





# Vessels and Vacancies

*In a career that lasted barely 10 years, Eva Hesse moved with remarkable speed from the brooding self-portraits of 1960, through biomorphic drawings and collages, into the tragic, absurd and strikingly original sculptures for which she is now best known. A touring retrospective opening in London this month traces this explosive growth.*

**BY SUE TAYLOR**

“I have been a giant in my strength,” Eva Hesse stated in 1970, “and my work has been strong and my whole character has been inside it.”<sup>1</sup> Hesse’s assertion, made in a last interview with Cindy Nemser, is powerfully affirmed in the current retrospective of 156 of her paintings, drawings, collages and sculptures, organized by Elisabeth Sussman and Renate Petzinger. In sculpture especially, from the time Hesse discovered it as her true métier in 1965, her originality is impressively on display in this survey. Emerging in the context of Pop art and Minimalism, her wall-mounted reliefs, biomorphic abstractions and eccentric serial pieces are infused with a distinctive mix of humor, intelligence and feeling. Compressed as it was, moreover, into five short years before her untimely death (she succumbed to brain cancer four months after Nemser’s interview), Hesse’s sculptural output seems nothing short of remarkable.

The inclusion of early paintings and drawings, produced shortly after her graduation from Yale in 1959, provides a sense of her beginnings as a young artist in awe of Abstract Expressionism and the primitivism of Jean Dubuffet. Though Hesse herself was famously beautiful, three untitled self-portraits from 1960 are not: thick and muddy, childlike in their schematic rendering of the head, they revel in the materiality of paint. In one, a gift to her psychiatrist at the time, the figure seems distressed, a touch of orange lipstick the only bright spot on the dull gray face with its sagging left eye, and we’re reminded that the confidence Hesse exuded at the end was hard-won. Her figure is haunted by a white, ghostlike image, a pregnant female form that impinges on her from the left. The apparition suggests anxieties externalized, concerns for her own (pro)creative future, or recollections of the lost maternal body.

The early drawings are similarly mysterious and brooding, in somber tones of black, gray and brown. Here are the themes that would preoccupy the artist for the remainder of her career: figures, always cursory, alone or in small groups; windows giving onto vague scenes or empty spaces; and ambiguous, abstract forms evoking balloons on strings or big heads on stick bodies. In a spooky little ink drawing from 1961, the recurring circle-and-stem motif is inscribed with a face with big black eyes and an aura of frantic black crayon scribbles. The immediacy and

---

*Eva Hesse: Repetition Nineteen III, 1968, fiberglass and polyester resin, 19 units, 19 to 20 1/4 inches high, 11 to 12 1/4 inches in diameter. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy Estate of Eva Hesse/Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich.*

*Art in America* 131



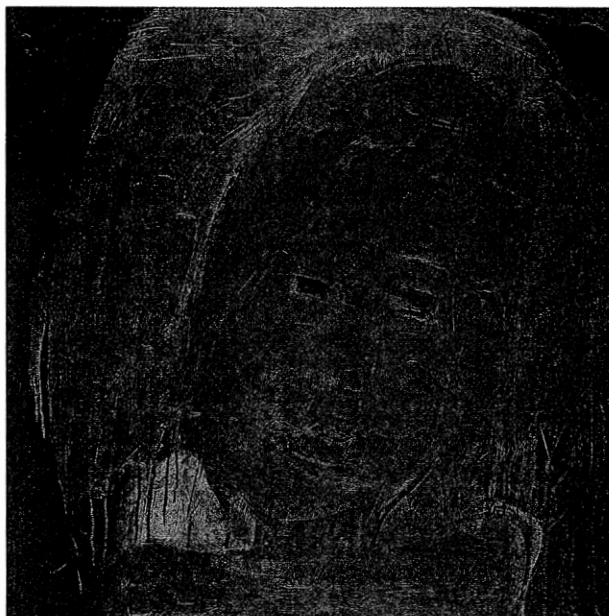
apparent spontaneity of the image is played off against the ink-wash frame Hesse has drawn around it, creating the effect of a figure at a window or a picture within a picture. Signature and date appear prominently at the lower left, inside the inky border. Clearly, Hesse is not simply emoting in these intimate studies, but self-consciously presenting her ghosts as material for art.

Arranged chronologically at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the exhibition is the most comprehensive to date—a momentous achievement considering it may be the last time the sculptures, many of them exceedingly fragile or altogether disintegrating, may ever be brought together.<sup>2</sup> Still, there seemed a few too many of the groping, experimental drawings and collages from 1962 through 1964, the year Hesse traveled to Germany with her then husband, sculptor Tom Doyle. In these dozen or so mixed-medium exercises, Hesse abandons her formerly funereal palette for vibrant passages of bright yellow, pink, purple, orange and lime green. She dubbed these “wild space” pictures with “crazy forms.” Mainly abstract, the forms include fences, lips, boxes, arrows and fish, material for a Freudian field day yet always resisting any coherent reading. Some drawings resemble bird’s-eye views of domestic interiors, telling, perhaps, of the artist’s efforts to adapt to married life. For all their vitality and visual appeal, these quasi-automatist works remain transitional and make one eager for future developments.

**B**iomorphic Surrealism informs the paintings that followed in 1964 and 1965; here Hesse organized her “crazy forms” into compartments, in the manner of Adolph Gottlieb’s pictographs of the 1940s. These partitioned fields seem lighthearted and wacky, like comic book panels, and indeed Hesse explained in a letter to Sol LeWitt that the images are contained “as if to tell a story.” “So it is weird,” she continued, “they become real nonsense.”<sup>3</sup> They embody the absurd, an overriding principle in Hesse’s art, which encompassed the ridiculous but also the irrational, the existential, the terrible aspects of life. It is fascinating to see her select one absurd motif from an untitled painting (1964-65) and repeat it, quite precisely, in a drawing carefully dated January 1965. This figure, with a podlike middle, radiant blue head and red doughnut indicating female genitalia, straddles the central cell in both works, arms and legs akimbo. What is the “story” told here? An anxious one, to be sure: each January brought not only Hesse’s own birthday but the anniversary, or *yahrzeit*, of her mother’s death. Next to the female icon in Hesse’s painting appears a surprising memento mori, another compartment containing two wristwatches without hands. “I am just like my mother,” the artist worried in her journals, “and will die as she did. I always felt this.”<sup>4</sup>

The tragedies that afflicted Hesse’s family are well known, especially their flight from Nazi Germany to the U.S. in 1939 (when Eva was three) and her mother’s suicide in 1945. Less familiar is what Anne Wagner reveals in a recent essay—that Ruth Marcus Hesse leapt to her death from a window. Wagner relates this mortal fact to a series of drawings Eva Hesse created from 1968 to 1970 (of which there are at least a dozen in this exhibition) of framed fields or windows, occasionally with multiple panes.<sup>5</sup> Some of these images evoke Marcel Duchamp’s *Fresh Widow* (1920), where the titular play on “French window” adds associations of love and mourning to a common metaphor for painting. Hesse’s window motif is already tentatively introduced in the watercolor drawings of 1960-61; in the later works, opacity and translucency,

