



Letting It Go as It Will: The Art of Eva Hesse

*I remember I wanted to get to non art,
non connotive, non anthropomorphic,
non geometric, non nothing,
everything, but of another kind, vision, sort.
from a total other reference point. is
it possible?¹*

—Eva Hesse, 1969

Eva Hesse summed up her deepest wishes as an artist in these words, excerpted from a longer statement she made near the end of her life. As her mature work developed between 1965 and her untimely death in 1970,² Hesse became consumed by a desire to move beyond what was considered sculpture, or, in the parlance of the 1960s, "objects." She struggled to realize creations of another status, material things in the world that she termed "non-art." "Is it possible?" she asked. By the time Hesse had completed her best-known work—such as the latex and rope piece of 1970 shown at left (FIG. 1)—she seems to have succeeded in producing an object that comes "from a total other reference point." The artwork is amorphous and strangely beautiful as it hovers between something and nothing, on the borderline of not coming together. Like many of her late pieces, it looked uncomfortable in the institutional setting where it was first shown, and even now, where it resides.

Hesse's primary means of attaining her artistic goal was an extraordinary sensitivity to the diverse, and often untraditional, materials with which she worked: paint, watercolor, pencil, papier-mâché, rope, latex, and fiberglass—to name just a few. Her control of material could be supreme; she often pushed a given medium to its limits by repeating a process so often that her actions would border on obsessive. Yet, at the same time, Hesse had the ability to step back from a preconceived plan and "allow" abandon to overtake it. Her work emerged from a liminal space between control and freedom, between what she knew and what she couldn't have known in

FIGURE 1
Hesse's studio in early 1970 with an
untitled work of the same year (PL. 110)
still in progress.

advance, between coherence and fragmentation. The materials' qualities are evident, but Hesse exerted control over the moment of their manufacture, and in these moments she found her non-art.

This exhibition and catalogue revisit Hesse's innovative working methods and materials in an effort to understand them better, and to bring her revolutionary artistic practice to the attention of a wider audience. Our first priority is to allow museum visitors to see the work firsthand, for Hesse believed deeply in the hand-made, hands-on quality of her work. Such a goal may seem relatively simple, but the artist's experimentation with unusual materials and processes makes this an exceedingly complicated task. Many of Hesse's late sculptures have been removed from view because of their fragility or their deteriorated condition, often the result of the instability of her beloved materials, latex and fiberglass. For this exhibition, research was undertaken to understand Hesse's intentions for these works, and to determine the extent of her belief that the material conditions of works over time—their ephemerality and/or degradation—might be part of the story the objects have to tell. As the roundtable discussion in this catalogue demonstrates, there can be no definitive answer to when, for Hesse, a work would have become unexhibitable. Some of Hesse's key works that can no longer be shown are represented in this catalogue, and in several cases, we have decided to exhibit works whose appearance has changed considerably since they were made.

Investigations into the material nature of Hesse's artwork have been augmented with documentary evidence provided by archive materials from the period and by numerous interviews that focused on Hesse's working processes and the artistic infrastructure of her world. The exhibition and publication seek to show that what Hesse sought was indeed "possible"—to show what she found in and through her work. Perhaps one of the most compelling findings from this comprehensive examination of Hesse's oeuvre is that her oft-neglected early works—paintings, drawings, and collages made between 1960 and 1965—contain the seeds of many ideas and processes that come to full flower in her mature output. Indeed, a vibrant and multi-faceted dialogue between two-dimensional and three-dimensional work takes place throughout Hesse's career. Actions such as collaging, reconfiguring, and salvaging are pursued in parallel forms across various media. Yet Hesse never loses sight of, nor fails to capitalize on, the unique properties of each medium. This is why it is so important to view her paintings and works on paper in proximity to her larger sculptural works. Only then can we fully understand how certain concepts and processes intersect in Hesse's chosen media, and then branch out into new, increasingly radical, explorations.

Even in her student work Hesse's impulse to manipulate a material but to let it act according to its own dynamic is clear. We see it in a series of collages of leaves pasted onto brown paper dating from 1957–58, when Hesse was a student at Yale.³ She was attracted to a readymade, the leaf, which yields its own inherent shapes and



FIGURE 2
Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, ca. 1958.
Gelatin silver print. 13 ⁷/₈ x 11 in.
(35.2 x 27.9 cm). Private Collection.

patterns and possesses its own processes (it will dry, it will disintegrate). She engaged in a sort of partnership in which she did not control everything. This collaboration with the texture and the outline of a leaf, and its potential to dematerialize, presages what she would do later in her latex sculpture. Photographs of leaves and other objects made at the same time (FIG. 2), fragile surfaces exposed to light to create their own traces, also foreshadow things to come.

Hesse struggled to incorporate this kind of presentness into the painting that she went to Yale to study (and in which she received a B.F.A. in 1959). A fellow student, the artist Irving Petlin, said of her, "With hindsight I could say she was headed for sculpture because she really liked the sense of something *concrete*. Painting can only go so far to supply that logic of realness. Her painting wasn't 'real' enough for her."⁴

Hesse responded to the inertness she found in painting with collage. Collage allowed her to reshuffle her deck, to juxtapose unconnected pieces, to fuse past and present, to surprise herself. In doing so, she seemed quite ruthless. "Last eve.," she wrote in her journal in March 1960, "I dr[e]w, intended to paint a picture—homage to F. Roth, first good painter to be totally recognized. Turned out lousy. Tore it up and after approximately 3 1/2 hours of work I tore it and within 30 minutes made a lovely little collage. A very good one. Looks like a little Klee. Red and black."⁵

Such pragmatic tearing and reconfiguring freed Hesse from making decisions about form in advance. She could cut and paste a new configuration. She would, by 1962, mix strips and pieces chaotically—pieces with scribbled pencil marks clashing with fragments painted with gouache and various inks—the intentions of one idea canceling those of another (PLS. 14–16). The elements, worked on over time, were relieflike, discontinuous. Hesse did not care that the surface barely coalesced: this separation into pieces made for an interesting presence. The tension of their having just come together and their potential for change—and potential disintegration—gives these little collages their force.

The artist's struggles between the impulse that causes a piece to be started and what actually happens, more freely, once its creation has begun, are clearer in collage than in painting. When Hesse taught at the Scarsdale Studio Workshop for Art in 1965, she presented collage as a necessary step in the process of making a painting or a watercolor; she would tell her students to use paper to make a rubbing, cut it up, reassemble it, then imitate the textures and shapes in a painting.⁶ Collage was to be a model stage in picture-making, a physical step, not a conceptual one, in the process that would suggest an order, but one that could be disordered.

Many of the actual pieces in Hesse's collages are pencil drawings. She aspired to become a painter, but had always drawn very easily and spontaneously; her student drawings are random subjects from nature, landscapes (FIG. 3), figures, still lifes. Many are full of portents of her later work—her love of line and of collapsing form, as, for example, in remarkable drawings of piles of shoes and paper bags, which probably date as early as 1954. But the drawings that came to interest her were those that had a real materiality. In the period just after her move from New Haven

to New York in 1959, she described a "series of drawings in ink with my main tool a crudely shaped wrong side of a small brush. The drawings can best be described as imagined organic and natural forms of 'growth.' They are essentially quite free in feeling and handling of medium 'ultra alive.'"⁷

This liveliness springs from the intensity of their surfaces. Hesse's small ink wash drawings from 1961, her first exhibited pieces,⁸ were worked in black, sepia, and sometimes red inks (PLS. 6-13). She boldly mixed the inks with pencil and varied the mark-making. A liquid medium was brushed on, a pencil used to make marks or to incise; the weights of ink range from opaque to transparent, and are counterpointed by the luminosity of negative space. In the contained space of a small sheet of paper, in a space that hovers around the representation of a landscape or a room, Hesse explored line, geometric forms, round shapes, boxes, borders, edges, and occasionally near-figurative shapes.

A series of paintings made between 1959 and 1961 are figurative in the conventional sense. Of heads (the so-called self-portraits) and paired figures, they reveal Hesse's desire to represent the bodily, but also to use paint and pigments in a manner that transcends description and becomes more emphatically carnal. In one untitled work of 1960 (PL. 2), the flesh of a female face is troweled by linear cuts made in the thick surface of the paint. In another work from the same year (PL. 3) there is a hovering, luminescent white/gray shape that is loosely brushed and disintegrating at the edge where it meets the female figure. Paint and color stand as the things they describe, but are also physically confrontational as substances: luminous, dense, thick, thin.

Hesse's work represents the bodily and also is bodily. It emerged from the infrastructure of a New York world of art and artists that she knew through exhibitions and personal contacts. Between 1959 and 1964, she was keenly aware of Claes Oldenburg, the various artists identified with Pop and Minimalism, the sculptors and painters that exhibited at the Park Place co-op gallery, and less classifiable artists such as Öyvind Fahlström and Yayoi Kusama.⁹ By 1963 and 1964 she gave up figuration to concentrate on geometric form and graphic patterns. In two collages she wittily used words as pattern, geometry, and referent to the body, here specifically eroticized: Hesse may not herself have connected the slang usage of the word "box" to female genitals, but she does morph the letters backwards and forwards from box to sex in the collage *Boxes*, 1964 (PL. 19). She diagrams a comic action with perhaps sexual overtones in *And He Sat in a Box* (FIG. 4). But what is distinctive in these pieces is how their physicality is bound up in the visible traces of facture. The artist's constant shifting of the orientation of the sheets is highlighted in the latter by the arrows pointing top to bottom, left to right, and by the phrase "and he sat in a box" written twice and legible from two different directions. In *Boxes*, tiny question marks (a key to the fluidity of this work) inscribed within a latticelike form on the upper right are legible only if the work is turned on its side.



