

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Kathy Noble, "Frances Stark; Critic's Picks," *Artforum*, June, 2015

ARTFORUM

London

Frances Stark

GREENGRASSI

1a Kempsford Road

May 30, 2015–June 20, 2015

"Bitch, I don't give a fuck about you, or anything that you do," lyrics from [Big Sean](#)'s "I Don't Fuck with You," blared out of [Frances Stark](#)'s exhibition "Sorry for the wait." The four videos in *Poets On the Pyre (I–IV)*, 2015, were displayed on monitors alongside images of signposts topped with the words "CLEVER" and "STUPID"—each designed to enable reversible reading as the other. The videos presented material collated on Stark's Instagram,

@therealstarkiller. This included a myriad of cultural imagery, both high- and lowbrow: art classics such as [Isabelle Graw](#)'s *High Price*, 2010; [Mike Kelley](#)'s early bird-box sculpture, sign-painted "The High Road" and "The Easy Road"; theoretical and literary works such as [Fred Moten](#)'s *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (2013); and Joan Didion's *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order To Live* (2006); all interspersed with pop-cultural references—such online headlines as "15 Shocking Celebs with STD's [please confirm erroneous apostrophe ("STD'S") in original]" and "Miley Cyrus Got a New Puppy and Shares Naked Selfie."



View of "Sorry for the Wait," 2015.

The combination of [Big Sean](#) shouting "I don't fuck with you, / you little stupid assed bitch" and Stark's very popular public accumulation of imagery presented to be "liked" formed a potent contradiction. Stark's feed contains material familiar to many of us working in art or related cultural fields, yet it would not be familiar to everyone. As such, *Poets On The Pyre (I–IV)* both reinforced and dissected the way social media constructs identity via a constellation of performed interests: We simultaneously create and validate ourselves in this virtual mirroring of presentation and affirmation. "Sorry for the Wait" is a sharp—and subversively funny—act of institutional critique of both art and life.

— [Kathy Noble](#)