

HAUSER & WIRTH

EVA HESSE

FIVE SCULPTURES

2 MAY - 26 JULY 2024
WEST 22ND STREET, NEW YORK



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Eva Hesse (1936-1970) transformed the language of sculpture through her pioneering use of alternative forms and materials. Challenging the hard-edged, manufactured aesthetic of the prevailing minimalist movement of her day, Hesse's use of latex, Fiberglas and industrial plastics opened new possibilities in art. Half a century later, her groundbreaking oeuvre is as potent as it was in 1968, the year of the first and only exhibition of her sculptures held during her lifetime. That there have been some fifteen exhibitions in the decades following her death in 1970 is a testament to Hesse's continued contemporaneity.

Hauser & Wirth celebrates the 25th anniversary of the estate's representation by the gallery by spotlighting Hesse's remarkable achievements in 'Eva Hesse. Five Sculptures.' This exhibition, organized by Barry Rosen, longtime adviser to the Estate of Eva Hesse, in collaboration with art historian and critic Briony Fer, reunites five of her most celebrated large-scale works, all on loan from major American museums and all made in the most intense period at the end of her life from 1967 to 1969.

Unlike most of the abstract sculpture being produced at the time, Hesse's works were abstract yet powerfully evocative of human corporality, laying bare the processes used to make them.

Learn more [→](#)





Eva Hesse in her Bowery Studio, New York, 1969

**‘THE EFFECT OF A LOT OF
HESSE’S LARGE-SCALE SCULPTURE
IS TO PUT IN QUESTION WHAT
YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT ART.’**

– BRIONY FER



Eva Hesse

Repetition Nineteen I

1967

Paint and papier-caché on aluminum screening, 19 units (one missing)

23.2 to 26.6 cm × 16.5 to 23.2 cm / 9 1/8 to 10 1/2 in × 6 1/2 to 9 1/8 in diameter each

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Murray Charash, 1973

REPETITION NINETEEN I (1967)

Seriality, connection and repetition were at the heart of Hesse's creative process and are evidenced clearly in the earliest work on view in this exhibition, 'Repetition Nineteen I' (1967). On loan from The Museum of Modern Art, New York, this work is the first of three versions Hesse planned to make over a period of ten months. It is comprised of eighteen bucket-like forms, each a little over nine inches tall, and is the last piece Hesse made using papier-caché, a favored medium. Hesse originally planned a second version of 'Repetition Nineteen' in sheet metal coated with Sculp-Metal, but abandoned that idea when she began to work with rubber and latex. 'Repetition Nineteen I' is a key example from Hesse's oeuvre, elucidating the artist's emotionally suggestive use of form and space, and interest in objects that were visibly handmade and irregular.

Although similar in size and shape, none of the cylindrical forms in 'Repetition Nineteen I' are exactly alike, creating a destabilizing and uncanny sense of doubling. Hesse kept their arrangement open-ended, insisting that they should not have a fixed order. The result is a responsive and provisional installation whose overall shape varies with each presentation. 'I don't ask that the piece be moved or changed, only that it could be moved and changed. There is not one preferred format,' Hesse said.



Eva Hesse

Area

1968

Latex and filler on wire mesh with wire and metal grommets

Dimensions variable

Collection of The Ohio State University. Courtesy of the Wexner Center for the Arts

AREA (1968)

'Area' (1968), on loan from the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in Columbus, was created in the summer of 1968 for Lucy Lippard's landmark traveling exhibition 'Soft and Apparently Soft Sculpture.'

For Hesse, 'Area' was important because of its underlying relationship to 'Repetition Nineteen III.' The artist explained: "Area' is made from the mold of another piece, 'Repetition Nineteen III.' It is the insides that we took out. And then I made it into another piece. I mean there is no connection whatsoever except if you saw it, it is very clear... I rubberized the forms, attached them and sewed them together with wire and that is the piece... I have a personal attachment because it comes from another piece. I take a piece from one piece and make it totally another one. 'Repetition Nineteen III' was made of empty containers and there was that sexual connotation. It is anthropomorphic. 'Area' isn't, or is in a totally different way. It is used as a flat piece with a suggestive three-dimensionality...'

