

BEDFORD + BOWERY

Art This Week: Immigrant Stories and Secondhand Paintings



*Robert Buck
Second Hand, 2015
Oil paint and India ink on found oil
painting
12 x 9 x 1/8 inches*

Second Hand

*Opening Saturday, April 21 at
Uterior Gallery, 6 pm to 8 pm. On view
through May 27.*

Any work coming from an artist who “changed his surname as a work of art” is bound to be, if anything, interesting. And “interesting” was indeed what came to my mind when I heard about the latest offering by Robert Buck (formerly Robert Beck), which consists of a series of “modified” paintings the artist found at thrift stores. Rather than taking these found paintings and turning them into something unrecognizable, Buck takes a more minimal approach: he adds copies of signatures people left in his guest book at past exhibitions, and then he signs his name. The fact that these slightly-altered preexisting paintings are now being showcased in a New York gallery certainly raises some of those age-old questions that have always swirled around artmaking, such as what qualifies as art and who is permitted to take credit for it.

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By Cassidy Dawn Graves