GUGGENHEIM

NEWS RELEASE

The Guggenheim Museum Presents *Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion*

A Powerful Work by Eva Hesse Is on Public Display for the First Time in 35 Years after a Complex and Dedicated Process of Restoration

Exhibition: *Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion*
Venue: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York
Location: Tower Level 5
Dates: July 8–October 16, 2022

(NEW YORK, NY—June 9, 2022) A focused exhibition devoted to influential and experimental artist Eva Hesse (b. 1936, Hamburg, Germany; d. 1970, New York) is on view July 8 through October 16 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. *Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion* is both an examination of the artist's studio practice and an invitation to explore the transformation and afterlife of a restored monumental work, displayed publicly for the first time in 35 years.

In the late 1960s, Eva Hesse sought to make objects that were neither painting nor sculpture, but a hybrid that was all her own. Simultaneously adopting and pushing against the prevailing Minimalist language of repetitive forms and hard edges, her work is imbued with a haptic experience that reflects her keen interest in materiality and incongruity. To create *Expanded Expansion* (1969), the show's central piece, the artist painted pliable layers of natural latex rubber onto cheesecloth panels, and supported them on rigid fiberglass and polyester resin poles, resulting in a massive scrim that expands or contracts to fit its environment. At once commanding and humorous, the towering structure leans against the wall, balanced on a series of awkward "legs". A short Guggenheim-produced documentary chronicles the piece's restoration from its status as "unexhibitable," detailing the museum's vast research, dialogue, and meticulous conservation processes.

Accompanying *Expanded Expansion* is a selection of smaller experimental works that reveal Hesse's skillful hand and visceral manipulation of materials. Visitors are also given a rare look into the artist's working and living space through unedited footage captured on film by Dorothy Beskind, and in an interview with Hesse by art historian and activist Cindy Nemser—uncovering the artist's ideas about the connections between her life and her art:

"I remember always working with contradictions and contradictory forms, which is my idea also in life, the whole absurdity of life, everything for me has always been opposites, nothing has ever been in the middle. . . . it was always more interesting than making something average, normal, right-size."
— Eva Hesse

The show surveys the temporalities of exhibition and interpretation, elucidating the contextual nature of perception and the complexities around preservation and stewardship. Hesse was well aware of the fragility of her chosen media, yet ambivalent about their accelerated demise over time, leaving the museum with a lasting question regarding her feelings about *Expanded Expansion*'s physical changes. Despite its shifts in color and increasing rigidity, the piece still holds tremendous power as a testament to the pioneering artist who, despite her untimely death in 1970, left a body of work that pushed sculpture beyond Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism, and continues to deeply influence and inspire artists today.

Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion is curated by Lena Stringari, Deputy Director and Andrew W. Mellon Chief Conservator, with the collaboration of Richard Armstrong, Director, and Esther Chao, Objects Conservator.

Funders

The Leadership Committee for this exhibition is gratefully acknowledged for its support, with special thanks to Suzanne Deal Booth, Hauser & Wirth, Lawrence B. Benenson, Peter Bentley Brandt, and an anonymous donor.

Additional funding is provided by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's Collections Council.

Funding for the conservation of Eva Hesse's *Expanded Expansion* was generously provided by Suzanne Deal Booth and through a grant from the Bank of America Art Conservation Project.

About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The international constellation of museums includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. An architectural icon and "temple of spirit" where radical art and architecture meet, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is now among a group of eight Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the United States recently designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim's activities around the world, visit guggenheim.org.

Sustainability
The Guggenheim Museum is committed to the sustainable stewardship of our collections and facilities, preserving them for future generations, and minimizing environmental impact.

Visitor Information
Admission: Adults $25, students/seniors (65+) $18, members and children under 12 free. Open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Friday, 11 am to 6 pm, and Saturday, 11 am to 8 pm. Closed Tuesday. Members-only on select Mondays, 6 pm to 8 pm. Pay What You Wish hours are Saturdays, 6 pm to 8 pm. Purchase of timed tickets is encouraged ahead of visit. Explore the Guggenheim with our free Digital Guide, a part of the Bloomberg Connects app. Find it in the Apple App Store or in the Google Play Store.

The Guggenheim Museum requires masks for all visitors regardless of vaccination status. Learn more about our COVID-19 safety protocols.