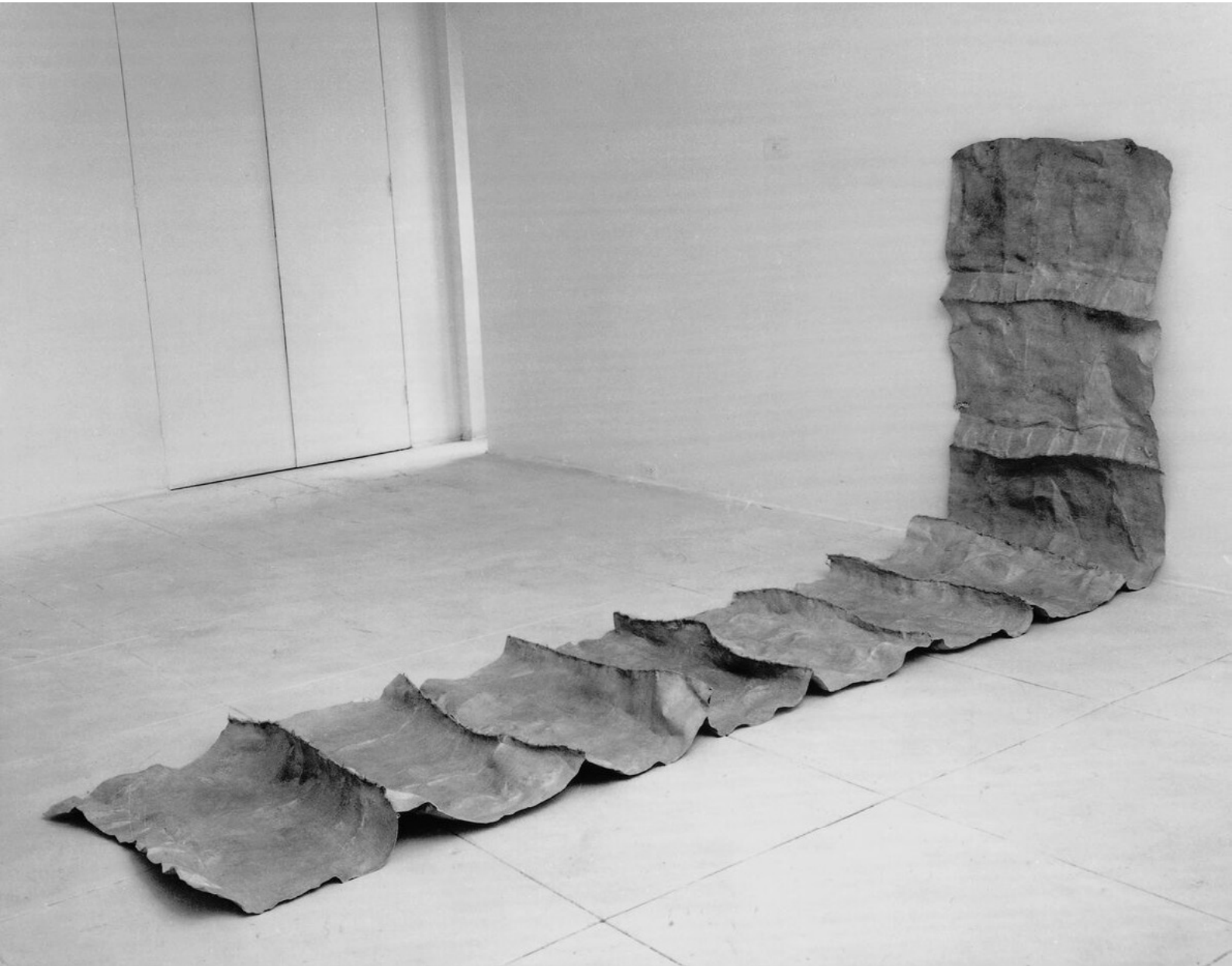


Photo: John A. Ferrari



Eva Hesse

Expanded Expansion

1969

Fiberglas, latex, cheesecloth

Installation variable, 3 units

A: 310 × 152 × 5 / B: 310 × 304 × 5 / C: 310 × 533 × 5 cm

A: 122 × 60 × 2 / B: 122 × 120 × 2 / C: 122 × 210 × 2 in

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Gift, Family of Eva Hesse, 1975

Photograph by Midge Wattles & Ariel Ione Williams

© Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York



EXPANDED EXPANSION (1969)

The monumental work 'Expanded Expansion' (1969), on loan from the Guggenheim Museum and made in the year before the artist's death, embodies all of Hesse's interests—especially her fascination with materiality, contradiction and absurdity. Hesse once described this piece as 'opposite in form, large, looming, powerful yet precarious.' Standing just over 10 feet tall and 30 feet wide when fully extended, 'Expanded Expansion' comprises thirteen panels made of fragile rubberized cheesecloth supported by rigid Fiberglas and polyester resin poles. Its height is fixed by the length of the poles, but its width could originally be manipulated to expand or contract, so, like 'Repetition Nineteen I,' its ultimate size is dependent on the qualities and limitations of its environment.

