

Wex hosts highly anticipated SITI/Hamilton piece

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Ann Hamilton (right) has collaborated with SITI theater company and its co-founder, Anne Bogart, for a sold-out production at the Wexner Center for the Arts. (Photo by Katie Spengler)

Immersive Artist Residency Award Project performance *the theater is a blank page* debuts onstage

By Erik Pepple

Wexner Center for the Arts

The Wexner Center for the Arts is set to present the world premiere of *the theater is a blank page*, an immersive performance created by renowned visual artist Ann Hamilton and theater innovators SITI Company. The production, the first full collaboration between the artists, was created through a Wexner Center Artist Residency Award and is a signature moment of the Wexner Center's 25th anniversary season.

Combining Hamilton's conceptual, visual art-based perspective on performance with SITI Company's skills as theater-makers, *the theater is a blank page*, which will be performed April 23-26 at Mershon Auditorium, pushes the artists' aesthetics into fresh experimental territory. No tickets are currently available to the performance, but additional information — including a waiting list for performances — is available at wexarts.org.

"From its inception 25 years ago, the Wexner Center has served as a habitat for research and experimentation across creative disciplines; a laboratory providing artists with generous financial, professional and technical support toward the production of new work," said Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin. "We're thrilled that the center's sustained commitment over two-plus decades to SITI Company and Ann Hamilton, respectively, has provided these artists the opportunity to become acquainted, develop a discourse and ultimately forge a fully collaborative work. This project perfectly exemplifies the spirit and sweep of our Artist Residency Program."

The work's title metaphorically refers to the meta-experience of reading — being aware of both the solitary act of reading and of the author's narrative journey. As an extension of this idea, Hamilton and Anne Bogart, Leon Ingulsrud and Ellen Lauren (SITI's co-artistic directors on this project) will focus on the apparatus of theater — its architecture, mechanics and tools — as well as on the audience's immersion in the performance's ever-evolving layers of images.

Text from Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927), known for its shifting temporal and psychological perspectives set alongside poignant ruminations on loss, subjectivity and perception, will be another point of

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More information on *the theater is a blank page* is available at wexarts.org/performing-arts/ann-hamilton-and-siti-company-theater-blank-page.

About the artists

Internationally renowned installation-art pioneer Ann Hamilton, a Distinguished University Professor in the Department of Art, has engaged the Wexner Center since *New Works for New Spaces* (1990-91), one of its inaugural exhibitions, and was the subject of the center's 1996 survey of her multimedia work, *the body and the object*. In addition to representing the U.S. at the 1999 Venice Biennale, Hamilton has exhibited installations at such major institutions as the Park Avenue Armory, Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Modern Art in New York, and has received the prestigious MacArthur "Genius" Award, among countless others.

Through Wexner Center creative residencies, SITI Company has created and premiered multiple works at the center, including *Bob* (1998), *Alice's Adventures* (1998), *Room* (2000), and *Score* (2002), and presented several other productions on the center's stages. Among other notable accolades, SITI Company has received the Rene Castillo Otto Award for Political Theater and the American Theatre Wing Award.

Hamilton met SITI Company through SITI's repeat visits to the Wexner Center, which led to her inviting SITI actors and designers to take part in her acclaimed, large-scale installation *the event of a thread* at the Park Avenue Armory in late 2012. This success triggered their interest in joining forces for *the theater is a blank page*.



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