@Guggenheim
guggenheim.org/social

For publicity images, visit guggenheim.org/pressimages
Password: presspass

June 9, 2022

For additional information
Sara Fox
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation
212 423 3840
pressoffice@guggenheim.org

Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion

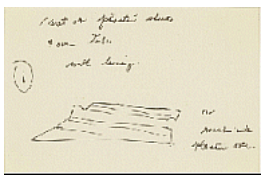
Loan objects with status: approved

Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, July 8, 2022 – Sunday, October 16, 2022)

Eva Hesse
Expanded Expansion
1969
Fiberglass, polyester resin, latex, and cheesecloth
Width variable; approximately 10 feet 2 inches x 25 feet (309.9 x 762 cm) overall
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Gift, Family of Eva Hesse, 1975
75.2138
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
No title
1969
Ink and graphite on paper
8 7/8 × 5 7/8 inches (22.5 × 14.9 cm)
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College. Gift of Helen Hesse Charash.
X.2021.673
Lender's Number: 1977.52.20
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
No title
1969
Ink on paper
5 7/8 × 8 7/8 inches (14.9 × 22.5 cm)
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College. Gift of Helen Hesse Charash.
X.2021.674
Lender's Number: 1977.52.76.54
Loan Object Status: approved



Eva Hesse
No title
1969
Ink on paper
5 7/8 × 8 7/8 inches (14.9 × 22.5 cm)
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College. Gift of Helen Hesse Charash.
X.2021.675
Lender's Number: 1977.52.76.53
Loan Object Status: approved

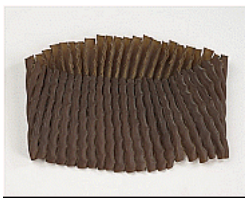
Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, July 8, 2022 – Sunday, October 16, 2022)

Eva Hesse
Test piece
1967-1969
Natural rubber
3/4 × 7 7/8 × 2 3/4 inches (1.9 × 20 × 7 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.682
Lender's Number: 1979.17.4
Loan Object Status: approved

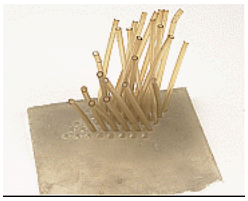
Eva Hesse
Test piece
1967-1969
Filled natural rubber over metal screen, with natural rubber and metal pins
5 1/8 × 3 5/8 × 1 1/8 inches (13 × 9.2 × 2.9 cm)
Berkeley Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.685
Lender's Number: 1979.17.8
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test piece
1967-1969
Natural rubber over white, straight-weave folded cloth and strips
7/8 × 9 1/2 × 2 7/16 inches (2.2 × 24.1 × 6.2 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.686
Lender's Number: 1979.17.10
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test piece
1967-1969
natural (?) rubber tubing, sliced lengthwise, with metal staples; stapled units forming a ring
1 1/8 × 10 7/8 × 2 7/16 inches (2.9 × 27.6 × 6.2 cm) (folded)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.687
Lender's Number: 1979.17.11
Loan Object Status: approved



Eva Hesse
Test piece for Accession series
1967-1968
polyester, fiberglass, and plastic (clear) tubing
3 7/8 × 5 3/4 × 5 3/8 inches (9.8 × 14.6 × 13.7 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.688
Lender's Number: 1979.17.13
Loan Object Status: approved



Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, July 8, 2022 – Sunday, October 16, 2022)

Eva Hesse
Test piece
1967-1969
natural rubber, cheesecloth (now 2 elements)
Longer Piece: 9/16 × 2 3/8 × 29 5/8 inches (1.4 × 6 × 75.2 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.689
Lender's Number: 1979.17.14
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test piece for Sans series
1967-1969
natural rubber over metal screen with metal staples
2 3/8 × 3 1/2 × 4 1/2 inches (6 × 8.9 × 11.4 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.690
Lender's Number: 1979.17.15
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test piece
1968
natural rubber over fine, straight-weave cloth (muslin?)
1/4 × 7 1/2 × 3 3/4 inches (0.6 × 19.1 × 9.5 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.691
Lender's Number: 1979.17.16
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test piece
1967-1969
Natural rubber
3/4 × 7 7/8 × 10 3/8 inches (1.9 × 20 × 26.4 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.692
Lender's Number: 1979.17.19
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test piece
1967
natural rubber over cotton batting
3 1/4 × 3 1/2 inches (8.3 × 8.9 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.693
Lender's Number: 1979.17.22
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, July 8, 2022 – Sunday, October 16, 2022)

