

FORM AS CONTENT: MINIMALIST CUBE AS INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE (1960-1969)

by

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(Under the Direction of Isabelle Loring Wallace)

ABSTRACT

In American sculpture of the 1960s, the form of the cube appears frequently and is often seen as an emblem of the Minimalist movement. For the most part, this commonality can be said to reflect Minimalist artists' collective preference for basic shapes and geometric austerity. Yet, for all the critical attention paid to the Minimalist cube, one possibility has rarely been explored in print: namely, the relationship these cubes might share with the emerging discourse of institutional critique. Although an explicit association of the gallery with the cube would not appear in print until 1976, some artists' made this analogy much earlier, even if this connection was not their stated intention. This thesis explores a new interpretation of the Minimalist cube, focusing on it as an unrecognized participant in the contemporaneous phenomenon of art as institutional critique, in the work of Robert Morris, Eva Hesse, Paul Thek, and Lucas Samaras.

INDEX WORDS: Minimalism, Institutional Critique, Museums, Robert Morris, Eva Hesse, Paul Thek, Lucas Samaras

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents:

Earl and Mary Frances Long and Marvin and Virginia Cason.

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## – Chapter 1 –

### Introduction

In American sculpture of the 1960s, the form of the cube appears frequently and is often seen as an emblem of the Minimalist movement. Robert Morris, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Tony Smith and others all made use of cubes in their three-dimensional work and, for the most part, this commonality can be said to reflect their collective preference for basic shapes and geometric austerity. In keeping with these artists' aesthetic choices, most critical reception focused first on the essential form and simple materials of Minimalist art<sup>1</sup> while other contemporaneous critics found that these geometric shapes and serial systems attempted to create a “triumphant illustration of the powers of human reason”<sup>2</sup> or discussed on the relationship these forms had to the human body.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, some early critics identified these taciturn forms as a symptom of American imperialism and, later, as a symbol of male power.<sup>4</sup> Yet, for all the critical attention paid to the Minimalist cube, both then and now, one possibility has rarely been explored in print: namely, the relationship these and other cubes might share with the emerging

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<sup>1</sup> Judd, working in industrial materials such as metal and plywood, defined these reductive shapes as “Specific Objects” whose purity of form was preferable to the illusionism of painting that was an “objectionable relic of European art. Donald Judd, “Specific Objects,” *Arts Yearbook*, 8 (1965); reprinted in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings of 1959-1975*, (Halifax, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York University Press, 1975), 181-189. See also Barbara Rose, “ABC Art,” *Art in America* (October-November 1965).

<sup>2</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “LeWitt in Progress,” *October*, no. 6 (Fall 1978): 46–60. See also Donald Kuspit, “Sol LeWitt: the Look of Thought,” *Art in America* 63, no. 5 (Sep. 1975): 42-9.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” *Artforum* (Summer 1967): 12-23. See also Robert Morris’s early writings dealing with his own work and Gestalt psychology such as “Notes on Sculpture,” which appeared in two parts in *Artforum* (February and October 1966).

<sup>4</sup> Karl Beveridge and Ian Burn address their scathing criticism directly to Donald Judd when they ask, “Was ‘Minimal art’ more American? Was this reflecting the fact that America, as the emerging world power, needed to have its own dominating ‘high culture,’ the imperative to be the best in the world? What would you say if people started referring to you as the first *complete* capitalist artist?” Karl Beveridge and Ian Burn, “Don Judd,” *The Fox* 2 (1975): 129-42. For a central feminist text on Minimalism, see Anna Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power,” *Arts Magazine* 64, no. 5 (1990): 44-63.

discourse of institutional critique.<sup>5</sup> Although an explicit association of the gallery with the cube would not appear in print until 1976,<sup>6</sup> some artists' work made this analogy much earlier, even if this connection was not their stated intention. This thesis explores a new interpretation of the Minimalist cube, focusing on it as an unrecognized participant in the contemporaneous phenomenon of art as institutional critique, and of Minimalist artist as institutional critic.

The white cube aesthetic of the modern gallery comes into prominence after the Bauhaus architectural movement of the 1920s - 1930s, which emphasized clean lines and geometric shapes exemplified by the Museum of Modern Art in New York City (Fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> Unlike the temple or palace façades and brocade-upholstered walls of many major museums like the Louvre in Paris, Metropolitan Museum in New York City, or British Museum in London, modern museum construction, even by the 1960s and 1970s, is almost always completed in this International Style. We have come to expect white walls and spare, rectilinear architecture in the modern museum and it bears examination that this ubiquitous aesthetic preference found a visual corollary in the geometric shapes of Minimalist sculpture.<sup>8</sup> It is intriguing that at the same time that the cube became an ever-present form in the modern gallery during the late 1950s and 1960s, we begin to see critical examination of the museum and gallery spaces surrounding these sculptures.

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<sup>5</sup> I will be using the terms "cube" and "box" synonymously, except where expressly differentiating between a closed cube and an open box form. I will also use the terms "gallery" and "museum" interchangeably and treat commercial and "non-profit" art collections the same way, as the attributes of these institutions that are critiqued are evident in both.

<sup>6</sup> This is in reference to Brian O'Doherty's series of articles for *ArtForum* titled "Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space." The critique I describe is an examination of the functions and practices of museums and galleries in general, but as it appears within the modern museum and gallery. For my thesis, this critique hinges on the similarity in form between the Minimalist cube and the architecture of the modern white box museum rather than its palace-style predecessor.

<sup>7</sup> Modernist architects Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone designed the current MOMA building, which opened in 1939.

<sup>8</sup> An excellent example of this is the 1962 addition to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York. The main building is of a Greek revival architectural type, but when the addition was built in the 1960s, the architects chose a black, glass box as their preferred form (Fig. 2).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, artists and critics began to address the role of the gallery and museum as a political and economic entity rather than see it as merely a backdrop, as neutral and silent as a plinth, which simply provides the support upon which an artwork is displayed. Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, and Michael Asher are the four artists most often named as founders of institutional critique, all of whom made critical examinations of the museum space and its ideological structure through installations, sculpture, and other media.<sup>9</sup> This kind of critique was also expressed in writing by artists, indicating that discussion of the museum's methodology and purpose was taking place both in the galleries and in art publications. In the year which saw the first comprehensive exhibition of Minimalist sculpture, "Primary Structures" (1966), the artist Robert Smithson explored the notion of "gallery time," as opposed to real time in his seminal article "Entropy and the New Monuments," before then dissecting the museum of art's 19<sup>th</sup>-century organizational logic in "A Museum of Language in the Vicinity of Art," another important article from this period.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, on the heels of an important Robert Morris retrospective at the Corcoran Gallery in 1969, Carl Andre (a Minimalist sculptor in his own right) discussed the role of the gallery in the viewer's experience of art and the artist's experience of making art regarding the economic relationship between artist, gallery and the buying public.<sup>11</sup> Four years later, Daniel Buren defined the roles of the museum in "The Function of the Museum" (1973) and in doing so, revealed the museum as an active force in shaping our ideas about art.<sup>12</sup>

Hans Haacke provides an example of an artist whose work – both expository and artistic – is associated with political and social critique in general, as well as with investigations into the

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<sup>9</sup> John C. Welchman, *Institutional Critique and After* (Zürich: JRP/Ringier, 2006), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments," *Artforum* 4, 10 (1966): 26-31 and "A Museum of Language in the Vicinity of Art," *Art International* 11 (March 1968): 67-68.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Andre, "Artworker: Interview with Jeanne Siegel," *Studio International* (1970): 175-79.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Buren, "The Function of the Museum," *Artforum* 12, 1 (1973): 68.

politics and mercenary policies that exist within the pristine white walls of many museums.<sup>13</sup> Two cube sculptures by Haacke – *Condensation Cube* (1963-1965) (Fig. 3) and *Grass Cube* (1967) (Fig. 4) – are largely passed over in discussions of his politicized oeuvre. For me, these omissions are dramatically symptomatic of the critical lacuna that has not yet connected the cube form and institutional critique. *Condensation Cube* and *Grass Cube* are both Plexiglas cubes that contain systems dependent on physical relationships between the museum, viewer and the object itself. In the former, condensation forms on the inside of the cube in response to environmental heat created by viewers in the gallery space. In the latter, grass grows on the top of the cube, and is sustained by fluorescent gallery lights and human attendants. The institutional environment of the museum bears directly on the appearance of the sculpture whose form and meaning are aligned to make an institutional critique by linking the space of the museum to that of Haacke’s self-contained, but manifestly dependent, systems. Yet, despite these and other instances of an emerging association of gallery with the cube, little has been written to examine the cube or box form as engaging with this issue. I will offer as-yet unrecognized examples of artists who may be seen to engage in the emergent discourse of cube as institutional critique by interpreting this sculptural form as a container for that particular critical content.<sup>14</sup>

