Afterall
A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry

Sharon Hayes
James Richards
R.H. Quaytman
Solo Exhibitions
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Spring 2015
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Context and Enquiry

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Name

The name Quayzman, originally spelled Kwajilerm, apparently means "lost man," and seems Dutch in origin. But true to the name, these eighth have vanished in the diaspora. The initial "H" comes from mine, my mother's surname, and its roots have been eroded for close to three centuries. I use the initial of my given name in order to discard my personal history from my paintings. When exhibiting in public institutions, I request that wall signage about my paintings not include any procedure.

I use the name "Book" metonymically to describe the overarching system with which groups of paintings are generated. The temporal accumulation of paintings for sequential exhibitions is divided into chapters. This is an archival method that I have resolved to continue without end. What the aggregate chapters narrate is still unknown. On one level, they display images and patterns generated by the specifics of the place in which they were first shown. On another level, the paintings negotiate something more complex. They function as a suture between two movements: the transference of the pictured image onto a painted presence present that laterally, instead of horizontally, directs attention; and the subsequent circulation of the paintings as it either folds into the archive of the book/studio or embarks into the world-archive toark.

Despite frequent use of photography, the digital, and printmaking techniques. I use the name "painting" to describe what I do. I make paintings in the hope that the following two ideas may be activated: (1) attention, whether from a gaze or a glance, can be contained, reflected, and distracted; (2) that the paintings will correspond to the ever-changing temporal, spatial, and contextual conditions of their placement.

The Book began in 2001. The start of the new millennium, combined with the historical circumstances of 9/11, which occurred three months into my fortieth year, induced a sense of loss and the instinct to mark it. Realized that my individual paintings on wood panels I had been making up until that point were not going to radically change, and that the only way to get their attention and have them develop, despite their demands was to establish consistent dimensions, and insert them within an overarching serial structure. This system of uniform, interspaced dimensions and contextual chapters, activated more complex correspondences, which allowed the success of each painting to rest on differing sets of criteria. The initial focal address of the paintings could, within the serial structure, introduce extended time. This functioned in opposition to the speckled time offered by the average painting in the structure of the art world, and the lager worlds that dictated and surrounded it. In addition, the serial structure was an inoculation against limiting scenarios constructed around contemporary painting. Placibo or not, it effectively united a double bind: felt caught between a small articulate and neatly convincing endgame scenarios on one side versus the less glamorous and inarticulate reality that I had no desire to do anything other than make paintings.
R.H. Quaytman: Paratexts and Palimpsests
— Richard Birkett

[The paintings] display images and patterns generated by the specifics of the place in which they were first shown. On another level, they negotiate something more complex: They function as a counter between two moments: the transference of the pictured image onto a printed presence/present that laterally, instead of formally, directs attention; and the subsequent circulation of the painting as it either folds into the archive of the book/ studio or embarks into the world — archive to ark.
— R.H. Quaytman, Spine

Poetry is never a personal possession. The poem was a vision and gesture before it became sign and coded exchange in a political economy of value. At the moment these manuscripts are accepted into the property of nurture their philospher-author escapes the ritual of framing — symmetrical order and arrangement. Are all these works poems? Are they fragments, meditations, aphorisms, events, letters?
— Susan Howe, "Ithese Flames and Generosities of the Heart: Emily Dickinson and the Illogic of Sumptuary Values"

Richard Birkett finds a subversive literary methodology in R.H. Quaytman’s ordering of paintings into chapters, and the production of related paratexts and publications.

The poet Susan Howe’s second work of literary criticism, The Birth-mark: unsettling the wilderness in American literary history (1993), comprises a series of essays steeped in the words of characteristic North American voices and visions that remain antinomian and separatist. Howe depicts antinomianism — a term from Christian theology that emphasizes the following of inner belief rather than external moral law — as a vital dissenting lineage. The book mines the margins of radical North American literature through historical narratives in which linguistic lawlessness is pitted against authority. It suggests voice as formed by place, beginning with Anne Hutchinson, a seventeenth-century New England settler who challenged the covenant of works laid down by Puritan orthodoxy, and as a result was sent into exile. For Howe, orthodoxy is ever present within a textual canon: “a dark wall of rule supporting the structure of every letter, record, manuscript; every proof of authority or power.” By contrast, antinomianism is repressed and distinctly gendered: “The issue of editorial control is directly connected to the attempted erasure of antinomianism in our culture. Lawlessness seen as negligence is at first feminized and then restricted and banished.”