Eva Hesse
Test pieces
1967-1969
natural rubber over cheesecloth; 13 pieces
Various: 3/4 to 1 1/2 x 6 1/8 to 7 1/2 x 4 1/2 to 5 5/8 in.
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.694
Lender's Number: 1979.17.24.a-m
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test piece for Sans III
1969
natural rubber
1/4 × 3 3/16 × 6 3/4 inches (0.6 × 8.1 × 17.1 cm)
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.696
Lender's Number: 1979.17.30
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
No Title
1967-1968
Glass-and-metal case, 6 objects (mixed media)
14 1/2 × 10 × 10 5/8 inches (36.8 × 25.4 × 27 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery. Promised gift of The LeWitt Collection, Chester, Conn.
X.2021.699
Lender's Number: ILE2008.19.1
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Test pieces
1966-1967
10 units: 3 metallic hemispheres (2 silver caulking material over 1/2 hollow rubber ball, 1 silver caulking over 1/2 solid rubber ball), 1 natural rubber hemisphere, 6 natural rubber hemispheres with varying degrees of pigment
1 to 1 1/2 h x 2 1/4 to 3 1/4 in.
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2021.835
Lender's Number: 1979.17.27.b-g and 1979.17.27.j
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse
Untitled
1968
glass-and-metal case with 14 studioworks
14 9/16 × 10 1/2 × 10 1/4 inches (37 × 26.7 × 26 cm)
Stuart and Maxine Frankel Foundation for Art
X.2022.6
Loan Object Status: approved

Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, July 8, 2022 – Sunday, October 16, 2022)

Eva Hesse
Test pieces
1968
canvas over padding, cotton (?) string
First unit: 4 1/2 × 13 × 11 inches (11.4 × 33 × 27.9 cm)
Berkley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
X.2022.141
Lender's Number: 1979.17.2.a-b
Loan Object Status: approved

Dorothy Beskind
Untitled
1968
digital transfer from 16mm film
duration: 12 min. 51 sec.
X.2022.161
Loan Object Status: approved

21 artworks

EVA HESSE EXPANDED EXPANSION

“. . . order versus chaos, stringy versus mass, huge versus small . . . I would try to find the most absurd opposites or extreme opposites . . . it was always more interesting than making something average, normal, right size, right proportion . . .”

— Eva Hesse

In the late 1960s, Eva Hesse (b. 1936, Hamburg, Germany; d. 1970, New York) sought to make objects that were neither painting nor sculpture, but a hybrid that was all her own. Simultaneously adopting and pushing against the period’s prevailing Minimalist language of repetitive forms and hard edges, Hesse’s work is imbued with a haptic experience that reflects her keen interest in unusual materials and incongruity. Hesse began to explore resins and latex rubber by 1967, attending the pioneering Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) workshops initiated by Bell Labs, where engineers and artists came together to investigate new technologies and push the boundaries of their fields, and where she learned about the chemistry and unique properties of polymers such as latex rubber and plastics. Process and experimentation were an integral part of Hesse’s practice, and she was in constant dialogue with her media—testing, adding, subtracting, evaluating.

Expanded Expansion (1969), a monumental work from the Guggenheim’s collection, embodies the artist’s interest in unconventional materials, absurdity, and extremes. Fabricated by painting pliable layers of natural latex rubber onto cheesecloth panels, which are supported by rigid fiberglass and polyester resin poles, the massive scrim expands or contracts to fit the environment. At once commanding and humorous, Hesse’s towering structure leans against the wall, balanced on a series of awkward “legs.” Due to the fragility of the latex, the work has deteriorated significantly over time.

Natural latex rubber is an unstable polymer that oxidizes and becomes discolored and brittle; *Expanded Expansion* is now darker and more rigid than in its original presentation. Does this alteration enhance the narrative or does it impede an understanding of the work as envisioned by Hesse? How does the inevitable aging of the components alter our experience? Does it lend a degree of pathos, or perhaps cause the viewer to wax nostalgic or assign a metaphorical significance never intended by the artist? As the caretaker of an artistic legacy, how does the museum preserve and present this inherently fragile work for future generations? Raising issues of contemporary aesthetics that determine the approach to restoration and exhibition, and questioning the concept of artistic intent, this work exposes the contextual nature of perception.

