Cover.
Iran, Il-Khanid Dynasty
(Kashan), Prism Tile, late 13th–early 14th century,
composite body with
overglaze lettering and
in-glaze blue decoration, 34.3
× 32.4 cm (13 1/2 × 13 1/4 in.),
Founders Society Purchase 
25.261

Title Page.
Eva Heist, American, 1936-70,
Accesion II, 1967; 32-vaainned
steel and rubber tubing, 78.1 x
78.1 x 78.1 cm (30 1/4 x 30 1/4 x
30 1/4 in.). Founders Society
Purchase, Friends of Modern
Art Fund and Miscellaneous
Gifts Fund (79.34). Reproduced
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Byzantine Glazed Ceramic Tableware in the Collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts
by Pamela Armstrong

Like the Light of the Sun: Islamic Luster-Painted Ceramics
by Elsie Holmes Peck

Accession II: Eva Hesse's Response to Minimalism
by Anne Swartz

A Monumental Catalan Crucifix
by Janice Mann
Figure 1.
Evie Hesse, American, 1934–75, Accrual 81
1977, galvanized steel and rubber tubing, 78.1 x 78.1 x 78.1 cm (30 1/2 x 30 1/2 x
30 1/2 in). Gift of The Friends of Modern Art Fund and Miscellaneous Gifts Fund
79.24.
Accession II: Eva Hesse's Response to Minimalism

Anne Swartz, The Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia

Throughout her sculptural work, Eva Hesse (1936–70) responded to the rigidity of Minimalism by tangling, binding, complicating, and enclosing space to underscore the expressive possibilities inherent in abstract sculpture. Her nonconformist approach facilitated the development of a unique sculptural language, and she introduced into sculpture new strategies and tactics that have been much imitated. In her series entitled Accession, Hesse used the cube form, which had been popularized by Minimalist artists, as an erotic and humorous device. With the second work in the series, Accession II (1967; title page and fig. 1), now in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Hesse was reacting against the severity of Minimalism, but in a positive way that allowed her to explore abstractions of self, obsession, and fetishism that asserted a dynamic female presence. The sculpture also reveals her exposure to textile manufacture and her concern with domestic spaces.

Accession II consists of a five-sided, industrially fabricated exterior made of galvanized steel screens through which Hesse punched 30,670 short pieces of silver-colored rubber tubing. She folded the tubes back through the screen, interlacing them through the shell of the sculpture. The result is a humorous, absurd, and tactile contrast between the hard geometric framing cube of the exterior and the repetitive soft, sensual, seemingly infinite contents of the interior. Hesse defined the simplified rigid form of the grid in Accession II by complicating its interior; this was a defiance that intersected with her rejection of contemporary Minimalism.

As a reaction against the emotional and gestural excesses of Abstract Expressionism—the dominant American art movement of the 1940s and 1950s, in which the painterly or expressive processes of the artist are left in evidence—Minimalist artists of the early and mid-1960s employed hard-edged, geometric forms to create unified, reductive sculptures. However, by 1965 artists began introducing varied propositions such as tension and softness, into their art, signaling the beginning of the end of Minimalism. Post-Minimalism, in contrast to Minimalism, emphasized tactile sensual surfaces, and its inception has been associated with Hesse’s art. This movement reacted against the sterility of Minimalism, celebrating instead curved, gestural lines and forms. Its art is evocative rather than literal; it invades the viewer’s experience, communicating the artist’s inner sensibilities through tactility, sensuality, and content. Mirroring the political and social rebellions of the mid- and late 1960s, Post-Minimalist art, including Hesse’s, foregrounded unpredictability, indeterminacy, infinity, mutability, chaos, heterogeneity, disjunction, subjectivity, diversity, and pluralism. Artists such as Hesse promoted radical spatial metaphors for the body and the self.

How did Hesse come to such a radically innovative conclusion when the rest of the avant-garde art world was primarily still focused on hard geometry? Accession II evolved out of the box and window forms that Hesse had experimented with in her drawings and small works on paper of the early sixties and resulted from her critique of the art of Surrealism, Expressionism, and Pop Art. While it is possible to read sculptures such as Accession II as mere pointed reactions to the dominance of Minimalist boxes and grids, in fact these forms were much more pervasive interests for Hesse. They were evident in her works on paper as early as 1960, appearing in Untitled (1960–61; fig. 2), as well as several others from 1963–65, such as the humorously titled abstract collage And He Sat in a Box (1964; fig. 3). The use of the geometric box reverberated with her psychological experiences of domestic spaces as a wife. Further, the incorporation of the soft, flaccid materials of textile production stemmed from her experience as a textile designer in 1960 and her encounter with discarded remnants and objects in the abandoned textile factory she used as a studio when she was in Germany. Therefore, Accession II is part of a process itself, one of a series of experiments with boxes, windows, and grids.