The core essays in The Birth-mark centre on particular historical voices and archival records but do not rest on the singular analysis of these texts. Instead, in form Howe’s writings take on a digressive structure, as literary scholar Susan Vanderborg has noted, with the response to an individual source... interrupted by questions, related sources and seemingly oppositional narratives.

2 Susan Howe, "Ithese Flames and Generosities of the Heart: Emily Dickinson and the Illogic of Sumptuary Values", The Birth-mark: unsettling the wilderness in American literary history, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1993, pp.147–68.
4 1984, p.4.
5 1984, p.4.

Artists: R.H. Quaytman
Gladstone Gallery

The book is a complex accumulation of 'text-parataxial dialogues,' and Howe's appropriation, much like the palindrome itself, in its process of historical recovery through the overwriting of the canon and the use of marginalia. Her essays, while addressing the question of the legibility of suppressed antinomian voices, implicate a genealogical reading of her own practice and its 'subversive' lines of influence. In its layering of quoted voices, The Birth-mark thus intersects with Howe's 'poems,' which set existing textual and paratextual sources together on a page, as if cut up and collaged. Such visual 'staging' of text articulates and problematises the contingencies of writing, while in strict terms not being 'writing' itself. This methodology of the palindrome also recurs in the 'paintings' of R.H. Quayuman — who is, perhaps not incidentally, the writer's daughter — which through the process of silhouette printing reproduce archival images as well as photographs of figures and situations determined by the non-arbitrary nature of specific exhibition sites. Quayman's sources, quoted through a reproductive medium, are part of a layered interplay of 'temporal, spatial and contextual conditions,' through which the artist positions painting as a discursive model.

For Howe, the methodology of re-inscribing the 'insubordinate' voices of the past through the inhabitation of physical and textual artefacts relates to the specific experience of female artists and writers. She has stated: 'If you are a woman, archives hold perpetual ironies. Because the gaps and silences are where you find yourself.' Her discussion of the distinctiveness of the North American voice has at its heart the poems of Emily Dickinson, in particular their antinomian genealogy, their isolation from the literary canon and the controlled nature of their posthumous publication. Howe's first work of literary criticism, My Emily Dickinson (1985), is a close reading of Dickinson's writing made in response to her manuscript books, which were only published in a facsimile edition in 1982.

In The Birth-mark, she concentrates on the articulation and distribution of Dickinson's radical writing during and beyond her lifetime, and its 'revising,' 'revisioning' and 'manhandling' at the hands of editors and institutions. The chapter 'These Flames and Generosities of the Heart: Emily Dickinson and the Illogic of Sumptuary Values' addresses the visibility of her poems and letters in her spacing, calligraphic marks, line breaks and marginalia. The poet's opaque ordering of writings in manuscript books, packets and sets can thus be seen in resistance to their subsequent editing into conventional publishable form.

In the late 1980s, in the period between Howe's publishing of My Emily Dickinson and The Birth-mark, Quayman combined working as an artist with the...
In 1989, Quaytman organised the first significant presentation in the US of the work of the Swedish painter Hilma af Klint, a radical early-twentieth-century abstractionist and devotee of theosophy. In an essay published in 2013, Quaytman details the impact of this exposure to af Klint’s work and ideas, a practice hidden in its time (seen only by a close network of fellow female artists) and neglected in the subsequent formation of a modernist canon. For Quaytman, the relevance of af Klint’s paintings stands in their ‘ability to immune abstraction’s terminal condition and give license to representation via language, botany, geometry, symbolism and the diagram’. Yet equally, the artist’s exclusion from the histories of abstraction, attributed to ‘her absence from any social network along whose lines abstraction developed’, poses for Quaytman vital questions of legibility. Just as Howe addresses Dickinson’s ‘gesture of infinite patience in preferring not to publish’, Quaytman queries how af Klint’s supposed self-isolation has been read, speculating instead on the deliberate construction of genealogies outside of the market and in opposition to the construction of the present by historians and critics.

