

RELATED EVENTS

MOCA ART TALKS PRESENTED BY GALLERY C

These informal discussions—free with museum admission and open to the public—take place in the exhibition's galleries unless otherwise noted.

Lara Schnitger, artist
THURSDAY, SEPT 7, 6:30pm

Elisabeth Sussman,
exhibition co-curator
THURSDAY, SEPT 21, 6:30pm

Samara Caughey, artist
SUNDAY, SEPT 24, 3pm

COURSE OFFERING

DRAWING AROUND AND AROUND

SATURDAY, OCT 14, 10am–1pm

MOCA GRAND AVENUE

SATURDAYS, OCT 21, 28 and

NOV 4, 11, 18, 10am–1pm

UCLA EXTENSION, WESTWOOD

Offered in conjunction with *Eva Hesse Drawing*, UCLA Extension presents a six-week studio-art course that examines Eva Hesse's drawing practice. The first session comprises a tour of the exhibition at MOCA; the following five sessions are held in a studio classroom where students will explore the drawing techniques and ideas used by the artist in their own work.

Advanced registration required; enrollment limited

Course # 855.36;

registration #S4593B

\$225 (MOCA members)

Course # 855.36;

registration #S4026B

\$275 (non members)

Instructor: Portia Hein, MFA

INFO 310/825-9971 or

uclaextension.org

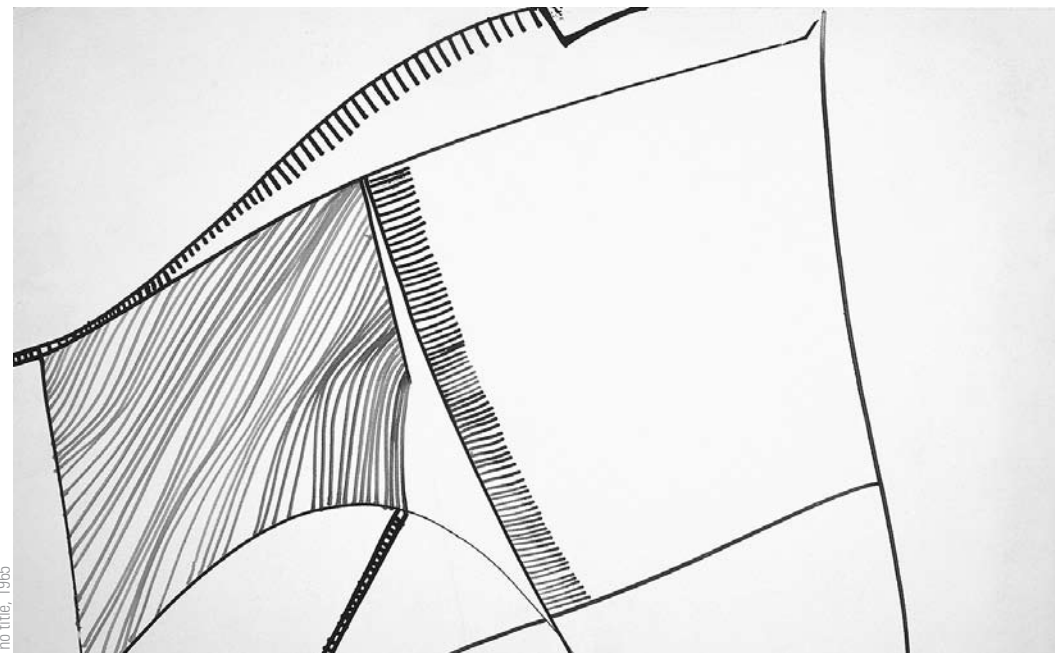
Education programs at MOCA are supported by The James Irvine Foundation; the William Randolph Hearst Endowment for Education Programs; Jean and Lewis Wolff and Family; the Weingart Foundation; The Lura Gard Newhouse Charitable Lead Trust; The Joseph B. Gould Fund for Education; MCI; the Entertainment Industry Foundation; and David Hockney.

Eva Hesse Drawing is organized by The Drawing Center, New York, and The Menil Collection, Houston. The exhibition is co-curated by Catherine de Zegher, former Executive Director of The Drawing Center, and Elisabeth Sussman, curator and Sondra Gilman Curator of Photography, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Eva Hesse Drawing* is made possible by the Robert Lehman Foundation.

MOCA's presentation is supported by Geraldine and Harold Alden, Susan and Larry Marx, Mary and Robert Looker, Betye Monell Burton, an anonymous donor, and Chara Schreyer. 89.9 KCRW is the Official Media Sponsor of MOCA.

The Drawing Center acknowledges the National Endowment for the Arts and Kathy and Richard S. Fuld, Jr., for their major support of this exhibition. The Menil Collection's presentation was generously supported by The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston, and Marilyn Oshman, with additional support from the City of Houston.