By the mid-1970s the phrase “the white cube” in reference to the gallery entered aesthetic discourse with Brian O’Doherty’s 1976 article for *Artforum*, “Inside the White Cube: The

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<sup>13</sup> Haacke’s investigatory installations have included polls eliciting museum visitors’ political beliefs (*MOMA Poll*, 1970) and a documented display of his investigation into the provenance and sale prices of a particular work (*Manet-PROJEKT '74*, 1974). The installations explicitly critiqued the museum by exposing causal relationships that were spelled out across the gallery walls in a language that was recognizably political.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to creating projects that critiqued the museum through art, artist-led groups engaged in dissent against the museum and the systems it supports included demonstrations in New York and abroad as well as the formation of politically minded collectives like the Art Workers Coalition (AWC), founded in 1969. This group drew up “thirteen demands” that were issued to the current director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, Bates Lowry. The AWC’s concerns centered on the priority of artists’ rights over that of the curator and trustees and also dealt with their perception of the marginalization of some artists on the basis of their race. After discussions ended in ultimatums, Lowry resigned from MOMA. William Seitz, *Art in the Age of Aquarius: 1955-1970* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 175-176.

Ideology of the Gallery Space.” Though it postdates the artworks I will discuss, his publication explicitly aligns the gallery and the austere cube in a way that plainly implicates geometric form in the idea of institutional critique. However, a thorough discussion of the cube-as-institutional critique was still lacking even a decade later, when Leo Steinberg pleaded, “Would someone please write the history of ‘The Box’ in latter twentieth-century art?”<sup>15</sup> Whatever his particular motivations, Steinberg’s request called for a continuation of the critical exploration of the cube/box form. In retrospect, a comparison of the modern gallery and the box-shaped artwork contained within it may have seemed obvious, as Carter Ratcliff commented that it was perhaps because of the similarity in shape that critics had not made this connection: “Minimalist object and minimalist gallery ... made such a tight formal fit ... that many overlooked it or saw it and felt no need to remark upon it.”<sup>16</sup> Ratcliff’s comment indicates that an examination of the cube as institutional critique is long overdue. I propose to look again at the concurrence of two developments in the 1960s – artists’ interest in the three-dimensional cube form and the burgeoning investigation of the museum’s structure and ideology – in order to explore an under-theorized link between the cube and the phenomenon of institutional critique. My examination will describe how these artists laid the groundwork for the now familiar association of gallery and cube.

Because a comprehensive survey of the ubiquitous cube during the 1960s is impractical, I have chosen four case studies that exemplify important aspects of the cube as critique. As these

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<sup>15</sup> Leo Steinberg, “Some of Hans Haacke’s Works Considered as Fine Art” in *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business*, eds. Rosalyn Deutsche and Brian Wallis, (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 8-19. Steinberg’s concern was with Haacke’s mixed reception in terms of the art historical canon and the political nature of his work. Steinberg does not answer his question about the box, but used this question to foreground the discussions critics have had over the changing forms and materials of art objects.

<sup>16</sup> Carter Ratcliff, *Out of the Box: the Reinvention of Art 1965-1975*, (New York: Allworth Press, 2000), 7. In *Out of the Box*, Ratcliff describes how postmodern artists reacted against and reworked Minimalist geometric forms like the cube, grid, and line. His study explores how Minimalist art created a framework that was a catalyst for many artists who sought to rebel against what they perceived as an overly didactic conception of art.

aspects are often inseparable from one another, the four studies will anticipate and recall each other and should not be understood as discrete analyses. In making new connections between these artworks and the burgeoning discourse of institutional critique, my exploration of the relationship between these forms and the museum may well exceed the artists' known intentions.

Framed by an account of two mirrored cubes (those of Robert Morris and Lucas Samaras), this thesis is itself a reflection on the relationship between the Minimalist cube and the box-shaped, minimal aesthetic of the modern gallery. The first chapter begins with a consideration of Robert Morris's Minimalist cubes and boxes. Here, I lay the groundwork for subsequent avenues of interpretation by first describing the terms in which the geometric shapes of Minimalism were often discussed during this period and after. Having considered what has been said, I will then turn to a consideration of what has not been said, revisiting three works by Morris which may imply a criticism of the museum. I will examine *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961) as well as *Untitled* (Box for Standing) (1961), contrasting these with his 1965 *Untitled* sculptural installation of four, equal-sized mirrored cubes whose form and materials create an uncomfortable awareness of one's own presence in the museum as both viewer and object, as well as an awareness of the presence of the museum itself.

In chapter two, I consider Eva Hesse's *Accession II* (1969), a work that transformed the Minimalist box by the addition of flexible latex filaments threaded through a perforated metal cube, thus providing what many have called a gendered sense of interiority to these closed and seemingly impersonal forms. As a female artist working with the "masculine" forms and materials of Minimalism, Hesse's sculpture makes an interesting contrast to Morris's work and will begin to show us how we may consider the cube outside of the "standard" Minimalist aesthetic. An examination of Hesse's sculpture as institutional critique will also provide an

opportunity to explore feminist criticism of the museum, while at the same time allowing us to examine how female artists were perceived within the male-dominated art world at this time. In addition to critical rhetoric which described a female artist's work in gendered and essentialist terms, other key texts regarding the viewer's experience within the institution, like O'Doherty's *Artforum* article and John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972), can be challenged for omitting any acknowledgement of feminist (or even female) perspective in their assessment of the relationship between artist, spectator, artwork, and institution.<sup>17</sup> In this chapter, I will consider how *Accession II* might provide evidence that the discourse of institutional critique was already subject to critique from within in the form of sculptures like Hesse's. Finding institutional critique in unexpected forms also occurs in the third chapter.

Paul Thek also took boxes beyond the seemingly inert shapes of the Minimalist canon with his *Technological Reliquaries* series. In chapter three, I will describe how his Plexiglas cubes and their curious contents – pieces of flesh or severed body parts sculpted in wax – direct our attention to the conceptual link between “museum” and “mausoleum.” Thek's artwork suggests how the museum ultimately fails in its attempt to keep inviolate both the physical artifacts it contains and the ideologies implicit in the art it esteems. Of particular interest will be Thek's one-time collaboration with Andy Warhol on *Meat Piece* (1965), a sculpture which contains a lump of flesh modeled in wax, housed within a Warhol Brillo box. The work comments on both the consumerist nature of the gallery while also calling attention to the museum's doomed struggle to preserve something forever, and did so at a moment critic Arthur

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<sup>17</sup> Though Berger's text is one of the first to articulate a gendered discourse regarding the woman as object and man as bearer of the gaze, even his relatively progressive study excludes any non-heterosexual or non-male spectator. Similarly, O'Doherty oriented his thoughts on the experience of art and the gallery space towards the male point of view.

Danto proclaimed “the end of art” – an end which was for him heralded by the Warhol Brillo box itself.<sup>18</sup>

Returning to the form of the mirrored cube, Lucas Samaras’s sculptures implicate viewer and environment by creating sculpture that *is* environment. Chapter four considers Samaras’s *Mirrored Room* (1966) as well as three additional mirrored environments he created during the mid- to late 1960s.<sup>19</sup> Echoing and amplifying Morris’s mirrored cubes, *Mirrored Room* creates a space completely covered in reflective surfaces, including furniture and other boxes made of mirrors that absorb the objects within it. Samaras’s rooms are visual and ideological Necker cubes: their mirrored surfaces help to camouflage the object in the gallery space by reflecting that environment so perfectly as to make it nearly invisible. It is through this visual blurring of boundaries between art object and institution that these rooms provide perhaps the most dizzying example of cube as institutional critique.

After exploring these four artists and their work, I will conclude my examination with a brief epilogue to revisit Morris, Hesse, Thek, and Samaras in dialogue with selected contemporary artists whose work seems to support ongoing interest in the cube as institutional critique. In sum, I will examine a selection of artists and their work that exploit the cube form to explore how these boxes, cubes, and containers evoke additional meanings for these much-discussed “primary structures.”