That is, Quaytman considers the prescriptions of af Klint laid out in her will for the presentation of her work — that the entire body of her paintings and writings should be considered one unit and always remain together, and that this entity should not be exhibited until twenty years after her death — not as a strategy of inaccessibility, but as an artistic move towards holistic legibility in opposition to isolated singularity: ‘The weight of the single painting is displaced onto something larger than itself.’ The emphasis on the unity of af Klint’s work, and its implicit sanctioning against isolation, influenced Quaytman’s adoption of the metaphorical ‘armature of the book’ as a means to impose an overarching structure on the production of paintings. Thus, since 2001, Quaytman has articulated each grouping of paintings produced in response to a particular context as a ‘chapter’, a grouping considered part of an as yet incomplete whole — the ‘book’ that ultimately will comprise the entirety of Quaytman’s production.

This armature suggests an ambiguous relationship to the exhibition as a primary site of legibility. The ‘book’ serves as an autonomous DIY structure, yet at the same time the individual chapters emphasise coordinates usually given by exhibitions, such as the particular place, time and context of each grouping’s production. The chapters are sequentially numbered and individually titled, and each

Quaytman’s chapters treat painting and its supporting institutions as foundational manuscripts, to be written through.

contains a varying number of paintings, from as little as one to as many as fifty. The paintings themselves share physical and aesthetic characteristics within chapters, as well as across the wider serial structure: they all make use of gessoed plywood panels with bevelled edges, and on the whole carry images that hover between the crisp realism of the photographic and the muted, opaque layering of surface facture and homogenous abstract patterning. These silkscreened images and digitally rendered patterns are often reproduced more than once within a chapter. Finally, each chapter revolves around distinctive subjects, which are signalled by the paintings’ reproduction of paratextual materials such as archival documents, Polaroid photographs and portraits of individuals or interior spaces. Notably, Quaytman’s paintings are secondary ‘exposures’, making use of material with a previous existence, either drawn from an archive or produced by the artist as un-shown photographs, models or renderings.

These materials function as fragments of institutional, historical or personal

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1 Af Klint was associated with a group of four other female artists under the name de Fem (The Five), formed in 1896. The group followed women, making extensive notes on the ‘message’ received, which in turn influenced automatic drawings and the development of abstract forms in af Klint’s paintings.


3 R. Howe, Unfinished: The Birth of Modern Painting, op. cit., p.3.

events, annotating the reading of external situations as they also come to frame and comment on the conditions of each chapter, and of Quayman's practice. The artist has described the structure of her 'book' as 'essentially a calendar... a datebook with appointments (history and time), addresses (places and architecture) and people (viewers and viewed) inserted as time moves forward'. It can also be seen as a distinctly personal archive in formation — in fact, Quayman has on occasion presented all or a number of a chapter's paintings leaning against one another in storage racks, like books on shelves — both in the sense of the accumulation of materials as 'a frame for consciousness', and with regards to a serial organisation that foretells the 'oblivion of dispersion'. The 'entries' in this datebook or archive were between those that transparently reflect the chapter's surroundings, and those that follow filaments of visual or conceptual relations to eclectic and lyrical ends.

