

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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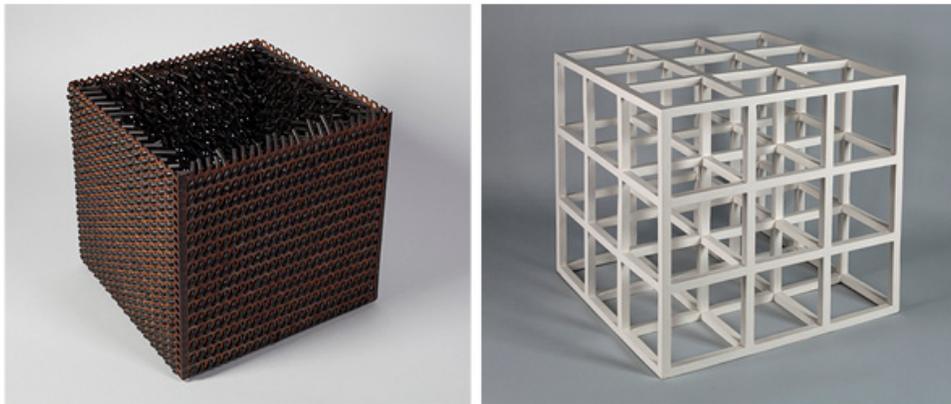
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BLANTON EXHIBITION SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON ART AND LIVES OF ARTISTS EVA HESSE AND SOL LEWITT

Converging Lines: Eva Hesse and Sol LeWitt

February 23–May 18, 2014



AUSTIN, Texas—November 21, 2013— *Converging Lines: Eva Hesse and Sol LeWitt*, on view at the Blanton Museum of Art February 23–May 18, 2014, celebrates the close friendship between two of the most significant American artists of the post-war era: Eva Hesse (1936–1970) and Sol LeWitt (1928–2007). Organized by Veronica Roberts, the Blanton’s curator of modern and contemporary art, the exhibition will feature approximately 50 works, including many that have not been publicly exhibited for decades.

While their practices diverged in innumerable, seemingly antithetical ways—LeWitt’s work is associated with ideas and system-based conceptual art and Hesse’s is associated with the body and her own hand—this presentation will illuminate the crucial impact of their friendship on both their art and lives. A scholarly catalogue published in association with Yale University Press accompanies the exhibition and includes essays by Roberts, Lucy Lippard, and others.

“It is a privilege for the Blanton to present this exhibition, which highlights one of the most fascinating and important artistic friendships of the 20th century,” remarked Blanton director Simone Wicha. “This presentation will shed new light on Eva Hesse and Sol LeWitt and provide a deeper understanding of their impact on one another, while capturing the

vibrant nature of the artistic dialogues and collaborations that took root in New York City during the 1960s.”

Robert Slutzky, a distinguished former architecture professor at The University of Texas at Austin, first introduced Hesse and LeWitt in New York in the late 1950s. They, and other artists including Robert Mangold, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Robert Ryman and art critic Lucy Lippard, all lived within close proximity of one another on the Bowery and supported each other in significant ways. In a 1993 interview, LeWitt noted, “The discussions at that time were involved with new ways of making art, trying to invent the process, to regain basics, to be as objective as possible.” * A map pinpointing the locations of dozens of artists’, composers’, and dancers’ studios will be on display in the exhibition, underscoring the dynamic environment of Lower Manhattan in the 1960s.

In spite of the dramatic differences between their artistic processes, Hesse and LeWitt nevertheless developed a close bond, evident in the extensive correspondence that ensued over the course of their more than decade-long friendship. In 1965, while Hesse was in Germany for a 15-month residency, LeWitt sent her an extraordinary 5-page letter in which he famously urged, “*Just stop thinking, worrying, looking over your shoulder wondering, doubting, fearing, hurting, hoping for some easy way out, struggling, grasping, confusing, itching, scratching, mumbling, bumbling, grumbling, humbling, stumbling, numbling, rumbling, gambling, tumbling, scumbling, scrambling, hitching, hatching, bitching, moaning, groaning, honing, boning, horse-shitting, hair-splitting, nit-picking, piss-trickling, nose sticking, ass-gouging, eyeball-poking, finger-pointing, alleyway-sneaking, long waiting, small stepping, evil-eyeing, back-scratching, searching, perching, besmirching, grinding, grinding, grinding away at yourself. Stop it and just DO!*” This letter, and postcards from LeWitt to Lucy Lippard, will be on display in the exhibition. The accompanying catalogue also reproduces dozens of postcards from LeWitt’s extensive correspondence with Hesse, illuminating the affectionate, and often humorous, nature of their friendship.