After nearly thirty-five years in storage, *Expanded Expansion* has been resuscitated from its status as “unexhibitable” through extensive study and a meticulous conservation treatment. This exhibition invites viewers to explore Hesse’s practice and appreciate the work’s “afterlife,” that is, its life once it leaves the artist’s studio. Imposing in scale, absurd in its repetition, and self-referential in its traces of production, *Expanded Expansion* is a testament to Hesse’s legacy as one of the most innovative and influential artists of the twentieth century.

Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion is curated by Lena Stringari, Deputy Director and Andrew W. Mellon Chief Conservator, with the collaboration of Richard Armstrong, Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, and Esther Chao, Objects Conservator.

To learn more about the exhibition and find accessibility offerings, download the Guggenheim Digital Guide, available for free on the Bloomberg Connects app. Look for this icon

450 Discover more about this exhibition.

#EvaHesse

DOROTHY LEVITT BESKIND
b. 1917, Wisconsin
d. 2014, New York

EVA HESSE IN HER STUDIO ON THE BOWERY
1968
Digital color video, silent, transferred
from 16 mm film, 22 min.

Over several decades painter, photographer, and filmmaker Dorothy Levitt Beskind photographed and filmed contemporary artists working in their studios on works in progress, with a perceptive lens into artistic process. This film was shot on 16 mm film in 1968 at Hesse's studio, 134 Bowery in New York, where Hesse had two levels—the lower floor was both a living space and studio, while the upper floor was where she worked on large-scale sculpture.

This video does not contain audio.

Facsimiles of Hesse's sketchbooks, journals, and appointment books lend visibility to the artist's research on materials, her exploration of concepts, and the language that informed the titles of her work.

Courtesy Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio, Gift of Helen Hesse Charash, 1977. © The Estate of Eva Hesse. courtesy Hauser & Wirth

Left to right:

- Statement by Hesse for her Fischbach Gallery show *Chain Polymers*, 1968
- Sketchbook page with notes about *Expanded Expansion*, 1967
- Sketchbook page showing studies of fiberglass long forms for *Accretion* (1968), 1967
- Notebook page, listing various material manufacturers, including Doug Johns, who fabricated *Expanded Expansion*, and was employed at Aegis Reinforced Plastics until 1968, after which he worked exclusively for Hesse, 1967
- Notebook page with notes on rubber testing and experimentation, 1968
- Sketchbook page showing thoughts on *Expanded Expansion* and Untitled (1968), a 62 ft. x 1 in. fiberglass work, 1968
- Notebook page with titles of artworks and dictionary definitions, ca. 1968
- Sketch for *Vinculum* I (1969), 1969
- Notebook page titled Problems in Art: Process, Materiality, Content, 1968
- Notebook page with dictionary definitions for the words "expanded" and "extensible," 1967
- Sketch related to *Expanded Expansion*, 1968
- Sketch for the layout of the Whitney Museum catalogue for *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, 1969

Photographs taken during the fabrication of *Expanded Expansion* by filmmaker Robert Fiore for the Whitney Museum of American Art's exhibition catalogue *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, New York, 1969. © The Estate of Eva Hesse, courtesy Hauser & Wirth

THE AFTERLIFE OF EVA HESSE'S *EXPANDED EXPANSION*
2022
Directed by Stephen J. Grant and Stephan Knuesel
Edited by Miao Wang

This short Guggenheim-produced documentary covers the extensive research, dialogue, and complex conservation treatment that was carried out to resuscitate *Expanded Expansion* and bring it out of storage after nearly thirty-five years.

451 Access the transcript for this film on the Digital Guide.

EVA HESSE
b. 1936, Hamburg, Germany
d. 1970, New York

UNTITLED
1969
Ink on paper
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio,
Gift of Helen Hesse Charash, 1977

UNTITLED
1969
Ink on paper
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio,
Gift of Helen Hesse Charash, 1977

UNTITLED
1969
Ink and graphite on paper
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio,
Gift of Helen Hesse Charash, 1977

EVA HESSE
b. 1936, Hamburg, Germany
d. 1970, New York

UNTITLED
1967/1968
Glass-and-metal pastry case containing “test pieces” in various media
Maxine and Stuart Frankel Private Collection, Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation for Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

UNTITLED
1967–68
Glass-and-metal pastry case containing six objects in various media, arranged by Sol LeWitt
Yale University Art Gallery, Promised gift of The LeWitt Collection, Chester, Connecticut

Hesse’s dear friend and artist Sol LeWitt procured a glass pastry case on Canal Street and arranged gifts that Hesse had given him on three shelves. Hesse was intrigued and purchased her own cases, placing small-scale studio or experimental works inside in a quasi-surrealist manner, with unrelated objects combining to create a new context. She displayed one of these works in her one-woman exhibition at Fischbach Gallery, New York, in 1968.