In her essay 'Allegorical Decors' (2008), Quayman quotes Roland Barthes's description of a methodology allowing for 'a multi-layering of meanings which always let the previous meaning continue as in a geological formation, saying the opposite without giving up the contrary'. Quayman rephrases and reframes the intertwining subjects of each chapter, fragmenting them and perceptually defamiliarising them, an exercise enacted through the local specificity of each source and its outward, unsettling movement into relations with other materials. The notion of the palimpsest as a paratexual strategy, evident in Howe's writing as a material process of re-inscription, an invocation of reading as a communal act and a critical tool of recovery, seems particularly relevant here. Howe's 'literary criticism', which is contiguous with her poetry, is grounded in the collective re-reading of central texts in tandem with their accumulating annotation, a perceptual and cognitive movement of reflecting and refracting. Similarly, Quayman's chapters are complex sites in which the artist seeks to maintain and simultaneously disrupt painting's absolute presence. They treat painting and its supporting institutions as foundational manuscripts, to be written through in order to recover traces of elision in their historical and social contexts. Principally for Quayman, the perceived singularity of painting overlooks its historical and contemporaneous operations within a collective social discourse — in the words of art historian Rhea Anastas, Quayman 'exposes instead a view of the moment of history as a field of relative positions sharing a common problematic'.

The adoption of a literary model of modular relations in Quayman's project extends to the syntactic structuring of the elements within a chapter, and its overall display. The artist produces paintings on wood panels in eight 'nesting' sizes, determined geometrically through the golden section. The exhibition of these proportionally defined units, which responds in each instance to the spatial particularities of the gallery or museum, echoes the logic of book design and layout, treating the white wall space between each element as a functional aspect of their sequencing. This relational arrangement recalls the organisation of language, particularly in poetry, where rhythm, metrics and emphasis draw each element into a relation with the whole. Such poetry also entails the negotiation of language between eye and tongue — a negotiation marked in Quayman's chapters by what the artist calls 'captions', or small hand-painted panels bearing monochromatic

19 R.J. Quayman, 'Date', Spin, op. cit.
20 In writing on Quayman's approach to the archive, the art historian Jules Maloney states: 'Quayman flips the archive, turning it on its side that polarizes the psycho-sensory sedimentation of the subject. In doing so she places the archive on the same side as the subject, a frame for consciousness rather than an impersonal repository.' J. Maloney, 'Painting, Folding', Scent, no. 90, 2012, p.104.
21 R.H. Quayman, 'Collectors', Spin, op. cit.
23 As highlighted by Vanderborg, the term 'palimpsest' was used by the poet E.D. Elnar as metaphor for the project of the woman poet writing through a patriarchal cultural history to recover traces of elided female myths and signs. E.D. Elnar, 'The Palimpsest as Communal Lyric', op. cit., p.60.
26 There are two anomalies to this system of sizing. From the inception of the system in 2001, one painting size was elected that does not 'nest' into the others — it was intentionally chosen to create a 'flaw' in the logic of the system. A second anomaly (one larger than any of the existing panel sizes) was added in 2012.
glyphs. These symbols are at times obliquely abstract, resembling decorative filigree; at others they appear as signage, the filigree forming into directional arrows, logo-like forms or typographic elements. The caption paintings are often positioned as if to comment on the works they appear alongside, or more enigmatically to register the manner in which an exhibition context asserts guiding principles. For example, in Exhibitoin Guide: Chapter 13 (2009), shown at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Boston, a painting of a white ribbon formed into the shape of an arrow on a black background greeted viewers as they exited the institution’s elevator, directing them into the main exhibition space and towards a second ‘introductory’ painting depicting the ICA’s founding.
manifesto. Rather than presenting didactic information on their surroundings, the ‘captions’ form networks of signs and discontinuities27 that undermine the hierarchy of text and paratext, centre and margin, photography and painting.

Quaytman has indicated that the forms that appear in many of the caption paintings reference the work of the early-twentieth-century Polish sculptor Katarzyna Kobro and her partner, the painter Władysław Strzemiński. Direct allusions to the artists are also present in images used in Łódź Poem, Chapter 2 (2004) and Constructivism, Chapter 13 (2009),28 while an arrangement of images and texts sourced by Quaytman in research on the Polish artists, titled Allegorical Decoys, was exhibited in a vitrine as part of Denial Is a River, Chapter 7 (2006). Allegorical Decoys is also the title of a 2008 artist’s book and its central essay, in which Quaytman cites Kobro and Strzemiński’s theory of ‘unism’ as an influence. This modernist theory, outlined in writings by the artists from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, expounds on the goal of producing artworks that