In 1967, Hesse began to explore the possibilities of the box as a container of mystery and ambivalence. That summer, she created painted paper-mâché boxes, Inside I and Inside II (figs. 4–5). Inside I contains an interlaced, chaotic painted twine and wire mass, while Inside II contains two weights wrapped in cord. The viewer must look inside to discover the contents and contemplate their significance, interacting mentally or emotionally with the notion that only important objects are enclosed in or protected by boxes. Hesse continued using the box-as-container in a series of glass display cases she created for small sample structures and test models for
The intensity of the manufacturing process for the Accession works motivated Hesse to have the next box, Accession III (fig. 8), produced entirely by assistants. Her friend Doug Johns, a plastics fabricator on Staten Island at Aegis Reinforced Plastics, helped coordinate the production of the third box. This box was large like Accession II but made of transparent fiberglass and clear plastic rather than metal and opaque, dark rubber. Accession III took a long time to make because each of the 28,000 holes had to be individually drilled and filled with rubber. Begun in the summer of 1968, it was not completed until that fall. This box was not as successful as its predecessors. Hesse recognized the problems in Accession III, even referring to the work as “too right and too beautiful,” noting that her interests were really elsewhere: “I’d like to do a little more wrong at this point.” The translucency of this sculpture did not convey the same sense of mystery and ambiguity as the other Accession works. Therefore, Hesse returned to the form and material of the first two when she made the fourth and fifth works in the series, Accession IV and Accession V (figs. 9–10). Both were done in 1968 and both were smaller, like Accession I. Due to its orange-colored exterior box, Accession V has a greater chromatic impact.

While Accession II can be viewed as a part of Hesse’s experimentation, artistic development, and formal explorations, as well as her reaction to the austerity of Minimalism, it also encapsulated several personal concerns of Hesse as a female artist and proto-feminist. Her adult life was defined by the tempestuous experiences of her childhood. Born in Hamburg in 1936 to a Jewish criminal lawyer and his wife, Hesse and her older sister escaped Nazi Germany on a children’s train to Amsterdam when the artist was only two years old. The girls were joined by their parents, who had also secretly left Germany, and after a sojourn in London, the family finally settled in New York City. Because of difficulties in language and adjustment in their new country, Hesse’s father was unable to work as a lawyer and instead sold insurance. Her parents’ marriage could not withstand this dislocation and trauma, and they divorced in 1945. Her father remarried soon after, but her mother, anguished by the war and the family’s displacement, committed suicide in January 1946.

Hesse’s intense emotional life was dominated by connections to other people. She struggled simultaneously with constant fear of loneliness and of failure to develop an individual identity. She worried she would suffer from instability and depression, as her mother had. Every January, around the anniversary of her mother’s death, she would be particularly anxious. Friends would make an effort to distract her so that she would not be overwhelmed. Hesse also felt influenced by what she saw as her father’s intense Germanic compulsiveness. She wanted to stabilize these opposing forces. Dr. Samuel Dunkel, her psychiatrist for most of her life, remarked that Hesse described relief in learning her symptoms of anxiety and depression could be linked to illness rather than personal experience. She died from a brain tumor at the age of thirty-four, still devoted to her art and with a life-affirming attitude.
Hesse knew she was interested in art from a very young age and decided to follow her inclination even though her lowest grades in junior high school were in that subject. She took evening classes at the Art Students League, New York, when she was in high school. During the 1950s she matured as an artist, attending several schools. Hesse studied with significant figures in American art education, including Josef Albers, the Bauhaus artist who taught at Yale School of Art and Architecture, where she received her B.F.A. in 1959. After graduating from Yale, Hesse moved back to New York and lived in the Bowery, where she met and befriended many artists and critics, including Claes Oldenburg, Carl Andre, Robert and Sylvia Mangold, Lucy Lippard, Robert Ryman, Mel Bochner, and Sol LeWitt. Hesse had her first gallery exhibition at age twenty-five and immediately began to receive critical attention.

