

## *indigo blue*

Located in an old garage off the center of the historic district of Charleston, South Carolina, this project was a part of the 1991 Spoleto Festival USA which commissioned artists to select sites and work in response to the social history and contemporary context of the city. Hamilton responded to her perceptions of the selective memory that the city markets as a tourist industry, as well as her own concern with a history that is based more in the somatic experience of the body than in the statistical accounting of events and facts.

Hamilton selected 45 Pinckney Street, a former auto repair shop that had previously served as a carriage house, as the site for indigo blue. Appropriately, Pinckney Street was named for Eliza Pinckney who, while running her father's plantation, introduced indigo to the Charleston in 1744.

In the center of the space, a 17'x24' steel platform was piled with 14,000 pounds of blue work clothing. Built layer by layer, the pile was formed by smoothing successive strata of pants and shirts until a volume of clothing the size of a semi truck was formed. At the back of the space, obscured from view by the pile, an attendant sat and erased slim blue books at a table borrowed from the central market, which formerly housed one of Charleston's pre civil war slave markets. Using a Pink Pearl eraser and saliva, the books were erased back to front. The eraser waste was left to accumulate over the duration of the piece. Although the space was entered at ground level, a window accessible in the small upstairs office of the garage gave another view of the pile of work clothes and the activity at the table. One wall of the office was hung with udder-sized net bags of soybeans that sprouted and later rotted in the leakage of summer rains. With the humid weather, the space was filled with the musty smell of the damp clothes and the organic decomposition of the soybeans.

—Ann Hamilton