28 Both Kobro and Strzemiński were born in Russia and moved to Poland in the 1920s. Quaytman’s grandfather, Mark Quaytman, was a Jewish immigrant to the US from the city of Łódź in Poland, where the artists lived and worked from the mid-1920s until their death.
appear non-compositional, devoid of any specific reference or focal point. Addressing the distinction between the 'natural limits' of painting and sculpture, the Polish artists defined unist painting as 'motivated' by the a priori limits of the painting frame, not seeking 'justification in values that subsist beyond the picture' whereas unist sculpture, ungoverned by such a frame, was to be 'based upon the organic unity of sculpture and space [and] the expression of spatial relationships'.

Quaytman's production of silkscreened panels, in which the pictorial, the abstract and the architectonic collide, appears to intentionally complicate the dialogic terms of the unist address of painting and sculpture by collapsing both registers into the body of each chapter. Specifically, the artist seeks to push the isolated painting beyond its frame into the realm of the unist's intentions to abolish, as she writes, 'the objectness of sculpture in favour of its architectural integration into the space around it', just as Kobro sought to realise 'sculpture in space/time'.

Quaytman adopts strategies in which paintings actively construct the terms by which the viewing body experiences the work's spatial and temporal location, extending this integration further towards each chapter's penetration by the contextual site of exhibition.

In a number of chapters Quaytman makes use of photographic images of installed paintings and passing viewers, empty gallery spaces prior to exhibition and architectural models, creating mise en abyme effects that assert the spatial presence of the painting over the purely pictorial. And on occasion, this constructed, localising effect is heightened by Quaytman perpectively 'keystoning' the photographic silkscreen, suggesting the fiction of the image as encountered by the viewer from a specific, oblique angle. Yve-Alain Bois has noted how Kobro was 'always concerned with the space of our experience', citing her statement that 'we come to know space through our actions'. Quaytman's paintings construct a similar awareness in the

32. In chapters such as The, Chapter 10 (2008) and Passing Through the Opposite of What It Approaches, Chapter 25 (2013), the architecture of the exhibition space becomes a central subject, either through its depiction in photographs or schematic diagrams. In others, including Jack, Chapter 12 (2008–09) and Quad, Chapter 14 (2009), the hanging of a painting in a certain space, impacting on by a specific photographic or spatial context, is documented and translated onto the surface of a new painting.
viewer of one’s location ‘in front of and moving by’ toward the next painting’ a lateral movement often signified by representations of the bevelled edges of the plywood panels painted onto the surface of the silkscreened boards.

The presence in Quaytman’s chapters of strategies that implicate the ‘shifting positions of the viewer’ finds its limits in Op art-like works that confound such indexing of perception. Silkscreened applications of digital renderings of checks, concentric circles, vertical and horizontal lines, sometimes overlaying and occluding the photographic image, install an intense, non-hierarchical field onto the paintings’ surfaces. Moire patterning is created by the silkscreen itself, containing within the surface of the work the conditions of its production, while repelling the eye through ‘optical burn.’ Within the logic of the chapter, Quaytman situates paintings exhibiting such self-sufficient ‘sheer opticality’—channelling Strzeminski’s notion of a picture as ‘a thing designed for looking at’ only—in direct relation to those that integrate the work into a broader context. The arrangement of works within each chapter thus traces seemingly oppositional movements between photographic flaness, the mirroring of the situated gaze and the objectlessness of Op art—articulating the notion that, as Quaytman says, ‘attention, whether from a gaze or a glance, can be contained, reflected or distracted.’