FIGURE 3
Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, 1958. Ink on paper. 17 ³/₄ x 12 in. (45.1 x 30.5 cm). The Estate of Eva Hesse. Courtesy Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich.

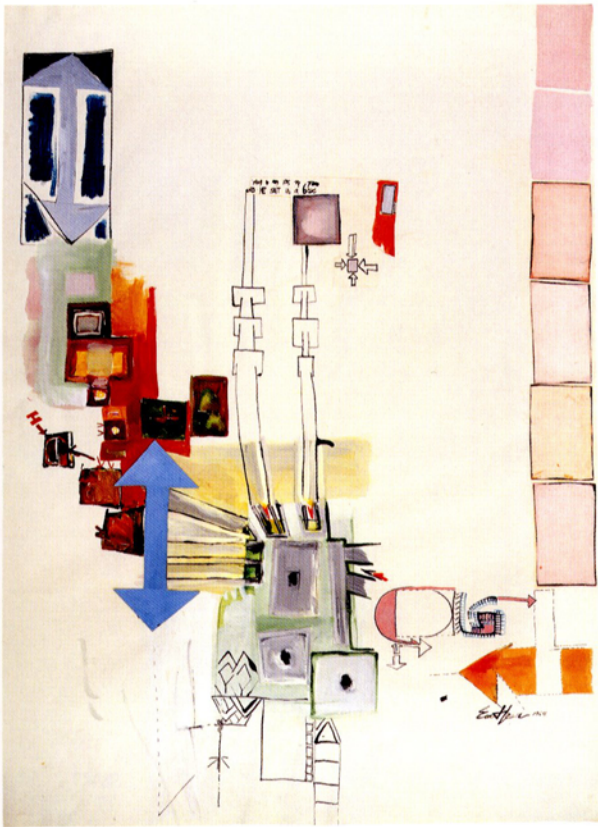


FIGURE 4
Eva Hesse, *And He Sat in a Box*,
1964. Paper collage with ink,
gouache, and watercolor. 30 x 22 in.
(76.2 x 55.9 cm). Ulmer Museum,
Germany.

The sexual humor and quirky activity of these two collages begin to suggest Hesse's growing interest in an iconography of eroticized form and in the dynamic potential of the two-dimensional surface. These interests would emerge in her drawings and paintings over the next two years, and would gradually lead her to the making of sculptural forms. From June 1964 through September 1965 Hesse lived in Kettwig an der Ruhr, West Germany. She drew and painted prolifically, inventing biomorphic and mechanical shapes that reflected her interest in the work of Arshile Gorky and Marcel Duchamp. (She saw a show of Gorky drawings in November 1964 at the Museum Folkwang in nearby Essen, and her husband, Tom Doyle, had a show of his sculpture at the Kunsthalle in Bern, Switzerland, in October and November 1964, at the same time that Arturo Schwartz's collection of Duchamp was being shown there.) Hesse's studio in Kettwig was in an abandoned textile factory, where she was confronted by machinery parts and cords lying around. Like the torn-up pieces of paper in her collages, this material offered the pleasure of play, rearrangement, and surprise. She began to draw the machine parts and string, allowing a loony lyricism to emerge, a cartoon of sex play (PLS. 34–37). Eventually Hesse began to make brilliantly colored reliefs that combine cord and found machine parts

to create abstract, zany forms—hybrids of body parts and machines (PLS. 39–49). She made particular use of cord or electrical tubing and its potential to be a surrogate for drawn line or a plastic element. Thus the dynamic potential for coiling, wrapping, and tangling inherent in rope became part of the physical process of the work. In the first reliefs, made in early 1965, tightly bound rope sections are sometimes iconic, suggesting recognizable forms. In *Ringaround Arosie* (PL. 39), the forms suggested to Hesse a "breast to penis."¹⁰ But in a relief made in June, *Tomorrow's Apples* (PL. 44), the forms are abstract, and the cords are linear, but tightly controlled. In *Top Spot* (PL. 49), made a month later, flexible electrical cords are strung through sockets and the jumbled confusion of their loops spills to the floor in a single stream. In *C-Clamp Blues* (PL. 46), made in July, a vaginal V shape is produced by the pull of gravity on a flexible wire. *Eighter from Decatur* (PL. 48) and *Top Spot* include elements that are not fixed, that can be twisted and changed in orientation. The palpable surfaces of some of the reliefs—textured with papier-mâché, plaster-soaked cloth—have the feeling of the organic, not the machine-made; the surfaces *feel* hand-made.

Hesse's reliefs are independent creations and original to her. Her decision to make objects, and specifically reliefs, seems to have been encouraged by the presence of reliefs at *documenta III*, which she saw after she arrived in Germany. The machine parts used in the constructions owe something to Jean Tinguely's sculpture. The textural surfaces may have some echoes of Group Zero's sculpture, such as the nail-studded wall constructions of Günther Uecker (FIG. 5). There is no doubt that she

saw Robert Morris's lead reliefs in Düsseldorf (FIG. 73). She certainly was aware of Joseph Beuys's work.¹¹ Although Hesse's reliefs had only limited exposure in a one-person exhibition at the Kunstverein in the Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, from August through October of 1965, they were received positively. Yet the works were left behind in Germany and not shown again until after her death.

A photograph taken in Hesse's New York studio reveals a landscape of strange forms made in 1965 and 1966 (FIG. 31). Hesse has abandoned the figure/ground structure of the reliefs and has made discrete objects, some of which hang against the wall, while others hang from the ceiling or are placed on pedestals. The quirky eroticized shapes are simplified and sleeker than the biomorphic forms of many of the reliefs. The sharp colors of the German work have been replaced by black, gray, or subtly graded, deeply toned color. There are circular forms (balls, circles, tires) with protrusions, pendants, cords; clusters of sausage shapes; semicircular and hanging tubes; clusters of pendulous bags; and there are tendrils, ropes, and cords falling off the surfaces of pieces. This ensemble arranged by Hesse for the photograph is funny, provocative, sexy, frightening—all simultaneously.

On the one hand, Hesse's radical simplification points to a recognition of the Minimalism prevalent in New York on her return from Europe. On the other, the erotic connotations of her work—the sagging breast or testicle forms of the net-bag *Untitled or Not Yet* (PL. 58); the phallic-shaped bound forms of *Ingeminate* (PL. 50); and the cluster of bound, entrail-like forms of *Several* (FIG. 54)—challenged Minimalist neutrality. Clearly Hesse had been aware of the geometric forms in the work of her friend Sol LeWitt before she left for Germany, and in fact, her collages and paintings of that period make an interesting comparison with LeWitt's 1962 oil-on-canvas and painted-wood wall constructions. His neutral geometry is countered in her drawings and paintings by her puns on boxes or by her filling of the box or the square with some hybrid biomorphic, at times anatomical, form. By the time Hesse had returned home, Minimalism was well established. Though she had missed such vital New York exhibitions as Robert Morris's show of plywood objects at the Green Gallery in December of 1964, by the spring of 1966, when *Primary Structures*, the key exhibition that included many of the Minimalist sculptors, opened at the Jewish Museum, she was keenly aware of being left out.

Hesse's engagement with Minimalism began in earnest fairly soon after her return to New York. However, in 1965–66, Hesse's involvement with biomorphic, decidedly bodily form was overt. The work she made at this time was part of a wider reaction to the formalism and abstraction that was brewing in studios, exhibitions, and critical writing. Hesse was invited by Lucy Lippard to participate in a show she was organizing called *Eccentric Abstraction*. Lippard knew that Hesse had, through the artist Ann Wilson, met Mike Todd, a sculptor who was then making fetishistic biomorphic objects formed of painted white balls, shoe trees, and bolts; and that through Todd and

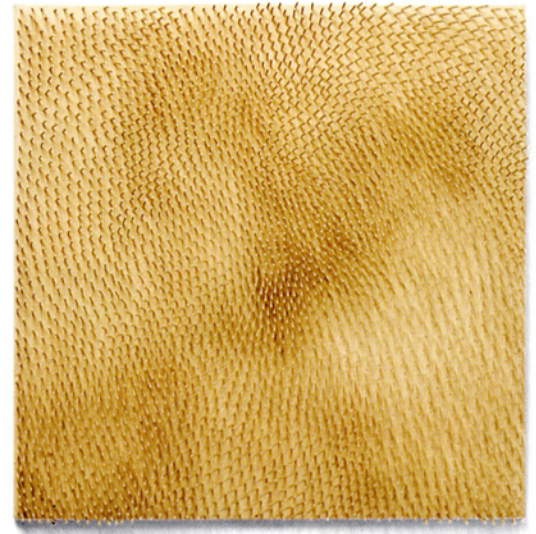


FIGURE 5
Günther Uecker, *White Field*, 1964.
Paint and nails on canvas on wood.
34 1/2 x 34 1/2 x 2 3/4 in. (87.6 x
87.6 x 7 cm). Walker Art Center,
Minneapolis, Gift of the T.B. Walker
Foundation, 1964.

scotched taped center crossing which has
 hairs four and I don't know if they're
 Wiley's or Raffaele's and then the
 string moves on toward a tampaxian
 puff again scotch taped and then string on and on and on. . . .¹⁷

Hesse's *Ingeminate*, which was in *Eccentric Abstraction*, bears a rough resemblance to Raffaele's verbal riff. But *Metronomic Irregularity*, for which Hesse made a model (PL. 59) in August of 1966 and then a larger version (FIG. 77) for the show (which opened in September), marked a shift in her work. This second version, comprising three modularly spaced, square panels connected by tangled wires, was a hybrid of order and disorder and lacked organic references. Hesse's representation in *Eccentric Abstraction*, then, suggests that she was drawn in two directions.

