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| <b>Institution: University College London</b>   |
| <b>Unit of Assessment: 34A – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory: History of Art</b>   |
| <b>Title of case study: Eva Hesse’s Studiowork: Engaging publics and professionals with the provisional status of the artwork</b>   |
| <p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Through a partnership forged with the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, Briony Fer developed international exhibitions building on research into the materials and processes underlying art’s making and thinking. This reached both general and specialist publics, including artists and conservators in the UK and beyond. The exhibition <i>Eva Hesse: Studiowork</i> from 2009 travelled across Europe and North America over two years, attracting over 200,000 visitors. It provided cultural enrichment and raised public awareness about how art is made; deepened specialist knowledge of fragile materials crucial to the conservation of modern sculpture; brought previously unknown artworks into the public domain and contributed to the tourist and heritage industry as part of the Edinburgh Art Festival.</p>  |
| <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Briony Fer is a leading authority on the work of Eva Hesse, and the impacts described here emerge from a long history of work on this important 20th century sculptor. In 2002, she contributed an important essay on Hesse’s use of latex as a material with ‘time built into it’ to the major Eva Hesse retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and participated in a much cited roundtable on the conservation problems arising from Hesse’s use of such perishable and degradable materials [a]. Her insights into the significance of Hesse’s studio practice in the context of conceptual art’s rejection of hand-made art showed how ideas about what constituted an artwork were radically reconfigured in the 1960s [b, c].</p> <p>This previous research led to the exhibition and accompanying book: <i>Eva Hesse: Studiowork</i>, (2009). Coining the term ‘studiowork’ to describe the diverse range of works produced by the artist that were neither merely preparatory nor necessarily finished works, Fer’s research drew attention to the way the most provisional of Hesse’s works (or ‘sub-objects’ as she also named them) deepens our understanding of the core logic of the artist’s most ambitious sculptures. The extensive monograph included a catalogue raisonné of all Hesse’s existing and extant studioworks and brought together items drawn from the largest collection of ‘test-pieces’ (as they were conventionally called) held by the University Art Museum at Berkeley, California, with previously unseen works from private collections, the artist’s estate, as well as some large-scale pieces. Many of these works had never been seen by Hesse scholars, let alone a wider public. Together, they demonstrated how the meanings of artworks change over time and according to context: for example, sometimes that which began as technical tests became, however provisionally, ‘works’ when given away or exhibited [e].</p> <p>Fer’s research question was how to interpret such precarious work – understood both in terms of the materials she used and the status of the objects she made. Because Hesse herself exhibited them, they were already, during the artist’s lifetime, both less than finished works but more than preliminary studies. The exhibition was devised as a way of asking what these objects are, without fixing them or fetishising them as finished works in their own right. The exhibition and monograph transformed how Hesse’s studioworks are understood, and placed them at the centre rather than the periphery of the artist’s work. In doing so, Fer raised larger questions about the significance of material processes to the logic of art-making in modern and contemporary art [d, e].</p> <p>Briony Fer has been a Lecturer at UCL since 1990, Reader since 2000 and Professor of Art History since 2005. Her collaborator in [a] was Barry Rosen who, in his capacity as the director of the Eva Hesse Estate, facilitated the loans and organisation of the exhibition.</p> |
| <p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>[a] Briony Fer, Catalogue essay on ‘The Work of Salvage: Hesse’s latex works’ and roundtable on materials and conservation issues in Elizabeth Sussman (ed) <i>Eva Hesse: A Retrospective</i> San Francisco Museum of Modern Art 2002. Praised for its ‘critical and historical rigor’ by Pamela Lee</p>  |

## Impact case study (REF3b)

in *Artforum* Summer 2002. Available on request.

[b] Briony Fer, 'Sculpture as Sample' in *Eva Hesse Drawing*, ed. Catherine de Zegher. Drawing Centre, New York: 2006. Available on request.

