



The installation, *human carriage*, commissioned by the Guggenheim Museum as part of *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* rims the rotunda’s parapet walls with a slender pipe to create a pathway, from the upper end of the museum’s ramp to the entrance below, for the descent of a wheeled carriage with two suspended Tibetan cymbal bells. The bells ring intermittently as the carriage descends and traverses the entire length of Frank Lloyd Wright’s spiral, the sound both everywhere and nowhere at once, until it comes to rest at the bottom of the spiral, where it triggers the drop of a bundle of reconstructed books. Although gravity propels the bells down the spiral, an attendant at the top manages the system and manually orchestrates an exchange: the placement of new book weights below, as the bell carriage is pulled back to the top of the spiral, and readied for a return journey on the pipe that traces and responds to the incline of the spiral walls -- producing a cyclical exchange between the sound and air of the bells and the silence and weight of the books.



artist	Ann Hamilton
title	<i>carriage</i>
date	2009
medium	slices of paperback books, cheese cloth, string, bookbinders glue, binders board, museum board, bookbinding cloth, acrylic panels
edition	15 with 3 artist’s proofs
dimensions	Outside circumference 13 3/4”, inside circumference 5 1/2”, depth 2 1/2” (16 3/4” length if laid straight), box dimensions: 18 7/8” square 4 1/2” high
other	Produced by Ann Hamilton Studio, Columbus, Ohio with archival box by Culpeck & Clark Limited, Rhinebeck, New York

carriage, an edition produced in conjunction with the installation of *human carriage*, further transforms a core component of the commission: a set of “guillotined” books representing the vast bibliography that serves as the intellectual foundation for the exhibition. American artists used translations of Asian literary and philosophical texts as one of their main sources for understanding the East. Hamilton investigates the processes of circulation, transmission, interpretation, appropriation, and misunderstanding of these texts through this “materialization of reading,” in which cross-sections of multiple books run as veins through newly made artifacts. Still hinged at the spine but now free to fan out, move, and be combined in new forms, these fragments are layered, with spines glued to a cheesecloth backing to create a ring-shaped object or collar that retains the language and references of a book while evoking other associations: the *bhavacakra* (wheel of life); the spiral of the Guggenheim; and the Zen Buddhist *enso* (Japanese word for “circle”) paintings which can imply many things at once -- completeness, nothingness, the absolute, the enlightenment with no beginning/no end in all phenomena. Structurally, strings between the cheesecloth and spine provide a “handle” or “tie” that mimics the way book fragments are constructed to act as counter-weights within the museum installation. The collar, made using the traditional materials of bookbinding, is housed in a transparent box that both protects and serves as a display case.