

VISUAL ARTS

If you go

Memento Mori: 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Through March 9. Gallery Paule Anglim, 14 Geary St., S.F. (415) 433-2710. www.gallerypauleanglim.com.



Gallery Paule Anglim

Frances Stark's "Memento Mori 4," 2013 (detail) is part of the Gallery Paule Anglim show.

'Memento Mori': A reflection on mortality, choices in life

By Kimberly Chun

Remembrance of artworks past — and an archival impulse — are only part of the story behind Bay Area-raised, now-L.A.-based artist Frances Stark's "Memento Mori" at Gallery Paule Anglim. The show is also mixed up with Stark's birth as an artist, nurtured by San Francisco's late '80s punk scene, as well as thoughts of mortality on the 2012 death of her early inspiration, artist Mike Kelley. In fact, at the time that Kelley died, the two were in a show together.

"I'm thinking a lot about death and choices in my life," says Stark, 46, from L.A., as parakeets chatter in the background. "To me, that (exhibit with Kelley) was like my dream came true, to become an artist like him and to be able to show with him."

"Memento Mori's" mostly untitled collection of collages, prints, works on paper, ephemera, and riffs on other artists like Kelley

and Silke Otto-Knapp coalesces into a narrative of sorts, marked by a black humor and off-the-cuff eloquence.

In one assemblage, a print that lays bare the aspirations, and pretensions, of her San Francisco State transcript with almost painful plainness, is coupled with barbed text that pokes holes in the career opportunities seemingly attendant with a liberal arts education.

Another collage looking back at her work reads like a "greatest hits," touching on a performance piece with Major Lazer's Skerritt Bwoy and her play off Caspar Friedrich's "The Wanderer" artwork on a paperback edition of Friedrich Nietzsche's "Ecce Homo."

"Memento Mori" comes after a sizable show at Mills College Art Museum in 2011, followed by another ambitious exhibition at Gavin Brown's Enterprise last year.

"I guess what started happening was I thought I'd like to use San Francisco as an impetus for organizing something of an archival project," says the University of Southern California professor, who fondly reminisces about late colleague Will Shatter of Flipper.

"I came of age in San Francisco as a teenager — I got into punk rock there, and that pretty much changed my life." Also life-changing was a talk by Kelley at the San Francisco Art Institute, which made her want to study with him and make art.

"When I saw Mike, it merged my high-mindedness with raw experience and attitude," says Stark. "You can be something to be reckoned with and still be a hard-ass and be tough and unapologetic and still be really critical and say what you want to say."

Kimberly Chun is a freelance writer. E-mail: 96hours@sfgchronicle.com Twitter: @kimberlychun

NEW THIS WEEK

Art Guild of Pacifica "Down to the Soul." Juried group exhibition. Reception p.m. Fri. Through Mar. Sanchez Art Center, 12 Linda Mar Blvd., Pacifica. www.artguildofpacific.com

ArtZone 461 E. Dale St. Recent paintings. Reception p.m. Sat. Through Mar. 461 Valencia St., S.F. (415) 441-8680. www.artzone.com

Chinese Culture Center Gallery "The Moment." Group exhibition. Reception 1-3 p.m. Sat. Through Mar. 750 Kearny St., Third Fl. (415) 986-1822. www.ccc.org

Commonweal Art Gallery "Subjectivities." Reception p.m. Sat. Through April. Mesa Road, Bolinas. www.commonweal.org

Gallery 60Six "Stain." Hoening, new works on paper. Reception 6 p.m. Sat. Through April. 66 Elgin Park. (415) 577-4396. www.gallery60six.com

Hackett | Mill "Defying Gravity: The Subject of Space." Reception 5 p.m. Fri. Through June 28. 201 Post St., S.F. (415) 362-3377. www.hackettmill.com

Jenkins Johnson Gall "Centennial." Gordon F. photography. Reception p.m. Thurs. Through April. 464 Sutter St. (415) 677-1111. www.jenkinsjohnson.com

Kala Art Institute "Ac Scale." Group exhibition. Reception 6 p.m. Thurs. Through March 30. 2961 Pablo Ave., Berkeley. (510) 841-7000. www.kala.org

Krowswork Gallery "Elemental Forces." Suzy P. photography, collage, etching, installation. Reception p.m. Sat. Through March. 480 23rd St., Oakland. (415) 229-7035. www.krowswork.com

MUSEUMS

Asian Art Museum "C. Tennacotta Warriors: The Emperor's Legacy." Opening party 7-11 p.m. \$15-\$18. Through May. "Batak: Spectacular Tea Java." Through May 5. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Sun. Larkin St. (415) 581-3511. www.asianart.org

Bay Area Discovery Museum "Once Upon a Time: Ex Through the World of Fairy Tales." Through May 26. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. \$12. Under 6