**In a 1960 self-portrait, the figure seems distressed, reminding us that the confidence Hesse exuded at the end was hard-won.**

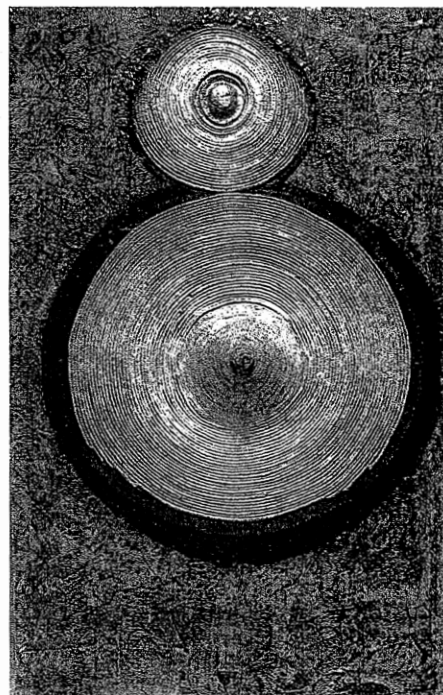


*Untitled, 1960, oil on canvas, 36 inches square. Private collection. Courtesy Robert Miller Gallery, New York.*

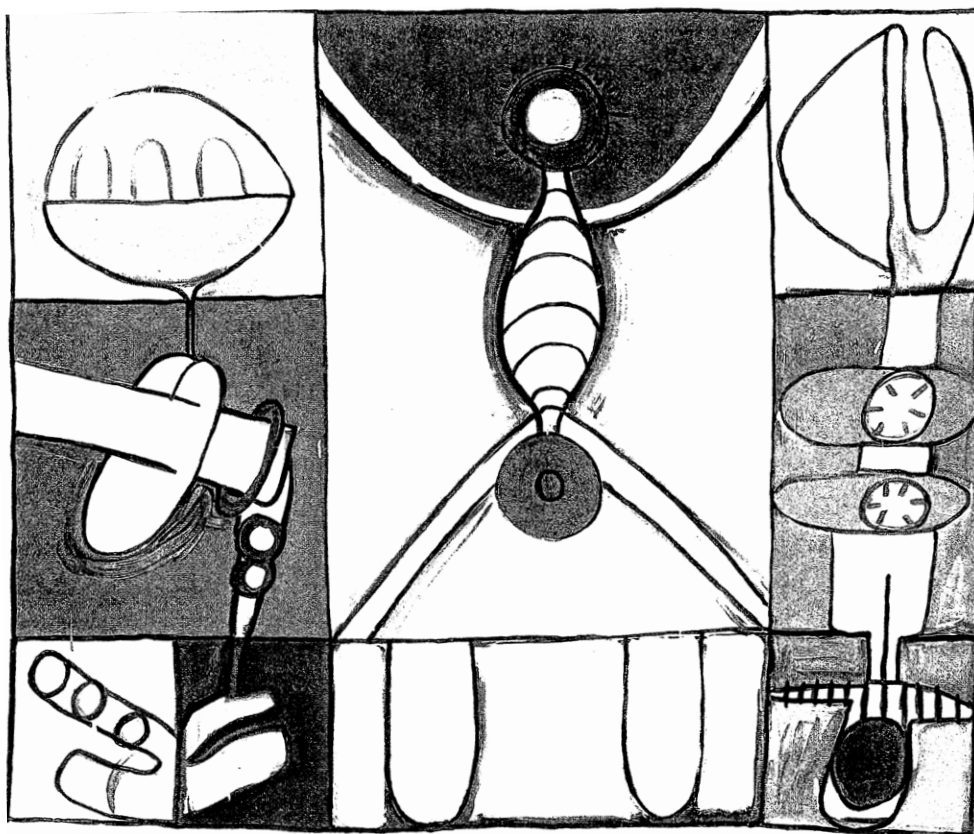


*Untitled, 1961, ink and crayon on paper, 10 1/4 by 9 1/4 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art. Courtesy Estate of Eva Hesse/Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich.*

*Ringaround Arosie, 1965, pencil, acetone, varnish, enamel paint, ink, cloth-covered electrical wire on papier-mâché and masonite, 26 1/4 by 16 1/4 by 4 1/4 inches. Courtesy San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.*







*Untitled, 1964-65, oil on canvas, 34 1/4 by 41 inches.*  
Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich.

emptiness, absence, even transcendence are exquisitely expressed in enigmatic windows rendered in sepia tones, pencil and ink, and white and metallic gouaches.<sup>6</sup>

In her own career, Hesse, like many of her contemporaries, reenacted Duchamp's rejection of the medium of painting; her breakthrough to assemblage and relief came while she was still in Germany in 1965. Sharing with Doyle an abandoned textile factory as a studio in Kettwig, Hesse combined old loom parts, wire and cotton cord with papier-mâché and enamel paint in a group of lively and funny works like *Ear in a Pond*, *Oomamaboomba* and *Ringaround Arosie*. Responding to a Pop sensibility that was then the rage in Germany as well as the U.S., these reliefs grew directly out of Hesse's erotic machine drawings of that same year, inspired, again, by Duchamp. The reliefs juxtapose organic, often breastlike shapes with clunky mechanical parts in a spirited play of color and clever dysfunction. Color (other than gray) finds its final application in Hesse's oeuvre in an untitled wood assemblage (1965) produced shortly after her return to New York. This handsome wall-mounted object consists of an upright rectangular bar with eight threaded dowels extending horizontally from its right side. Each dowel terminates in a handlelike cap. Just as the dowels diminish in size from the top to the bottom of the piece, the purple acrylic is gradated in its application to each element. And what can be the meaning of eight? In music or poetry, one thinks of an octave, in Jewish ritual, a menorah with eight branches.<sup>7</sup> If Hesse began with a sacred candelabrum, a simple act of 90-degree rotation ensured that any allusion to the functional object is effectively suppressed.