Evidence of this is also visible in two separate "portraits" of Hesse made during the second half of 1966. The first is a traditional, photographic group portrait of the Thek circle, including her, by Peter Hujar (FIG. 6). The other is Mel Bochner's word portrait of Hesse titled *Wrap* (FIG. 7). Bochner produced other word portraits in the same period, including one of Sol LeWitt that he called *Closure*, one of Robert Smithson called *Repetition*, and one of Ad Reinhardt called *Quiescence*.¹⁸ Each Bochner portrait is in a shape that resembles one of the "sitter's" own forms, is titled with a single word associated with his or her artistic strategy, and is composed of synonyms for that term copied from a thesaurus.¹⁹

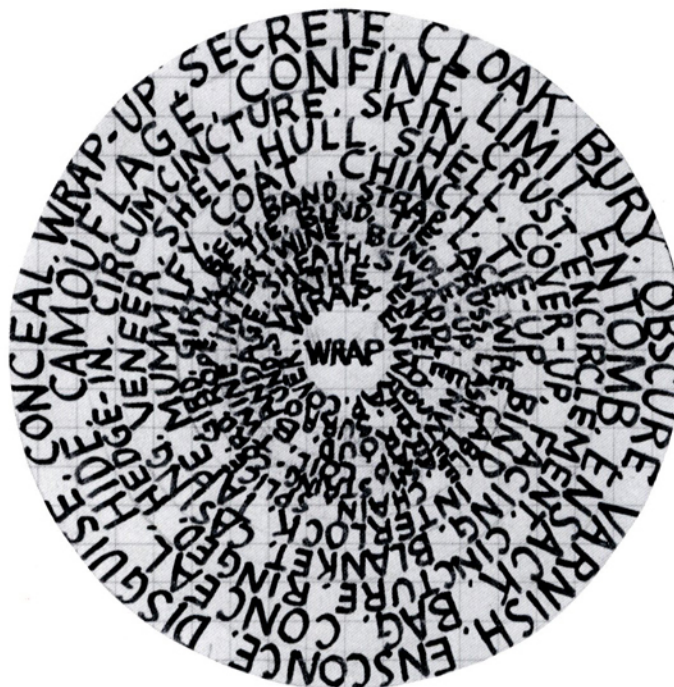


FIGURE 6
 Peter Hujar, *Group Picture*, 1966.
 Gelatin silver print. 13 1/2 x 13 1/2 in.
 (34.3 x 34.3 cm). Estate of Peter
 Hujar. Courtesy Matthew Marks
 Gallery, New York. From left, top row:
 Allan Rosenbaum, Gene Swenson,
 Steve Lawrence, Howard Krieger,
 Linda Finch, Larry Saper, Barbara
 Pallenberg, Kes Zapkus; middle
 row: Simone Tuten (holding mirror
 that reflects the photographer),
 Frederic Tuten, Diane Kelder, Joe
 Raffaele, Paul Thek; bottom row:
 Eva Hesse, Mike Todd, Susi Bloch.

Wilson, Hesse had become involved in a loosely connected circle that included the artists Paul Thek, Peter Hujar, and Joe Raffaele, as well as the critic Gene Swenson.¹² Thek, perhaps the best known of this group, was producing his Technological Reliquaries (some of which are known as "the meat pieces"), Plexiglas boxes containing blood-red wax forms, some stuck with pins and sprouting hair, that resemble realistic sections of flesh (FIG. 74). "The flesh is not mutilated," said Thek, describing the meat pieces in an interview with Swenson, "it is rigidly and orderly cut, forced into a precise shape. . . . it is beyond our usual sensibilities."¹³ Swenson included Thek in *The Other Tradition*, an exhibition of historical and contemporary art that he organized at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia. The show and its catalogue were known to Hesse and Lippard. "The other tradition," Swenson wrote, "is non-formal. It is less easily appreciated with the familiar critical tool known as formal analysis. Its major importance lies outside or beyond 'significant form,' and its application is useful chiefly to non-abstract art: that is, in general it deals more with the movements known as Dada, Surrealism, and Pop Art than with those known as Cubism, Early Abstraction . . . and Abstract-Expressionism."¹⁴ Lippard, visiting artists in California and New York, was sympathetic to Swenson's formulation, but she wished to extend it in another direction, to include younger artists who she felt pushed more in the direction of the formalism and "conceptualist" thinking that he was openly against.¹⁵ In "An Impure Situation," a review Lippard wrote that included a consideration of Swenson's show and of other shows in New York, including the first exhibition in which Hesse appeared after her return from Germany (*Abstract Inflationism and Stuffed Expressionism* at the Graham Gallery), she describes the difference in artists she supported: "Viner's work, and Eva Hesse's (and to a far lesser extent, Marc Morrel's) at Graham, and Robert Breer's at Bonino, are intuitive rather than intellectual, but they share certain attitudes with the more conceptual branches of current art as well as with the Other Tradition. I find their experiments more interesting and more stimulating to the contemporary sensibility than Thek's, Arman's or Raffaele's warmed over and updated Surrealism. In view of the prevalent formalist trends, this kind of art could be called Eccentric Abstraction."¹⁶

For Hesse, the *Eccentric Abstraction* show at the Fischbach Gallery, New York, in the fall of 1966 was a critical turning point. Her objects were conceivably like Thek's, and aptly described as being "beyond our usual sensibilities." They were simultaneously silly, absurd, made of strange materials. The description of an "eccentric" object that Joe Raffaele, an artist in *The Other Tradition*, wrote from California about an object by William Wiley, picks up these qualities:

Brown rubbered circle with cunty-bull-dogged head, mouth open and white, heavier than but like, bakery box string coming through hole moving on towards



Bochner's *Wrap* and his review of *Eccentric Abstraction* vividly convey his very real experience of how process was beginning to create levels of metaphor in Hesse's art. He praised *Metronomic Irregularity II* as "regular, remote, and lifeless." He and LeWitt had installed the panels for the piece at Fischbach Gallery; Hesse threaded the wires through the holes in them, lacing the panels together—as it happened, unsuccessfully, for the piece fell off the wall and had to be restrung by Hesse the next day. Bochner's account of the piece is thus filled with the experience of close scrutiny, of watching Hesse in the studio and gallery production of it, of observing the dull and methodical fabrication of its chaotic web of wires: "*Metronomic Irregularity* [was composed of] three 40" square gray boards spaced 40" apart with holes drilled at every intersection of a one inch grid drawn on each board. Hundreds of white wires connected the boards, entering them through the holes."²⁰ Bochner's *Wrap* is a circle of words, a shaped drawing that cuts off and covers the grid of its graph paper surface. A viewer cannot just stand in front of the work and read the words, but must swivel around it in a physical act that mimics some of the words used to describe Hesse as she is revealed through the strategies of her work:

wrap-up, secrete, cloak, bury, obscure, varnish, ensconce, disguise, conceal, camouflage, confine, limit, entomb, ensack, bag, hide, circumcincture, skin, crust, encirclement, cincture, ringed, hedge-in, shell, hull, cover-up, facing, blanket, casing, veneer, shell, cinch, tie-up, bind, interlock, shell, mummify, coat, strap, lace, wire, cable, chain, splice, gird, bandage, envelope, shroud, surround . . .

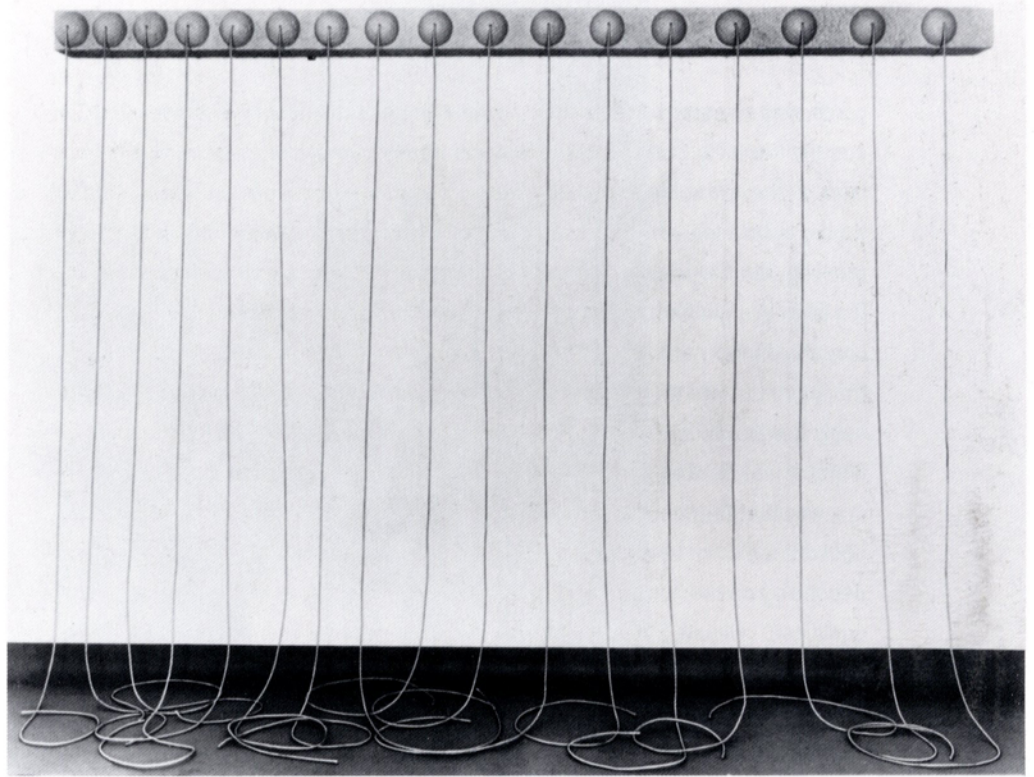
Bochner condensed the implicit meaning of Hesse's work into a tightly configured but affectless, dictionarylike flow of words. And associations with the processes