[c] Briony Fer, 'Studio' in *The Infinite Line*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London: 2004. Available on request. Monograph was reviewed positively in the *Art Bulletin*, *Art History*, the *Oxford Art Journal*, *Building Design* and other peer-reviewed journals.

[d] *Eva Hesse: Studiowork* [Exhibition] (co-curated with Barry Rosen), initially at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh: 2009. Positively reviewed in art press including by Barry Schwabsky April 2010 in *Artforum*; see [1].

[e] Briony Fer, *Eva Hesse: Studiowork* [monograph], The Fruitmarket Gallery and Yale University Press, New Haven & London: 2009. Submitted as REF output. Shortlisted for the 2010 Banister Fletcher Award for the best book on art and architecture, and praised by jury for the quality of scholarship and ambition of the publication.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The exhibitions, together with the publications, public events, educational activities and outreach programmes they generated, collectively enhanced public access to the work of a major artist by bringing hitherto unknown artwork to display in several international contexts. They enhanced public understanding of the role of making and material processes in art, and reached a wide variety of audiences through educational activities. They also increased specialist knowledge of materials essential for care and conservation; and attracted a diverse range of professional partners and participants such as artists, curators and other art professionals.

*Eva Hesse: Studiowork* first opened in 2009 at the Edinburgh Art Festival (5 Aug–25 Oct 2009, 52,966 visitors [1]) and then travelled, over two years, to venues in Europe, Canada and the United States: Camden Arts Centre, London (11 Dec–7 Mar 2010, 19,897 visitors), Tapies Foundation, Barcelona (13 May–1 Aug 2010, 18,900 visitors), Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada (10 Sep 2010–2 Jan 2011, 72,000 visitors), Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, California (26 Jan–24 Apr 2011, 8,664 visitors), ICA Boston (19 Jul–10 Oct 2011, 44,388 visitors) [2]. Thus the exhibition was seen by about 217,415 visitors worldwide, demonstrating the global reach of these exhibitions, and generating impacts in each venue. This international tour also demonstrates the work's significance: despite the fragility of the materials, museums and galleries in four countries were keen to host the exhibition and arrange events for a wide audience.

**Challenging conventional ideas of finished 'work':** Through exhibitions and associated educational events, the underpinning research enhanced public understanding of Hesse's studio production methods, the provisional nature of her work, and her use of innovative but fragile materials such as latex, fibreglass and paper. Visitors appreciated the opportunity 'to consider the studio process (such an integral part of any artist's practice) and look at pieces that are so rarely shown'; 'I loved the fragile studio pieces and her adventurous use of paper, latex and enamel. So much more interesting than I imagine!' (p. 12–13, [1]).

As part of the landmark *Studiowork* exhibition, the Fruitmarket Gallery Edinburgh arranged a series of events intended to engage a wide variety of audiences who might otherwise not come into contact with Hesse's work and thus enhance public access. These included previews for secondary school teachers, school visits, a gallery tour for visitors aged 60 and over, and a tour designed specially for visitors with visual impairments (2 September 2009). Feedback on a two-day Youth Sculpture Workshop for 13–17 year olds on 20–21 October 2009 included: 'The young people benefited from using materials not widely used in school art classes... (and got) a feel as to what art school practice is like and the way in which some artists use the studio' (delivering artist) and 'I felt (Eva Hesse) was brave to try out new materials and play with different things and see what the outcome was' (participant). Overall, during the Fruitmarket run, 813 people participated in learning activities through 3 school visits (33 young people) 25 student groups (325 people), and 6 adult groups (62 people) [2]. As well as a DVD of an interview with Briony Fer, a web-film featuring her talking about the exhibition was made, shown and marketed by the Fruitmarket Gallery (2009), and has been viewed on YouTube 9,044 times.