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<sup>18</sup> Danto cited Warhol’s exhibition of his first Brillo box in 1964 as the event which signaled the “end of art.” Arthur Danto, “Three Decades After the End of Art,” in *After the End of Art*, 35 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> These are *Room #2* (1966), *Room #3* (1968), and *Mirrored Cell* (1969/1988).

– Chapter 2 –

**Constructing the Box: Institutional Critique within Robert Morris's  
*Box with the Sound of its Own Making* (1961)**

Robert Morris's sculptural work of the 1960s and his writing on Minimalism make him a key figure in the interpretation of this artistic approach. His work appeared in seminal exhibitions of Minimalist art including *Primary Structures* (1966), *Art of the Real: USA* (1968), and *Minimal Art* (1968) and subsequently became synonymous with the geometric aesthetic of Minimalism. Morris, writing in 1968, praised the cube for its self-sufficiency, rationality, and purity, "To achieve a cubic or rectangular form is to build in the simplest, most reasonable way, but it is also to build well."<sup>20</sup> One may wonder, then, why, after having found this complete and perfect form, Morris would soon jettison it in favor of looping fabric work in felt, large labyrinthine structures, and dispersions of detritus and dirt, all work that is formally opposed to the closed and contained cubes he once favored. Perhaps an answer lies in Morris's first sculpture, *Box with the Sound of its Own Making* (1961) (Fig. 5).

Most analyses of Morris's work begin with the year 1961. It is at this time that he made his first box, an ordinary-looking and modestly-sized construction in walnut, about nine inches square. Closed within the box is an audio recording of the sounds made during the course of its construction. The recording plays a continuous three-hour loop of the sawing, hammering and sanding that Morris performed in making the sculpture. Here, Morris used the record of artistic process to link artist with object, providing a different example of the "artist's mark" within a Minimalist form usually disassociated from the hand-made. As we shall see, even as he becomes one of Minimalism's most notable practitioners, Morris was already rebelling against both the

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Morris, "Anti-Form," *Artforum* 6, no. 8 (April 1968): 33-35.

Minimalist form (and the boxed-shape gallery in which it is presented) within this first sculpture. In unpacking the *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*, one can read a critique of the gallery itself.

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Critical connections between the box and cube form and the “white cube” of the gallery and museum were just beginning to appear in the literature on art in the mid-1960s. At the same time Morris praised the cube in *Artforum*, artist and critic Allan Kaprow called attention to the Russian doll-like nested effect these Minimalist box forms have within “gallery and museum boxes or their equivalents”<sup>21</sup> in the same publication. He asked how artists can “get free” of the rectangular form of Minimalist objects that were, “made in a rectangular studio, to be shown in a rectangular gallery, reproduced in a rectangular magazine, in rectangular photographs, all aligned according to rectangular axes, for rectangular reading movements and rectangular thought patterns.”<sup>22</sup> Though Kaprow was ready to “think outside the box” long before the phrase became common, he is one of the first critics to have related the box-like form of the modernist gallery to the Minimalist boxes and cubes it often contained during this period. It was not until the mid-1970s that the phrase “the white cube” in reference to the gallery entered the artistic lexicon with Brian O’Doherty’s 1976 institutional critique for *Artforum*, “Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space.” However, it was more common then, and remains so, to interpret Minimalist sculpture – itself often rectilinear – either in terms of the body or simply as examples of Minimalist artists’ preference for geometric shapes. Michael Fried’s seminal article “Art and Objecthood” (1967), for example, focused on the physical relationship the viewer shares with

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<sup>21</sup> Allan Kaprow, “The Shape of the Art Environment,” *Artforum* 6, no. 10 (Summer 1968): 32-33. Morris, too, is experimenting with different sculptural forms. As if to acknowledge the limits of the cube, he has already presented his work in felt by 1968. His article “Anti-Form” briefly addresses the “recent” occurrence of sculptural materials that are unlike the “rigid, industrial” materials previously favored by so many Minimalist sculptors, including him.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 32-33.

these objects in the room.<sup>23</sup> In his view, these geometric sculptures' literalness subjects the viewer to a theatrical, performative relationship with them within the museum space. To Fried, this awareness of one's body in relation to Minimal objects short-circuits any kind of aesthetic transcendence one might hope to experience. Morris, too, focused much of his early writing on the Gestalt psychology believed to be inherent in the experience of these shapes, seeing sculpture as primarily relating to the human body in general.<sup>24</sup> Critical reception of Minimalist work, like Barbara Rose's "ABC Art," attempted to define stylistic commonalities based on geometric structure. In "ABC Art," Barbara Rose, acknowledged that, while not identical, most Minimalist art of this period did seem to share a "formal reaction to the excesses of painterliness" that was evidenced in artists' preference for geometric austerity in both painting and sculpture, a conclusion that fell in line with other writing on Minimalism.<sup>25</sup> Returning to Morris and Kaprow's near-simultaneous conclusion concerning the ascetic nature of the Minimalist cube, how might the eventual rejection of this perfected form have been presaged in Morris's first sculpture, and how does *Box with the Sound of its Own Making* evoke additional associations for the box?

A box, even when empty, contains something, even if only space. It is defined by its ability to contain, protect, separate, and classify. Though most Minimalist cubes do not contain a physical presence, Morris invested his first box with aural evidence of a physical process. The recording placed within its walls is the wearying sound of endless labor. The record of this building is on a loop is a fact that forestalls closure, in a way that is at odds with the cube, as such. Whatever pleasure we may get from seeing this "well-made object," sounds coming from

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* (Summer 1967): 12-23.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," *Artforum* 4, no. 6 (February 1966): 42-44; 5, no. 2 (October 1966): 20-23; 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 23-29.

<sup>25</sup> Barbara Rose, "ABC Art," *Art in America* (October-November, 1965) reprinted in Gregory Battcock, *Minimal Art: a Critical Anthology* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1968) 276-297.

inside the box indicate that, in another sense, it remains forever incomplete as an ongoing process. This destabilizing of visual supremacy by providing contradictory aural information announced a new meaning for this usually silent object. This sound of the eternal and constant physical construction of the object echoes our occupation with constructing and re-constructing meaning for artwork. Instead of a silent and self-sufficient structure, Morris gave us a box that was contrary to Minimalist practice in that it is never finished and is always in need of remaking. By placing a recording of its construction inside the box, Morris has also given the object a history – a personal history that was tied to his own movements and moods. This object resists the deadening qualities implied by its form and, by extension, of the historicizing function of the museum and critical categorization – it is never finished and so never reaches the entropic state of a completed work.

Morris's box flaunts its status as a construction and foregrounds a tension between completion, stasis, and constancy, and incompleteness, changeability, and instability of meaning. The formal attributes of this closed cube are undercut by its audio content and in this way, he showed how the Minimalist cube and its meaning are *made* and, analogously, called attention to the processes by which we (and curators and critics) create meaning for art. By implication, Morris raised questions about the white cube of the museum and alerted us to the fact that this is also a space where meaning is created and recreated. In other words, the museum is *not* a neutral space or idealized form perfected in its sole purpose of displaying art, but is a physical *and* ideological construct just like the Minimalist cube. In the gallery, white walls and right angles are not merely silent backdrops for similarly silent geometric structures, but play an important role in influencing the viewer's experience as she creates meaning for the works of art she views.