Left to right: Samples A, B, and C

Expanded Expansion's panels are made of natural latex rubber applied in liquid form to cheesecloth with brushes. Over time the chemical process of oxidation through the material's exposure to light, heat, and air has caused the rubber to darken and become rigid and brittle. In Sample A, the latex rubber is flexible and pale yellow—appearing as the panels would have at the time of *Expanded Expansion*'s fabrication. As you touch the test sample, it feels pliable and bendable. Sample B was made at the end of 2007 with Hesse's studio assistant Doug Johns. Although it is still malleable, the color has already begun to darken. Sample C is an exceptionally deteriorated latex rubber sheeting from 1989.

We invite you to touch Samples A and B.

Interview with Eva Hesse, New York, 1970
Conducted and recorded by Cindy Nemser

This interview, conducted by writer, critic, and impassioned feminist Cindy Nemser (1937–2021) shortly before Hesse's untimely death, is a rare instance of the artist speaking about her own life, influences, and fascination with materials. Although she once wrote in a postcard to Nemser, "The way to beat discrimination in art is by art. Excellence has no sex," Hesse was well aware of her position in a male-dominated milieu. Posthumously she has become a feminist icon.

The interview, which is more than two hours long, has been classified according to seven topics of interest: Hesse's biography, influences and art historical references, materials and process, content, exhibitions, feminism, and *Expanded Expansion*.

Access transcripts for portions of this audio on Guggenheim.org

Please do not touch the artwork.

EVA HESSE
b. 1936, Hamburg, Germany
d. 1970, New York

EXPANDED EXPANSION
1969
Fiberglass, polyester resin, latex, and cheesecloth
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Gift, Family of Eva Hesse, 1975

Completed in 1969, *Expanded Expansion* is one of Hesse's last works, a monumental hybrid of painting, sculpture, and installation. Originally shown in the groundbreaking 1969 exhibition *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, it has not been exhibited since 1988.

In dialogue with the architecture in which it stands, the work leans precariously against the wall. A serial arrangement of repeated intervals, it can expand and contract between the upright poles. Hesse thought of *Expanded Expansion* as variable—she liked it on the floor, and studio photos visible in this gallery show the piece wrapped around a wall. In the work, reflecting the spirit of paradox that Hesse sought, soft drapes of rubberized cheesecloth are juxtaposed with fiberglass fabric stiffened with polyester resin. *Expanded Expansion*'s variability, its oppositional materials, and the exaggerated repetition of the sections combine to demonstrate Hesse's interest in the absurd; as she told Cindy Nemser in 1970,

"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."

In creating the work, Hesse's studio assistants, under her focused direction and led by Doug Johns, a former fiberglass fabricator for Aegis Reinforced Plastics, painted liquid rubber directly onto cheesecloth lying on the floor. Evident in the surface are traces of the many different hands that prepared the panels—brushing and daubing, with thinner and thicker application. Sheets of plastic that lay underneath the cheesecloth crinkled and distorted during the piece's fabrication, imparting a creased texture to the final structure. Once dry, the latex panels were sandwiched between the rigid vertical poles.

Although Hesse knew that rubber ages quickly, she chose to use it anyway because it achieved her aims. Once pliable and translucent, the latex is now stiff and darkened. *Expanded Expansion* has been the subject of considerable discussion regarding its physical condition and whether Hesse would have rejected, accepted, or even appreciated its material changes. Consequently, the work raises questions around changing aesthetic sensibilities and the interpretation of physical alteration, provoking a philosophical debate on the museum's role as a steward of history and its responsibility to preserve and present the material transformation of artworks over time.