In this work, Hesse combined some of her favorite materials, latex, Fiberglas and cheesecloth. The juxtaposition of durable Fiberglas with ephemeral latex and cheesecloth testifies to Hesse's continued interest in paired opposites, subverting the idea of the monumental by suggesting that forms were only

momentarily stable. As she stated in an interview with Cindy Nemser for Artforum in 1970, 'I guess this is the closest thing I've done to an environment. It is leaning against the wall like a curtain and the scale might make it superficially environmental but that's not enough... I thought I would make more of it, but sickness prevented that—then it could actually be extended to a length one would really feel would be environmental. This piece does have an option... I think that what confuses people in a piece like this is that it's so silly and yet it is made fairly well. Its ridiculous quality is contradicted by its definite concern about its presentation...'

'Expanded Expansion' was first shown in 1969 as part of the group exhibition 'Anti-Illusion. Procedures/ Materials' at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. This powerful work is on view at Hauser & Wirth for the second time in 35 years after a complex and dedicated restoration process by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



Eva Hesse with 'Expanded Expansion' at the 1969 exhibition 'Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials' at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

issued in installments

series—number of things
of which each is
similar to the preceding
or related to it as it
to its predecessor, sequence,
succession, order, row,
set,
in ordered succession

mate—set of terms
constituting a progression
or having the several
values determined by a
common relation.

Gibson pc.

1. Seam—line of
junction between two
edges.

* juncture—joining—
place where things join;
concurrence of events.
expanded
expansion expanding
enlargement.
an expanded thing or part
the amount, degree, or extent of expansion.
a development or full
treatment as of a topic.

2. Expanded
expansion (cheese cloth + poles.
extend)

3. extendible—adj. extensible; extensibility.
the quality of being extendible; that can be extended.
(to stretch forth, to stretch or straighten out.)



Eva Hesse

Augment

1968

Latex, canvas

Installation variable, 17 units

198.1 × 101.6 cm / 78 × 40 in each

Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland

AUGMENT (1968)

On loan from Glenstone Museum, 'Augment' comprises seventeen overlapping rectangular sheets of rubberized canvas placed on the floor. Hesse's definition of the title in a notebook—to 'increase, make greater'—refers to the repetition and accumulation of units. The idea of the infinitely repeatable module, found in much of Hesse's work in 1968, is expressed in 'Augment' in the form of thin superimposed sheets. Created towards the end of 1968 in Hesse's studio in New York, the work embodies the artist's aesthetic of formal contradictions. Its composition is simple and elegant, making it her largest latex floor piece. At once solid (the central sheet of canvas) and permeable (the translucent edges of pure latex), finite in its seventeen sheets and infinite in its title and the artist's desire for the work to contain 'a thousand' sheets, rough in its poured edges and smooth on its latex canvas base, the work perfectly balances many of Hesse's preoccupations towards the end of her career.

'Augment' was included in two legendary exhibitions at the end of the 1960s. It was first shown in '9 at Leo Castelli' in 1968 alongside 'Aught'—both works installed at Hauser & Wirth just as they were in this landmark exhibition. The following year in 1969, it was shown in 'When Attitudes Become Form,' curated by Harald Szeemann at the Bern Kunsthalle, an exhibition advocating for the new art that emerged in the 1960s, work grounded in an 'inner attitude' elevating artistic process over final product.



Aught: wall pc. 4 sections
anything in any degree or respect,
anything whatever any little part

Augment: sheets 2D
increase make greater

Addendum—A thing added or to be added [sketch]
Accession— Increased by something [sketch]
added

REPETITION

Repetition Nineteen [sketch]

Range— To arrange in a certain order especially to set
in a row or rows. 12×12 grommets F.

Compart—To divide into parts, partition, subdivide 4 lds. F.

Compass—To form a circle around

Iterate—To repeat, to do again 20×20 F.

Cincture—An encircling enclosure 1967

CONSTANT— quantity that does not vary. [sketch]

number expressing a relation

That remains the same for same

substance in same conditions.

5'×5'×5-3/4" wood, P.M. rubber

DITTO: 1967 Sculpmetal on Plexiglas [sketch]

15"×14-1/2"

SCHEMA: latex rubber 1967-68 [sketch]

42"×42"×1-1/2"

augment: sheets 20 [sketch]

Castelli

aught: wall pc. Castelli [sketch]

4 units

Sans 68-1/2" above floor.