Morris called attention to this process with *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*. By giving us evidence of the process of making meaning, Morris challenged the idea of these Minimalist forms as free from the personal and ideological. Rather than an object like a pebble that was simply always “there” and beyond meaning, Minimalist forms like the cube are human constructions that reflect and, in that sense, contain human ideologies. To complete the experience of the work, the viewer must cognitively close the loop herself and walk away from the box. We know that it is finished, even though we heard only part of the recording, and as we look at this box, which is itself inert, we imagine the motions of its making, the activity of swinging a hammer or pushing a saw through wood. In this, we are also making something as we think about the work. As Morris wrote in “Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making,” “the construction of rectilinear objects involves a split between mental and physical activity and a simultaneous underlining of the contrast.”<sup>26</sup> We, too, must use our mental and physical faculties in the dual action of our visual and aural perception of the box and of the imagined idea of its creation. Morris stated that there was something created here that was in addition to the object itself: “I believe there are ‘forms’ to be found within the activity of making as much as within the end products.”<sup>27</sup>

In the early and mid-1960s, several artists explored these ideas about artistic forms existing in addition to or instead of a physical object. Morris’s collaboration with Carolee Schneemann, *Site* (1964) (Fig. 6), for example, draws out the idea of labor as it relates to art making. In *Site*, Morris wears workman’s overalls and moves three by four-foot pieces of white plywood across the stage, at times concealing and other times revealing Schneemann, who reclines on a white sofa costumed as the nude subject of Édouard Manet’s *Olympia* (1863). By

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<sup>26</sup> Robert Morris, “Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making,” *Artforum* 8, no. 8 (April 1970): 62-66.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

manipulating what the audience sees, Morris-as-construction-worker alternately obscures and clarifies one's view of a well-known artwork, asking us to re-view this once revolutionary (and now canonical) painting in order to revise our interpretation of this and other artwork. The performance is precisely about the constructedness of an artwork and its interpretation and shows us an artist as a construction worker laboring to create and recreate the work. *Site*, like other performance-based artworks, was art that had to be experienced by a live audience rather than passively observed in a space separate from the time and place of its creation. With *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making*, as with other types of performance-based art, Morris located a part of the artwork outside of the museum or gallery, thereby pointing to the permeability of this larger container.<sup>28</sup> One cannot say what part of a changing process is the "authoritative" version and one cannot sell something that is not quantifiable. Thus, the artwork may escape the grasp of the museum by working outside of its organizational logic. Morris has in some ways trapped an artifact of the creative process within this box, but in doing so pointed out the ways that the museum attempts and fails to do the same in terms of defining and dictating meaning for the objects in its collection. By returning us to his studio with the sound of the box's making, Morris transgressed (and allows us to transgress) the walls of the gallery.

Reworking the relationship between viewer, object, and institution was one of Morris's intentions in other sculptural work, as well. He said, "I wish to emphasize that things are in a space with oneself, rather than a situation where one is in a space surrounded by things."<sup>29</sup> This statement indicates that, with Morris's artwork, the viewer has the place of primacy, not the objects and certainly not the space. As the source from which perception emanates, the viewer is

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<sup>28</sup> Additionally, *Site* was performed outside of the gallery environment completely and took place at Stage 73, Surplus Dance Theater in New York. Kimberly Paice, "Catalogue," *Robert Morris: The Mind /Body Problem* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation) 168.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Morris and Martin Friedman, Letter, quoted in "Robert Morris: Polemics and Cubes," *Art International* 10 (1966): 23-24.

the activating agent in the artwork's meaning. On Morris's account, it should not be the museum that provides meaning or control of interpretation, but the viewer – a move which wrests some authority away from the institution and its didacticism. One can find Morris's distaste for the institutional attempt to force individuals to conform to a set of behaviors and beliefs in his brief text, "A Method for Sorting Cows," published in *Art and Literature* in 1967.<sup>30</sup> This essay, which on the surface is a descriptive set of instructions for getting cows to run into a pen, which creates an analogy between the herding behavior of animals and the way museum visitors are herded and sorted within the labyrinth of that institution. This is done chiefly through the space he describes, which could easily be that of the museum or gallery: "It is essential to have a long corridor or alley with a large room or pen off to one side and approximately halfway between the ends of the corridor." His irreverent tone criticizes both the "stumbling, falling, sweating" cows and the two men who are meant to sort them in an orderly fashion. The whole enterprise seems pathetic, with panicking (female) cows and the (male) "head men" jumping and screaming at the poor animals.

The condition of being boxed in, and the realization that it is the gallery itself that is keeping us in that state, is present in another wooden sculpture from 1961. Morris's *Box for Standing* (1961) (Fig. 7) is one sculpture that aligns most explicitly with the idea of the box as coffin, an idea to which I return in the context of my discussion of Paul Thek in chapter three. This rectangular box is tall and wide enough to allow for a person to stand within it, and in the museum the sculpture is presented vertically, though usually empty. However, when the work is discussed in articles and monographs, authors often choose a photograph of Morris standing in the box, as if he were demonstrating its purpose. In contrast to the impish grin he has in the

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Morris, "A Method for Sorting Cows," *Art and Literature* (Winter 1967) reprinted in Michael Compton and David Sylvester, *Robert Morris* (London: The Tate Gallery, 1971) 8.

photograph of *I-box* (1962) (Fig. 8), however, the photograph for *Box for Standing* shows him staring morosely at the floor, with head down and arms hanging limply at his sides. In ways that anticipate Paul Thek, he seems inert and helpless within the box, as if being in a form that looks like a pine coffin has in fact made him die. The act of framing itself makes the subject inside the frame appear to be dead; here it is as if Morris were an insect specimen pinned within the frame of a shadow box. While the interiority of *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* is one that is active, what is inside *Box for Standing* makes the subject inside it appear lifeless. Brought together, they disrupt the deadening effect of the museum, either by calling attention to the fact of this phenomenon (*Box for Standing*) or by forcefully opposing it (*Box with the Sound of Its Own Making*).

An awareness of the institution and the way it corrals its viewers is often not the first reaction when entering the gallery space. Then and now, the museum typically works to conceal its purposefulness in the way it presents objects and directs our attention to certain showpieces (though not all museums accomplish this in the same way). One is usually focused on the objects the museum presents, unless those objects make specific reference to the ostensibly neutral space around them. Like *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*, Morris's mirrored cubes *Untitled* (1965) (Fig. 9) create a tension between interior and exterior space, calling one's attention to their own presence within the box of the gallery. *Untitled* (1965) consists of four mirrored cubes of identical dimensions. The shiny, machine-made materials Morris used do not bear the artist's mark, but instead reflect the presence of the viewer. Rather than see (or hear) a trace of the artist's own hand in the work, we see ourselves in the reflection. As we become acutely aware of our presence we also become aware of the gallery itself. The mirror reflects our own image as well as that of the other gallery visitors and the museum space, all taking part in this ritualized

experience within the institution. The mirrored sides of the art object seem almost to disappear and become absorbed in the space surrounding them; instead of seeing it, we see the reflected image of gallery floors, walls, and ceiling. These mirrored cubes force us to see the gallery room-as-box and perceive our presence and performance within it. The objects displace themselves by showing the viewer who cannot help but see her own image all over the sculptures.

Morris's use of a geometric vocabulary in his Minimalist sculpture emphasized simplicity and order. A closer look at the boxes he created, however, reveals a few of his misgivings about this unyielding form. With his first sculpture, *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*, Morris made a formal decision as he set on the cube. He used geometric shapes like the cube for several years, developing an association between himself and these particular shapes, before moving on to explore other configurations. His break with this cube form in favor of more organic shapes and scatter pieces may seem sudden and incongruous until one realizes that he had been pushing on the walls of the box all along. In his permutations of the cube shape using differing scales and materials, Morris created a critique of both the confining nature of the Minimalist cube and the conforming institutional walls of the museum box.

His *Untitled* (1968/9) (Fig. 10) installation of 200 pieces of raw sculptural materials may be a representation of the final deconstruction of the box. Here is the box exploded and strewn on the gallery floor with a few right angles intact – just enough to identify the casualty. Morris's scatter piece came at the same time that artists were abandoning the gallery and creating earthworks outside of that space or, dematerializing the art object itself by participating in Happenings and other performance-based work, thus hindering the museum's ability to contain, and thus, control and commodify the artwork. Connecting *Untitled* (1968/9) to Morris's first

sculpture in 1961, one may imagine that the sounds coming from *Box with the Sound of its Own Making* were the sounds of an escape-in-progress from this confining form. However, with this sculpture, Morris let us in on the secret long before the final destruction of the cube: those institutional walls which seem so unbreakable are actually quite capable of coming down.