*Hang Up* rehearses the experience of loss, and the ungainly umbilical cord becomes poignantly vestigial, without function, obsolete.<sup>11</sup>

Hesse's brilliant adaptations of Minimalism center on just such insinuations of the body into that movement's "specific objects." A premier example is the 36-inch cubic *Accession*, whose five perforated metal faces Hesse hand-threaded with some 30,000 individual lengths of plastic tubing, creating an open box with a stubbly, nestlike interior. Two versions of this sculpture (1967/69 and 1968) were included in the exhibition—both, unfortunately, sealed in Plexiglas. Distressing as it was to view the works this way, the protective cases drove home the decidedly seductive character of *Accession*, which people seem compelled to touch when it is exhibited in the open. While Minimalist objects by Donald Judd and Robert Morris remain unyielding and nonrelational, their industrial fabrication distancing the viewer, Hesse's cube does the opposite, enticing one to feel, to stroke and, in at least one instance, even bodily to enter and curl up inside the bristling container.<sup>12</sup>

In the gallery with *Hang Up*, phallic, testicular and uterine forms appeared in ingenious sculptures whose odd conditions—flaccid, pendulous, ostensibly broken—elicit humor, pathos and corporeal empathy. Here, too, the very "pneumatic" quality Michael Fried would deplore in the Minimalism of Morris and Tony Smith becomes an operative feature:<sup>13</sup> for *Ingeminate* (1965), Hesse wrapped two inflated balloons in papier-mâché and cord, sealed them in enamel paint and linked the resulting twin sausage shapes with an inordinate length of surgical hose. Ovaries and fallopian tubes seem obvious anatomical analogues to these suggestive forms, whose doubling, connection and

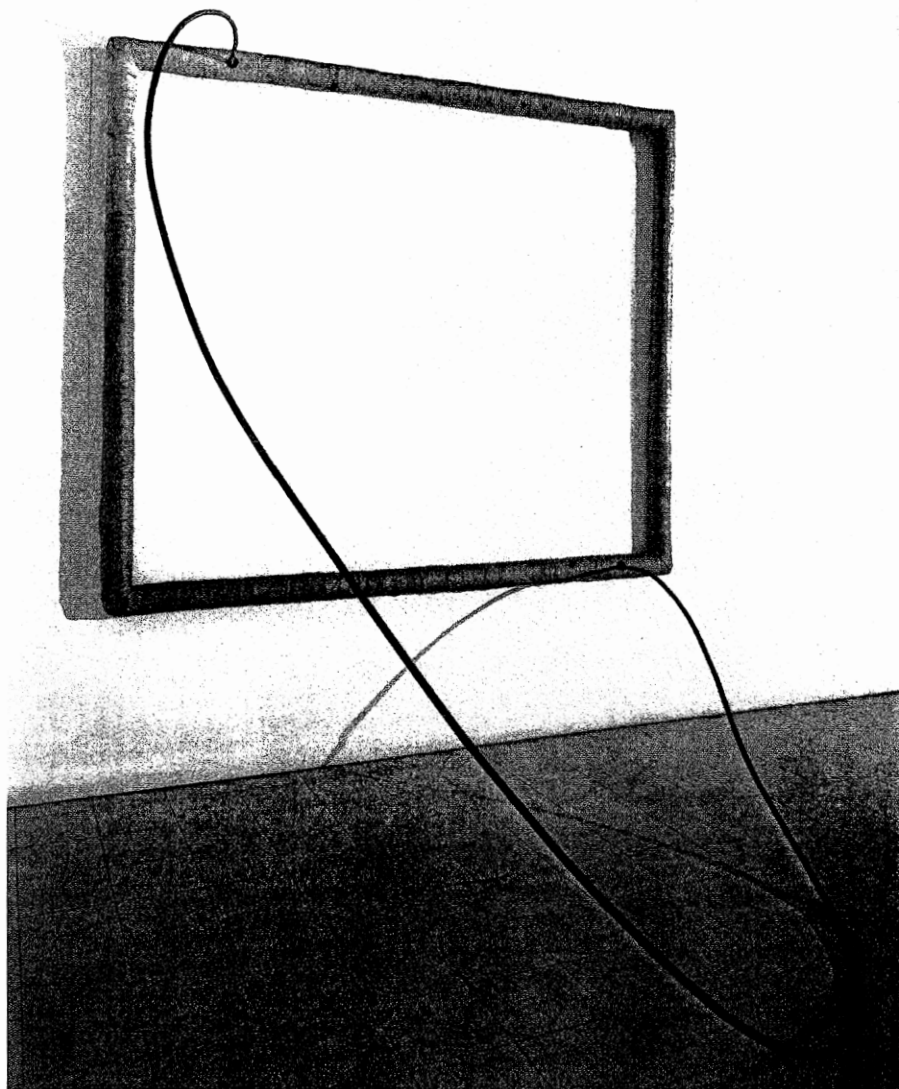
Another wall-mounted assemblage, *Hang Up* (1966), is a key work, long understood as a comment on the exhaustion or "emptiness" of painting in an art world dominated by Greenbergian proscriptions about the medium's possibilities. Made of a 6-by-7-foot stretcher bound in cloth and painted gray, with a long, flexible steel rod protruding awkwardly from the top left and bottom right of the frame, the sculpture addresses a dialectic of two and three dimensions. Hesse dubbed it "ridiculous," and was proud of the "depth or soul or absurdity or life or meaning or feeling or intellect" she had achieved in it.<sup>8</sup> Like many of the window drawings, it frames nothing, and "nothing" was often what Hesse was after: "I wanted to get to non art" she explained, "non connotive, non anthropomorphic, non geometric, non, nothing, everything."<sup>9</sup> It was the heyday of Minimalism and, as James Meyer writes in the exhibition catalogue, negation and existential negativity were "in the air," in the critical discourse, for example, of Hesse's friends Mel Bochner and Robert Smithson.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, on a psychic level, the evacuation of the contents of the frame seen in



mummification, and the title *Ingeminate*—to reiterate or repeat—relate the piece thematically to the self/mother theme.<sup>14</sup> What's significant, however, about *Ingeminate* and all the work that follows is how Hesse moved beyond the kind of literalism of two wristwatches into an arena of meaningful abstract forms that convey feeling on an entirely nondiscursive level.

The circle motif and its permutations in Hesse's drawings and sculptures of 1966 and 1967 provide a most eloquent example. Concentric circles are inscribed in ink on graph paper, rendered in spiraling string on masonite, materialized in grids of steel washers on wood. Using a compass to create hundreds of circles in delicate works on paper, Hesse carried Minimalist repetition and seriality to the point of obsession. These are no mere formalist exercises but polyvalent symbols of time, of chaos ordered, of life's sometimes painful cycles endured. They are also memories of the maternal breast, as when each of the 25 shaded circular forms in a subtle, untitled drawing (1967) expresses from its center a length of translucent nylon thread, like mother's milk. In *Addendum* (1967), the circles become gray-painted papier-mâché hemispheres on a 10-foot wall-mounted lintel. A long cord hangs from each mound, spilling generously onto the floor. In a reprise of one of Judd's galvanized metal reliefs, *Addendum* involves a progression of increasing spatial intervals between hemispheres; from left to right on the lintel, moreover, one begins with a mound and ends with a blank space. Weaning is surely the theme of this piece, separation and loss its melancholy content.

