YALE UNION, a nonprofit art institution, was commissioned by Killian Pacific, the private developer of Goat Blocks mixed use project at SE 10th and SE Belmont Street, to create and install an outdoor public artwork. The artwork will take the form of an ongoing economic relationship between Yale Union and Killian Pacific, publicly articulated through five on-site mural panels.

The primary conduit for this relationship is the four major public utility bills that Yale Union must pay every month: electricity, water, gas, and internet. These publicly regulated services, administered in part through the city of Portland, comprise a significant portion of the operating budget for Yale Union.

\*\* Killian Pacific’s ongoing finance contributions to YALE UNION help fund the payment of the public utility costs for Yale Union, which is represented by this artwork. \*\*

In this reciprocal relationship, Killian Pacific directly supports Yale Union operations and public programming, and Yale Union returns the social and civic benefits of a local arts organization to the Killian Pacific development and the neighborhood at large. By commissioning this public art piece, Killian Pacific will help—literally—to keep the lights on at the art institution that is also its neighbor across Belmont Street.

On the four mural sites on the north building, we propose large paintings of Yale Union’s monthly utility bills. The design of these murals starts from the graphic forms of the bills, but removes the month-specific billing information. What remains is only the graphic furniture of these documents—the particulars of the transaction are removed, but its obligation remains.

For the final mural site on the south building, we propose to paint this description (what you are reading right now). We conceive this to function something like a future-looking caption, one that helps to unpack the ongoing exchange at the center of this artwork while providing possible language for later thinking around its complexities.

All of this asks for a public’s close attention. This is not unusual; art often asks for the same, relying on an unspoken contract between the audience and the work in which each agree to regard the other with care and deliberation. This very artwork, the contractual agreement between Killian Pacific and Yale Union, makes similar demands of its public.