– Chapter 3 –

**Inside the Box: Gender and Institutional Critique within  
Eva Hesse's *Accession II* (1968)**

When discussing Eva Hesse, critics usually begin with the end. Hesse is often described as a tragic figure, a woman who died too soon after a devastating history of trauma and loss. Her death came at age thirty-four after a diagnosis of a brain tumor. This illness, and the aggressive and ultimately unsuccessful treatment she endured, weakened her body in the last year of her life and led to her death in 1970. A monograph by Lucy Lippard soon followed and began by listing Hesse's birth and death dates before enumerating the reasons she will be remembered as a "major artist" despite the many art reviews which, regrettably, regarded her as merely "a tragic female stereotype."<sup>31</sup> Likewise, Cindy Nemser's introductory essay to Hesse's interview in *ArtTalk* (1975) begins, "Eva Hesse is a sculptor who died of a brain tumor ...."<sup>32</sup> Even those who wish to ignore the death knell that announces the start of so many texts on Hesse acknowledge that this is the way she is usually framed. The opening sentence to Bill Barrette's catalog raisonné on Hesse is a vow to, "... focus on Eva Hesse's sculpture, rather than her biography," but even he recognized that "... the extreme and tragic details of her life have obscured her achievement as a sculptor."<sup>33</sup> I began this chapter with Hesse's death, not to provide a biographical investigation of her oeuvre, but to establish a context within which to situate Hesse's work – work I read as a response to both Minimalism and the institutions in whose formal language it shares.

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<sup>31</sup> Lucy Lippard, *Eva Hesse* (New York: New York University Press, 1976) 5. She also recounts a few reviews that were typical of the time including Joyce Purnick's article that appeared in the *NY Post* December 13, 1972 titled, "Tortured and Talented." Lippard, 182.

<sup>32</sup> Cindy Nemser, *Art Talk: Conversations with 15 Women Artists* (New York: Harper Collins, 1975, 1995) 173.

<sup>33</sup> Bill Barrette, *Eva Hesse Sculpture: Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: Timken Publishers, 1989) 9.

As Chave and others have argued, Hesse critiqued the institutionalized chauvinism present in the male-dominated art world at a time when the “masculine” Minimalist aesthetic dominated the gallery. As the look of many modern galleries paralleled the hard-edged box shape of Minimal sculpture, by revising the cube Hesse effectively critiqued the museum institution (and those who worked within and benefited from its patriarchal structure). I take as my primary example Hesse’s *Accession II* (1968) (Fig. 11), a 30 ¾ inch steel cube perforated with holes threaded with graphite-colored latex filaments. Hesse’s sculpture may be understood to explore the feminist perspective about gender within the site of the museum/gallery space – the institutional interior within which the artistic and philosophical subjects of this paper reside. As we shall see, when interpreted this way, Hesse’s work reveals ideological contents hidden inside those closed and seemingly-neutral cubes.

*Accession II* looks anomalous in the company of other Minimalist boxes. The textured and perforated surface, graphite colored filaments reflecting light in an almost twinkling display, and ever-so-slowly degenerating rubber materials put it at odds with the impermeable and immovable surfaces of other geometric sculptures. Likewise, Hesse’s work is at odds with the gallery or museum space for these same reasons. Unlike the smooth pale surfaces of many Minimalist boxes, *Accession II* literally bristles at such a neatly complementary visual relationship with the space in which it is displayed. One sees *Accession II* differently, not only because of its appearance, but perhaps also due to the contemporary debate surrounding women and the art they make.

Hesse’s *Accession II* makes interiority a fundamental attribute of its appearance by opening the cube, creating a striking visual difference from Minimalism’s frequently closed shapes. This avowal of interiority mirrors the interest that contemporaneous critics had in

discussing Hesse and other women artists in terms of an emotional interior. Critical focus on Hesse's illness – an illness ironically located in her brain – situates discussion of her life and her work in her body. In the late 1960s, feminist criticism was developing, almost concurrently, with Hesse's own career. The struggle between resisting definitions of womanhood on the basis of biology and wanting to recognize the experience of gender as understood by one's bodily presence in the world was something that Hesse also confronted in the male-dominated world of fine art and its institutional spaces. Coming on the heels of masculine action-hero artists such as Jackson Pollock and Willem deKooning, Hesse's work was perhaps passed over merely on the basis of her gender. Lippard quotes Hesse's friend and mentor, Sol LeWitt, concerning this sexist conundrum:

The critical neglect of Hesse's achievements and refusal to take her seriously as the other [male] artists can probably be ascribed to the fact that as a woman, she couldn't be the 'new Pollock.' She was very hurt by this confrontation with art politics and anti feminism which was so obvious.<sup>34</sup>

The institutionalized masculine dominance that existed within the art world, including gallery and museum spaces, found a metaphorical likeness in Minimalist sculpture. Minimalist art is analogous to the museum space in that both share a similar geometric vocabulary, as well as a common indebtedness to the prevalent masculinist attitudes much of Minimalist work seemed to embody. Aligned with "male" associations of angularity, hardness, and impermeability, Minimalist sculpture seemed to shut out rather than invite a discussion of interiority (in terms of both physical and psychological states) that was associated with the feminine. Like the museum, most Minimalist sculpture *appears* to be silent and neutral, but can be invested with meaning despite some artists' claims to the opposite. For Hesse, to open the closed Minimalist cube was

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<sup>34</sup> Lippard, 137.

to reveal what ideologies these sculptures could contain. To do so within the site of an institution that had traditionally refused women artists entrance reinforced her critique of patriarchy: not only was Hesse investigating Minimalism, but also the museum that contained these objects.

The idea of interiority with regard to gender was a key concept in feminist critical discourse at this time. In the case of Hesse, critics fought over reading her work as *about* the body and, conversely, *not about* the body. Critics discussed Hesse's own struggle with engaging themes of embodied experience in her art.<sup>35</sup> However, aligning the body with the feminine was part of critical discourse throughout the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>36</sup> In the discourse's most basic premise, the womb and vaginal passage to the womb were the biological signifiers of the difference between male and female genders. The anatomical fact that the vagina leads inwards to an interior space, became a metaphor for other perceived "internal" differences between the sexes in terms of temperament and ability. The belief that women are more introspective and empathetic than men, more emotional in comparison with their silent, intellectual male counterparts, follows a gender stereotype that began in antiquity. Art criticism of the 1960s and 1970s also sometimes reflected these gendered roles in examining art made by women. It described both the artist and her artwork in terms of looking inward and exhibiting an emotional response to her subjects, in contrast to the way in which it handled male artists in terms of a more intellectual approach to art making.

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<sup>35</sup> James Meyer says that, "Hesse ... consistently despecified the body ... [her] distancing of the bodily association was an effective way to elude the sexist (and prurient) expectation of those years that a woman artist should, or could only, produce an art that reflected her gender and erotic desire." James Meyer, "Non, Nothing, Everything: Eva Hesse's 'Abstraction,'" in *Eva Hesse*, ed. Elizabeth Sussman, 66 (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). Griselda Pollock discusses critical disagreement surrounding Hesse's work regarding consideration of her gender in "A Very Long Engagement: Singularity and Difference in the Critical Writing on Eva Hesse," in *Encountering Eva Hesse*, eds. Griselda Pollock and Vanessa Corby, 23-55 (Munich: Prestel, 2006).

<sup>36</sup> It is true that some artwork by Abstract Expressionists like Pollock and de Kooning were also associated with the body, but here it may be read as evidence of the active *male* artist, a testament to power and virility, rather than an "emotional" interior.

Linda Nochlin, in her 1971 essay “Why Are There No Great Women Artists?,” recognized that feminist scholars who argue that there is a style particular to woman artists see their work as “... more inward-looking [than male artists’ work], more delicate and nuanced in their treatment of their medium.”<sup>37</sup> Nochlin criticized this approach, maintaining that to apply gender stereotypes to work created by women artists only serves to perpetuate sexist attitudes which have historically marginalized women’s art. Nochlin also recognized the institutionalized sexism that has barred female artists from the world of fine art, and explained how women are excluded from the canon not because of some innate deficit of talent, but because male-driven social mores precluded women from taking part in the same educational and occupational opportunities that men enjoyed. Nochlin’s contemporary Cindy Nemser also took part in a feminist examination of the art world and of women’s place in it. Nemser compiled a collection of fifteen interviews with women artists in *ArtTalk* (1974). In some ways an attempt to answer Nochlin’s query, Nemser’s examples of “great women artists” created a feminine canon of contemporary art. Nemser chose Hesse as one of these exemplary women and wrote, “In [her] work she broke through the pseudomascuine [Minimalist] cult of detached intellectualism, giving license to female and male artists alike to explore and openly reveal their interior sense of themselves.”<sup>38</sup> Hesse, however, seemed to rail against being identified as a “woman artist,” writing in 1969 that, “The way to beat discrimination in art is by art. Excellence has no sex.”<sup>39</sup> This tension between embodied and gendered experience and working as an artist without claim to one’s sex finds a tangible illustration in Hesse’s *Accession II*, in which Hesse opened the Minimalist cube to complicate the institutionally gendered view of both the sculptural form and of her work as a woman artist.

