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**The Latest**

## 7 Questions for Artist Ann Hamilton

Posted by Kristen Schmidt on April 21, 2015

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Columbus is proud to call artist Ann Hamilton one of our own. This week, the city benefits from her talent and residence again with the premiere of "the theater is a blank page," a collaborative performance piece by Hamilton and the renowned SITI theater company of New York City.

Apropos of this 25th anniversary season at the Wexner Center for the Arts, this work brings together artists who have long been associated with the center, and it was completed in residence at the Wex by Hamilton as well as SITI collaborators and co-artistic directors Anne Bogart, Leon Ingulsrud and Ellen Lauren.

We asked Hamilton seven questions about the creative process, inspiration, collaboration and, yes, art.

"The theater is a blank page" opens Thursday and runs through Sunday in the Mershon Auditorium.



**What about performance as a medium gets your creative engines running?**

Work that is live is always changing and is being changed as people, place and time cross. Paying attention, being in these changes is what makes me feel alive. Anything can happen, and everything is possible. Work that is live is at base an exchange.

**Can you describe your experience with Anne Bogart and SITI on “the theater is a blank page”? Has it been like playing with friends, or is it a more challenging experience with rewards for hard work?**

It is definitely playing with friends—long hours, working elbow to elbow, in conversation, finding form together. I have deep respect for everyone in SITI and am so thrilled and honored to work with them. In bringing together the experience of reading and the space of theatre, we are making something neither of us would make alone, working in ways that are new to each of our practices.

**How do you celebrate or otherwise mark the premiere of a show like “the theater is a blank page”?**

First off—we will all get a good night's sleep! When we sit together with the first audience, we, too, will begin to experience it for the first time. After opening night, the work will continue to grow, to shift and refine. We will come to understand more what it is, what it has become and what it needs.

**What have been some of your favorite theater experiences (as an audience member) in Columbus and elsewhere?**

In Columbus, I have been spoiled by the variety of music and experimental theater I have seen in the Wexner black box theater, beginning with SITI Company's early performance, *The Medium*. Outside Columbus, we have friends with a tiny theater for 25 in their SoHo loft. It is always unexpected, intimate and provocative; whenever we are in New York, we go for the experiments and conversations. They make a context for bring people together.

**Where are some of your favorite places to go in Columbus to experience art? (Besides the Wexner Center, of course.) Any hidden or unsung gems we should be checking out?**

The Wexner is a large part of what makes life for artists in Columbus possible, but I also love going to the Scott antique show at the Ohio Expo Center, thrift stores citywide and stopping at The Golden Hobby Shop in German Village on my way to the studio. It is always fascinating looking at objects, the made and the found. In terms of alternative art spaces, Mint is attracting a lot of wonderful young energy.

**A lot of students are about to be freshly minted fine arts graduates in a few weeks. Any words of wisdom on being seen and heard?**

Disappear into your work and see what happens. Have faith and let it lead you. Shun the "should" voice.

**You have an all-expenses-paid trip to any art exhibition in any city in the world this weekend. Where are you headed?**

New York City to see The Plains Indians exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum. (If you asked in early May, it would be attending the Biennale in Venice.)

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