We tend to think of artists' works as either unfinished or finished products but this exhibition suggested we look at the space in between. Critical press coverage showed a keen response to Fer's questioning how we decide when work becomes a *work*, and an understanding of why this is important. Reviews appeared in all major UK broadsheets (including the *Independent*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Observer*, *Sunday Times*, *Guardian*, *Scotsman*), the international press (e.g. the largest circulation paper in the US, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*) as well as in the international and specialist art press (e.g. *Artforum*, *Art Monthly*) [1, 2]. Frequent press and online references to Fer as the author of the research foregrounded the show's original concept (e.g. on *artdaily.org*, an article headlined: 'New research by renowned Eva Hesse scholar results in Exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery' 6 August 2009; see also below). Press previews and reviews picked up on Fer's innovative approach: 'Neither merely monographic nor thematic, the show is a art event: an exhibition generated by an idea' (James Meyer, *Artforum*); Kenneth Baker, in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, wrote 'In titling *Eva Hesse: Studiowork* at the Berkeley Museum, guest co-curator Briony Fer coined a new term to indicate the grey zone between avowed artworks and inchoate or abandoned efforts' [4]. The quality of the research and the exhibition's ambition was recognised: 'The Fruitmarket Gallery's *Eva Hesse: Studiowork* is a show that is exemplary in its dedicated scholarship, ambitious loans and confident sense of how art history might be made to live in the present' (*Scotland on Sunday* 10 Aug 2009) [1].

*Eva Hesse: Studiowork* at the Fruitmarket Gallery was curated as one of the key exhibitions and was strongly promoted in the 2009 Edinburgh Art Festival, thus expanding the cultural offerings of the festival (250,000 visitors attend the Edinburgh Art Festival each year). The reception of this exhibition led to an ongoing relationship with the Fruitmarket Gallery to explore the nature of artists' 'work' culminating in a major exhibition of Gabriel Orozco's works (from 1 Aug 2013, but previewed on 26 May 2013 by Adrian Searle in the *Guardian* as one to watch), also curated by Fer [1].

Fer thus helped to bring major international art to Scotland, and raise the public profile of the Fruitmarket Gallery as a leading modern and contemporary art venue for a global audience, helping to support its mission statement 'to make contemporary art accessible without compromising art or underestimating its audience'. This was acknowledged in the press coverage: as the critic Laura Cummings wrote in the *Observer*, 'Of the many shows that make this a golden year for contemporary art at the Edinburgh Festival, one stands out as momentous: 50 sculptures, some never shown in public before, by American artist Eva Hesse,' adding, 'That this show originates in Scotland is a coup for Fiona Bradley's Fruitmarket Gallery' (9 Aug 2009) [1].

The *Studiowork* exhibition led to an increased recognition of a large group of previously unknown or neglected works by Hesse. The newly discovered works brought into the public domain by Fer and Rosen were shown in three further exhibitions curated by others, expanding the audience of the original exhibitions: (i) a select show of paper test-pieces at Hauser and Wirth, New York (Jul–Aug 2011), (ii) the second-only showing of the work of Eva Hesse in Asia, at the Kukje Gallery in Seoul, Korea, where paper studioworks were exhibited alongside Hesse's early paintings [4]. The catalogue included an essay by Fer and (iii) a third exhibition, *Eva Hesse: 1965* at Hauser and Wirth Piccadilly, contained two pieces presented for the first time in the 2009 *Eva Hesse: Studiowork* show, making previously unknown works available to public view (exhibition seen by over 60,000 visitors).

**Learning events for art professionals:** The Hesse exhibitions were accompanied by events that attracted a large public audience including art professionals such as artists, curators and conservators. The Edinburgh conference (22–23 Oct 2009) included a special strand on artists' conversations (with Polish artist Monika Grzymala and Scottish artist Clare Barclay) (100 attendees). The critic Jonathan Jones remarked on the significance of Hesse's experimental work for artists today: 'Any young artists could get an education just by coming to this show a few times' [1]. Indeed, at the Fruitmarket Gallery, of visitors involved in art, 31% were practising artists [1]. Similarly, the London symposium at the Camden Arts Centre, entitled 'Sub-Objects and Studioworks' (February 2010, 140 in attendance) was specifically designed to draw attention to the global implications of Hesse's work in the light of the new geographies of art history and to bridge to the next exhibition at the venue, of the Brazilian artist Ana Maria Maiolino – enabling the centre to fulfil its own aim of an integrated curatorial, outreach and learning programme [2].