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<sup>37</sup> Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” *ARTNews*, 69 (1971): 24.

<sup>38</sup> Nemser, 174.

<sup>39</sup> Lippard, 205.

As its title suggests, *Accession II* was not the first version of the sculpture. Hesse experimented with this particular form – a steel cube perforated with holes threaded with latex filaments – on several occasions, creating a total of five *Accession* boxes between 1967-1969.<sup>40</sup> Accessioning is the museological process of increasing its collection by adding objects to it, and in the serialization of the form Hesse compounds the already repetitive elements of the sculpture like the numerous holes and tubing that add texture to the smooth metal cube shape. Additionally, she chose a museological term for this series which hints at a significant link between her sculptures and a critique of the museum. With *Accession II* and the other iterations of the cube in this series, Hesse used materials, construction methods, and a geometric form all aligned with Minimalist practice. On a recommendation from Robert Morris, Hesse asked Arco Metals in Manhattan, New York to make the 30 ¾ -inch perforated steel box to her specifications.<sup>41</sup> After the steel cube was made, Hesse employed Doug Johns to assemble the piece. He, too, came at the recommendation of Morris. Johns described his participation in a way that evokes Hesse’s brain, her leading characteristic. He said, “... the actual shape and concept is pure Hesse, I was just her hands.”<sup>42</sup> Unlike most people writing about artwork made by women, Johns separated Hesse’s mind from her body and saved the intellectual work for Hesse while he got his hands dirty – an ironic inversion of the more common description of Hesse’s mind as the site of her undoing. Additionally, if the shape is “pure Hesse,” what does that say about her and the Minimalist box she amends?

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<sup>40</sup> The series replicates the form with slight variations in materials: *Accession I*, aluminum with rubber tubing; *Accession II*, galvanized steel with plastic tubing; *Accession III*, fiberglass with plastic tubing (Fig. 12); *Accession IV* (Fig. 13) and *Accession V*, galvanized steel with rubber tubing (Fig. 14). Maurice Berger, “Objects of Liberation: The Sculpture of Eva Hesse,” in *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective*, ed. Lesley K. Baier, 133, n. 25 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>41</sup> Allison Rowley, “The Fourth Dimension. Doug Johns Interviewed by Allison Rowley,” in *Encountering Eva Hesse*, eds. Griselda Pollock and Vanessa Corby, 89 (Munich: Prestel, 2006). Hesse also commissioned Arco to construct *Accession I*.

<sup>42</sup> Rowley, 92.

The cube shape and its construction from industrial materials like steel and latex align this sculpture with other Minimalist cubes. However, Hesse presented an open and textured box rather than the closed, smooth surfaces of contemporaneous works by Morris and Donald Judd. The neatly-patterned exterior belies an interior that was described by Hesse as “chaotic,” with the tubing pointing inwards to create an organically grassy or furry-looking interior surface.<sup>43</sup> As a symbol of the museum, *Accession II* is a cube that has been entered and occupied. The cube appears to be teeming with life rather than closed and vacant. Hesse complicated the gendering of both the Minimalist cube and the Minimal museum space by adding “feminized” aspects to the cube, subverting Minimalist assumptions about each form. The juxtaposition of softness and hardness, of geometric regularity and organic chaos, points to a tension between opposites, and thus, Hesse’s sculpture makes visible the limits of an either/or approach to defining the kind of work a male or female artist might make. As practiced by Hesse, Minimalism refuses to align neatly with the conventional clean-lined and geometric aesthetics of the movement or to a particularly gendered view to the piece, complicating the art world’s categorization of her work as Minimalist or as an example of “women’s art.” Picking up on this refusal, Yve-Alain Bois calls *Accession II* a “conceptual hermaphrodite.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, *Accession II*’s phallic protuberances and womb-like cavity signify both genders, and suggest, in turn, that the museum is a structure inhabited by men and women simultaneously.

As it turns out, hybridization is a fundamental component of Hesse’s work. *Hang Up* (1966) (Fig. 15) and *An Ear in a Pond* (1965) (Fig. 16) are both painting/sculpture hybrids that

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<sup>43</sup> Anna Chave notes a play of opposites in *Accession II* and includes a passage from an interview between Nemser and Hesse where Hesse says of the sculpture, “... the form it takes is a square and it’s a perfect square. And then the outside is very, very clear ...The inside looks amazingly chaotic” Anna Chave, “Eva Hesse: A Girl Being a Sculpture,” in *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective*, ed. Lesley K. Baier, 111 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> Yve-Alain Bois, “Dumb,” in *Eva Hesse: Sculpture*, eds. Elisabeth Sussman and Fred Wasserman, 18 (New York: The Jewish Museum; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

defy categorization as “this” or “that” type of object. In addition, they each bear symbols of both male and female genders. *Hang Up* has both an open (female) space as well as a (male) thick protruding cord which plugs in the frame. *Hang Up* acts like a painting – it is a frame hung flat on a wall – but also like a sculpture in that the cord bound with fabric loops out of the frame and back in a lasso that captures space. Similarly, *An Ear in a Pond* is both a painted, two-dimensional surface and a sculpture. A flaccid cord hangs down from the painting beyond its frame, dangling out of the picture in a way that impinges on the viewer’s own space.

Hesse’s decision to take on the male-dominated Minimalist box form and the rectilinear site of the male-dominated museum could also be a gendered play on the colloquial meaning of “box,” a slang term generally used only by men in referring to female genitalia.<sup>45</sup> By engaging this particular shape in ways that stress interiority and femininity, she reclaimed this hard-edged geometric ideal for women rather than keeping to the more “feminine” visual language of circles or other soft-edged shapes (which she did elsewhere).<sup>46</sup> Though Hesse never explicitly stated that she chose the box form to present an eroticized “box” sculpture, Elizabeth Sussman notes that Hesse participated in this kind of word play before in two collages where she rearranged letters to spell out “box” and “sex.”<sup>47</sup> With *Accession II*, the box is open, and like Pandora, Hesse revealed an interior that some may find terrifying. The imagining of those rubber nubs as sharp teeth identifies the sculpture with the folkloric “vagina dentata” which appears in myths

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<sup>45</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary includes this slang definition for “box” with earliest examples from the 1940s and one from 1963, showing that the use of this term was contemporaneous to Hesse’s work.

<sup>46</sup> It is also interesting to note that the Guggenheim museum, built in the late 1950s, is a spiral rather than box-shaped museum. This circling, inward-looking architecture may also make a critique of the “white cube” in its celebration of interiority.

<sup>47</sup> Sussman writes, “In two collages she wittily used words as pattern, geometry, and referent to the body, here specifically eroticized: Hesse may not herself have connected the slang use of the word ‘box’ to female genitals, but she does morph the letters backwards and forwards from box to sex in the collage *Boxes*. She diagrams a comic action with perhaps sexual overtones in *And He Sat in a Box*.” Elizabeth Sussman, *Eva Hesse* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 20. (Fig. 17).

cross-culturally.<sup>48</sup> With *Accession II*, Hesse thus opened the “masculine” Minimalist box both to an interpretation of indeterminate gender and also to an interpretation of this box as a trap, hence the need of many (primarily male) sculptors to close it off.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, within the guise of a Minimalist cube, Hesse created an artistic Trojan horse that infiltrated the gallery (and eventually the Minimalist canon) to reinterpretation and critique. In this way, Hesse suggested a psycho-sexual explanation for the proliferation of classic, closed Minimalist cubes – the male fear of castration. While the closed Minimalist boxes made by many of Hesse’s male contemporaries may be seen to silence and entomb discussions of interiority so prevalent in the feminist debate, Hesse’s insistence on opening the box uses this form as a means of “trapping” the viewer into recognizing the debate as ongoing. The surprising contrast of opposites – the austere cube covered inside by “chaotic” filaments, the industrial materials used to create an almost organic-looking interior, a masculine cube that may or may not be an image of the “feminine core” – both subverts a traditional reading of the form as masculine (and only Minimalist) and alerts viewers to the danger in assigning gender to art at all.

