

**“EVA HESSE” a FEATURE DOCUMENTARY about Hesse and the Art World of the 1960s to Premiere at the Whitney Museum of American Art on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

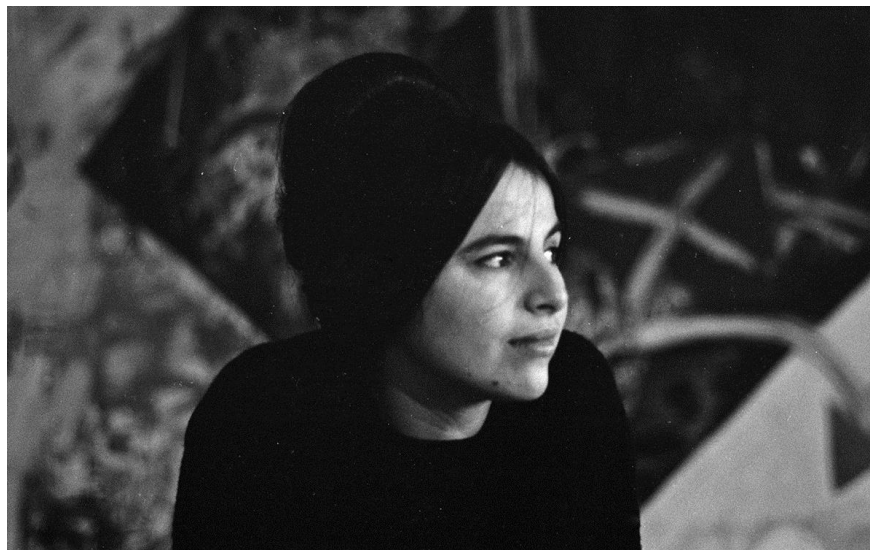


Photo of Hesse by Barbara Brown circa 1963

**NEW YORK, April 5, 2015**—“Eva Hesse”, a feature documentary about the life and work of the groundbreaking 1960’s artist will premiere at the Whitney Museum of American Art on May 16 in a private event. The film will also screen on Sunday, May 17, as the inaugural film, from outside the Whitney’s collection, to be shown in their new theater. The screening will be followed by a panel of artists and curators speaking about Hesse’s legacy and influence on current art practice.

The 102-minute film, directed by Marcie Begleiter, is the first feature-length exploration of the artist and her cohort which included Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, Bob and Sylvia Mangold, Carl Andre, Dan Graham, Bob Smithson and Nancy Holt as well as the writer Lucy Lippard. Helen Hesse Charash, the artist’s sister, and numerous close friends of Hesse also appear in the film speaking about the woman, her art and the raucous art world that filled lower Manhattan in the 1960s.

Eva Hesse’s work is represented in many of the world’s most important public collections, including the Whitney, MoMA, The Pompidou, the Tate, The Ludwig in Cologne, the Jewish Museum and scores of others. Hesse is in a rarified group of artists from that period whose work is central to the development of mid-century art and that perspective is also reflected by collectors; a single work sold privately in 2012 for over 10 million dollars. “Eva Hesse” offers a deeper view into why and how the artist’s work and life are still current and of extreme interest.

Hesse left over 1000 pages including unpublished journals, letters and datebooks which were culled to form the narration of the film. Actress Selma Blair voices Hesse while her father William Hesse is read by Bob Balaban and Patrick Kennedy speaks the words of Sol LeWitt.

The film is constructed with both color and black and white source material including newly discovered footage of Hesse and her husband, sculptor Tom Doyle, in mid-1960s Germany and scores of never-before published still images. In addition, newly shot interviews with many of Hesse’s friends (the artists named above), her family as well as Nicholas Serota, Director of the Tate Museums and Elisabeth Sussman, curator at the Whitney. The filmmakers have traveled from LA to NY, from London to Hamburg in order to film work in various settings and give viewers a sense of the structure of the work and the fragile materials that are the artist’s signature. The footage presents the work in a manner that museums,

because of conservation concerns, can rarely offer. The film is being produced with the cooperation of the Hesse estate.

### **About Hesse**

Eva Hesse was born to an observant Jewish family in Hamburg, Germany in 1936. In 1938, two weeks after the Kristallnacht riots, her parents put Eva and her sister Helen on a Kindertransport to Amsterdam. The family was reunited the following year and they emigrated to America in 1940. She grew up in Washington Heights within a close community of German-Jewish immigrants. Drawn to art at an early age, Hesse attended Pratt and Cooper Union before getting a degree in art from Yale in 1959. She subsequently moved to lower Manhattan where she was active in the vibrant community of artists, performers and writers that populated the lofts and tenements which had little more than running water but offered unparalleled workspace. She married sculptor Tom Doyle in 1961 and they spent 15 months in Europe in 1964-65 at an artist residency based in Kettwig, Germany.

Hesse went to Europe a painter, but returned to NY a sculptor. She began to utilize mechanical parts and bits of refuse from factory floors in her paintings. Her work quickly began to be noticed as brilliant and eccentric, weaving elements from Minimalism, Surrealism and Pop into her own strange and intoxicating brew. Inclusion in major group shows followed in 1966 with Lucy Lippards's seminal "Eccentric Abstraction" at the Fischbach Gallery on 57<sup>th</sup> Street. Hesse was then offered a one-person show at that same gallery and "Chain Polymers" opened in November of 1968 with a glowing review in the New York Times. 1969 looked to be a breakout year for the artist with group shows at the Whitney and the Jewish Museum, as well as over a dozen more in the offing, when Hesse was hospitalized and then diagnosed with a brain tumor. Multiple surgeries followed and although she was extremely productive during the following year, she passed away at age 34 in May of 1970.

**PRESS INQUIRIES and to receive a clip of the film:**

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The estate of Eva Hesse is represented by Hauser & Wirth Gallery