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SFMOMA ACQUIRES IMPORTANT WORK BY ANN HAMILTON

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) is pleased to announce the acquisition of the work *indigo blue* by artist Ann Hamilton. Conceived in 1991 as a site-specific installation for the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, *indigo blue* was inspired by the region's labor history of producing indigo (both a plant and a dye), inextricably bound to its plantation economy. Although *indigo blue* is indelibly linked to its original site, its re-creation at SFMOMA represents the fluid nature of the artist's practice and the work's ability to accrue new meaning over time rather than remaining temporally or contextually finite. The work will be on view at SFMOMA until October 8, 2007.

Indigo blue is comprised of some 18,000 pieces of used, blue work clothes that are folded and piled on a steel-and-wood platform. In front of the platform are a wooden table and stool where an attendant sits and erases text from a book titled *International Law Situations*, published by the Naval War College, exemplifying Hamilton's incorporation of an active, physical presence within her work. The attendant moistens an eraser with saliva, rubs out lines of text, and allows the eraser filings to accumulate into a pile at the book's edge. Hamilton has described this activity as a way of "using the body to re-mark history—taking the mechanically reproduced text and replacing it with the mark of the body." The work also acts as a surrogate voice for the anonymous laborers represented by the mountain of blue uniforms located behind the work table.

Hamilton typically engages participants in the unmaking of some component in her installations, whether through acts of erasure, burning, or emptying. The performative actions of the body are an essential aspect of Hamilton's work, investing the piece with an element of authorship. The activity in *indigo blue*, in particular, speaks to how traces of the human body have the potential to participate in the rewriting of a history.

The artist's interest in the history of American labor was an underlying motivation behind the creation of this work, and she has read extensively about labor issues over the years. Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980) provided a specific source of inspiration. Hamilton focuses "on the uniforms of anonymous 'blue-collar' workers, whose names, for the most part, are lost from written histories," curator Joan Simon has noted.

Taken together, all of the materials of *indigo blue* point to the artist's interest in process and how it is bound to notions of time: the process of developing and assembling the piece, including sourcing and arranging materials; the lifecycle of the clothing, suggested by the garments' various states of wear; and the processes that are demonstrated and implied through the act of unmaking (erasing) a given object. *indigo blue* embodies the

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artist's abiding concerns with how material realities possess temporal qualities, or how changes in organic or cultural matter can speak to forgotten or overlooked histories and inform our perception over time.

OBJECT INFORMATION

Ann Hamilton

indigo blue, 1991/2007

Blue work clothing, steel-and-wood platform, wood table, stool, lamp, light bulb, books (military regulation manuals, blue bindings), Pink Pearl erasers, participant erasing lines of text in the books

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. The Museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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