Discussions of interiority at this time focused on the psychological life of the female artist. As with *Accession II*, we see Hesse’s ambiguous response to this approach and how she both accepted and subverted a gendered reading of her work. What she seems to have told us, however, is that there *is* an ideological interior that must be investigated. This interior belongs to both the apodictic Minimal forms prevalent at this time and to the seemingly neutral

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<sup>48</sup> This “toothed vagina” is a psychological motif and metaphor for emasculation by castration, as the imaginary image is one of a consuming vagina that men fear will bite off their penis upon penetration. Catherine Blackledge, *The Story of V: a Natural History of Female Sexuality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004) 165-68.

<sup>49</sup> Incidentally, the word “trap” is a slang term for a male transvestite, further connecting this description of Hesse’s sculpture with an ambiguous gender. Additionally, “trap” shares a common meaning with the word “snatch” (which, like “box,” is also slang for female genitals) as something that grabs or ensnares.

museum/gallery box. With the *Accession* series, Hesse insisted that to open one is to open the other and similarly, to critique one is, by extension, to expose the assumptions made of both.

As for the box that is the museum, John Berger's essays in *Ways of Seeing* (1972) present an examination of the art institution's tacit participation in creating meaning for the individual's art viewing experience. In chapter three of the book, Berger explores how one-point perspective allows the viewer to enter the picture plane and visually penetrate the two-dimensional surface to "go inside." His discussion centers on the female nude, and how the (male) viewer has always held an active gaze that penetrates the passive (female) subject. In Berger's text, the viewer is active and interpretative rather than passive and oblivious as in Morris's "audience as cattle" description in "A Method for Sorting Cows." However, the relationship between spectator and artwork still involves a hierarchy of power that is related to gender. Berger invites his readers to investigate the gendered relationship they share with art objects and calls attention to the way the supposedly neutral space of the gallery or museum has always operated on these relations. Though it is Berger's privileged male gaze that Nochlin, Nemser, and other feminist writers criticize, he does deserve credit for being one of the first writers to make explicit the gendered power relations at work in the museum. In other words, the viewer in the exhibition space has always been male in the sense that he or she actively enters the picture plane through this perspectival access point and, in doing so, plays a masculine role regardless of the viewer's biological sex. Hesse both confirmed and complicated this idea by offering an open cube that we may visually enter, but one that has a hybridized aesthetic that confounds a simple identification of being purely masculine or feminine.

Hesse put *Accession II* on the floor, without a plinth or elevating pedestal, making possible easy visual access into the cube. The viewer may "enter" the cube and see what is inside

the box, something which museum patrons have apparently wished to do since the sculpture's debut. Its immediate predecessor, *Accession I*, was badly damaged during an exhibition when a visitor climbed inside the box and the filaments were broken.<sup>50</sup> This unusually physical behavior seems to literalize Berger's theory, as the viewer was not content only to enter the sculpture with her eyes, but was compelled to immerse herself bodily within its walls. In response, the sculpture's current curators at the Detroit Institute of Art have found it necessary to add a protective Plexiglas cube over Hesse's cube, distancing the object from visitors' touch and obstructing a tactile response to the work. Contracts outlining the terms of its display in other galleries stipulate that this barrier must be in place at all times, as on more than one occasion the filaments have been unraveled and taken as souvenirs.

It seems that the sculpture's tactility is irresistible to many who are not content just to look. This exchange between the museum curators and Hesse's artwork points to issues of access and control. While Hesse chose to open the cube, curators found it necessary to close it. Indeed, her "feminized" Minimalist box is now protected within a "masculine" closed cube, conforming her sculpture to the more clean-lined Minimalist objects that accompany it in the gallery room (and to the gallery itself). By the mere fact of the conservational cube's shape, it may be unclear to museum visitors that it is not part of Hesse's artistic intention. Its plastic transparency and mimicry of Minimalist forms present it as invisible, but on closer inspection this box-within-box-within-box seems to amplify the critique Hesse made. When raised on a plinth or enclosed in a Plexiglas vitrine, objects gain a heightened status. These layers of museological context and control symbolize institutional authority and most often take the form of a cube. Something

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<sup>50</sup> *Accession I* was larger than *Accession II* at 36 x 36 x 36 inches. This incident is recounted in Lippard's monograph on Hesse. Lippard also mentions Hesse's first sculpture, a large soft tube in which people could get inside and dance, illustrating that this is not the first time viewers have wanted to experience her work with their bodies and not just their vision (Lippard, 21).

displayed inside or atop these boxes asks the spectator to come nearer to take a closer look, yet the object remains untouchable and removed. This kind of tease creates a flirtatious tension within the formal public environment of the museum and seems again to sexualize the relationship between spectator and object.

In “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power,” Anna Chave describes how she watched two adolescent female visitors viewing Donald Judd’s brass box sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art.<sup>51</sup> The young women played in the reflective surfaces by arranging their hair, and then – with the guard watching – kissed their reflection in the top of the box and then kicked the cubes. Chave interprets this kick as rebelling against the monolithic male power that is redolent in these Minimalist forms. It would seem that Hesse, too, rebelled against the Minimalist cube by transgressing its closed surface literally to “poke holes” in the form and open it to view, a move which also exposed the institutionalized chauvinism of that particular aesthetic practice and of the art world in general by making explicit an interiority to these closed cubes and the museums they populate. Like Judd’s box, the *Accession* series elicited a physical response, but Hesse’s cubes have incited more caressing than kicking. Hesse’s hybrid view of the Minimalist cube appears at once soft and hard, prickly and touchable, inviting one to consider its meaning intellectually in its conceptual form and also tempting one to experience the surface with one’s hands. That the museum institution has circumvented this access by containing her sculpture within a closed cube is telling. This gesture suggests that an on-going incompatibility of certain ideas within the institution exists even now, as Hesse’s once “chaotic” sculpture of indeterminate gender appears contained and conformed within the museum, (re)formed by the Minimalist cube.

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<sup>51</sup> Anna Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power,” *Arts Magazine*, 64 (1990): 44-63.

– Chapter 4 –

**“Museomasochism:”**  
**Paul Thek’s *Technological Reliquaries* (1964-1967)**

Museums organize, re-contextualize, and preserve objects – objects which are selected because curators, critics, and other cultural experts deem them valuable and worthy of preservation. Conversely, one may surmise what is *not* valuable by what is excluded from museums’ collections. Museum curators and art critics also regulate access to objects, in both physical and intellectual terms, acting as mediators between these special items and the general non-specialist audience. In this way, what is curated and protected in the museum are not just the objects themselves, but the ideas with which they are aligned. Paul Thek’s *Technological Reliquaries* series (1964-1967) approaches the concept of the museum’s role in preserving and promoting ideologies through the separation of art objects from everyday, lived experience. Though he used the Minimalist cube form and identified with Minimalist aesthetics in the mid-1960s,<sup>52</sup> in retrospect, his work is rarely associated with Minimalism either by critics or other artists working in that idiom. Instead, Thek’s work is seen, at times approvingly, as a “perverted version of Minimalism.”<sup>53</sup> Thek’s boxes are clinical-looking Plexiglas vitrines, that adhere to Minimalist norms in terms of form and materials, but with contents that make a striking contrast to the boxes’ clean exteriors. Inside the containers are sculptures that resemble bloody and oozing pieces of flesh sculpted out of colored wax, mimicking the appearance of a hunk of hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus*, 1965 [Fig. 18]) or cross-section of an alien limb (*Untitled*, 1965 [Fig. 19]). As did Hesse, Thek turns our attention to an investigation of what is inside the box.

<sup>52</sup> In an interview with Gene Swenson in 1966 Thek simply states, “My things are minimal.” Gene Swenson and Paul Thek, “Interview,” *Art News* 65 (1966): 35, 66-67.

<sup>53</sup> Mike Kelley, “Paul Thek: Death and Transfiguration,” *Art Press*, 183 (Sept. 1993): 21.

This juxtaposition of a slick, clear surfaced container and sticky contents makes for an unusual version of Minimalist practice. Determining the sculptures' status as either scientific specimen or fine art is also a dilemma. Thek commented on the ambiguous nature of the *Technological Reliquaries* by saying, "I don't know if the cases hold out the viewer or hold in the wax-flesh. It's almost impossible to tell what's inside unless the viewer has his nose to the glass. They're ambiguous; they can't be seen all at once."<sup>54</sup> It is unambiguous, however, that the boxes are attempting (and possibly failing) to preserve something, to keep something composed and alive.

