



**Ann Hamilton**  
*when an object reaches for your hand, 2019/20*

We register touch consciously and unconsciously, in the near at hand, as in the far. A whistle reaches us through a window, or across a field, so we awaken to the presence of another, and likewise are called into ourselves. A bird shuffles its wings and reminds us we do not occupy a space alone. Hearing is how we touch at a distance— just as the cloth encircling our wrists and the tools that callous our palms, and the stone we select from hundreds along the shore, brings us into communion with other beings. The traditional hierarchy dismantles when we consider the endlessly complex ways that animals, plants and objects make our lives possible. The carved roundness of a Pre-Roman stone, or the flimsy, ethereal collapse of a plastic bag speaks of this ongoing exchange between all beings.

Like the near-far variations of touch, so our attention focuses and recedes with the elements in the installation: printed images, record players, and projected texts. The images, featuring objects selected from friends' homes and the university's archive, are presented in book-form stacks on tables throughout the gallery. The shallow depth of field characteristic of the outmoded scanners give these objects: clothing, ancient geological fragments, fossils, puppets, medical tools, and biological specimens—their spectral quality.

In the spirit of the university's mission to make its archive available, visitors may take a print from the stacks, either for themselves or to mail to an address of their choice at the mailing stations in the gallery.

*There are countless things that you accumulate around you: fans, postcards, perfume bottles, necklaces hung on the walls. But on closer examination every object proves special, somehow unexpected. Your relationship with objects is selective, personal; only the things you feel yours become yours: it is a relationship with the physicality of things, not with an intellectual or affective idea that takes the place of seeing them and touching them. And once they are attached to you, marked by your possession, the objects no longer seem to be there by chance, they assume meaning as elements of a discourse, like a memory composted of signals and emblems.*  
 —Italo Calvino