FIGURE 7
Mel Bochner, *Wrap: Portrait of Eva Hesse*, 1966. Pen and ink on graph paper. Diameter: 4 1/2 in. (11.4 cm). Private Collection.

mentioned do inform Hesse's own works based on the circle: the circle drawings, the gridded wall works made with rows of industrial washers or grommets, and the *Compart* series (PLS. 61–62), gray wall works made by wrapping cord into circular forms. These works, made from 1966 into 1968, come closest to Minimalism's serial and repetitive processes, but the physical operations are not strictly impassive, transparent, and orderly. A mechanical, repetitive process, and in some cases a readymade material, whether the graph paper or the washers, dictated some parameters of the work; these tangible, invariant givens potentially obscured and repressed the human hand that struggled to conform to their limits. But a tension with that repression is sometimes evident, even crucial: for instance, in some Hesse made sure that the circles she drew in the tiny squares of the graph paper were not exactly alike—they are lopsided or irregular, leaning to the left or to the right (PLS. 69–70). Works with readymade components can be contrasted with pieces such as *Constant* (PL. 73): its painted papier-mâché surface, punctuated regularly with tied rubber extrusions, takes its form from the imprint of the artist's fingers. Transitional between these two groups are drawings of concentric circles where the subtle gradations of tone, though regularized and systematic, are nuanced and painterly (PLS. 64–66).

In June of 1967 Sol LeWitt had published "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" in *Artforum*. "To work with a plan that is pre-set," he wrote, "is one way of avoiding subjectivity. It also obviates the necessity of designing each work in turn. The plan would design the work. . . . [The] fewer decisions made in the course of completing the work, the better."²¹ Hesse's subtle interventions violate conceptual order. In the circle works, Hesse came close to the conceptual ordering processes, the wonderfully cool and crystalline ideas for art-making, that are articulated in LeWitt's "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." But she allowed the repetitive and systematic methods of Conceptualism to go haywire in the group of works titled *Accession* (FIG. 84; PLS. 77, 80), leading to extremes that mesmerize and disorient the viewer. Beginning in 1967, Hesse made five versions of *Accession*, the first from found material. The cube forms for others were fabricated for her from five square sides punctuated with grids of holes.²² Through the holes she threaded rubber tubes of equal lengths, thereby creating rows of small, bulging forms on the external surface. Inside the boxes the tubing is impossibly tangled, and the ends of the cut tubes read as a mass of tiny circles. The sensible procedures of the making—fabricating a cube with the holes cut in a grid, cutting equal lengths of tubing, and inserting them—produce an inside, a contained space with no beginning or end, a formless abyss, a funny, bristling tactile environment. The hallucinatory reaches of the interior undermine the certainty of the industrially fabricated container.

Hesse perceived the potential for chaos within logical, repetitive art-making processes. Her ability to find incongruity in a subtle, nuanced way is inherent in the structure of *Addendum* (FIG. 8; PL. 76), made for the exhibition *Art in Series* that Mel Bochner organized at Finch College, New York, and opened in November 1967. Hesse's work fits Bochner's thesis that serial art is a series of parts that have a



definite continuity or progression, an orderly modification. But while abiding by this, Hesse wanted to subtly indicate the contrivance at the heart of her serial piece. In her statement for the exhibition's audio guide, she authoritatively describes the nearly ten-foot-long *Addendum* as "a series of seventeen, five inch diameter semi-spheres . . . placed at increased intervals." Hesse does note what she calls the unifying factors: "repetition . . . surface texture . . . rope pulled through the center of each form . . . monochrome color." But this is a forced "unity" and she reveals the intentional disunity in the work:

The chosen nine foot eleven inch structure, the five inch diameter semi-spheres, and the long thin rope are as different in shape as possible.

The choice of extremely different forms must reconcile themselves. To further jolt the equilibrium the top of the piece is hung seven feet high.

The cord is flexible. It is ten feet long, hanging loosely but in parallel lines. The cord opposes the regularity. When it reaches the floor it curls and sits irregularly. The juxtaposition and actual connecting cord realizes the contradiction of the rational series of semi-spheres and irrational flow of lines on the floor. Series, serial, serial art, is another way of repeating absurdity.²³

FIGURE 8
Eva Hesse, *Addendum*, 1967.
 Paint and papier-mâché on wood
 with painted cord. Panel: 5 x 119 x
 6 in. (12.7 x 302.3 x 15.2 cm).
 Tate, London.

What Hesse called the "irrational flow," provided in *Addendum* by the combination of unlike elements, the placement high on the wall, and the loose lines of the rubber

cords, was an essential element in the challenge or disruption of seriality. The flow, and the flexibility, that she found in *Addendum's* cords were qualities that drew her to latex. In the late summer of 1967, Hesse began to experiment with this natural liquid rubber substance, which she could buy on Canal Street, a neighborhood thoroughfare teeming with shops selling all sorts of hardware.²⁴ Her first goal seemed to be to shape the latex in a geometrical form, but she saw that it had more potential than that: not only could latex conform to a shape, it could also remain flexible, and it would register the imprint of whatever surface it touched. The liquidity of latex enabled Hesse to apply it with a brush. As a surface, it was as responsive as papier-mâché and Sculpt-Metal. It was flexible, like the ropes and cords she had used, but it could be shaped in a way that they could not. The latex was also a neutral color; pigment could be added but did not have to be. In addition, she could make latex translucent or opaque depending on the number of layers applied. By February of 1968, Hesse noted its qualities: "1) liquid, 2) clear rubber, 3) sets after twenty-four hours, 4) second chemical determines rubberness, flexibility 5) can add color to liquid."²⁵ She also knew that with the wrong chemical combination, it could become rigid, or crack and yellow. The malleability and inherent instability of latex were positive attributes to Hesse. Ultimately, she realized that the material had a life of its own that surpassed her intentions for it, and took her into a state of unknowing that was in open conflict with her a priori decisions.