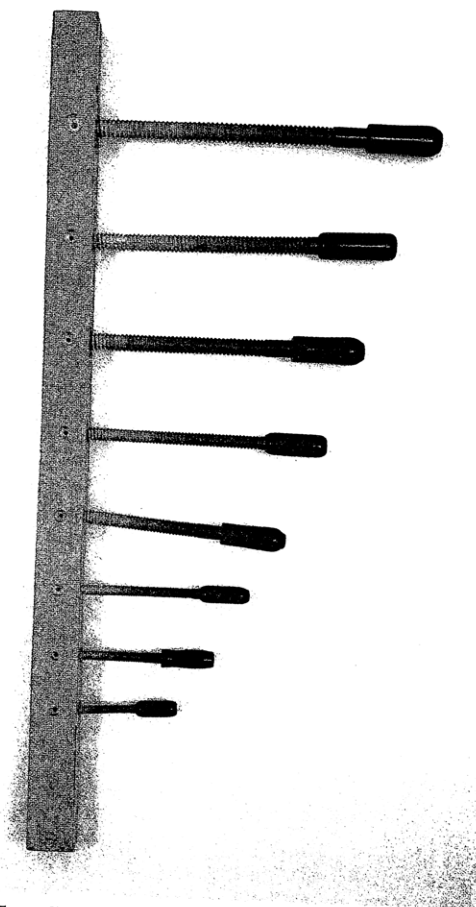
*One More Than One* (1967) announces this loss by virtue of negative space: here a short lintel bears two concave hollows emitting cords, impressions only of *Addendum*'s hemispheres, records of absence. If these two shadow-orbs can also be read as eyes streaming tears, there is nonetheless something silly about the awkward cords dangling to the floor, as if from an old appliance, unplugged. (Hesse's achievement depends on this very embrace of both the sad and funny, bringing Shakespeare's late, underappreciated tragicomedies to mind.) She develops the "hollow breast" or concavity-with-cord from *One More Than One* into a commemorative vessel in studies for *Repetition Nineteen* (1967). In these preparatory drawings, Hesse envisions a kind of canister with a false bottom that emits a rubber hose—like an oil lamp with a long wick or, more significantly, a *yahrzeit* candle. Traditionally, the *yahrzeit* candle in its translucent glass container is burned for 24 hours on the anniversary of the death of a loved one. For Hesse, long bereft of her mother and, since the summer of 1966, her father as well, the votive candle became the perfect formal vehicle for memorializing loss.



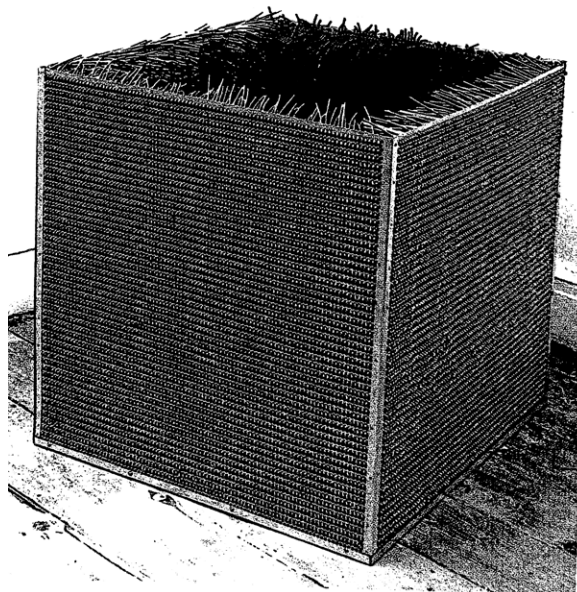
*Hang Up*, 1966, acrylic paint on cloth over wood, acrylic paint on cord over steel tube, 72 by 84 by 78 inches. Art Institute of Chicago. All photos this spread courtesy Estate of Eva Hesse/Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich.

Sculptural experiments with the vessel and wick led Hesse eventually to discard the latter in favor of the empty container itself, which, multiplied, became the squat, white, cylindrical forms of *Repetition Nineteen I* (1967) in papier-mâché over aluminum screening. It wasn't until the following year, however, and her discovery of the possibilities of fiberglass and polyester resin that Hesse realized the glorious *Repetition Nineteen III*, incorporating in this tender contingent of knee-high, irregular and dented receptacles a new and necessary element: light. The translucency Hesse achieved in this fiberglass version endows each element with what Lucy Lippard recognized as an "inner glow,"<sup>15</sup> a kind of spiritual presence, entirely dependent on materials. Lippard compared these battered but still upright units to schoolchildren, prisoners and young trees, to which I would add souls of the departed. As a survivor obliged to bear witness,

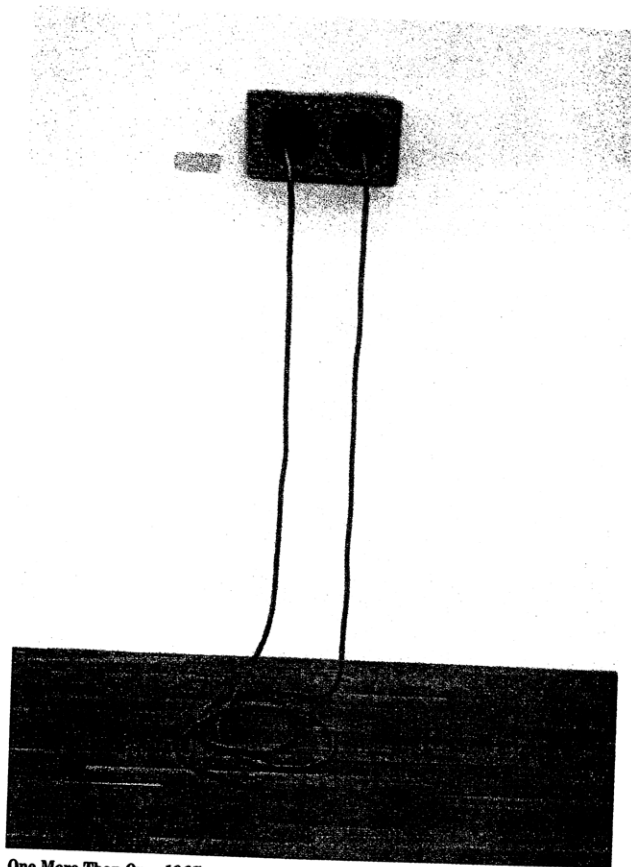




*Untitled, 1965, acrylic on wood, 45 by 22 by 2 1/2 inches.  
Israel Museum, Jerusalem.*



**Hesse's brilliant adaptations of Minimalism center precisely on the insinuation of the body into that movement's "specific objects."**