Eva Hesse

Aught

1968

Latex and filler over canvas stuffed with polyethylene sheeting,
rope, and unidentified materials, with metal grommets, 4 units
198.1 × 101.6 cm / 78 × 40 in each approximately

University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Gift of Mrs. Helen Charash

AUGHT (1968)

'Aught,' borrowed from the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, is comprised of four parts hanging side-by-side along the wall—each the same size as the sheets in 'Augment'—both works installed just as they were for their public debut in the now legendary exhibition '9 at Leo Castelli' in 1968.

Each of the four segments in 'Aught' are comprised of two sheets of rubberized canvas that have been attached at the edges and filled with polyethylene drop cloths, creating a slightly billowing effect on the surface, provoking viewers to feel the tension in the space—literal and psychological—between painting and sculpture. Normally the polyethylene—used to prevent the rubber from sticking to the floor during fabrication—would have been discarded once the latex had dried. The idea of reusing a discarded element of the fabrication process is reminiscent of the creation of 'Aught,' made from the mold of another piece, 'Repetition Nineteen III.'



Installation view, '9 at Leo Castelli'
Leo Castelli Warehouse, New York NY, 1968
Photo: Shunk-Kender

TIMELINE

1936

Eva Hesse is born on 11 January in Hamburg. She is the second child of Ruth Marcus Hesse from Hameln and Wilhelm Hesse, an attorney from Hamburg.

1938

On 7 December, Hesse and her older sister Helen are sent to The Hague on one of the last Kindertransports to leave Nazi Germany.

1939

On 5 February, Hesse's parents flee Germany. The family travels from the Netherlands to London, where they board a ship to New York on 16 June. They arrive in New York City on 23 June and settle in Washington Heights.



Pages from Helen Hesse's 'Tagebuch 3,' compiled by Wilhelm Hesse, 1939

1945

Hesse's parents divorce. Her father remarries and assumes custody of both daughters.

1946

Shortly before Hesse's 10th birthday, her mother takes her own life.

1952-1953

Hesse graduates from New York's School of Industrial Art and enrolls at the Pratt Institute to study commercial art. In the fall of 1953, she begins attending drawing lessons at the Art Students League and works part-time for Seventeen magazine.

1954

Hesse leaves the Pratt Institute and enrolls at Cooper Union. Seventeen magazine publishes a color-illustrated article about the young artist.

1957-1959

Hesse concludes her studies in design and receives a scholarship to attend the Yale Norfolk School of Art in Connecticut. She is then accepted at the Yale School of Art and Architecture, where she studies with Josef Albers and Rico Lebrun, among others. She completes her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1959 and returns to New York.



Hesse with Josef Albers at the Yale School of Art and Architecture, ca. 1958

TIMELINE

1960

Hesse meets Sol LeWitt in the summer of 1960. She creates a series of semi-representational oil paintings, known today as Spectre paintings.

1961

In April, Hesse participates in the 'Drawings: Three Young Americans' exhibition at John Heller Gallery in New York. She meets the sculptor Tom Doyle, and the two marry on 21 November.

1962

The majority of Hesse's work is now centered on drawings. Hesse and Doyle spend the summer in Woodstock, where she designs a costume composed of chicken wire and soft jersey for a Happening organized by Allan Kaprow, Walter de Maria and others.

1963

On 12 March, Hesse's first solo show, 'Eva Hesse: Recent Drawings,' opens at Allan Stone Gallery in New York. In December, she and Doyle move to 134 Bowery, a space that will remain Hesse's home and studio for the rest of her life. Around this time, she meets Lucy Lippard, Robert Ryman, Frank Lincoln Viner, Robert Mangold and Sylvia Plimack Mangold.

1964

In June, Hesse and Doyle travel to Kettwig an der Ruhr, Germany, where Doyle is invited by the industrialist Friedrich Arnhard Scheidt to work for a year in preparation for an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bern. The couple are provided with materials, a stipend, and a studio space in a disused part of Scheidt's textile factory. Later in the year, Hesse exhibits three drawings at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf.

The couple travels throughout Europe, visiting documenta III in Kassel, and various exhibitions in Basel, Bern, Düsseldorf and Zurich, among others. In Amsterdam, they visit the Rijksmuseum and Stedelijk Museum, and attend the premiere of James Baldwin's first play 'The Amen Corner.'



