

ARTFORUM

“The Contract”

ESSEX STREET

114 Eldridge St

November 20–January 25

As Congress considers a bill that would introduce artists' resale rights, also known as *droit de suite*, to the United States, the timely group show “The Contract” promotes the bill's underlying notion that artists should benefit from the price appreciation of their work. By requiring all sales of work on view here be subject to the 1971 Projansky contract—which stipulates that artists receive resale royalties—this exhibition suggests that, given the frenzied pitch of the contemporary art market (in which access is highly coveted), artists may now have sufficient power to demand resale royalties as part of their sales contracts.

Hans Haacke, the contract's most famous adherent, and Maria Eichhorn, who interviewed Haacke and the contract's authors, Bob Projansky and Seth Siegelaub, for her project *The Artist's Contract*, 1996–2005, are grouped with Jay Chung and Q Takeki Maeda, Wade Guyton, Park McArthur, R. H. Quaytman, Carissa Rodriguez, and Cameron Rowland. McArthur's *Social Security*, 2014, a desktop computer tower used by the artist from 2008 to 2013 and still replete with her personal files (of which no backups or copies were made), alludes to the relationship between artist and collector, characterized by vulnerability and trust (for the artist) and responsibility (for the collector).

Likewise referencing the complex and often compromised power dynamic between author and owner, Quaytman's painting depicts a still from Andrea Fraser's *Untitled*—the infamous 2003 surveillance video of Fraser's sexual encounter with a collector—where the sales contract generated the work itself. Rowland's *49–51 Chambers Street—Basement, New York, NY 10007*, 2014, a circular wooden table purchased at an auction of government property, evidences the endemic trend of privatization. Only by making the conditions of exchange central, even intrinsic, to the artwork itself, “The Contract” argues, can artists wrestle control.



R. H. Quaytman, *Ark, Chapter 10 (still from A. Fraser “Untitled”) #2, 2008-13*, oil, silkscreen ink, gesso on wood, 20 x 20”.

— Natasha Degen