

Public message in an alley

By Charles Desmarais

Hank Willis Thomas is one of the more prolific artists working today, and his production seems to know no bounds of medium. A conceptual artist who makes real objects out of humor and pain, personal identity and activist politics, he has worked in painting, photography, video and sculpture.

Thomas' first American foray into permanent public art will be unveiled on Thursday, Nov. 9. The work is on Annie Street, an alleyway near the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of the African Diaspora, and adjacent to the California Historical Society.

"Love Over Rules" is a neon sculpture addressed to a broad audience, but it is also a tribute to the artist's cousin, murdered in 2000. The work consists of the man's words, recorded in his last message to Thomas.

At 6 p.m., Thomas will speak on his project and his career at a free event at the historical society. At 7 p.m., the outdoor work will be illuminated for the first time, followed by a 7:30 p.m. reception.

In a cogent reminder of how much a concept can change, the work is dramatically different from a bronze sculpture Thomas proposed in 2015.

The Thomas work is the third public art project of Sites Unseen, a relatively new nonprofit that concen-



Dorka Keehn / Sites Unseen

"Love Over Rules," a permanent work by Hank Willis Thomas, is on Annie Street in San Francisco.

Hank Willis Thomas unveils "Love Over Rules": Talk, 6 p.m. (fully subscribed — see website for wait list). Public sculpture lighting, 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 9. Free. California Historical Society, 678 Mission St., S.F. (415) 644-0728. <http://sitesunseen.org>

trates its efforts in less-trafficked areas of San Francisco's Yerba Buena neighborhood. Other permanent works include a large mural by Barry McGee on the exterior walls of the Moscone Center Garage and a seating

installation by Leah Rosenberg on Natoma Street.

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