In April 1961, Hesse met sculptor Tom Doyle, whom she married in November of that year. He was eight years her senior and already established in the New York art world. Her marriage to Doyle affected her artistic development over the next five years. As she noted in her diaries, she felt both professionally dominated by Doyle and personally distressed by the agitated and competitive nature of their relationship. Hesse also expressed concern over Doyle’s drinking and public boisterousness. She bemoaned her difficult dual role as artist and wife of an artist, noting: “It is as difficult as it is said to be an artist’s wife and an artist also. Not always for the reasons one thinks however it is not all ‘The Free Life.’” Indeed, she expressed fatigue as a result of the multiple roles expected of her as a woman. An oft-quoted sentiment reveals that she felt overworked and unhappy in her marriage: “I cannot be so many things... Woman, beautiful, artist, wife, housekeeper, cook, saleslady; all these things. I cannot even be myself, nor know what I am, I must find something clear, stable and peaceful within myself...” Yet even at this point of dissatisfaction with her marriage, her work developed into a series of drawings of erotic machines and then into even more playful forms when Hesse began exploring sculpture.

Hesse’s real breakthrough as an artist—her transition from painting to sculpture—occurred in 1964–65 when Doyle was invited to make art for F. Artaud Scheidt, a wealthy German textile manufacturer and art collector. Doyle’s large Abstract Expressionist-inspired sculptures were too expensive to transport, so Scheidt moved Doyle and Hesse to Germany, allowing them to set up studios in an abandoned textile factory in Kettwig-am-Ruhr, near Düsseldorf. This location proved fortuitous for Hesse’s development, stimulating her interest in the physical nature of soft materials such as string and cloth; she had a large supply of these discarded materials available to her at the textile factory.

This stage of Hesse’s artistic development did not come easily. She had personal anxieties to overcome when she returned to Germany, associated in her mind with her family’s demise and her mother’s depression. The failing marriage suffered even more while Hesse and Doyle were abroad, separated from friends and familiar surroundings. Not surprisingly, these anxieties initially stymied Hesse’s artistic production. Yet Hesse turned to sculpture when Doyle suggested that she try something new and experiment with the abundant abandoned materials lying around their factory/studio. She manipulated these elements of textile manufacture—strings, cords, wires, and threads—into reliefs to produce her first three-dimensional works of art.

At this point, Hesse’s art began to evolve rapidly. She developed a highly personal vocabulary of images, at once absurd and sensual, finding her main sources of inspiration in Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, and finally Pop Art. From the first two she learned about strategies and forms for expressing themes of autobiography and eroticism. Hesse was particularly intrigued...
by artists who pursued energetic disjunctions, strange incompatibilities, or ironic gestures. Yet she worked independently, without looking for identification with the work of other artists and without specifically aligning herself with any particular artistic movement.

From Surrealism, Hesse appropriated an emphasis on the irrational and on the breaking of boundaries. She borrowed methods of disjunction, dismemberment, and displacement, as well as the employment of obsessive tactics that relied on or prompted a subsequent compulsive response from the viewer. In making objects, Surrealist artists frequently played with the viewer’s inner obsessive desires; the Surrealist object often features a mix of sculptural elements intended to provoke the viewer’s unconscious response by engendering effects that could not be expected or determined, such as eliciting the viewer’s sexual fantasies. An example of such a work is Meret Oppenheim’s Object (1936; Museum of Modern Art, New York). To make it, Oppenheim covered a teacup, saucer, and spoon with fur, creating a symbol evoking an oral eroticism underlined with disgust, since the viewer is forced to associate that pleasure with a potentially unpleasant situation. Hesse met Oppenheim in 1965 when she was in Europe and remarked upon it in her diary, clearly showing the impact both the meeting and the object had on her sensibility.

Eroticism is an integral component of the physicality of Hesse’s work, figuring into her fetishistic forms and use of tactics that evoke a compulsive response (such as the compelling desire to touch the object) from the viewer. Both of these are evident in Accession II. In Freudian psychoanalytic theory, a fetish is an object that symbolizes or acts as a substitute for sexual organs, thus allowing for the displacement of sexual feelings onto an inanimate thing. Freud admitted that while individualized sentiments can result in the fetishization of objects, there are specific relationships between particular objects and genitalia. Freud designated containing objects as symbols of female genitalia, including both the vagina and the womb. He described boxes, cases, cupboards, and ovens as vaginas or uteri, and rooms as fetishes relating to women. Thus, in its definition and demarcation of space, the

box form of Accession II—with its pleasurable interior of handwoven plush tentacles contrasted and contained within a hard, fabricated exterior grid—relates strongly to the male fetishizing of female genitalia (which are often referred to in slang as a “fairy box,” a description that also applies to this sculpture).