Hesse at work in her studio in Kettwig an der Ruhr, Germany, ca. 1964–1965

1965

Hesse creates 14 reliefs and presents them alongside drawings in an exhibition in a former greenhouse on the Scheidt property. Hesse and Doyle then travel to Hameln and Hamburg to visit the Hesse family's former apartment on Isestrasse, however, they are refused entry by the occupants. In August, Hesse's solo exhibition 'Eva Hesse: Materialbilder und Zeichnungen' opens at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. After 15 months in Europe, the couple returns to New York.

1966

In January, Hesse and Doyle separate. Hesse's father dies on 16 August.

TIMELINE

Hesse participates in the seminal group exhibition 'Eccentric Abstraction' curated by Lucy Lippard at the Fischbach Gallery in New York. She presents her sculptures 'Metronomic Irregularity II' and 'Several' for the first time and meets the art dealer Donald Droll.

1967

Hesse develops her practice through small, experimental 'studiowork' pieces made from a wide range of materials, including latex, wire mesh and cheesecloth. Her work is included in various group exhibitions on the East Coast, including 'Art in Series' curated by Mel Bochner at the Finch College Museum of Art in New York.

1968

Hesse experiments with Fiberglas and polyester, working with the fabricator Doug Johns, co-founder of Aegis Reinforced Plastics in New York. She has her first solo show as an 'object artist' entitled 'Eva Hesse: Chain Polymers,' which opens in November at New York's Fischbach Gallery.



Installation view, 'Eva Hesse: Chain Polymers,'
Fischbach Gallery, New York, 1968

She shows 'Area' in Lucy Lippard's exhibition 'Soft and Apparently Soft Sculpture,' and 'Aught' and 'Augment' in the now-legendary exhibition '9 at Leo Castelli.'

1969

Hesse participates in the landmark exhibition 'Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form,' curated by Harald Szeemann at the Kunsthalle Bern. In April, she is diagnosed with a brain tumor. She shows the sculpture 'Expanded Expansion' at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York that same year.

1970

An in-depth interview with Hesse is published in Artforum, conducted by art historian and activist Cindy Nemser. The Allen Memorial Art Museum in Oberlin acquires Hesse's sculpture 'Laocoon' (1966), the artist's first sculpture to be acquired by a museum.

Hesse dies on 29 May at just 34 years old.

1972

A memorial exhibition is organized at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.



Installation view, 'Eva Hesse: A Memorial Exhibition',
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1972

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Hamburg Germany in 1936, Eva Hesse is one of the icons of American art of the 1960s, her work being a major influence on subsequent generations of artists. Comprehensive solo exhibitions in the past 50 years, as well as a retrospective that toured from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to the Museum Wiesbaden in Germany and finally to the Tate Modern in London, have highlighted the lasting interest that her oeuvre has generated. Hesse cultivated mistakes and surprises, precariousness and enigma, to make works that could transcend literal associations. The objects she produced, at times barely present yet powerfully charismatic, came to play a central role in the transformation of contemporary art practice.

In New York in the 1960s, Hesse was one of a group of artists, including Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra and Robert Smithson, who engaged with materials that were flexible, viscous or soft: latex rubber, plastic, lead, polythene, copper, felt, chicken-wire, dirt, sawdust, paper pulp and glue. Often unstable and subject to alteration, these elements yielded works that were vital in their relativity and mutability. Hesse was aware she produced objects that were ephemeral, but this problem was of less concern to her than the desire to exploit materials with a temporal dimension. Much of the life-affirming power of Hesse's art derives from this confident embrace of moment. As she stated in an interview with Cindy Nemser for Artforum in 1970, 'Life doesn't last; art doesn't last.'