EVA HESSE
b. 1936, Hamburg, Germany
d. 1970, New York

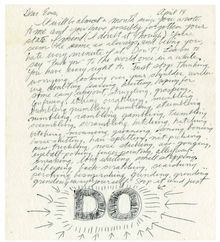
Selection of studio works in various media
University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Gift of Mrs. Helen Charash

Clockwise from top left:

– Latex rubber and cheesecloth, four elements
– Latex rubber
– Polyester resin, fiberglass, and plastic
– Latex rubber, fabric, and tape
– Sliced rubber tubing and metal staples
– Padded boat bumpers and string, two elements
– Latex rubber and fabric, two elements
– Latex rubber
– Pigmented rubber hemisphere
– Latex rubber and metal screen
– Latex rubber
– Latex rubber and cotton batting
– Latex rubber, fabric, and metal
– Latex rubber
– Sculp-metal hemispheres over rubber balls and pigmented latex rubber, six elements
– Latex rubber and cheesecloth

Compelling evidence of her interest in material manipulation, the objects arranged here provide a view into Hesse's studio practice. Their status within her oeuvre remains uncertain, however; they are referred to at various times as experimental works, test pieces, studio leavings, or studioworks. That said Hesse did exhibit several of these works in her 1968 exhibition *Chain Polymers* at Fischbach Gallery, New York. These tactile objects are simple phrases of manipulation that were repeated throughout her work. They functioned as small engineering experiments created to resolve the mechanical properties of specific material combinations.

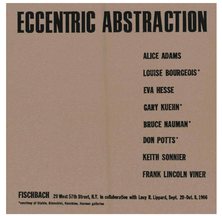
Like *Expanded Expansion*, this selection of captivating objects reveals the passage of time and varying degrees of chemical alteration. Embrittled rubber evokes corporeal or epidermal properties. Fabrics that have stiffened and yellowed resemble bandages. Collapsed forms disclose incompatible materials or chemical deterioration. In sum these objects combine to form what might be considered a studio archive, revealing Hesse's unique process and the fallibility of her material choices. Evoking the dualities of her entire oeuvre, these small works possess a palpable strength coupled with incisive vulnerability.



In her brief but intensely productive life as an artist, Eva Hesse helped redefine modern sculpture. Her late experiments in resin and latex rubber—exemplified by *Expanded Expansion*—made a previously heavy and opaque medium translucent, light, and markedly eccentric. *Expanded Expansion*, shown here after a lengthy revival by the Guggenheim's conservators, is a monument within Hesse's work and in the history of twentieth-century sculpture.

Hesse was born in 1936 in Hamburg, Germany. Fleeing Nazi Germany, she and her sister were transported to the Netherlands in 1939. They were eventually reunited with their parents, and the family emigrated to the U.S. and settled in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Upper Manhattan. Hesse's parents divorced, and her mother committed suicide when Eva was ten years old—a trauma that understandably plagued her the rest of her life. Hesse studied at Pratt Institute, the Art Students League, and Cooper Union. She was a student of Josef Albers at Yale University, graduating in 1959.

Hesse subsequently moved back to New York, where she continued to draw and paint. She married sculptor Tom Doyle in 1961, and in 1963 had her first solo exhibition, *Eva Hesse: Recent Drawings*, at a well-regarded New York gallery. When a German patron offered Doyle and Hesse a disused textile factory near Essen, they moved to Germany for fifteen months in 1964. Returning to her native country was traumatic, but Hesse quickly adapted—fashioning reliefs from parts and materials she found in the factory. Despite the anxiety and self-doubt expressed in her journal entries, she would develop extraordinary determination and confidence in her talent. Her good friend and fellow artist Sol LeWitt had written her an exhortatory letter saying "Do," and Hesse did. Other friends and artists, particularly Carl Andre, Mel Bochner, Nancy Holt, and Sylvia Mangold, also encouraged her.



Hesse and Doyle returned to New York in 1965 and divorced shortly thereafter. Hesse devoted herself more to sculpture, employing plastic tubing, wrapped cord, and found objects that allowed her to invent within the hard-soft dichotomy inherent in these materials. By 1966 Hesse showed a new freedom and sureness of scale in her work, garnering greater attention. That same year she was included in the gallery exhibition *Eccentric Abstraction*, organized by her friend, the writer Lucy Lippard. Hesse began using latex rubber in 1967. Her previous taste for coiling and wrapping loosened as she exploited the material's suppleness, translucency, and light weight.