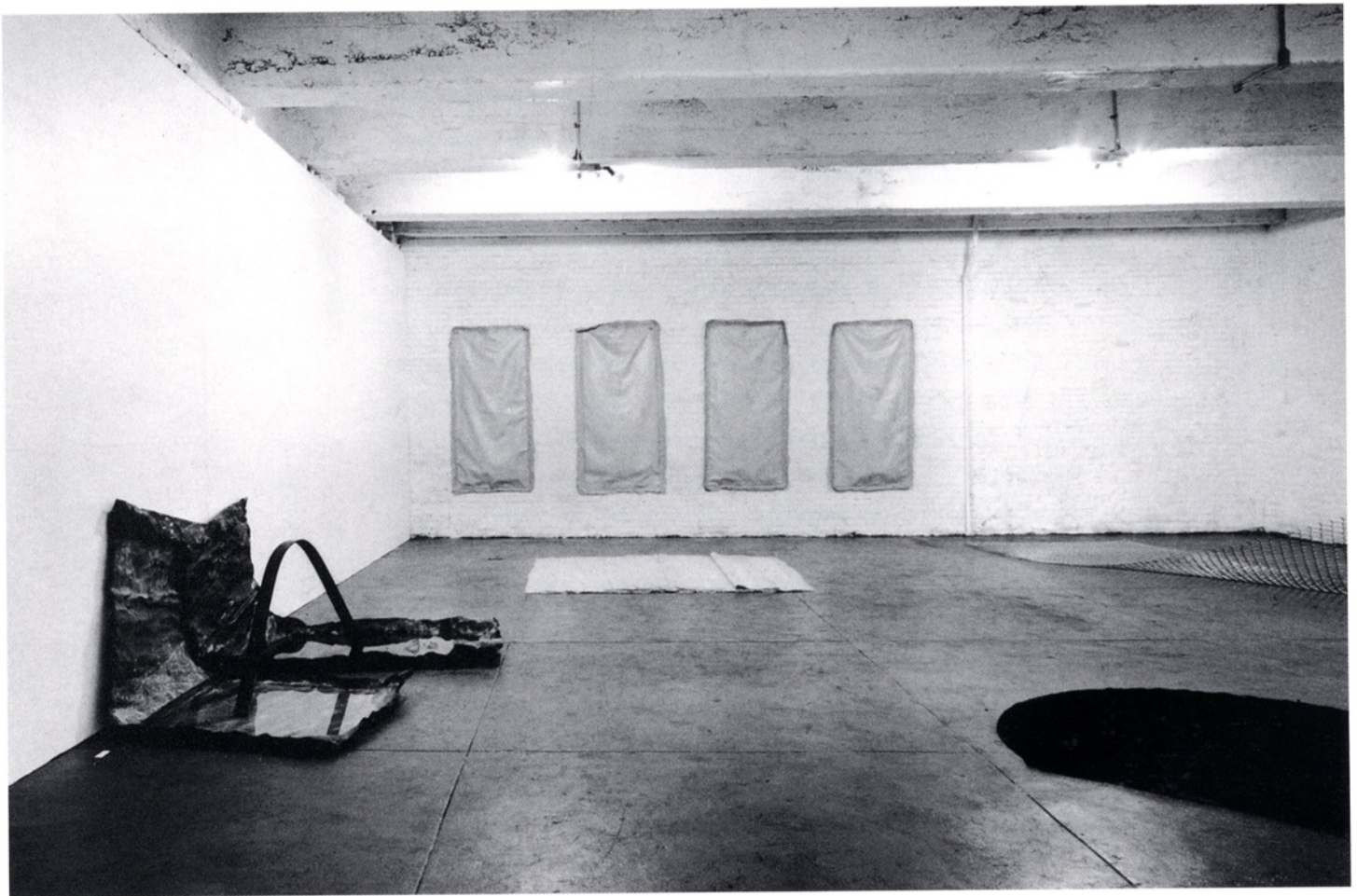
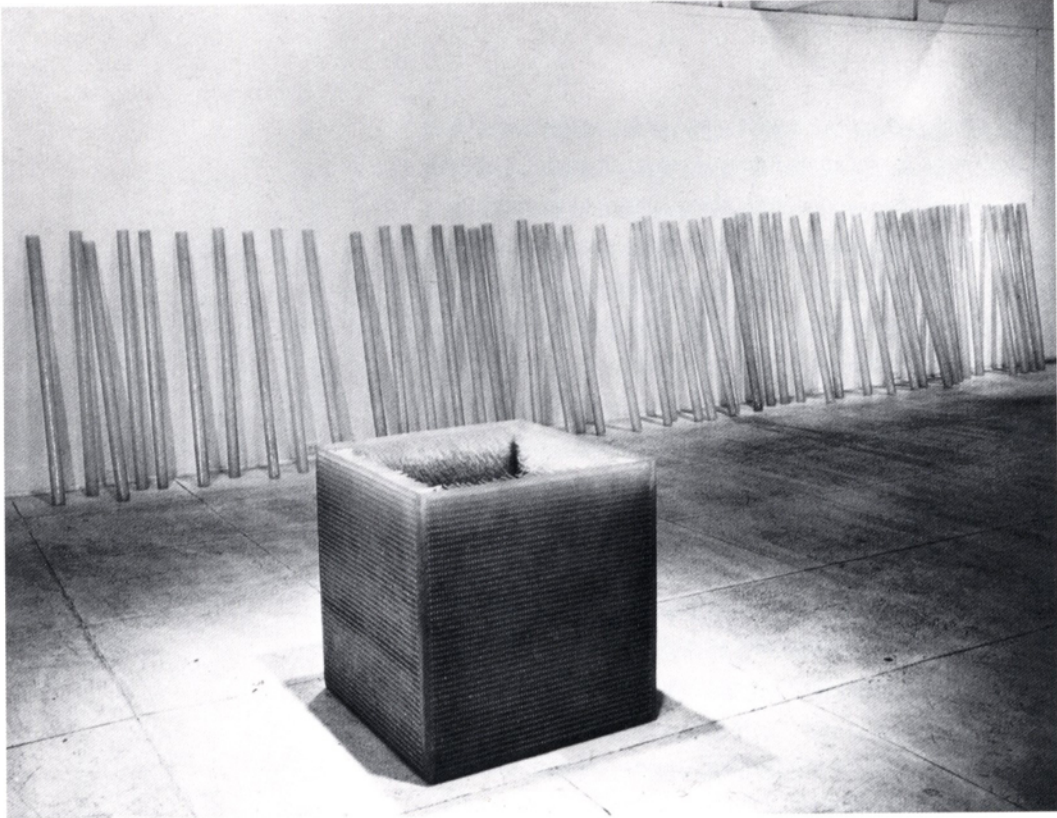
Hesse began making sculptural work in latex beginning in the fall of 1967, and by 1968 went back and forth between the two mediums of latex and fiberglass, often asking from one the qualities that she found in the other. She elicited from fiberglass its ability to collapse, to respond to gravitational pull, to pick up the imprints of other materials. Conversely, she employed latex's potential to be confined to a contained form. Rather than the more contrived incongruities of *Addendum*, Hesse's experiments with the processing of materials worked with the ranges of soft to hard, translucency to opacity, and form to non-form.

During 1967 and '68, Hesse worked feverishly toward her one-person exhibition planned for Fischbach Gallery in the fall of 1968 (FIGS. 9, 44). Her appointment books show her to have been part of an internationally active group of artists. Hesse was in a New York circle that included Robert Smithson, Nancy Holt, Dan Graham, Sol LeWitt, Mel Bochner, and Ruth Vollmer;²⁶ Bruce Nauman wrote to her from the West Coast; and beginning in April, her appointment book listed Heiner Friedrich, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Morris, Richard Serra, Carl Andre, Rolfe Ricke, Scott Burton, and Harald Szeemann.

This list indicates that Hesse's new fiberglass and latex work was central to the artistic dialogue and curatorial constructions of the late sixties. Her latex pieces *Aught* and *Augment* were included in Morris's influential show *Nine at Leo Castelli* (FIG. 10) in New York in December of 1968, and *Augment* was in Szeemann's *When Attitudes Become Form*, which opened three months later in Bern.²⁷ Smaller latex pieces and her large fiberglass works were included in her own exhibition at Fischbach, *Chain Polymers*.

FIGURE 9
Installation view of the 1968 exhibition *Eva Hesse: Chain Polymers* at the Fischbach Gallery, New York. Foreground: *Accession III* (PL. 80); background: *Accretion* (PL. 96).

FIGURE 10
Installation view of the 1968 exhibition *Nine at Leo Castelli* held at Castelli's 108th Street warehouse, New York. Hesse's *Aught* (PL. 97) hangs on the rear wall with *Augment* (FIGS. 103-104) on the floor beneath it. Also on floor, clockwise from left: untitled works by Gilberto Zorio, Bill Bollinger, and Steve Kaltenbach.



Hesse's latex and fiberglass objects exhibit a wide range of formal and expressive qualities and vary in size from large to miniature. Some of the small pieces, gathered for display in glass pastry cases (PL. 85; FIG. 90), have the quality of small fetishes, mysterious objects of anthropological or biological interest, body parts or, humorously, casts for dentures and teeth. Others were more ambitious experiments, possibly even small versions of, or models for, something larger; still others were designated "test pieces." What met the criteria for the exhibitions so influential at the end of the 1960s were the large, radically simple latex pieces, which were without obvious Surrealist overtones. Szeemann noted that he wanted to capture "the constant differentiation between organic and geometric" that he saw in studios in 1968.²⁸ He visited Hesse on 14 December and afterward wrote in his diary: "Eva Hesse. She is an old acquaintance. As early as 1964, she had already created first examples of 'soft sculptures' in Germany. Her first solo exhibition in the Fischbach Gallery was a success. She has since achieved great freedom with regard to materials and the use of these in the presentation of her art. I select *Aught + Augment* from the *Castelli Warehouse Show*."²⁹

What Szeemann did not perceive was the relationship between the hard and soft, the fiberglass and latex work. *Sans* and *Aught* illustrate the relationship between the two, between form and anti-form. Two versions of *Sans*, one in each material, were in *Chain Polymers*, and *Aught* was in Morris's Castelli warehouse show. Morris had given the name "Anti-Form" to a new sculptural tendency in his essay published in *Artforum* in April 1968; he visited Hesse's studio in May. Hesse made *Aught*, *Augment*, *Seam*, and *Area*, her large latex pieces, over the summer. Morris's canonical description of Anti-Form is interesting to compare with Hesse's own statement about her sculpture made for *Chain Polymers*. Morris wrote:

*Recently materials other than rigid industrial ones have begun to show up. Oldenburg was one of the first to use such materials. A direct investigation of the properties of such materials is in progress. This involves a reconsideration of the use of tools in relation to material. In some cases these investigations move from the making of things to the making of material itself. Sometimes a direct manipulation of a given material without the use of any tool is made. In these cases considerations of gravity become as important as those of space. The focus on matter and gravity as means results in forms that were not projected in advance. Considerations of ordering are necessarily casual and imprecise and unemphasized. Random piling, loose stacking, hanging give passing form to material. Chance is accepted and indeterminacy is implied, as replacing will result in another configuration. Disengagement with preconceived enduring forms and orders for things is a positive assertion. It is part of the work's refusal to continue estheticizing the form by dealing with it as a prescribed end.*³⁰

Hesse's statement for *Chain Polymers* was written in June 1968 and shares many of Morris's concerns. But since her statement would refer to a show with both latex and fiberglass pieces, it addresses what Morris would describe as "rigid industrial" work, as well as the latent, the mobile, the mutating work of Anti-Form. Therefore, it is important to understand that for Hesse, addressing the properties of matter could yield both "hard" and "soft" work, even as each can speak to a similar condition. Hesse wrote:

I would like the work to be non-work. This means that it would find its way beyond my preconceptions.

What I want of my art I can eventually find. The work must go beyond this.

It is my main concern to go beyond what I know and what I can know.

The formal principles are understandable and understood.

It is the unknown quantity from which and where I want to go.

As a thing, an object, it accedes to its non-logical self.