In 1970, immediately upon learning of Hesse’s premature death from a brain tumor at the age of 34, LeWitt created *Wall Drawing #46* for an exhibition of his work in Paris. The work consists of a wall covered with “not straight” pencil lines that LeWitt drew as a way of paying homage to the organic contours that were a hallmark of Hesse’s art. This landmark work will be one of five wall drawings in the exhibition. All will be installed by artists who worked closely with LeWitt during his lifetime, with assistance from students at the University of Texas, in keeping with LeWitt’s longstanding interest in having students help create his work. More than an isolated gesture of affection, *Wall Drawing #46* demonstrates how Hesse’s artistic influence shaped LeWitt’s practice in indelible ways.

Numerous works in the exhibition also illustrate the reverse: LeWitt’s impact on Hesse’s work. *Accession V*, a galvanized steel and rubber sculpture, responds to LeWitt in its use of the cube (a quintessential LeWittian and Minimalist form); the sculpture also marks one of Hesse’s first attempts at working with outside fabricators, a practice commonly used by LeWitt at the time. The artists’ artistic dialogue is also evident in a striking 1969 Hesse drawing with gouache, silver paint and pencil that features stacked horizontal lines. With its silvery palette and grid-like composition, this untitled work, which has not been publicly exhibited for 30 years, hints at LeWitt’s influence on Hesse’s evolution as an artist.

Other highlights include several important early LeWitt sculptures (or structures, to use his preferred term) that have not been displayed in 50 years, a 1969 Hesse drawing from the collection of Agnes Gund, and several Hesse sculptures and drawings from the LeWitt Collection, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Yale University Art Gallery.

The accompanying exhibition catalogue will feature an interview with LeWitt on Hesse, published here for the first time in its entirety, and a richly-illustrated chronology featuring recollections by the artists about their childhoods, early jobs, and highlights of their artistic careers, all drawn from interviews and oral histories with the artists and their wider circle.

An exciting roster of public programs will complement the exhibition. Art critic and writer Lucy Lippard will share personal recollections of her friendships with Hesse and LeWitt. Pulitzer Prize-winning *Boston Globe* journalist Sebastian Smee will discuss famous artistic friendships of the 20th century. Filmmakers Marcie Biegleter and Karen Shapiro will discuss *Tracing the Rope: Eva Hesse Life + Work*, the first documentary ever dedicated to the artist and will provide a sneak peek at some of the film's highlights. Curator Veronica Roberts will present some of the unexpected discoveries of her research for this exhibition, and talk about the ways that curatorial research often mirrors detective work.

Converging Lines: Eva Hesse and Sol LeWitt is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art.

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About the Blanton Museum of Art

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art is one of the foremost university art museums in the country and holds the largest public collection in Central Texas. Recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The museum is located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10AM–5PM, Saturday from 11AM–5PM, and Sunday from 1–5PM. Thursdays are free admission days and every third Thursday the museum is open until 9 PM. Admission Prices: Adults \$9, Kids 12 and under FREE, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth/College Students (13-21) \$5. Admission is free to members and all current UT ID-holders. For additional information call 512.471.7324 or visit www.blantonmuseum.org.

*Andrew Wilson, "Sol LeWitt Interviewed," *Art Monthly*, no. 164 (March 1993).

Image captions:

Eva Hesse

Accession V, 1968

Galvanized steel and rubber

10 x 10 x 10 inches

LeWitt Collection, Chester, Connecticut

Sol LeWitt

3 x 3 x 3, 1965

Painted wood

14 1/2 x 14 1/2 x 14 1/2 inches

LeWitt Collection, Chester, Connecticut