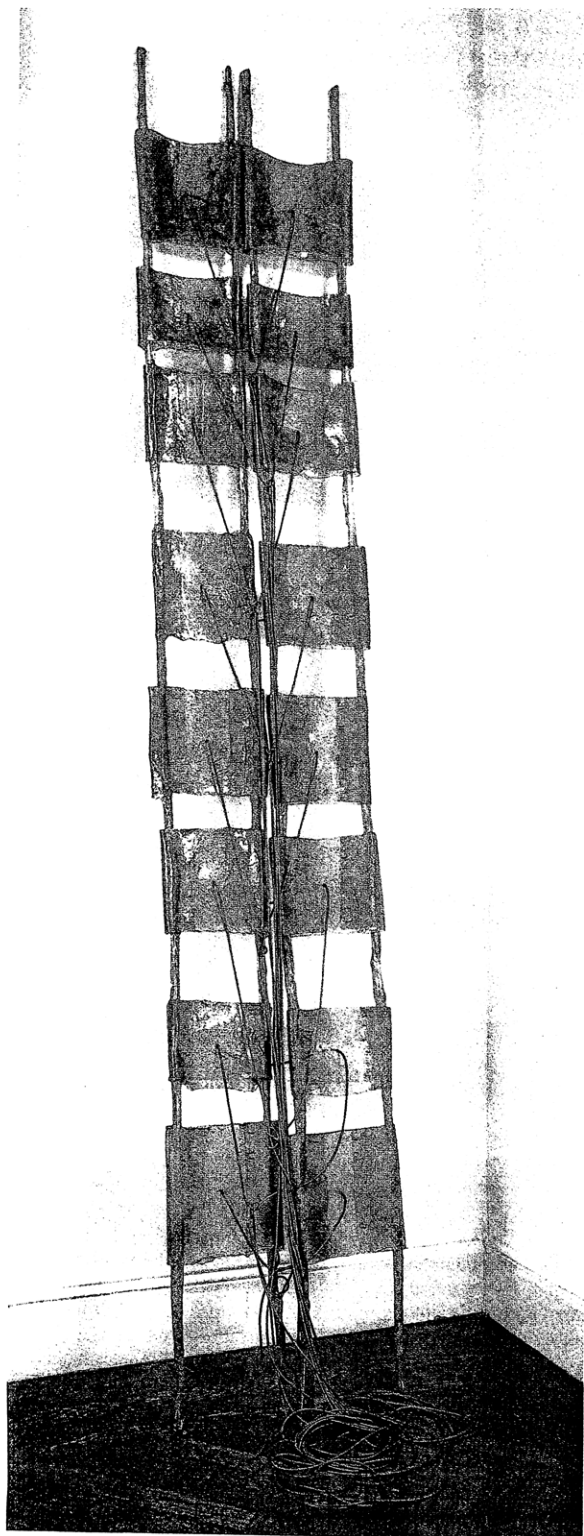
*One More Than One, 1967, acrylic and papier-mâché on wood and plastic with painted cord, 8 1/4 by 15 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches (not including cord). Naomi Spector and Stephen Antonakos, New York.*

*Accession II, 1967-69, galvanized steel with plastic tubing, 30% by 30% by 30% inches. Detroit Institute of Arts.*

not just for her immediate family but for those who did not escape the Holocaust, Hesse found a way to express the ineffable, through the poetry of form and light.

Made of the same materials as *Repetition Nineteen III*, the beautiful *Sans II* (1968) hung in the same gallery, its five aging, translucent amber sections reunited for this occasion from disparate museum collections. (The parts had been sold separately out of Hesse's 1968 exhibition at Fischbach Gallery.<sup>16</sup>) Here the empty container is a shallow fiberglass box or tray, a dozen in each unit, 60 in all, stretching horizontally nearly 36 feet along the wall. The effect is of an endless bank of smoky windows, without a view. *Sans* embodies loss as its title refers to absence itself, from the point of view of one who is left "without." Louise Nevelson's similarly abstract and repetitive wall piece *Homage to 6,000,000* (1964) comes to mind; seen in this light,





*Vinculum I*, 1969, fiberglass and polyester resin, metal screening, vinyl tubing, 103 by 23 by 31 inches. Daros Collection, Switzerland.

**The triumph of these late works, as Hesse confronted her fatal illness, consists in their constant surprise and positive transformative power.**

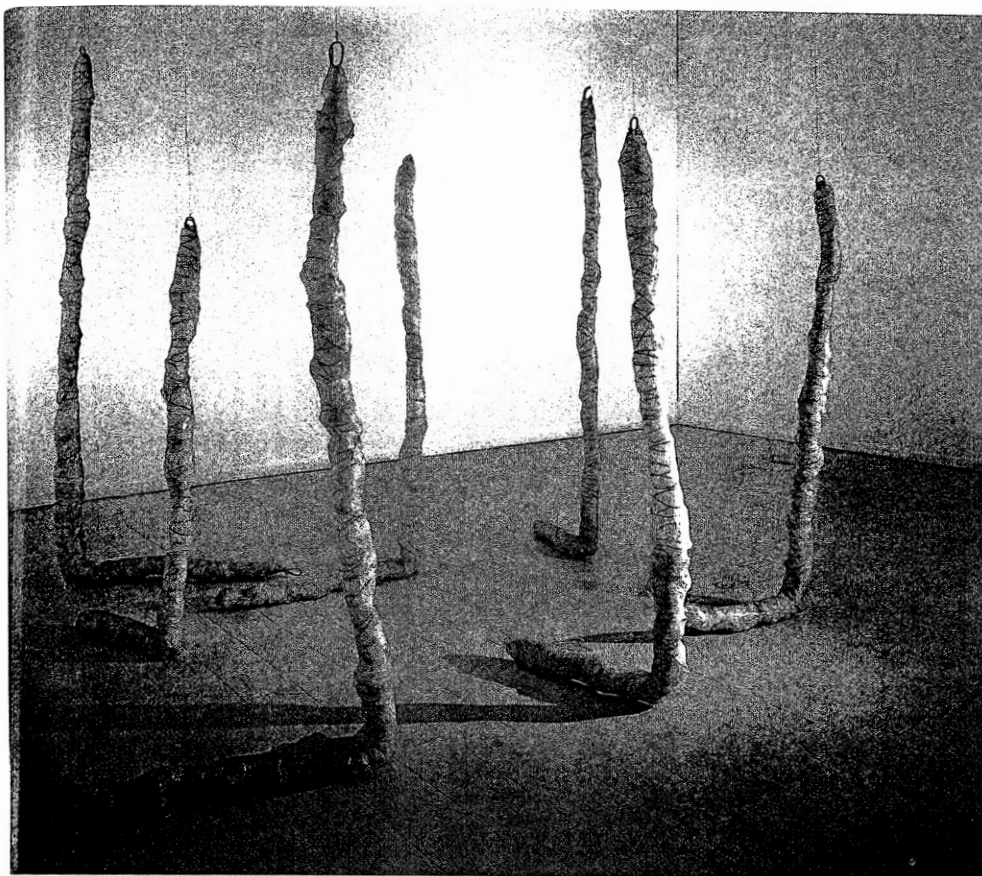
serial repetition, “one thing after another,” takes on a different kind of meaning from its Minimalist manifestations, one more akin to Jonathan Borofsky’s incessant counting—which also references the unfathomable number of six million. The spindly, upright fiberglass tubes propped against the wall in Hesse’s *Accretion* (1968), each nearly 6 feet tall, number 50—but could continue indefinitely. Hesse produced another variation on the translucent cylinder in *Tori* (1969), where the hollow tubes assume the proportions of human torsos; their forms are irregular and rent along their seams, like pods that have burst open, or empty husks. Unlike the attentive, vertical and radiant forms of *Accretion*, the dark-colored *Tori* seem exhausted, dead, strewn about in a heap.