It is significant that Quaytman locates these acts of viewing, and the associated ‘oscillation’ between the binary of contextual interdependency...

and the isolated monocural painting with reference to the dialogic development of unist values between Kober and Strzeminski. The enigmatic, recurring descriptor ‘allegorical decoys’ suggests a symbolic narrative both didactic and divertive. Among other individuals—friends, associates, historical figures—who have appeared in Quaytman’s work, often in photographic portraits, Kober and Strzeminski are not cited merely as totems of creative affinity, but are embedded as paradigmatic actors within still unfulfilled movements of excess and legibility. Occupying a marginal position within the art historical canon, they implicate an unruly, antagonistic model of temporal influence in the face of modernist singularity. In Strzeminski’s words: ‘it is not a question of assimilating some supposedly perfect, extra-temporal form. Such a form does not exist and never will, because the artistic criteria are in fact a sublimation of the criteria of life, which are different at every epoch.’ In a sub-chapter of the introduction to The Birth Mark titled ‘Submarginality’, Strohm explicitly states: “Every source has another source so is every creator.”

Quaytman’s construction of a ‘datebook’ through the accumulation of chapters and images charts such an accrual of meanings, constituencies and contingencies. The overarching structural devices recursively applied by the artist may suggest the desire to dispel the arbitrary, or more specifically, to impose control over the work’s legibility—“the book” serving as a third way between the oblivion of paintings gathering dust in storage and their hyper-circulation.

35. These hand-painted motifs also being to mind the configuration of the paintings when placed on storage racks, showing that their edges like the edges of books.
41. Quaytman’s chapters have included staged images of artists and curators including Dan Graham, Andrew Ross, Ed Hefley, Matt Mullican, Thomas Beard, Suzanne Oon and Hannes Sartori. Ordinarily, these individuals form part of Quaytman’s social network — they are friends, and people encountered as part of her working life as an artist. Their presence makes palpable certain connections to artistic lineage, while complicating those associations through the implication of personal exchange. For instance, Quaytman was Graham’s studio assistant, and while his work bears some resemblance to and subjectivity is of Graham’s reference, in turn, Chapter 23 does connect these concerns and ideas through a further reference to the nineteenth-century British artist John Martin, whom Graham has referred to as the “first sci-fi artist.” Extending from those within Quaytman’s direct milieu, the artist also includes other subjects through more associative references for instance poet Jack Spicer is cited through the appearance of his poetry in 1 Lost His World Classic New Odd Poetry, Chapter 29 (2010—11) and David von Schlegell through images of his public sculptures in Boston in exhibition guide: Chapter 17 (2006).
44. Quaytman has spoken of the trauma of dealing with the storage of Harvey Quaytman and David von Schlegell’s artworks after their deaths. H.H. Quaytman, ‘Collection’, Op. cit.
as commodities. Yet for Quaytman these processes are paradoxically not a pitch for 'independence'; they are an immersion in 'interdependence and contextuality' as a viable critique of the canonical accrual of value—a critical reflection on artwork at the junction of becoming 'sign and coded exchange in a political economy of value'.

This is perhaps most evident in the publications that Quaytman has produced since 2008: Allegorical Decays (2008), Spine (2011) and 7, Chapter 24 (2012). These paratexts are not conventional exhibition catalogues or monographs, but extensions of the contextual operations within chapters. Allegorical Decays spans the period between 2005 and 2008, during which Quaytman was a director of Orchard, a gallery on New York's Lower East Side collectively run by twelve artists and art historians and driven by the legacies of Conceptual art and Institutional Critique. It implicates the gallery as a frame for Quaytman's production within and beyond her identification as a painter, including three texts written by the artist, alongside images of paintings from the ten chapters produced up to that date, some of which were exhibited at Orchard and reflect the exhibitions and people who formed that context. An essay that relays Quaytman's experience organising an exhibition of Jeff Geys sits alongside an ekphrastic poem formed around the words of artist Thomas Eggerer. The placement of these two distinct textual modes in relation to one another is abrupt but telling: the former is anecdotal yet also analytical, questioning the responsibilities in presenting another artist's work as well as in relation to the communal discourse of the Orchard project; the latter quotes speech shared privately to form an elegy to a visually absent painting, Eggerer's The Call of the Wind I (2007), and to the language of self-examination:

...The space doesn't hold what it seems to promise. rotating around itself reversing the perspective we expect. I say reverse—maybe that's too strong a word but it doesn't follow the logic if we want the painting to rhyme in perspective.

