONFIRMED THE SALE), yet slides by under the video's overall diaristic construct.

Despite lacking physical imagery, Stark's videos are uncomfortably veristic in unsavory detail and brevity. A sober thought regarding the problematics of diverging real and virtual lives points toward productive inquiry—PEOPLE COULD REALLY LIVE THIS WAY . . . MAYBE IT'S THE ONLY SOLUTION LEFT—and finds its terminus in an unexpected glitch: STUPID ROUTER. Disembodied cyberspace may not be as liberating as we once thought; at least Frances Stark is willing to admit it.

— Beau Rutland