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***The Improvisational Quilts
of Susana Allen Hunter***

Target audience: General public as well as the special niche audiences of African Americans and quilters

Label type: Object grouping

The Henry Ford

Dearborn, Michigan



Praise from the Jurors

Labeling the objects with quotes from people in the artist's world helps me make meaning of all these things that I have probably seen in a hundred history museums. I can envision a life and integrate this vision with the quilts that also came from the artist's world.

— **Barbara Becker**

I liked the use of quotes to humanize a group of mundane objects, connecting them to the life of the quilt maker and her family. I felt that I understood the family's spare household environment, and I had the sense that Susana created beauty from whatever was at hand and could become part of her practice. The object IDs also make important contributions to the story, showing me precisely how each object was connected to, made, or used by family members. It was also quite powerful to see that the museum has brought most of these modest objects into their permanent collection to document the life of this artist and the context in which the quilts were made. I think the museum accomplished their goal of letting visitors explore Susana's life through first-person oral histories, without adding an "interpretive voice" to explain the objects' power.

— **Phyllis Rabineau**

Label copy

"She made her slips, her dresses, her aprons."

Tommie Hunter *Susana Hunter's grandson*

Apron

1965–1970

Slip

1940–1965

Made by Susana Hunter

2006.80.18; 2006.80.14

Given in memory of Susana Allen Hunter

by Paul Hunter and Tommie and Susie Hunter

"Got water from the spring, about a half mile behind the house."

Tommie Hunter *Susana Hunter's grandson*

Buckets and Dipper

Used by the Hunter family

Mid-20th century

2006.80.33; 2006.80.34; 2006.80.36

Given in memory of Susana Allen Hunter

by Paul Hunter and Tommie and Susie

Hunter

"The only way we found out what was going on, we had a dry cell radio . . . that's the only news we had. We had two stations on the radio that we could pick up."

Tommie Hunter *Susana Hunter's grandson*

Battery-powered Radio

Watterson Radio Manufacturing Co., Dallas, Texas

Used by the Hunter family

About 1940

Courtesy of Tommie and Susie Hunter

"We would let the milk turn to clabber. Then we would put it in the churn and churn it."

Tommie Hunter *Susana Hunter's grandson*

Butter Churn

Used by the Hunter family

Mid-20th century

2006.80.41

Given in memory of Susana Allen Hunter

by Paul Hunter and Tommie and Susie

Hunter

"No electricity. I had lamps for when I had to get my lessons for school."

Tommie Hunter *Susana Hunter's grandson*

Kerosene lamp

Used by the Hunter family

Mid-20th century

2006.80.28

Given in memory of Susana Allen Hunter

by Paul Hunter and Tommie and Susie

Hunter

"She'd cook anything. My mom taught me to cook..."

Paul Hunter *Susana Hunter's son*

Griddle

Frying Pan

Mixing Bowl

Used by the Hunter family

Mid-20th century

2006.80.38-40

Given in memory of Susana Allen Hunter

by Paul Hunter and Tommie and Susie

Hunter

Wind-up Phonograph

Geib, Chicago, Illinois

Used by the Hunter family

About 1935

Basin

Used by the Hunter family

Mid-20th century

2006.80.35

Given in memory of Susana Allen Hunter

by Paul Hunter and Tommie and Susie

Hunter

Recordings

"That's All Right" by Arthur Crudup (RCA Victor)

"Love Me or Let Me Be" by James Clark (Columbia)

1945-1949

Courtesy of Tommie and Susie Hunter