Accession II might also be termed a fetish in the word’s general definition: anything to which extra value or power has been attached. These excesses manifest as magical, erotic, or omnipotent characteristics. A boxed object stimulate desires for consumption, sovereignty, ownership, and possession. Like the Surrealist object that engenders such a compulsive response, Hesse’s sculpture similarly invites such projections of fantasy. Created by the repetitive action of poking the straws into the screens, this work begins with a box, but it ends wherever the viewer imagines.

The complicated and repetitive nature of Accession II reveals Hesse’s own compulsiveness in weaving the vinyl tubes in and out of the perforations and may be deemed fetishistic in itself. This behavior has a component of erotic gratification to it in its rigid repetition and restrictive control. Lippard has convincingly related Hesse’s obsession for repetition to an autoerotic desire that substituted for the lack of her mother’s love.

Hesse’s compulsiveness is depicted in a portrait by her friend, artist and critic Mel Bochner. In Portrait of Eva Hesse (1966; fig. 11), Bochner placed the concept of enclosure at the epicenter of her “cosmology,” explaining, “I selected the word
"wrap" because it is both a noun and a verb, an object and a process. That contradiction, or coincidence, seemed to me to be at the "center" of Eva’s work.20 Bohaner broke the idea down into several strata, each circle representing some nuance of enclosure or connection. In effect, this reproduction of Hesse’s process imaged as a string of synonyms resembles the present interpretation of Accession II, which focuses on her compulsive behavior of obsessively repeating an activity.

The construction of Accession II was a continuing interest of Hesse’s.21 Even when she returned from her first hospitalization in 1968 for the brain tumor that would eventually prove fatal, she continued with the repetitive task. Art critic and curator Robert Storr was astonished by the devotion this involved: "That the artist resumed and persevered in this endeavor after her first collapse makes the pathognomy of this 'marking time'—and so by analogy the hopeful obstinacy of all human projects pitted against time—achingly apparent."22 Helen Hesse Charash, the artist’s sister, noted that compulsivity was a large part of their upbringing and that their father, as a self-employed insurance salesman, was a "workaholic," staying up nights and continuing to work in his bathrobe.23 Eva Hesse’s ongoing interest in repetitive process stemmed from her relish for the compulsive act. In a 1963 letter to her good friend Rosie Goldman, she noted: "I finally took a screen, heavy mesh which is stretched onto a frame like so and taken [sic] cord which I cut into smaller pieces. I took them in plaster and knot each piece through a hole and around wire. It is compulsive work which I enjoy."24 This notion of repetition is an especially interesting absurd hyperbole.25 When Hesse was asked why she often repeated forms in a single work, she replied, "Because it exaggerates. If something is meaningful, maybe it’s more meaningful said ten times. It's not just an esthetic choice. If something is absurd, it’s much more greatly exaggerated, absurd, if it’s repeated."26 Lippard defined the word “accession,” used in the title, as “increased by something added,” which exactly describes Hesse’s process in expanding the form of the enclosed box.27 Compulsive tactics, such as the repetitious poking of tubing through a box in Accession II, are prevalent in Hesse’s earliest reliefs and sculptures, such as the controlled and repeated coiling of Ringaround Arosie (1965; Martin Bernstein Collection, Birmingham, Mich.) and An Ear in a Pond (1965; Robert M. Kay Collection, Rumson, N.J.).

Abstract Expressionism was an even more important source than Surrealism for Hesse’s inclusion of autobiographical subjects. She admired the accomplishments of Abstract Expressionist artists. Two of the movement’s basic tenets are relevant to Hesse’s art: an interest in artistic expression of the inner self and a concern with the activity of the artistic process. Hesse worked to internalize what she saw as the important issue for Willem de Kooning and Arshile Gorky: the creation of a personalized art that incorporated activity and gesture into the aesthetic. Early in her career, she painted in a style dependent upon both artists.28 The freedom and sweep in her sculptures represent an appreciation of their sensuous treatment of forms and their passionate sensibilities. Yet when Hesse tried to contend with the bravado of Jackson Pollock’s art, a greater tension ensued. In contrast to him, she worked on an intimate scale. Like Pollock, she wanted to create a transparency between the presence of the materials and the process of constructing the work.29 In her work, she left elements of production evident in obvious reference to the presence of the artist. She also made obvious her intention to emphasize her role as artist through her use of absurd oppositions.