The triumph of these late works, as Hesse confronted her fatal illness, consists in their constant surprise, transformation, even power in the face of death. Although the wall-mounted latex-and-canvas sheets of the four-part “painting” *Aught* (1968) can be seen on one level as shrouds (their own present physical deterioration, sadly, contributes to this reading) or as opaque materializations of Hesse’s haunting windows, her complex artistic vision does not end in morbidity. Thus *Vinculum I* (1969) offers a gamut of possibilities, from the ominous—its title is Latin for “cord” or “noose”—to the redemptive. With two long stretcher or pallet forms linked by vinyl tubing, the piece conjures hospital gurneys, railroad tracks or, alternatively, the rescue sleds of Joseph Beuys. The height and verticality of the piece enforce its most positive, biblical association—with Jacob’s ladder, imagined in a dream, reaching to heaven, ascended and descended by angels.

Hesse never saw her last project fully realized, but approved it from photographs studio assistants showed her in the hospital. The seven ungainly, L-shaped units of *Untitled* (1970) stand erect, tall as people; the slender poles, suspended by invisible nylon string, are formed of aluminum wire, polyethylene sheeting, fiberglass and resin. Nearby in the exhibition, Hesse’s plaster maquette for the piece was presented on a pedestal. She had initially conceived the seven elements huddled on a square mat, linked together with wire wrapped in string, like Rodin’s *Burghers of Calais*, bound with rope, who go to their deaths with great nobility. For practical reasons, Hesse’s assistants could not connect the large fiberglass poles as planned, and the elements were ultimately liberated, to wander this way and that depending on their installation. They are awkward, lumpy, precarious and miraculous in their unlikely verticality. It’s impossible not to read them figuratively—they reminded Lippard of Giacometti’s emaciated sculptural personages—and one wishes them well.<sup>17</sup> In works like this and the shimmering, linear, suspended canopy *Right After* (1969), it is no longer a question of Minimalism or Post-Minimalism but of an artist who has arrived at an idiom all her own.

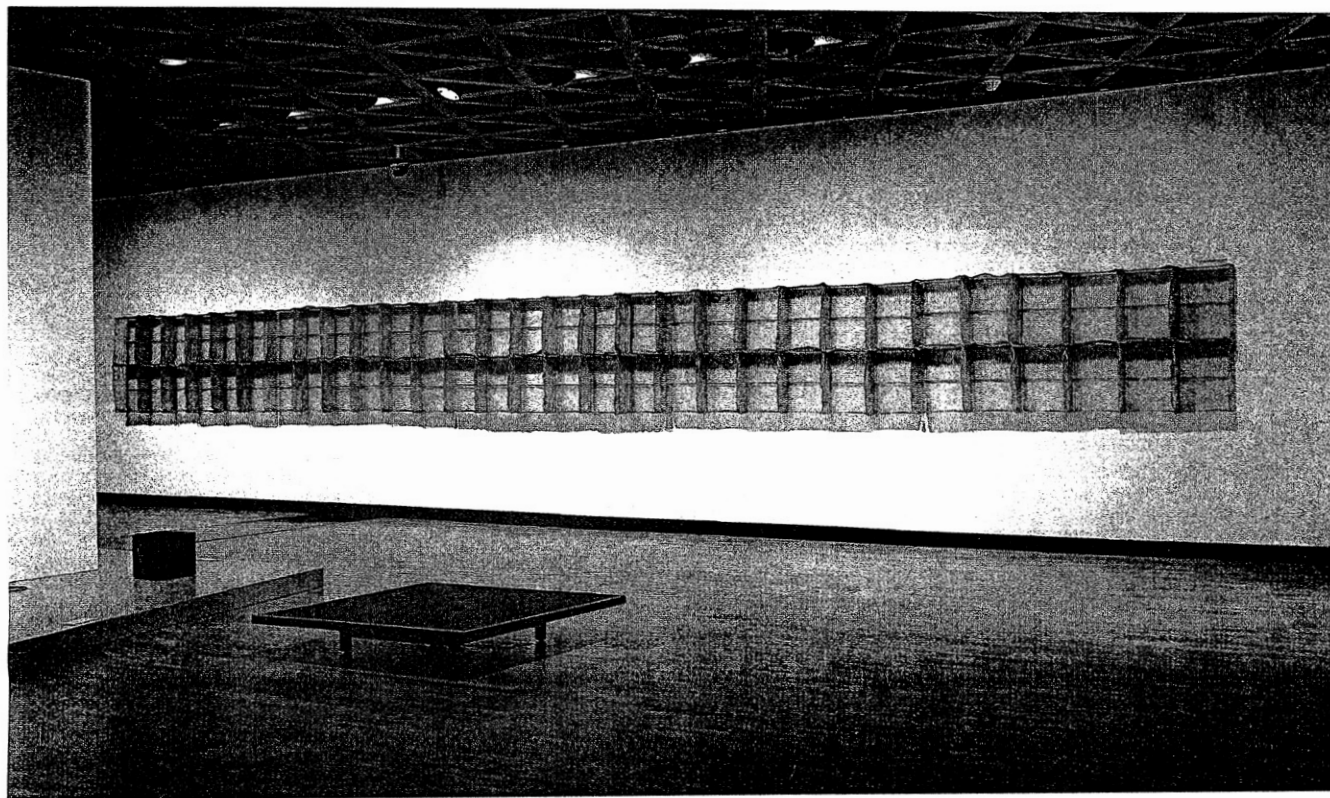
**N**onetheless, the hanging skeins of *Right After* and an untitled rope piece of 1970 have always evoked comparisons with Pollock’s poured paintings, without the canvas support. Hesse herself affirmed the analogy: “Chaos can be structured as non-chaos,” she explained. “That we know from Jackson Pollock.”<sup>18</sup> If Abstract Expressionism is indeed the model here, with its grand scale and sublime aspirations, perhaps the sculptural precedents of Ibram Lassaw should also be considered. His delicately wrought, molten-metal drawings in space, with their metaphysical overtones, earned the





*Untitled, 1970, fiberglass and polyester resin over polyethylene sheeting and aluminum wire, seven units, 74 to 111 inches high, 3 1/2 to 5 1/2 inches in diameter. Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris.*

*Sans II, 1968, fiberglass and polyester resin, five units, each 38 by 86 by 6 1/4 inches. All photos this spread courtesy Estate of Eva Hesse/Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich.*