It is something, it is nothing.³¹

How does Hesse, whose words reveal the romanticism at the heart of her enterprise, let matter evoke its non-logical self, become something and nothing? The literal translation for the French *sans* is "without." Hesse's *Sans I* (FIG. 96) is a piece without its center. The process of making the piece produced, for its maker, its meaning, its essence. This "meaning" arises circumstantially. The piece is "something"—it is there—and simultaneously "nothing," or near nothing: it is "without." Hesse's work is not Anti-Form in the sense that Anti-Form seems to imply another logic. Hesse's way of considering form and meaning in her work was practical. The possibilities in a working process evoked the conditions for meaning. Hesse made positive forms from wood; plaster was then poured into the wood; latex was then cast from the plaster. Wax-filled latex boxes and other latex boxes among the so-called test pieces relate to this process. The completed sculpture (no longer extant) consisted of many such small latex boxes fastened together in a double row, hung on the wall, and extending down into the room. This was then elaborated in the large, fiberglass *Sans II* (PL. 93), made first as a papier-mâché and then rubber form.

Several lists of words are found in Hesse's records, dating as far back as 1965 (see, for example, FIG. 11). The earlier lists seem to be about naming sculptures. One undated, typewritten list of nouns, verbs, and other words obviously compiled by Hesse from a dictionary or thesaurus (some definitions are provided) includes some words that Hesse did use as titles for her sculpture.³² Significantly, the words on this typewritten list refer to what might be called numerical states, and often involve the relationship of one thing to another or others; and, more than just possible titles, they are simultaneously "instructions" for making, and suggestive of physical and possibly psychological states:

accretion, continuum, conjunction, sequence, area, augmentation, adjunct, summation, sequel, sequence, schema, sans, accession, repetition 19, strata, vinculum, expanded expansion, seam, juncture, aught, contingent, conjoin, range, connections, challenging assumptions, continuum, toroid, tori, torus.

Hesse's language, though it was never made visible and exists only in unpublished notes, "operates between literal and metaphorical signification," as Robert Smithson wrote,³³ and allowed her to give material presence to processes she was interested in linguistically and physically, states that are sculptural, biological, and psychological. Notes in her journals show the progression from the jokey words and phrases of the 1965 reliefs, to the psychological titles of 1966 objects, such as *Not Yet*, to the more mathematical and geometric words used in 1966, such as *Addendum*. Hesse's language is related to that of peers other than Smithson, including, obviously, Bochner, as shown by his 1966 portrait of her. (Bochner is said to have given her a thesaurus.) Her sense of language as instruction for action or process is close to that of Richard Serra, who compiled his own verb list in 1967–68 and published it in the magazine *Avalanche* in 1971.³⁴ By 1968, Hesse and Serra had both begun to appear in exhibitions of process-related art, the major "Anti-Form" exhibitions.

Aught (PL. 97) is the title of a piece that was included in the Castelli warehouse show and the Bern exhibition. The word "aught" is on Hesse's list, and in one dictionary two definitions are given. It seems that Hesse did not choose the definition of "zero, cipher, or nothing," though this was a condition for her work to which she aspired. Rather, the meaning she privileged was "anything in any degree or respect, anything whatever, any little part." Thus *Aught* is in a more liminal state than *Sans*, which is without.

Latex could deliver the conditions of aught, of the slightly there. Deployed in a simple way, it has, intrinsically, no marks to distinguish its surface. But it nonetheless becomes barely something. To create *Aught*, eight rectangles of canvas were laid atop polyethylene drop cloths on the floor, which effectively became the "mold" over which the artwork was configured. Latex was painted on each canvas and extended slightly beyond the latter's edges, forming a translucent latex border. Pairs of the latex-and-canvas panels were then stuffed with the drop cloths and other materials, and their edges were sealed together. When hung on the wall, the resulting four units billow and sag, their natural movement further altering the surface texture and profile. If *Aught* can be thought of as Hesse's reengagement with painting, then, as painting, this process cancels the intentionality of mark making. Its minimal disturbances, the way it approaches zero, its imprints, were only achieved through a surrender to the conditions and fortunes of its making and environment.

ppppppp
 Addendum-A thing added or to be added
 Accession-Increased by something added
 REPETITION
 Repetition Nineteen
 Range-To arrange in a certain order especially to set in a row or rows. 12x12 gramma 20 F.
 Compartment-To divide into parts, partition, subdivide 4 lbs. F.
 Compass-To form a circle around
 Iterate-To repeat, to do again 20x20 F.
 Cincture-An encircling enclosure 1967
 CONSTANT - QUANTITY THAT DOES NOT VARY
 NUMBER EXPRESSING A RELATION THAT REMAINS THE SAME FOR SAME substance in same conditions.
 5'x5'x5 3/4" wood, P.M. RUBBER
 DITTO : 1967 SCULP METAL ON PLEXIGLAS
 15"x14 1/2"
 SCHEMA:
 later rubber 1967-68
 42"x42"x1 1/2"
 augment: sheets 20 castelli
 aught: wall for 4 units

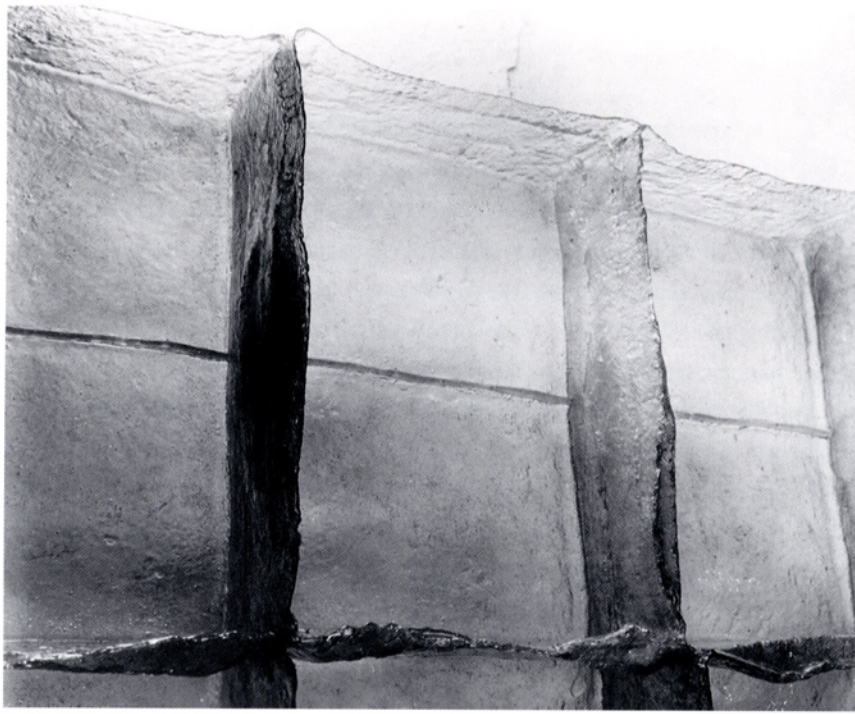
FIGURE 11
 Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, undated.
 Pen and ink with typewriting on notebook paper. 6 7/8 x 3 7/8 in. (17.5 x 9.7 cm). Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio, Gift of Helen Hesse Charash, 1983.

Layering liquid latex to build up form rather than casting it intrigued Hesse, and in this "free" state its metaphoric potential was rich. One consequence of Hesse's decision to use latex was that the work would change. Her note cited above indicates that by February 1968 she knew that latex could become rigid, could crack, tear, and become discolored when certain types of filler were used. The question is, did Hesse know that latex sculpture would deteriorate? Would she have accepted the process of deterioration, would she allow it to be visible over time? Might she enjoy the analogies that this process of decay has to the fate of things in the world and consciously incorporate them into the content of her work? A central problem raised by works not necessarily designed for longevity is that at some point their status as an artwork may come to an end. They are not site-specific or ephemeral, as were Serra's splashed lead pieces or LeWitt's wall drawings created at the same time. Hesse's latex works were *something*; at what point would they become *nothing*, and was this a status she wanted for them? Do the latex pieces move into another class of objects, ruins that can be viewed as having their own picturesque and nostalgic presence due to their breaking down? Or must they be removed from view when they become significantly different from what they were?

Hesse invited such philosophical inquiry into the status of her objects. In her view, the works became interesting at the moments when they went beyond her own expectations. However, she was not interested in ephemerality in itself. The ephemerality of the latex was a secondary condition, a liability offset by the qualities that attracted her. Her admission to a certain guilt about selling the latex pieces to collectors or museums testifies that she was not sure whether the work would sustain her intentions for it. Indeed, in the thirty years since the latex works were made, they have changed considerably. The flexibility of the material is vastly diminished, and the appearance is significantly different, due to, for example, discoloration and the stretching of the surfaces from gravity's pull. Undoubtedly, Hesse had a sense that the fate of this body of work might be an irreversible unexhibitability.

But the fate of latex did not keep her from the experimentation with process and material that brought her to the threshold of meaning in her work. The ragged edges left on *Sans II* (FIG. 12) after the fiberglass was cracked off its rubber form revealed to her that fiberglass could yield its own indeterminacy. She went further by not using fiberglass on rigid forms, but rather allowing it to find its own shape as it dried over the most minimal of supports. Hesse let wet fiberglass dry on wires hanging from the ceiling of her studio. The resulting cocoonlike modules were clustered in a group and titled *Connection* (PL. 108)—but, as with many of her late works, the ultimate disposition of the cluster was not designated, and it may have never been thought of as fixed.