Hesse combined Surrealist and Abstract Expressionist influences with yet another source, Pop Art. This was an unusual combination for a Post-Minimalist artist in the 1960s. She and her artist friends disdained Pop’s artificiality and commerciality, even though they had an association with Roy Lichtenstein, one of Tom Doyle’s teachers. However, according to Lippard, for Hesse the period from 1962 until 1964 “reflect[ed] a confusion perhaps rooted in a conflict between loyalty to the inner imagery of Gorky and de Kooning and the brash newness of Pop.”30 In particular, Hesse was attracted to Andy Warhol’s art, especially his deadpan attitude.31 She especially admired the soft, sexually provocative forms of Claes Oldenburg and Yayoi Kusama (an artist often loosely associated with Pop Art).32 The humorous titles of Hesse’s first series of reliefs that she made in Germany reflect the playfulness of Pop: Ringaround Arosie, Oomanismoomba, C-Clamp Blues, and Eighter from Decatur. Pop provided Hesse with an outlet for the humorous expression of absurd statements.
reaction. As Doyle has pointed out, LeWitt was a calming figure, a soothing presence; his willingness to discuss others' ideas about art, as well as his own, made him a very dear friend and companion.34 Lippard notes that Hesse's interest in serial arrangement can be directly linked to their friendship.35 While Hesse's grid, box, and window forms evolved out of her own thematic studies, her realization of the hairy box in Accession II seems like a gestural counterpart to the austerity of LeWitt's ubiquitous cube forms.36 Anne Wagner has effectively characterized the tactile quality of Accession II's interior surface as a contrast to minimal forms: "(Hesse reframes) the industrialized real of the Minimalist object into the surreal of incomplete sexualized form."37

Critics first noted Hesse's focus on process, eroticism, and content when Lucy Lippard included Hesse's work in the 1966 exhibition "Eclectic Abstraction." Early that year, Lippard had recognized a trend among several unaffiliated artists whose sculpture deviated from the hyperstructural, reductive forms preferred by Minimalist artists in the mid-1960s.38 Years later, Lippard wrote about "Eclectic Abstraction": "I was not trying to 'create a movement,' but rather to indicate that there were emotive or 'eclectic' or erotic alternatives to a solemn and deadest Minimalism which still retained the clarity of that notion."39 She recognized these works as the beginning of a move away from Minimalism. Erotic and soft forms, which are traditionally associated with femininity, were highlighted in the exhibition, which included works by both male and female artists.

All opposed the extreme masculinity and brutal, dominant positioning of art characteristic of Minimalism, although Hesse's interpretations were informed by a feminist sensibility. Lippard considered Surrealism the major influence on such works. Arguing that all the artists in the show retained an interest in abstract form rather than representation, she used Hesse's sculptures as an important focal point in her writings related to the exhibition.40

It is not surprising that Lippard was the first to discuss openly and explicitly erotic themes in Hesse's art. Her conception of this exhibition was based primarily on Hesse's work and the manner in which Hesse seemed to be "working both within and outside of the current geometric tendencies."41 Taking her cue from Hesse's sculpture, Lippard "began looking for other artists confronting that dialectic."42 Lippard wrote in her catalogue essay that Hesse's works exemplified the "Surrealist 'reconciliation of distant realities.'" Hesse harmonized different images or structural effects to integrate form and content. Lippard noted that Hesse's sculptures, despite their simplicity and limited use of colors, possessed "an intensely personal mood," which differentiated them from Minimalism. Most importantly, Lippard asserted that Hesse had created something new: "Omitting excessive detail and emotive color, but retaining a tentative, vulnerable quality in the simplest forms, she accomplishes an idiosyncratic, unified space..."43 For Lippard, recognition of this nebulous space was crucial because it implied that Hesse's art suggested a radical notion of
infinity. The exhibition marked an important historical moment in American art of the 1960s by announcing a trend in which the artists' work was motivated by Minimalism, but separate from it.