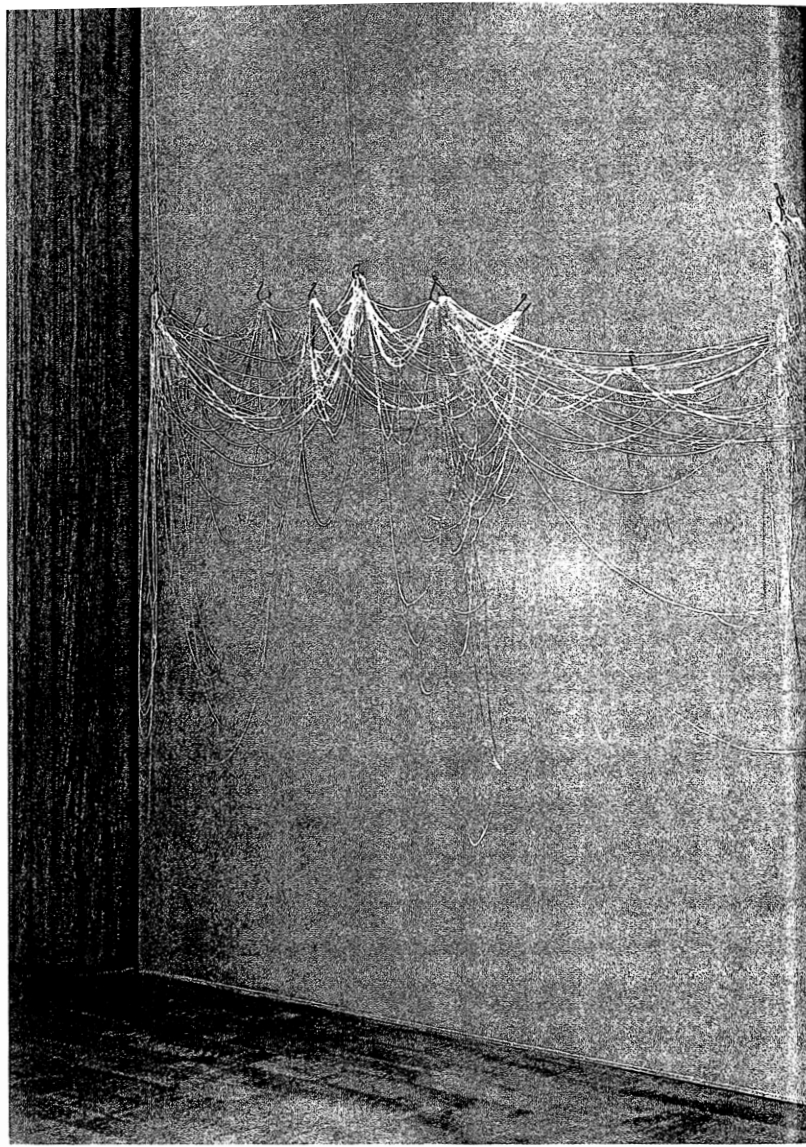
artist a number of commissions for large, lacy screens and canopies for synagogues. But Hesse recoiled from the transcendent beauty of *Right After*, believing the gossamer web of fiberglass and polyester resin too pretty, and in the untitled rope piece that followed she produced a suitably ugly reprise. Installed in the final gallery in San Francisco, this tangle of thick, dangling rubberized rope presented a gutsy counterpart to *Right After*, an intestinal network knotted and splayed, visceral in both appearance and effect.

Historic and revelatory, the exhibition and its catalogue offer a material and technical account of Hesse's development, frame her contribution art historically and consider the uncertain future of her oeuvre in light of museological problems of preservation and display. It is perhaps unfair to ask for more. Yet a number of fascinating issues—gender, ethnicity and psychology—are largely elided in this project, whose overall formal emphasis is in keeping with the current critical backlash against earlier Hesse scholarship, with its stress on the artist's life and illness.<sup>19</sup> It's conceivable that the exhibition organizers' reticence about Hesse's subjectivity stems from an assimilationist ideology that aspires to ensure her a place in the (patriarchal) canon. Indeed, Hesse seems to have wanted this for herself. But her achievement has much to do with her particular position as an ambitious young woman in a male-dominated art world, a Jew among gentiles, a child of the Holocaust who stood for remembrance and survival. It is not reductive to acknowledge how these differences, and her own lived experience, informed her art. Her work is admirable not only for its astonishing formal innovation but also as a testimonial to her strength: she coped with grief and was not defeated by it. From this perspective, Hesse's art also possesses a moral dimension that merits recognition.

What is clear from this ultimately magnificent survey is the artist's rapid and brilliant evolution. We see her exciting leap from two into three dimensions and from clichéd motifs to richly symbolic sculptural forms. The feeling, moreover, that infuses these abstract forms matures and deepens before our eyes, as Hesse moves from the dark anxiety of her earliest pictures, to the defensive irony and tongue-in-cheek attitude of *Hang Up*, to the gentle acceptance of loss in *Repetition Nineteen*. From a declaration of pure emptiness, she goes on to create vessels for holding and containing that absence. And it must have been an attendant, growing conviction of her own artistic powers that led Hesse to the dramatic synthesis of drawing, painting and sculpture in late works like *Right After* and its untitled reprise of 1970. Introducing a new generation of artists and viewers to an astounding body of work heretofore known largely through photographs, the exhibition also shows us how, undercutting the many vicissitudes that invaded Hesse's life, invention and wit sustained her throughout. □

1. Eva Hesse quoted in Cindy Nemser, "Eva Hesse: Her Life," *Feminist Art Journal*, Winter 1973, p. 13.

2. The problems that issue from the ephemeral nature of the latex and fiberglass Hesse used were considered at a symposium at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art on Apr. 27, 2002. Questions about whether to refabricate some of the disintegrating sculptures remain unresolved. See also Chad Coerver, ed., "An Uncertain Mandate: A Roundtable Discussion on Conservation Issues," in Elisabeth Sussman, ed., *Eva Hesse*,



*Right After*, 1969, fiberglass and polyester resin with metal hooks, 60 by 214 by 48 inches. Milwaukee

exh. cat., San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2002, pp. 290-311. Participants in the latter discussion, moderated by Ann Temkin, included friends of the artist, conservators, curators and collectors of her work.

3. Eva Hesse, in a letter of March 1965, quoted in Robin Clark, "Contained Forms: Gridded Works on Paper and Canvas," in Sussman, *Eva Hesse*, p. 149.

4. Hesse quoted in Anne Middleton Wagner, "Another Hesse," in *Three Artists (Three Women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner, and O'Keeffe*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996, p. 263.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 264. No mention is made in the exhibition of the possible mournful content of the late window drawings.

6. Hesse's friend Gioia Timpanelli, who was present at the creation of these works in 1969, writes a touching personal account of the artist's activity that summer in "Woodstock Paintings," in Sussman, *Eva Hesse*, pp. 97-106.