The time-based phenomena of variability and instability are signatures of Hesse's late work. They were inherent in her materials and processes, and in them reside the psychic and metaphoric residue of her art. Collaboration also played a key role in Hesse's process toward the end of her career. Although she at first handled the



latex independently, she actually worked on her fiberglass pieces collaboratively. She could, in some cases, simply send orders to Aegis Reinforced Plastics, where she had begun working closely with the fabricator Doug Johns. But even if a piece was fabricated at Aegis without her daily examination, as was *Accretion*, 1968 (PL. 96; FIG. 9),³⁵ a sculpture composed of fifty identical fiberglass units that lean against the wall, she insisted on randomness in the intervals between the discrete units. As Hesse's and Johns's collaboration continued, she convinced him to work outside of the factory and to use fiberglass in ways that he had never envisioned. By the end of 1968, Hesse had students working as assistants. When she collapsed from a brain tumor in April 1969, the students and Johns became more involved in the execution of her ideas.

These conditions produced a number of results that were embraced by Hesse and that must be considered, in addition to variability and instability, hallmarks of her late work. *Contingent* (FIG. 112), finished in November 1969, is a series of eight panels of rubberized cheesecloth and fiberglass that hang from the ceiling. The pieces were mostly made by Hesse's assistants, and in addition to these eight panels, there are two similar ones, indications of a studio practice of producing multiple units. In a statement about *Contingent*, Hesse articulated her intentions and some of its generative conditions:

*today, another step. on two sheets we put on the glass.
did the two differently.
one was cast—poured over hard, irregular, thick plastic;
one with screening, crumpled. they will all be different.
both the rubber sheets and the fiberglass.
lengths and widths.*

FIGURE 12
Eva Hesse, *Sans II*, 1968, detail
(PL. 93).

*question how and why in putting it together?
can it be different each time? why not?
how to achieve by not achieving? how to make by not making?
it's all in that.³⁶*

If Hesse's *Aught* and *Sans* pieces were titled to reveal the results or conditions of their production, then the name of *Contingent* would also convey the artist's intent. Could it be always caught in the dynamics of uncertainty conveyed by Hesse's title? Was this a vital condition for the artist's late works, one implicit in the possibilities of randomness and irregularity and change in her earlier modular pieces? Was it, ultimately, a fascination with modularity and repetition that introduced change into the work?

Of all the late works, the one most open to interpretation was never fixed with a title: the large hanging rope piece (PL. 110; FIG. 1) made in 1970 and never installed outside of Hesse's studio during her lifetime. It is a case study of the artist's intentionality, for Hesse wished to give it no form at all, yet in embellishing its formlessness—in this case by coating ropes in latex—she crystallized a process and subliminally anticipated the limits of her desire.

In November 1969 Hesse made a drawing for this work (FIG. 13) and typed on it:

*ropes rubberized with filler all sizes widths colors connected to plastic
one i made but reaching closer to what i had envisioned for that piece
the way it had started before i got sick. hung irregularly tying knots as
connections really letting it go as it will. allowing it to determine more
of the way it completes its self. make it with at least 2 or 3 of us,
connecting from wires from ceiling and nails from walls and other ways
let it determine more itself. how floppy or stiff[f] it might be. colors.
how much rope / must be rope piece.*

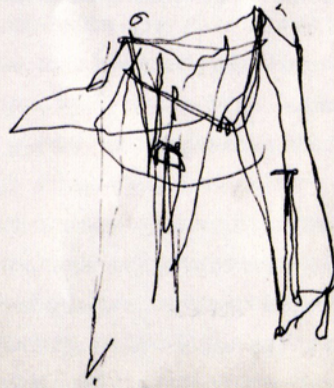
Uncertainty still surrounds the question of whether this piece reached completion during Hesse's lifetime. The only known photographs made while she was alive are two views of the partially made piece that appeared in the *Life* magazine issued on 27 February 1970 as part of an article on new art titled "Fling, Dribble, and Drip." Hesse began the piece in January, working with a friend, David Magasis. Magasis was quoted in Lippard's monograph: "It was something she'd had in mind. *Life* magazine was coming to photograph in a couple of days. I went to my uncle's place and got cable cord of all sizes. I came back and she said 'Do something.' 'What?' 'Whatever you feel like doing. . . . Do you want to make a knot?' 'Yes.' So I made a knot." Lippard continues, "He dunked it in liquid rubber and strung it up."³⁷

Magasis's matter-of-fact humor about the work conveys the dumb and somewhat funny processes that Hesse enjoyed in her work. But this did not preclude the romantic hope that matter could respond to and convey existential conditions.

work-fourth 17 foot hanging one planned for whitney
 1, stand up on lower section holes to attach to wall not necessarily straight
 can lean forward
 2 center rubber clutched together with rubber wires or cord or staples mixed. nothing
 form however it falls naturally.
 3 top held up or fallen over, either way.



work- fifth ropes rubberized with filler all sizes widths colors connected to
 plastic one i made but reaching closer to what i had envisioned for that piece
 the way it had started before i got sick. hung irregularly tying knots as connection
 s really letting it go as it will. allowing it to determine more of the way it
 completes itself. make it with at least 2 or 3 of us, connecting from wires from ceiling
 and nails from walls and other ways let it determine more itself. how floppy
 or stiff it might be. colors. how much rope / must be rope piece.



Inherent in this untitled piece is the irony that once Magasis and Hesse dipped the rope, they froze the meandering lines into near-final form.³⁸ One of the photographs for *Life* shows the piece in a close-up, as a dense tangle through which Hesse looks out (FIG. 14); the other is a long shot, showing it as strung out (FIG. 1). A quote from Hesse in the magazine reveals her awareness of the impossible nature of her utopian ideals for the artwork, that formlessness and the dynamics of change had their limits: "This piece is very ordered. Maybe I'll make it more structured, maybe I'll leave it changeable. When it's completed its order could be chaos. Chaos can be structured as non-chaos. That we know from Jackson Pollock."³⁹ Hesse knew, ultimately, from the way the materials worked, that she, like Pollock, would be making a representation of chaos. Latex over the rope imposed limits; latex's apparent flexibility and malleability was itself "changeable," and it would harden the supple ropes wherever it touched them.

In early March 1970 Hesse made another section of the work with her student and assistant Bill Barrette. Barrette and Hesse dipped ropes into five-gallon buckets of latex, knotted and tangled them to achieve irregularity, and hung them from wires

FIGURE 13
 Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, 1969.
 Pen and ink with typewriting
 on paper. 11 x 8 1/2 in.
 (27.9 x 21.6 cm). Gioia Timpanelli.



FIGURE 14
The artist in her studio in early 1970 with an untitled work of the same year (PL. 110) still in progress.

attached to the ceiling. The work was then put aside, shoved into a corner to make room for Hesse's last fiberglass piece (PL. 114). On 21 March Hesse went back into the hospital. On 24 March a list of unsold work was compiled by Fischbach Gallery, and although prices were added to every piece of sculpture on the list, there was no price on the last rope work, perhaps indicating uncertainty about whether the piece was finished.⁴⁰ On 30 March Hesse was operated on, and on 29 May she died.

The last rope piece is an emblem of Hesse's desire to let the material find its own configuration and of her reconciliation with other demands made by the institutions of art. It is not known who, with the exception of Barrette, saw the rope piece in Hesse's studio. It appears that Hesse hoped that, although it would always be suspended from the hooks on which it was made, the piece could be opened, closed, spread, condensed. It was respectfully treated this way after her death by Hesse's dealers and friends, who used their intuition about her intentions as their guide to its display.

Hesse's intention was that this piece "determine more of the way it completes itself" (see FIG. 13). On 14 November 1970 the untitled rope piece was first installed in a very appropriate exhibition, *Against Order: Chance and Art* at the ICA in Philadelphia. According to Lippard, "Nancy Graves, who installed it in Philadelphia the first time it was shown, remembers that Hesse was not happy with this piece, but was too sick to be sure about it."⁴¹ When it was shown in Harald Szeemann's *documenta 5* in Kassel, West Germany, in 1972, Donald Droll, Hesse's dealer at Fischbach, instructed the curator, "I would like to leave it to Mr. Sol LeWitt's judgment as to how this would be exhibited, also to select appropriate lighting."⁴² Lippard recounts that the installation "took two days and even then he felt he could have continued. It would look right from one angle and wrong from another."⁴³ On the heels of *documenta 5* came Hesse's memorial retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and its tour, for which the piece was installed by Droll and Barrette (FIG. 129). Lippard summed it up in 1976 when she wrote, "The piece has been called 'unfinished'; its installation is half the work and must be done by someone extremely familiar with Hesse's ideas. . . . Its 'unfinished' quality may, however, have been what Hesse wanted."⁴⁴ In 1972, the work was sold to the collector Victor Ganz, and in 1988, at his death, it was sold to the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The ambiguity that clothes this magical work speaks to the questions about limits that Hesse posed. She was always interested in an art that was bodily in its materials and processes, where change and time were first implied and then, increasingly, actualized. Did she build into this work the "unfinished," open-ended lack of finite structure? But, in applying the latex that would fix the shape, did she recognize the limits of this? Was it meant to be collected, or was it "non-art"? Could it have been destined for a museum collection and the constraints of conscientious custodial care? These are the questions inherent in the tangled gnarl of latex-covered ropes that is sometimes, perhaps appropriately, referred to as *Untitled*, 1970. In these physical facts and the conditions they impose lie the questions that Eva Hesse asked of art.