IMAGES: no title, 1965, ink and colored ink on paper, 8 1/4 x 11 5/8 in., private collection, © The Estate of Eva Hesse, Hauser & Wirth Zürich London; no title, 1960, black, brown, and colored ink, 13 1/2 x 11 in., collection of Tony and Gail Ganz, Los Angeles, © The Estate of Eva Hesse, Hauser & Wirth Zürich London



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART MOCA GRAND AVENUE

EVA HESSE DRAWING

AUG 6–OCT 23, 2006 An early key figure of American Post-Minimalism, Eva Hesse created paintings, sculptures, and works on paper that are striking in their poetic beauty and radical singularity. Filtering influences of Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, and Conceptualism through her own feminine sensibility and continually experimenting with unexpected materials, Hesse broke disciplinary boundaries, collapsing discrete categories of figuration and abstraction. *Eva Hesse Drawing* is the first exhibition in over 20 years to focus solely on the crucial role of drawing in the artist's oeuvre. Comprising approximately 150 works on paper, including 50 never-before-displayed working notes and drawings, as well as three-dimensional reliefs and "test pieces" (1967–69), the exhibition juxtaposes drawings and sculptures to follow Hesse's explorations of line and investigate her particular working processes.

Hesse was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1936. Three years later, her family fled Nazi-occupied Germany and moved to New York, where she became an American citizen. The artist attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in 1952 and Cooper Union in Manhattan from 1954 to 1957. After winning a scholarship to the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Music and Art, Hesse was accepted into the School of Art and Architecture at Yale University, where she studied painting with Josef Albers and Rico Lebrun, earning her BFA in 1959. Upon graduating, Hesse returned to New York and, in the fall of 1961, participated in her first exhibition, the group show *Drawings: Three Young Americans* at John Heller Gallery.

Hesse's works on paper from 1960 to 1964 include early collages, ink washes, and gouaches that engage many visual vocabularies and thematic paradoxes, from geometric and biomorphic abstraction to a mix of organic and inorganic forms. In June 1964, Hesse traveled to Germany for the first time since her childhood. Working in a textile factory near Essen, far removed from the New York art scene, she experimented with alternative ways of artmaking, prompted in part by the difficulties she was having in translating her complex drawings into paintings. Often described as "process art," a term that reflected a focus in the late 1960s and 70s on the physical properties of materials and the process of interacting with them, her method of incorporating sculptural materials in drawings and paintings was developed to investigate the drawn line in three dimensions. As the artist commented in 1970:

I had a great deal of difficulty with painting, but never with drawing. The drawings were never very simplistic. They ranged from linear to complicated washes and collages. The translation or transference to a large scale and in painting was always tedious. It was not natural and I thought to translate it in some other way. So I started working in relief and with line—using the cords and ropes that are now so commonly

used. I literally translated the line. I would vary the cord lengths and widths, and I would start with three-dimensional boards and I would build them out with papier-mâché or kinds of soft materials. I varied the materials a lot, but the structure would always be built with cords.¹

During this period, Hesse produced a series of "mechanical drawings," in which she delineated contours of interconnected tubes and planes on paper with a controlled line that is at once gestural and automatic. The artist described these drawings as "very HARD. That is they are forms I have always used but enlarged and very clearly defined. Thus they look like machines, however they are not functional and are nonsense."² Using discarded textile materials, she also began to make a series of reliefs in which cord-wrapped wires materialize the drawn line in space.

Hesse returned to New York in September 1965, continuing to utilize papier-mâché, cord, paint, and other materials in reliefs that bridge the space between two and three dimensions. Her continued engagement with the drawn line and with the incorporation of found industrial objects is apparent in works such as *Ingeminate* (1965), which comprises two balloons connected by surgical hose, each of which the artist covered in papier-mâché and then methodically wrapped with a single strand of string.

Hesse's drawings of the mid-1960s challenged the geometric regularity and rigidity prevalent in Minimal art at the time by exploring notions of transience, chance, and difference. The artist's attempt to precisely render grids of serialized geometric forms opened her work to accident and chaos. In untitled drawings featuring concentric circles drawn with a compass and graded in ink washes, each repetition is slightly different; the uniformity of the shapes and shading is imperfect, and in some works the circles feature small plastic or string filaments protruding from their centers. Other drawings of this period



rendered on graph paper consist of simple marks repeated in an almost mechanical way, producing highly textured sensual surfaces.

Hesse's "test pieces" are three-dimensional sketches in which she experimented with media such as latex, rubber, plaster, cheesecloth, aluminum screening, and unfired clay. Intended as experiments in material and form, they have since come to be regarded as artworks in their own right, and offer a unique perspective into the beginnings of some of her most important and well-known sculptures. The "window drawings," begun in 1968,

show a strong relationship to the layering effects found in her later latex sculptures. In each of these drawings, a layering of semitransparent washes emphasizes the subject's ephemerality, revealing Hesse's faith in chaotic processes: "Its order could be called chaos. Chaos can be structured as non-chaos."³

Notes

1. Cindy Nemser, "A Conversation with Eva Hesse" (1970), in *Eva Hesse*, ed. Mignon Nixon (Cambridge: MIT Press/October Files).
2. Hesse, quoted in Lucy Lippard, *Eva Hesse* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 38.
3. Lippard, *Eva Hesse* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 218. This statement was made in 1970 in reference to these late works.