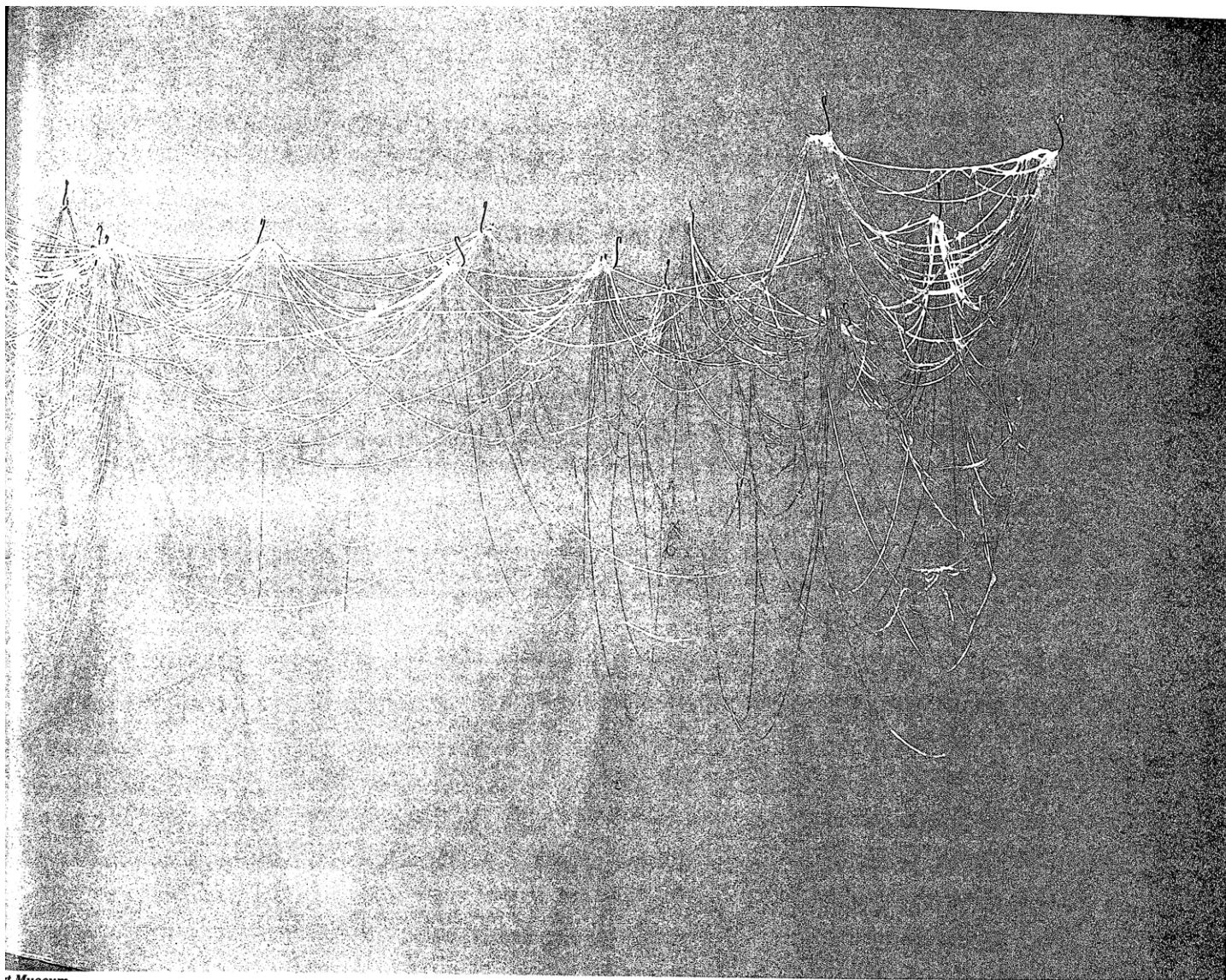
7. Depending on the occasion, a menorah may have seven or eight branches; sometimes, an additional (eighth or ninth) candleholder is included for the *shammes*, the taper used to light all the others. Hesse's "menorah" now belongs to the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, a gift of the artist's sister, Helen Hesse Charash.

8. Hesse quoted in Lucy Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, New York University Press, 1976, p. 56.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

10. James Meyer, "Non, Nothing, Everything: Hesse's Abstraction," in Sussman, *Eva Hesse*, p. 72.





t Museum.

11. Interpreting Hesse's use of the blank wall psychologically, Briony Fer cites an essay by Melanie Klein (1929) in which the analyst vividly describes the way the infant's experience of loss is reactivated in adult life in depression through the metaphor of "blank space." See Fer, "Bordering on the Blank: Eva Hesse and Minimalism," *On Abstract Art*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997, p. 120.

12. As Lippard reports, *Accession* had to be refabricated in 1968 after it was shown in Chicago, where "people got inside the box and wrecked it," *Eva Hesse*, p. 103.

13. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood" (1967), in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1968, p. 129.

14. The phallic, bound, and shiny *Ingeminate* perfectly embodies what Donald Kuspit has identified as the modern fetish, "a special property of artistic play . . . evoking primary identification and union with the mother." Such an object often provides comfort at conflict-filled moments in an artist's career. See Kuspit, "The Modern Fetish," in *Signs of Psyche in Modern and Postmodern Art*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 151-52.

15. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, p. 109.

16. Scott Rothkopf, "Sans," in Sussman, *Eva Hesse*, p. 239.

17. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, p. 179. Lippard's comparison seems especially apposite in light of Laurie Wilson's recent speculations about how Giacometti's frail figures were inspired by postwar newsreels of the death camps. See Wilson, "Giacometti's Thin Figures: Dead Men Walking," *Art in America*, May 2002, esp. pp. 137-38.

18. Hesse in a *Life* magazine interview of Feb. 27, 1970, quoted in Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, p. 172.

19. For an exemplary psychobiographical treatment, see Anna Chave's sensitive "Eva Hesse: A 'Girl Being a Sculpture,'" in Helen Cooper, ed., *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 99-117.

For sharing their insights on Eva Hesse's work, I thank Hannah Dresner, Judith Russi Kirshner and Natalie Fay Linn.

Co-organized by Elisabeth Sussman and Renate Petzinger, "Eva Hesse" was originally scheduled to debut at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 2001, but was cancelled there in the wake of Sept. 11. The exhibition opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art [Feb. 2-May 19, 2002] before traveling to the Museum Wiesbaden, Germany [June 15-Oct. 13] and the Tate Modern, London [Nov. 14, 2002-Mar. 9, 2003]. Accompanying the exhibition is a 344-page catalogue with essays by Michelle Barger and Jill Sterrett, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Robin Clark, Briony Fer, James Meyer, Petzinger, Scott Rothkopf, Sussman and Gioia Timpanelli, and a panel discussion on conservation issues led by Ann Temkin and edited by Chad Coerver.

Author: Sue Taylor is assistant professor of art history at Portland State University, Oregon.