1. This is an extract from Hesse's statement about her work *Contingent* included in the catalogue for *Art in Process IV* at the Finch College Museum of Art, New York (opened 11 December 1969), as reprinted in Robert Pincus-Witten, "Eva Hesse: Post-Minimalism into Sublime," *Artforum* 10 (November, 1971): 43.
2. Hesse died in May 1970, two months after a third operation for a brain tumor.
3. An example of one of Hesse's leaf collages can be found in Helen A. Cooper, ed., *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective* (New Haven and London: Yale University Art Gallery and Yale University Press, 1992), hereinafter abbreviated as "Cooper," p. 22. For a detailed account of the early years of Hesse's artistic development, see the essay by Renate Petzinger in this volume.
4. Quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, *Eva Hesse* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), hereinafter abbreviated "Lippard," p. 10.
5. Quoted in Cooper, p. 22.
6. According to a Hesse biography compiled in 1966 by Fischbach Gallery, she taught at the Scarsdale Studio Workshop for Art. The date is not clear, but it was probably in 1965. Hesse taught in 1966 at Riverdale Neighborhood House. Hesse's detailed notes for classes are preserved in the Eva Hesse Archives, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. The notes were probably written for the Scarsdale classes. For grades one and two she taught "phantasy-color," "figure ground," "textures," "color," "the image in 3 dimensions," "shapes and color," "graphics," "collage with polymer medium," "clay," "clay and plaster reliefs," and "wood construction-sculpture." For grades 5 and 6: "drawing-natural forms," "wood construction," "3 dimensional experience," "Expressive possibilities of line," "Positive and Negative," etc. These notes, though meant for children, are very telling about Hesse's own techniques.
7. Quoted in Lippard, p. 12.
8. The exhibitions included two that opened in April 1961, *Drawings: Three Young Americans* at the John Heller Gallery, New York, and the *21st International Watercolor Biennial* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art; as well as *Drawings* at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut (dates unknown).
9. A brief summary of Hesse's connections would include: Claes Oldenburg, whom she met in New York in 1959 through her Yale classmate Irving Petlin; from 1961, Roy Lichtenstein, who had been the teacher of Hesse's husband, Tom Doyle; Lee Bontecou and her husband, Bill Giles, who were friends of Doyle's; Peter Forakis, a member of the Park Place group, whom she knew before 1961; Sol LeWitt, whom she met in 1960; Al Held, whom she met in 1961; Öyvind Fahlström, whom she and Doyle met before 1963; Al Jensen, whom she knew before 1964; and Yayoi Kusama, who lived in the loft building at Park Avenue and 19th Street, where Hesse lived briefly in 1961. In 1963, when Hesse and Doyle moved to 134 Bowery, they met Lucy Lippard, Robert Ryman, and Robert and Sylvia Mangold. Donald Judd became known to Hesse when he showed with LeWitt and others in a group show at Kaymar Gallery in March–April 1964. This information is gathered from Lippard; from responses to questions by Sol LeWitt, 18 November 1999; and from an interview with Tom Doyle in Roxbury, Connecticut, in spring 2000.
10. Letter to Sol LeWitt, written in diary on page dated 26 March 1965, Hesse Archives, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin.
11. Hesse and Doyle attended *documenta III* on 6 June 1964. There she would have seen the work of Group Zero, Tinguely, and Beuys. On 26 October 1964, they attended Robert Morris's opening at Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf. They went to see Yvonne Rainer, a friend, who was performing with Morris at the Kunstakademie (Hesse's appointment book for 1964, Hesse Archives, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin). Doyle has said that he and Hesse attended Beuys's twenty-four-hour performance on 5 June 1965 in Wuppertal. Doyle has also said that everyone in Germany was talking about Beuys when he and Hesse were there. For a very thorough discussion of the possible relationships between Hesse and Beuys, see Dirk Luckow, *Joseph Beuys und die Amerikanische Anti-Form Kunst*, Berliner Schriften zur Kunst, Bd. 10 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1998), particularly the chapter, "Wesenverwandschaft und Bezüge im Werk von Eva Hesse und Beuys (Similarities and affinities in the work of Eva Hesse and Beuys)."
12. This information comes from an interview and correspondence with William Wilson, New York, 1 February 1999; an interview with Mike Todd, Los Angeles, 29 April 1999; G.R. Swenson, *The Other Tradition* (Philadelphia: The Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1966); Henry Martin (Bolzano, Italy), *The Other Tradition: The Collected Essays of G.R. Swenson*, unpublished; and conversations with Stephen Koch, executor of the estate of Peter Hujar.
13. G.R. Swenson, "Beneath the Skin," *ARTnews* 65 (April 1966): 67.
14. Swenson, *The Other Tradition*, p. viii.
15. Scott Rothkopf discusses the critical dialogue between Swenson and Lippard, and their relationship to Surrealism, in "The Other Sixties: The Return of Surrealism in American Art and Criticism" (A.B. thesis, Harvard University, 1999), a revised version of which will be published by Yale University Press. During the development of this exhibition, Rothkopf and I had many conversations concerning Hesse's role in this history.
16. Lucy R. Lippard, "An Impure Situation (New York and Philadelphia Letter)," *Art International* 10 (May 1966): 63.
17. Typewritten text by Joe Raffaele about a piece he says could be in a show he calls "Concentric Extraction," Hesse Archives, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin.
18. Bochner's portraits of LeWitt and Smithson are reproduced in Richard S. Field, ed., *Mel Bochner: Thought Made Visible, 1966–1973* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1995), pls. 12, 13.
19. Telephone interview with Mel Bochner, New York, July 2001.
20. Mel Bochner, *Arts Magazine* 41 (November 1966): 58. Description of Bochner's role in the production is from interview with Bochner, July 2001.
21. Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967), reprinted in Gary Garrels, ed., *Sol LeWitt: A Retrospective* (San Francisco, New Haven, and London: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 369, 370.
22. See Ann Swartz, "Accession II: Eva Hesse's Response to Minimalism," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 71, no. 1/2 (1997): 37–47.
23. Hesse's statement on *Addendum* is published in full in Lippard, p. 96 (from which both quotes here were taken). Elayne Varian, the director of the Contemporary Wing at the Finch College Museum of Art worked with Bochner on *Art in Series*. In light of the discussions of Hesse's use of the word "absurd" (for example, by Robert Storr in "Do the Wrong Thing: Eva Hesse and the Abstract Grotesque" in Cooper, pp. 85–98), it is interesting to read in a letter, dated 22 September 1972, from Varian to Linda Shearer, curator of the first Eva Hesse retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1972) that "in Eva's use of the word at the end of her statement which some people did not understand, she meant it to be used as in 'theater of the absurd'" (letter in Hesse retrospective exhibition file at the Guggenheim Museum).
24. Hesse bought latex and got advice on how to use it from Mr. Niccio at Cementex, 336 Canal St. The store is still there today. Martin Langer (Idstein, Germany) has researched Hesse's relationship with Cementex.
25. Diary entry for 14 February 1968, Hesse Archives, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin.
26. See the exhibition catalogue *Flyktpunter/Vanishing Points*, edited by Olle Granath and Margareta Helleberg (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1984); the artists in that exhibition were Bochner, Graham, Doyle, Hesse, LeWitt, Smithson, and Vollmer.
27. The Castelli exhibition is sometimes referred to as the Castelli Warehouse Show. *When Attitudes Become Form: Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information*, opened at the Kunsthalle, Bern, Switzerland, in March 1969 and traveled that year to the Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, West Germany; and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.
28. Harald Szeemann, "How Does an Exhibition Come into Being?" in *Painting, Object, Film, Concept: Works from the Herbig Collection* (New York: Christie's, 1998), p. 41.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 40. According to the exhibition catalogue, *Aught* was not shown in *When Attitudes Become Form*.
30. Robert Morris, "Anti Form," *Artforum* 6 (April 1968): 33–35.
31. Quoted in Lippard, p. 131.

32. The sheet is in the archives of the Guggenheim Museum in the files for the 1972 Hesse retrospective. Other lists have been published in Lippard, p. 65; and in Naomi Spector, "A Selection from the Notebooks of Eva Hesse," in *Eva Hesse: Sculpture*, ed. Nicholas Serota (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1979), n.p.
33. Robert Smithson, in the press release for his own exhibition at the Dwan Gallery in June 1967, "Language To Be Looked At And/Or Things To Be Read," reprinted in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), p. 61.
34. The list appears in *The New Avant-Garde: Issues for the Art of the Seventies*, text by Gregoire Müller (New York: Praeger, 1972).
35. In an interview with Doug Johns, Topanga, California, February 2000, Johns said that during the making of *Accretion* Hesse would call him on the telephone.
36. Exhibition catalogue statement for *Art in Process IV*, Finch College, reprinted in full and quoted from Lippard, p. 165.
37. *Ibid.*
38. I owe some of my thinking about *Untitled*, 1970, to comments made by Michael Leja and others at a seminar talk I gave for students and faculty in the M.I.T. Department of Architecture History, Theory, and Criticism in May 2000. Leja's suggestion about the "frozen" nature of the work was especially interesting.
39. Lippard, p. 172.
40. The list of Hesse's unsold work compiled by Fischbach Gallery on 24 March 1970 is in Fourcade-Droll files in the possession of Jill Weinberg, of Weinberg-Lennon Gallery, New York City. (In 1972, Donald Droll, Hesse's dealer, left Fischbach and established a partnership with Xavier Fourcade.)
41. Lippard, p. 172. There is some uncertainty about whether the piece was shown in Philadelphia at the ICA since the published catalogue for the exhibition does not include the work. Further research will likely prove that the work was in the show.
42. Letter from Donald Droll to the *documenta* staff, Fourcade-Droll papers, Weinberg-Lennon Gallery.
43. Lippard, p. 172.
44. *Ibid.*