Hesse's creation of Minimalist linearity and rigidity in Accession II accentuates the conventional position of women artists, and by extension, women's relations to culture: because, as Alicia Ostriker has noted, women artists have been excluded from developing their own tradition, they have had to appropriate masculine artistic language. Yet in her use of soft materials, Hesse radically revised her Minimalist sources. Though an assessment of soft as feminine may be considered stereotypical by current standards because it promotes an idea of an essential female quality, it would have been acceptable for an artist working in the 1960s. Hesse looked at one of the most prominent forms from the masculine tradition of Minimalist art, and through the device of elaboration revised its implications, adapting them to advance her own artistic development. Anna Chave has pointed out that Accession II can also be read as a point of expression, calling it a "voice box," another physiological feature to which the form of this work has a resemblance. Hesse purposely took the smooth, hard, masculine edge of the Minimalist cube and changed it into a box with an interior of abundant cords.

Hesse's dialogue with feminism related to her desire to find a different artistic image than that espoused by Minimalism. Feminism's celebration of the personal, the private, and the discounted provided important vehicles for Hesse to enact her efforts to distinguish her work. Accession II indicates such a difference, because in it she created a sculptural object and space that involves the body, makes reference to enclosed domestic spaces, and employs weaving forms. In Accession II, Hesse was specifically interested in the containment of space as that enclosure impacts on the body. Lippard noted that Hesse moved into the lower floor of her apartment, which consisted of two small rooms, in order to create the comforting enclosure of a nest or womblike space. Hesse commented at this time, "I work only downstairs. In my corner. It is really crowded with work and tools and all sorts of paraphernalia. Feel less lost and lonely there that way. Upstairs is unknown—unfamiliar to me." She was aware of the spatial impact that Accession II had on the body and even allowed her own body to interact with this sculpture in a playful way. A still from a film made by Dorothy Beskind of Hesse in her studio (fig. 12) documents Hesse lowering her head into the box. When Accession II was shown in 1968, the desire to touch it overwhelmed its viewers. The sculpture was partially damaged as people leaned on it and lowered children into it.

Accession II introduces a new metaphorical mode of making textiles, one that appeals in the abundance of the interior and defies the order implied by the controlled segmentation of the exterior framework. Hesse knew textile production from her work as a textile designer. Though weaving has historically functioned as an outlet for women, it remains connected to scenarios that define their impotence, because women's work is so economically and socially undervalued. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have noted, "Like Ariadne, Penelope, and Philomela, women have used
their looms, thread, and needles both to defend themselves and silently to speak of themselves.\textsuperscript{30} Weaving confers a silent power, allowing women to contend with their limitations by providing an alternative mode of expression to male-dominated art.\textsuperscript{31} However, for a very few women artists, notably Hesse, weaving has offered a mode to usurp the male tradition. In \textit{Accession II}, the monotonous tedium of weaving has been complemented by a profusion of cords, simultaneously demonstrating pleasure in traditional weaving and expansive, infinite possibilities.

Hesse’s \textit{Accession II} works against the norm of what is expected in art made by women. The sculpture suggests the potent expressiveness of the “female experience,” rather than simply reiterating any historical concept of the female as victim. Here, Hesse exploited the possibility of a radical reversal of that paradigm, accomplishing a new form for expressing a feminist aesthetic featuring absurdity and compulsion. Hesse’s abstract sculpture deviated from the dominant standard, defining a distinct realm with feminist alternatives. During the feminist movement of the 1960s, women’s bodies and traditionally defined “women’s work” were increasingly used by artists as metaphorical vehicles for the female/feminine experience. Eva Hesse was engaged in developing her own modes of expression at this very time and thus began to mine those subjects for inspiration.

44
the catalogue of the 1992 retrospective exhibition at Yale University Art Gallery (see H. Cooper, "Chronology," in Eva Hesse, 1966-70, Accession IV, 1992; note 2). It was also developed from my notes on her diaries, journals, and notebooks in the Eva Hesse Archive at the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. The author would like to thank Christine Mack, Registrar, and Kimberlee Overly Foss, Assistant Registrar, at the Allen Memorial Art Museum for facilitating access to the Eva Hesse Archive; and Barry Rosen and Helen Hesse Church for permission to reference the archive and reproduce images by Hesse.