**Informing professional practice in curation and conservation:** The Studiowork project both

## Impact case study (REF3b)

enlarged the recognised oeuvre of Eva Hesse and promoted new ways of thinking about studioworks and how to care for and display the work of artists using unstable materials. For instance, at the Fruitmarket, the curatorial decision to place the studioworks on a series of tables differed from the way Hesse's 'test-pieces' were shown in early exhibitions; 'piled together', under or in vitrines. One very large table of the papier maché studioworks was shown in every venue without a vitrine, a rare chance to see work of this type not protected by glass. In turn this has influenced the way the Fruitmarket curated subsequent exhibitions, with similar tables to display the works of other artists [3].

Following the Berkeley leg of the exhibition, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Deputy Head of Conservation and Conservator of Modern Sculpture described the 'profound impact' on SFMOMA's own strategy on giving the public access to an artist's studio holdings: 'Recognizing the importance of making artists' studiowork and other studio holdings available to the public – as was done in the *Studiowork* exhibition – we made the choice to physically place this collection in the center of our new conservation studio, making it available through a rotating display to staff, scholars, conservators, and museum visitors' [5]. Through his involvement with each installation, the official conservator for the Hesse Estate built up a dossier of Condition Reports that have advanced understanding of conservation problems in Hesse's oeuvre but for perishable materials generally. The *Studiowork* exhibition thus enabled him to better carry out conservation on latex pieces shown at the major exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, curated by Germano Celant at Fondazione Prada, Venice, June-November 2013 [6]. The Chief Curator at the Berkeley University Art Museum, which holds a significant collection of the 'test-pieces' and are thus important stewards of Hesse's work, commented on the way this 'game-changing' exhibition altered their understanding of the artist [7].

An indicator of the significance of the contribution made to professional practice by research on Hesse's studiowork and test-pieces, Fer was invited to join the Panza Steering Committee at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. This was a major project funded by the Mellon Foundation bringing together leading international museum directors, conservators, curators and academics to set the direction for the ethics of conservation and the care of modern materials (2011–2013) [8].

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] *Exhibition Report Eva Hesse: Studiowork* Fruitmarket Gallery Edinburgh Art Festival (including visitor figures feedback and selected press); available on request.

[2] *Exhibition Report Eva Hesse: Studiowork Tour* (including visitor figures and selected press); available on request.

[3] Sustained partnership with Fer and influence of *Studiowork* on subsequent exhibitions described in statement provided by the Director, Fruitmarket Gallery. Available on request.

[4] Other exhibitions that came out of the original project but curated by others included *Eva Hesse; Spectres and Studiowork* 2012 Kukje Gallery, Seoul, South Korea, catalogue with essay 'Eva Hesse: Painting Drawing Sculpture' by Briony Fer (available on request).

[5] For the contribution of *Studiowork* to the understanding of Hesse's art production and methods from a conservation point of view, a statement is available from the Deputy Director and Sculpture Conservator, Department of Conservation, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

[6] Statement on improved conservation techniques is available provided by the Conservator, Eva Hesse Estate.

[7] A statement from the Chief Curator and Director of Programs and Collections at the Berkeley University Art Museum is available on care and conservation of Hesse's work at the Berkeley Museum.

[8] The Senior Curator, Guggenheim Museum, New York can corroborate the fact that Fer was invited to contribute to the international Panza Initiative because of research on Hesse's studiowork in particular, demonstrated in the international *Studiowork* exhibition, and on 60s art in general. Contact details provided.