

Philadelphia Museum of Art 1996

## KOCOT AND HATTON

Marcia Kocot and Thomas Hatton's work tends to fall into various conceptual series of long evolution, such as the ten-year serial project of self-portraits that they undertook in 1973, which was intended to convey an ever-changing perception of their own identities. *Red, Yellow, and Blue* is part of an ongoing series entitled "8," which consists essentially of monotypes produced using inked bubble wrap instead of more traditional metal, stone, plastic, or glass plates. The "8" series was inspired by a 1987 announcement from the Kitt Peak Observatory of the discovery of three "mirage arcs" in star clusters on the perimeter of the universe, which the artists imagined to be "light reflecting back from the end of space."<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1990s, Kocot and Hatton began to suggest the idea of bounded infinity through ink drawings of traditional figure eights, which eternally return upon themselves, much like a Möbius strip. These ink drawings led to a series of works printed with ink on kraft paper using bubble wrap. These later works, for the most part, incorporate a digital representation of the number eight, a form inferring electronic space that reveals and obscures all numbers.

The patterns utilized in *Red, Yellow, and Blue*, derived from a nineteenth-century international color-code manual in which patterns symbolized colors, operate on a similar level, with a display of color that can be read so that it simultaneously presents color to the mind (the patterned codes) and to the eye (the pigments). The red pigment in the left panel of the triptych is reinforced by the vertical line pattern for red, whereas the green pigment in the central panel conforms to the chaotic pattern for yellow. In the right panel, the horizontal line pattern for blue amplifies the blue pigment.

*Red, Yellow, and Blue* presents additive (red, green, and blue) and subtractive (red, yellow, and blue) primary colors, using codes and pigments coexisting simultaneously. It is not a synthesis, but rather Kocot and Hatton's attempt to allow two concepts of color to occupy the same space at the same time. Paradoxes—such as the concept of dimensionless space, infinite yet bounded, or the symbolizing of one color through a pattern that is visually presented in another color—are fundamental to the artists' thinking. They force the viewer to confront new perceptions of self, of space, of scale, of perspective, and of the place of works of art in the viewer's consciousness. Ann Percy

*Red, Yellow, and Blue*,  
from the "8" series

1993

AM Multigraphic ink printed from  
bubble-wrap plastic on three sheets of  
kraft paper

44<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 29<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (112.4 x 74 cm) sheets

132<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 87<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (337.2 x 221.9 cm)  
assembled

1993-57-1a,b,c

1. Kocot and Hatton, artists' statement, August 30,  
1990, n.p.



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1989-1995

KOCOT AND HATTON

MARCIA KOCOT (pp. 48-49)

Born 1944, Northampton, Massachusetts  
Studied Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine  
Arts, Philadelphia, C.F.A., 1967  
University of Pennsylvania, B.F.A., 1987  
Resides Philadelphia

THOMAS HATTON

Born 1946, Kingston, Pennsylvania  
Studied Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine  
Arts, C.F.A., 1968  
Resides Philadelphia

Over the past twenty-five years, the two artists now known as Kocot and Hatton have gone by a variety of names, including Tom Hatten and Xochital, Hatten Co., Tom and X Hatten, and Xochitaltomhatten. In the early years, only Hatton's name was associated with their work because it was often difficult to garner interest in collaborative projects. Kocot and Hatton met in 1964 when they were students at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, were married in 1967, and began working together during those years. Notably, the first work they ever sold to a museum was purchased by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1968. They are best known for the long-term portrait project they commenced in 1973, when they committed to painting weekly portraits of

themselves over a ten-year period. They began the project using a palette of only black and white and added a new color each year, culminating in the addition of red in 1983. These portraits were intended to reveal the continuously changing social guises the two assumed. A sampling of these paintings was first exhibited in 1974, in the *Made in Philadelphia 2* show at the Institute of Contemporary Art. A number of the works also appeared in the opening exhibition of the Nexus Gallery in 1976, where as a pair, Kocot and Hatton were part of the original artists' cooperative. Since then, they have had solo exhibitions, including one entitled *Scale/Ratio: A Work for Two Sites*, shown at the Jessica Berwind Gallery and at the Levy Gallery for the Arts, at the Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia. Kocot and Hatton's longstanding collaboration has inspired them to investigate other collaborative artistic efforts. Their research on the subject appeared in the 1990 catalogue of the exhibition *Team Spirit*, an examination of cooperative artistic projects. In 1995, Kocot and Hatton participated in the exhibition *Hiroshima: From Me to You*, at the Fukuya Gallery in Hiroshima. The show traveled to Tokyo and to other venues in the United States.