Hesse's *Expanded Expansion* was a key piece in the landmark exhibition *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, organized by Marcia Tucker and James Monte at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1969. The show was the most comprehensive and empathetic survey of work by the young artists soon dubbed "Post-Minimalists." Their shared embrace of gesture distinguished them from the concurrent movement of geometry-bound sculptors. *Expanded Expansion* was a standout in the company of work by twenty other artists—including such later luminaries as Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, Joel Shapiro, Keith Sonnier, and Richard Tuttle.

Hesse was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 1969, and died the following year. She was once quoted as having said about her experimental materials, "Life doesn't last; art doesn't last. It doesn't matter." However, as stewards of art, the Guggenheim felt we owe future audiences the opportunity to see *Expanded Expansion*.

Left column: Early works in Hesse's studio, 1966; photo: Gretchen Lambert. Hesse's table, ca. 1968–69; photo: Mel Bochner. Sol LeWitt's letter to Hesse, 1965; © 2022 The LeWitt Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Center column: Announcement for *Eccentric Abstraction*, Fischbach Gallery, New York, 1966. Installation view, *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, May 19–July 6, 1969; photo: Peter Moore, courtesy Frances Mulhall Achilles Library and Archives, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Hesse in front of *Expanded Expansion*, 1969; installation view, *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, May 19–July 6, 1969; photo: Courtesy Frances Mulhall Achilles Library and Archives, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Right column: Installation view, *Eva Hesse: A Memorial Exhibition*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, December 7, 1972–February 11, 1973; photo: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. Detail of *Expanded Expansion*; installation view, *Eva Hesse: A Memorial Exhibition*, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, December 12, 1973–February 3, 1974; photo: Courtesy University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. All artworks by Hesse © The Estate of Eva Hesse, courtesy Hauser & Wirth

"*I'm not sure what my stand on lasting really is. Part of me feels that it's superfluous and if I need to use rubber that is more important.*"

—Eva Hesse

Expanded Expansion is a prototypical example of an object that, despite its alterations, still holds power as a symbol of the human spirit, artistic license, and the vicissitudes of life. Eva Hesse was well aware of the fragility of her chosen materials; yet they were essential in achieving her desired effects and she was ambivalent about their degradation. Hesse was not working with ephemerality as a concept, and she did not want her works to fall apart. Consequently, we as caretakers are left to make subjective decisions about the preservation of an artwork that is transformed due to the accelerated aging of its materials. Would Hesse have accepted *Expanded Expansion*'s changes as a natural part of life, as an intrinsic quality of active matter in an ever-changing world? In the absence of this information, the treatment and presentation of the work restores Hesse's interest in absurdity, scale, and extensibility, while raising questions of viability due to its shifts in color and flexibility.

Stewardship of cultural heritage involves multiple levels of study. In order to inform treatment decisions, conservators carry out historical inquiry and scientific analysis, while considering conceptual significance, material changes, and ethical issues. The resuscitation of *Expanded Expansion* involved a lengthy process of philosophical debate and research. Hesse's monumental and important work was deemed unexhibitable in the 1990s, and had since been stored horizontally in a large wooden cradle. When evaluated in 2000 for inclusion in a retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the embrittled latex raised concern that the piece would be unable to support its own weight if lifted for installation, and there were tears in the fabric. Beyond its structural integrity, discussions ensued regarding the evident material alteration, and if it still reflected Hesse's "artistic intention." Many conservators and art historians, as well as family and friends of the artist, weighed in on the fate of *Expanded Expansion*.

A focused study, conducted by conservation scientists, used materials testing and microscopic and spectroscopic techniques to examine the work's materials and their deterioration mechanisms: Latex rubber is a polymer that degrades relatively fast in the presence of heat, light, and oxygen, while the polyester resin of the poles yellows and embrittles at a much slower rate. Based on the results of this research, object conservator Esther Chao designed a protocol to clean the work, repair tears, soften stiffened creases, and fill areas of loss. Moreover, crucial to the treatment and presentation of *Expanded Expansion* is a carefully engineered travel frame designed by conservation technician Derek Deluco that enables the unwieldy, large work to be transported and safely lifted. This hands-on conservation work, completed over the course of two years, respected a philosophy of minimal intervention that was consistent with Hesse's own honest and direct approach. The video documentary in this room details each phase of the work's restoration, telling the story of the "afterlife" of *Expanded Expansion* and its revitalization nearly thirty-five years after the piece was last exhibited.