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Elderly woman accused of replacing pricy painting with fake

By [Kathianne Boniello](#)

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Getty Images/iStockphoto

An Illinois health tech company with a vast art collection says an elderly Manhattan woman is holding one of its paintings hostage after someone switched it out for a “deliberate fake.”

But 90-year-old Carol Feinberg claims she bought the piece fair and square — and has no plans to give it up.

Medical device maker Abbott Laboratories says it acquired the oil painting in 1960, yet the artwork then ended up in Feinberg’s Park Avenue pad, where it’s been hanging for the last 25 years.

The company is suing her in Manhattan Federal Court, demanding the painting be returned. The firm says it didn’t learn its version of the work was a fake until 2016.

But Feinberg says she purchased the piece for hundreds of thousands of dollars from a New York gallery in 1993, claiming in her own suit against Abbott in Illinois that the lab knew since 2003 that at least part of its collection contained forgeries.

Neither side would identify details of the piece or the artist who painted it.

Abbott hasn’t provided proof of ownership and never insured it against theft or loss, Feinberg alleges in court papers.

“Abbott has not produced a shred of credible documentation which supports [its] claim, whereas Mrs. Feinberg has owned this picture for decades and has a bill of sale for the picture from a well-known Madison Avenue gallery which proves it,” said Feinberg’s lawyer, John Cahill.

Abbott declined comment.