Yes there is a lot about rhythm and rhyme in my paintings. Musical structure But maybe that's a tricky one to say—painters often say that you know.

The third text in Allegorical Decays details the 'circumlocution' of Quaytman's approach to painting. A numbering system relates sections of the essay to accompanying images, but rather than being directly embedded in the text, these illustrations appear on the book's cover, which unfolds into a large poster bearing reproductions of 54 of Quaytman's paintings. This unusual architecture figures the sequencing of images as one remove from the expansive, reflexive writing. In keeping with this apparatus, Quaytman's text largely resists direct interpretation of the paintings pictured. The book maps a series of relationships between interior and anterior, text and paratext—the 'interweaving of expectation and categories...checking itself'. The code of the image sheet suggests the attribution of meaning as an act of communal, multiple unfoldings, echoing the aspirations of Orchard itself.

Quaytman's second publication, Spine, collates images of the paintings from all twenty chapters produced between 2004 and 2011, alongside self-authored descriptions. The folded cover of the book is again a bearer of central content, inventing the conventional text-paratext hierarchy: an essay that extends the self-reflection of Allegorical Decays is divided across inside and outside covers, with section titles echoing institutional captioning ('Name',...
'Title', 'Date', 'Medium', 'Dimension', 'Collection'). While the book holds a sense of comprehensiveness, it is undoubtedly also palimpsestic, as images and paratextual annotations that have previously appeared momentarily, as part of a relentless cycle of exhibitions and press releases, are collated and re-issued outside of this flow. Emphasising this, 

Spine recursively functions as the 'primary site reference' for the final chapter represented in the publication: 

Spine, Chapter 20, which was produced to be shown in two exhibitions in 2011, at Kunsthalle Basel and at the Neuberger Museum of Art at Purchase College—SUNY in upstate New York. 

Spine, Chapter 20 holds the archival structure of Quaytman's practice back onto itself, the chapter's 37 paintings mining Quaytman's archive of films that she has used to produce silkscreens for previous chapters. Across its presentations in Basel and at Purchase, new collusions of images and transferences of meanings between one work and the next were mirrored by the material, spatial and temporal layering of paintings. In one work, a vertically oriented panel bears the silkscreened image of a 16mm film projector, originally used in Ark, Chapter 16 (2008). This image, which relates to the re-presentation of a 1973 film screening

by Michael Asher at Orchard in 2005, is newly superimposed on the spectral image of the naked backside of film curator Thomas Beard (a friend of Quaytman), which formed the central motif in Beard, Chapter 19 (2010). In Basel, this new painting, titled Spine, Chapter 20 (Ark/ Asher Screening/ Beard) (2011), was itself hung over the top of a second, larger horizontal panel of vertical grey gradient lines, its Op backdrop throbbing like the banding on a defunct video monitor. On the wall next to this composite work, a panel titled Spine, Chapter 20 (Denial Is a River) (2011) bore the image of a basement wall of the SculptureCenter building in New York, an image originally repeated in the three works that form Denial Is a River, Chapter 7 (2006). In the Neuberger Museum version of the exhibition, this arrangement of panels and impositions was reversed, with Spine, Chapter 20 (Denial Is a River) hung over the grey Op panel and Spine, Chapter 20 (Ark/ Asher Screening/ Beard) displaced to elsewhere in the installation. This interplay of historical and conceptual affinities, friendships and institutional sites—caught in movements between revealing, exhibiting, projecting or occluding—proposes Spine, Chapter 20 as a metasite of paratextual community.

The selection of particular examples from a large group is always a social act. By choosing to install certain narratives somewhere between history, mystic speech and poetry, I have enclosed them in an organisation, although I know there are places no classificatory procedure can reach, where connections between words and things we thought existed break off.

For me, paradoxes and ironies of fragmentation are particularly compelling.

Every statement is a product of collective desire and divisibilities. Knowledge, no matter how I get it, involves exclusions and repression.

— Susan Howe, "Incloser" 49

49 Susan Howe, "Incloser", The Birth-mark, op. cit., p.45.