For a more extensive discussion of Hesse's art and the themes presented here, refer to A. Schwart, "Psychosexual Strategies of Enclosure and Entanglement: Re-Reading Bourgeois and Hesse" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1996).

10. In her diaries, Hesse dramatized the opposing mother and father impulses operating in her life, calling this dynamic the "force conflicting Eva": "Underlying Theme/conflicting forces inside Eva/1) mother force: unstable, creative/sexual threatening my stability/father: Aggressive/2) father, suppress force: good, little girl obedient, neat, clean, organized/masochistic" (diary entry, May 1966 [Oberlin, Ohio: Eva Hesse Archive, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College], box 2, item 5).


12. "It's All Yours," Seventeen Magazine (September 1954); 140. Hesse was a job at Seventeen Magazine in 1954, and the editors decided to focus on the artistic talents of their young intern in the article.

13. Hesse Archive (note 9), box 2, item 6.

14. Ibid.

15. Legs of a Wadding Bull (1965, Estate of Eva Hesse), a well-crafted and precise work of marble, is an example of one of these famous sculptural experiments. Then Doyle described the details of Hesse's artistic development in Germany and her initial experiments with three-dimensional reliefs. Then Doyle, interviews by author, New York, N.Y., February 15, 1994. It seems perhaps questionable to accept the word of the artist's estranged mother, whose description of h.s. as influencing the artist could be taken as an attempt to win him/herself an important role in the history of Hesse's art. But his importance to Hesse is corroborated by Sol LeWitt, who also encouraged and motivated Hesse in her art (S. LeWitt, interview by author, New York, N.Y., February 16, 1994; see also the correspondence between Hesse and LeWitt in Letter 1962 [note 3], 14-15). Additionally, LeWitt acknowledged Doyle's role in facilitating Hesse's progression from painting to sculpture (ibid., 28).


17. Diary entry, June 1965 (Hesse Archive [note 9], box 2, item 7).

18. S. Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," p. 2, and "On Dreams," in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychopathological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. J. Strachey, vol. 5 (London, 1953-54), 354, 663. In a recent article, Borin For discussed Hesse's sculpture as being "of the body," or referencing the unified corporeal presence of the body, as distinct from the individualism involved in fetishism (B. For, "Bordering on Blank: Eva Hesse and Minimalism," Art History 13, no. 3 [September 1994], 426). Borrowing her discussion on the theories of psychoanalysis Melanie Klein, For proposes that Hesse's sculpture is more metaphorical than literal and declares that they are not fetishes (ibid., 442), dismissing Freudian Theory as an appropriate conceptual model for looking at the work (ibid.). While I certainly agree with the psychoanalytic aspects of Hesse's abstract sculpture and see the strong connection between Klein's theories and the metaphors of Hesse's art, Hesse's sculptures have strong relationships to the body and do have fetishistic implications underlying the conceptual relationship to Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

24. The sculpture Hesse described in this letter no longer exists, but the process resembles that used for the construction of Ascension Piece. Hesse to P. Goldman, December 14, 1964, with handwritten notes by Hesse, as quoted in Lippard 1992 (note 3), 28-29, 35 fig. 44.

25. The literary theorist J. Hillis Miller has noted that such a mode of continuous repetition accomplishes a return to the reader or viewer of the artwork: "Repetition might be defined as anything that happens in the line to trouble or even confound its straightforward linearity: repetitions, insertions, insertions, insertions, insertions, insertions, insertions . . . Without the line there is no repetition, but repetition is what disrupts, suspends, or destroys the linearity of the line and plays with its straightforward logic" (note 24). J. Hillis Miller, "Akhmatova's Theodicy: Repetition and the Narrative Line," International Symposium on Interpretations of Narrative, Buffalo, N.Y., and Toronto, 1976, 157-59.

26. E. Hesse, as quoted in Nemser 1975 (note 7), 211.

27. Lippard 1992 (note 3), 104. Lippard probably drew this particular definition from one of Hesse's many notes on this series of works.

28. This point is apparent in the general treatment of the figure and the lateral composition of Untitled, an oil painting of 1960 (The Estate of Eva Hesse, reproduced in Eva Hesse 1992 [note 2], 145, pl. 7).


