

Press Release
18 April 2017

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Venice Agendas 2017 *The Contract: An Exhibition*

4 – 26 May 2017
Preview: 3 May 2017

Launching the programme of events for Venice Agendas 2017, *The Contract* exhibition brings together artworks that explore the idea of the contract from different perspectives: the contract between artist and audience, artist and institution, nation states, and the individual and society at large.

The exhibition includes artworks by **Keith Arnatt**, **Hollis Frampton**, **Hew Locke**, **Donald Rodney**, **Monica Ross** and **Carey Young** and is curated by Gilane Tawadros. It will take place at DACS from 4 – 26 May in London with a preview on 3 May 2017.

At a time of significant social and political turbulence in the world, the obligations – explicit or implied – which we have towards each other are being called into question, re-negotiated and re-written. *The Contract* presents works that challenge the contractual agreements which we take for granted, recall others which we need to remember, and provoke discussion about the nature of our obligations.

Sited at the entrance of the exhibition, **Carey Young's *Artistic Licence (2005)*** compels visitors to provide their fingerprints and signature on a form as a condition of entering the exhibition. The form, which has been designed by the artist, is based on a US immigration form. Since 2003, Young has worked with a legal team to make works in different media that operate as bespoke legal instruments, which address and critique law as a separate kind of reality. With *Artistic Licence*, the artist makes visible the implicit contract between an artist and their audience and 'controls the border' between the gallery space and prospective visitors to the exhibition.

Monica Ross' *Anniversary – an act of memory (2008-2013)* records solo, collective and multi-lingual recitations from memory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A collective and ongoing series of performances by the artist Monica Ross, *Anniversary – an act of memory* was conceived in response to the fatal shooting by police of Jean Charles de Menezes in London in July 2005. The act of memory which Ross repeatedly invokes through the performances, recalls the killing of an innocent man and simultaneously the articles of the only universal and international 'contract' which enshrines our human rights. Following the artist's death, the performative recitations continue.

Hew Locke's *Republique Chinoise Gold Bond 1 (2009)* is part of a series of works which represent contractual obligations between governments and nations which have been incurred as a direct consequence of war, conflict and forced migration. The Boxer Rebellion of 1901, a peasant movement that attacked and killed foreign missionaries, nationals and Chinese Christians across northern China, was supported by the Imperial Army. *Republique Chinoise Gold Bonds* – also

known as 'Boxer Loans' were issued to settle the remaining obligations of the Chinese government from war indemnity imposed on them after this rebellion.

Hollis Frampton's *(nostalgia)* (1971) is an autobiographical film which looks back to the artist's immediate past but frustrates his audience's expectations. Frampton presents a sequence of twelve still photographs to the viewer, most of them taken by the artist himself and slowly burning one at a time on a hot plate. Frampton's comments and reminiscences about each image are out of sync with what we see on screen. The artist's narrative refers to the image which follows rather than the one we can see and so we become disorientated, caught between the past and the future.

The theme of the absent or disappearing artist is one that recurs in a number of works made by **Keith Arnatt** between 1967 and 1972. In one work he announced his absence with a banal white sign nailed to a brick wall. In another he pictured himself gradually disappearing beneath a mound of earth. With *Is it Possible to Do Nothing as My Contribution to This Exhibition?* (1970), the artist took this motif further. Arnatt proposed, for an exhibition at Camden Arts Centre in London, that he do nothing. His proposal to do nothing, reproduced only as a text in the exhibition catalogue, is the artwork; a permanent statement of his intent to make no contribution.

Donald Rodney's last exhibition in his lifetime, *9 Nights in El Dorado*, took place at South London Gallery in 1997, curated by David Thorp and prepared by the artist from his hospital bed. One of the works in the exhibition *Psalms* (1998) is an unoccupied wheelchair which moves around the exhibition space, weaving between visitors, apparently of its own volition. Unable to attend his own exhibition opening, the autonomous wheelchair attended in Rodney's place as it does here, starting up, moving, stopping, starting up again, moving in a different direction.

The Contract is part of Venice Agendas 2017's programme of events including an exhibition, a publication, talks and performances in London, Venice, Margate and Folkestone between May and September 2017.

The Contract

Preview 3 May 2017

4 – 26 May 2017, Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm

DACS, 33 Old Bethnal Green Road, London E2 6AA

dacs.org.uk/events/venice-agendas-2017-the-contract

– Ends –

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Notes for Editors

Venice Agendas

Venice Agendas was developed by Bill Furlong and Mel Gooding and has featured at every Venice Biennial since 1999. Since 2011, workinprogress (Clare Fitzpatrick and Terry Smith) has continued the series of topical, intelligent and informative discussions, talks, debates and events. Mel and Bill along with Vittorio Urbani of Nuova Icona continue to support and mentor the project.

<http://www.veniceagendas.eu/>

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London: 4 – 26 May

Venice: 10 – 12 May

Margate: 17 June

Folkestone: 23 September

Newspaper publication: *The Contract*

A newspaper publication includes written and creative contributions from artists including Jon Adams, Maria Thereza Alves, Michael Armitage, Jordan Baseman, Anne Bean, Gayle Chong Kwan, Jimmie Durham, Yara El-Sherbini, Tony Heaton, Hew Locke, Melanie Manchot, Hayley Newman, Tatsumi Orimoto, Young In Hong, Terry Smith and Richard Wilson.

DACS

Established by artists for artists, DACS is a not-for-profit visual artists' rights management organisation. Passionate about transforming the financial landscape for visual artists through innovative new products and services, we act as a trusted broker for 90,000 artists worldwide. Founded over 30 years ago, DACS is a flagship organisation that campaigns for artists' rights, championing their sustained and vital contribution to the creative economy. Since we were founded in 1984, we have paid over £90 million in royalties to artists and their estates – a significant source of income supporting artists' livelihoods, their practice and legacy.

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