Learn more →





ARTFORUM

An Interview with Eva Hesse

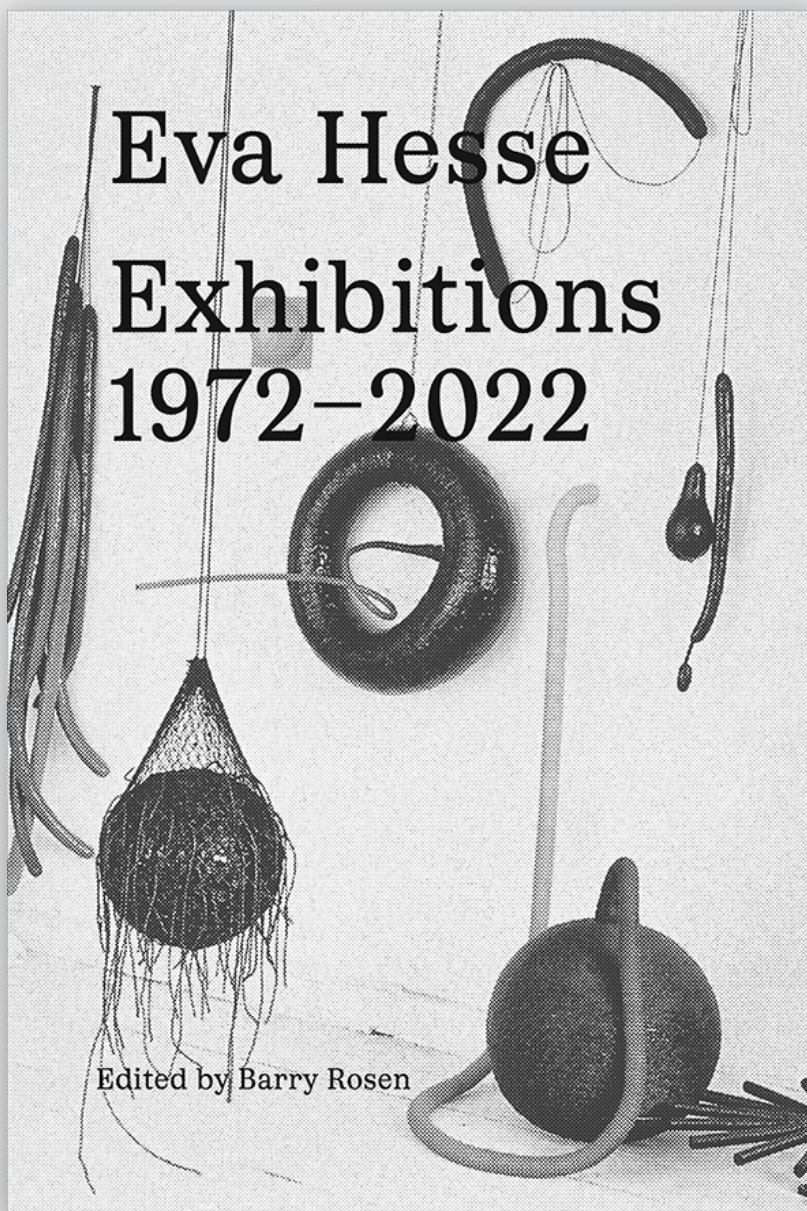
By Cindy Nemser

1970

Read here →



HAUSER & WIRTH PUBLISHERS



EVA HESSE: EXHIBITIONS, 1972-2022

Offering a unique insight into Eva Hesse's milestone exhibitions from 1972 to the present day, 'Eva Hesse: Exhibitions, 1972-2022' documents an exhibition evolving from idea to its critical reception through the prism of Hesse's work and her journey to becoming an icon of American art of the 1960s.

Learn more →

SYMPOSIUM: EVA HESSE 'LOOKING BACK AT A VOICE FOR THE FUTURE'

Fri 3 May 2024
1 – 4.30 pm
New York, 18th Street

On the occasion of the opening week of 'Eva Hesse. Five Sculptures,' an exhibition celebrating the 25th anniversary of Hauser & Wirth's representation of the Hesse estate, please join us for an afternoon symposium, at our 18th Street location, gathering some of the foremost voices on the artist's work, including her sister, Helen Hesse Charash; curators Helen Cooper and Linda Shearer; art historian Élisabeth Lebovici; Guggenheim Museum conservators Lena Stringari and Esther Chao; writer, curator and advisor to The Estate of Eva Hesse, Barry Rosen; and Senior Curatorial Director at Hauser & Wirth, Kate Fowle.

The afternoon symposium will feature three key discussions touching on Eva Hesse's (1936–1970) transformational sculptural language and her pioneering use of alternative materials. Much of the program will highlight one key work, 'Expanded Expansion,' as an exemplary focal point of 'Eva Hesse.

Symposium Program

1 pm
Foundation: Helen Hesse Charash,
Helen Cooper, Linda Shearer and Kate Fowle

2.15 pm
Élisabeth Lebovici on
'Expanded Expansion'

3.30 pm
Conservation: Esther Chao,
Lena Stringari and Barry Rosen

Learn more —>

Register here —>

THIS EXHIBITION IS ON VIEW AT
542 WEST 22ND STREET
NEW YORK 10011

HAUSERWIRTH.COM