32. On Oldenburg, see Lippard 1992 (note 3), 197; A. C. Charaf, "Eva Hesse," in Eva Hesse 1992 (note 2), 114 n. 11; M. Berger, "Objects of Liberation: The Sculpture of Eva Hesse," Art/Text 30, 125 n. 46. On Kusama, see Lippard 1992 (note 3), 197. Doyle explained the importance of Kusama to Hesse, noting that Kusama lived in the Bowery near them, and he remembers Hesse's attention to the lowest echelons of Bowery's colorful life in her sculptures (Doyle 1994 [note 15]). Hesse probably saw Kusama's work at the Greene Gallery, according to Lippard, in "something of the most memorable art in New York in the early 1960's" (Lippard 1992 [note 3], 217 n. 41). In an article on Kusama, Dana Fleiss-Harnon mentions that "Hesse was a neighbor and sometimes publicist"; however, no one has corroborated that Hesse and Kusama's relationship was so involved (Doyle 1994 [note 15]).


34. Doyle 1994 (note 15).

35. Lippard 1992 (note 3), 200-201. It is interesting that the younger of LeWitt's two daughters is named Eva. LeWitt was influenced by Hesse in his art as well, particularly in his Wall Drawing 446 (Vertical lines, not straight, not touching, uniformly spaced, maximum density, covering the entire surface of the wall), a drawing that he was intended to cover one wall of a gallery when installed (Sol LeWitt, Collection). It served as a memorial to her; as it was completed in the month of her death (May 1970) and shown soon after in an exhibition that LeWitt dedicated to Hesse. LeWitt has remarked that variations in the linear forms of this work—conceived as an essay in variables and forms—were directly influenced by Hesse's emphasis on controlled permutations (LeWitt 1994 [note 15]). Hesse's close relationship with LeWitt is also confirmed by her sister Charaf (Charaf 1996 [note 22]).

36. My reading of Hesse's forms as a point of contrast to the manipulability of Minimalism's reductive sculptures is influenced by Anna C. Charaf's interpretation of Minimalist rhetoric as focused on "masculine" qualities such as entropy, destruction, destruction, mass, strength, territory, authority, and mastery (A. C. Charaf, "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," Art/Text 42 [January 1993]: 44-63).

In an article relating to the exhibition, Lippard included Heise with Louise Bourgeois, H.C. Westermann, Lindsay Decker, Jean Lurcat, Bruce Nauman, Keith Sonnier, Frank Linehan, Nixer, Alice Adams, Don Ponti, and Gary Kuehn (L. Lippard, "Eclectic Abstraction," Art International 19:11 [November 1966], 28, 34-38; and idem, Eclectic Abstraction [New York: Fischbach Gallery, exh. cat., 1966]).


40. Lippard was also stimulated by the work of Frank Lineham, Nixer (ibid., 70).

41. ibid., 72.

42. ibid., 71.

43. Lippard, "Eclectic Abstraction," 1966 (note 38), 28. Heise was represented in "Eclectic Abstraction" by three works: two of the black, scansioned papier-mâché pieces created immediately after her return from Germany in 1965—called, a shiny wall-related hanging (Staatsliche Collection, London), and King Life, a matte, floor-related sculpture destroyed at the request of the artist—and Metamorphic Irregularity, a painted wood and Sculptural wall-related work made especially for the exhibition, consisting of multiple parts interconnected by under-covered wire (present location unknown).

44. Alice Ostriker describes how women must usurp the masculine tradition because language tends to make it "easy to take" it out of their hands: "We must also have in our power to seize speech and make it say what we mean" (A. Ostriker, "The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revising the Mythmaking," Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society 8, no. 1 [1982]: 69, 71).


46. Heise's sister, Helen Heise Chastain, notes that Heise was very much aware of the women's movement of the 1960s and understood its implications for her as an artist (Chastain 1996 [note 2]).

47. As quoted in Lippard 1992 (note 3), 105.


49. There is some controversy about the damage done to the sculpture, as some parts of the work required refurbishment, but there is a consensus about how much conservators was necessary. Lippard and Barlette both state that the work was seriously damaged while on exhibit in 1968 in Milwaukee and Chicago (see Lippard 1993 [note 2], 103, and Barlette 1969 [note 4], 140). However, a Helen Cooper disagrees. "Although it has been thought that the piece was badly damaged—that fewer than ten lengths of wire were missing at the end of the exhibition (according to its present owner, who purchased the work directly from the artist in 1969)" (H. Cooper, "Chronology," in Eva Heise 1992 [note 2], 103 n. 30).