To return life and humanity to the museum was Thek's self-stated aim. Rebellious against both the cool, unemotional qualities of Minimalism and the calculated aesthetics of the museum, Thek stated, "I wanted to return the raw human fleshy characteristics to the art."<sup>55</sup> Indeed, these "meat pieces" appear almost living, an incongruity in the frozen stillness of the museum. Thek's dissatisfaction with the sterilization of art through curatorial practice has much in common with the ideas expressed in John Dewey's landmark text, *Art and Experience* (1936), a text that continues to be foundational in discussions of museum aesthetics. Dewey likened the museum to a temple containing sacred objects, objects which are separated from lived human experience by the museum's methods of control and display: the pedestal, the vitrine, and compartmentalizing white walls. By removing art objects from their original environment and placing them in the contrived space of the museum, these items lose their original meaning and take on new values placed on them by the museum institution itself. This "aura" surrounding artwork placed within

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<sup>54</sup> Holland Cutter, "Paul Thek's Time," in *Paul Thek: The Wonderful World That Almost Was* (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 1995) 170.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Thek, "Selected Confessions: A Personal Narrative," in *Paul Thek: The Wonderful World That Almost Was* (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 1995) 186.

the museum is intended to inspire reverence for the object.<sup>56</sup> Dewey wrote, “As works of art have lost their indigenous status, they have acquired a new one – that of being specimens of fine art and nothing else. Moreover, works of art are now produced, like other articles, for sale in the market.”<sup>57</sup> Removing art from everyday experience has the effect of isolating a shared cultural legacy for the enjoyment of a select group of people. Dewey’s call to re-connect art to the processes of human life shared a common goal with Thek’s own aims.

Thek constructed miniature versions of museum-style specimen displays in order to call attention to the sterilized state of museums and the museum experience. That he named these works “technological reliquaries” placed them in dialogue with both religion and science. These reliquaries hold body parts, just as Medieval reliquaries often held the remains of martyrs, but rather than enclose these objects within a decorative box, the specimens are protected within sterile Plexiglas vitrines punctured by medical tubing that appears to be regulating the internal environment. The *Technological Reliquaries* series echoed early museological practices of the Wunderkammer, or “cabinet of curiosities,” in which unusual objects (often of scientific interest) were collected together in display boxes. A box can be a reliquary or coffin, and in this way, mirrors the museum as a mausoleum dedicated to the preservation of cultural artifacts. Robert Smithson, writing in 1968 about the deadening or freezing effect of the museum, said that, “Museums are tombs, and it looks like everything is turning into a museum. ... The museum spreads its surfaces everywhere, and becomes an untitled collection of generalizations that immobilize the eye.”<sup>58</sup> This fixity is achieved by presenting an object in a historical context

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<sup>56</sup> The idea of the “aura” is from Walter Benjamin’s 1936 essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. See also Douglas Crimp, “On the Museum’s Ruins,” in *On the Museum’s Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993) 44-64.

<sup>57</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1934) 9.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Smithson, “What is a Museum? [“A Dialogue between Allan Kaprow and Robert Smithson],” reprinted in *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: NYU Press, 1979) 60.

within the museum. Once “entombed,” the object is immobilized in the viewer’s mind and here, one may remember the photograph of Robert Morris in his *Box for Standing*. Rather than imagined as part of a living experience, the object is held captive once added to the museum’s collection. That these objects are separated from lived experience by the very process of their selection for inclusion in the museum was a problem for Thek, as it was for Dewey. Both found that, once placed in this context, art becomes frozen in time – it becomes part of the past and thus joins the realm of the dead. Thek described his contentious relationship with the museum when he said, “... the museum is really my arch enemy ... I murder my work by showing it.”<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the contents of his *Technological Reliquaries* do appear to be the result of violence. A hacked off leg or arm, butchered flesh, these amputated objects appear to be still living and oozing blood. One may be reminded that the body parts of martyred saints are contained within religious reliquaries and pilgrims flocked to churches to see the divine miracles of bleeding or crying saints as visitors flock to museums to see Thek’s artwork. Returning to the technological aspects of Thek’s reliquaries, clear tubes and other apparatus bridge inside of the cubes to the outside as if the object were on life support, regulating the specimen’s environment and keeping it in some liminal space between life and death. What was once whole is now presented as a fragment, cut off from the body and cut off from lived experience by its appearance in the museum.

The queasy pathos inspired by these objects contrasts with the cool intellectualism associated with Minimalist work. In an interview with Emmy Huf in the Dutch newspaper *De Volksrant* (April 1969), Thek said of the *Technological Reliquaries*:

In New York at that time there was such an enormous tendency towards the minimal, the non-emotional, the anti-emotional even, that I wanted to say something again about emotion, about the ugly side of things... People thought it was a sadomasochistic trick.

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<sup>59</sup> Thek, “Selected Confessions,” 187.

That did not even occur to me. But if they wished to see it like that, it was OK with me: sadomasochism at least is a human characteristic, at least it is not made by a machine.<sup>60</sup>

Thek describes this pendulum swing away from intellectualism and towards emotionality in terms of pain and ugliness. Thek's choice of words anticipates the portrait of a muscular Robert Morris dressed in S&M chains and helmet which appeared on the pages of *Artforum* in 1974 (Fig. 20). While Morris's image of the hyper-masculine artist is almost comical in its excess, it seems to share with Thek's ideas a similar anxious desire to elicit feeling through Minimalist objects by invoking pain that calls for the viewers' empathy with (or disgust for) the painfully amputated specimens in the *Technological Reliquaries*. Like Dewey, Thek wanted to offer viewers a visceral experience in looking at art in a way that was connected to the everyday struggles of life – to offer transcendence. To borrow Dewey's description, having an experience will draw attention to the relationship between the "live creature" and our "environmental conditions."<sup>61</sup> In the case of experiencing art objects, the environmental condition is that of being a live creature in the museum. There, we face the challenge of attempting to reunite a whole made up of the disparate fragments of cultural objects presented on the museum's walls and pedestals.

In 1965, Thek met Andy Warhol, an artist who by many accounts was his opposite. Warhol, the coolly unemotional, blandly unexcitable, commercially successful and celebrated artist, was a contrast to Thek's persona as an art world outsider. While Thek wanted to present art that could not be confused with a mechanical production, Warhol famously declared, "I want to be a machine." Perhaps this extreme opposition attracted Thek and Warhol to produce a one-

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<sup>60</sup> Thek, "Selected Confessions," 186.

<sup>61</sup> Dewey, 35.

time collaboration in *Meat Piece with Warhol Brillo Box* (1965) (Fig. 21), a striking merger of Pop art's slick surfaces with Thek's seemingly sticky wax sculpture. Pop art's investment in commercial culture brought everyday items into the hallowed halls of the museum and, like Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917), placed the ready-made and readily available item on a pedestal. Within the museum or gallery, these objects took on new authors (now the artist rather than the factory), new meanings, and new commercial values all dependent on their placement in this museological environment. Dewey described the human desire for aesthetic enjoyment as a basic need and something people seek out despite the hurdles one might encounter in attempting to enter the intimidating portal of the fine art museum. For Dewey writing in the 1930s, "The arts which today have the most vitality for the average person are things he does not take to be arts: for instance, the movie, jazzed music, the comic strip ... For when he knows an art is relegated to the museum or gallery, the unconquerable impulse towards experiences enjoyable in themselves finds such outlets as the daily environment provides."<sup>62</sup> Dewey's comments presage the inclusion of popular imagery in the museum, though he may have lamented that what the "average person" was able to enjoy was then "relegated" to the museum and out of his living environment. Perhaps Thek, with the inclusion of the "meat piece" within the Brillo box, returned a bit of humanity to the work – with a grotesque literalness that one-ups Warhol's exact recreation of a simple packing crate. Placed inside the box, flesh is made a commodity and reduces Warhol's box to a display for this profane object. In this, Thek invited the primary form (the cube) to be denigrated rather than revered by re-presenting the famous Brillo box as a container for spoiled goods rather than as an untouchable icon of art. Likewise, the status of the Minimalist cube is questioned by calling our attention to the way this primary form may be

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<sup>62</sup> Dewey, 6.

corrupted. As a container for something that appears to be on the verge of rotting, we are reminded that the Minimalist and museum box are also coffins.

Warhol's participation in the creation of this sculpture made him an accomplice in the critique of the museum as an institution that deadens our experience of art by its strict regulation of our access to it while controlling the value structure of its collection as it commodifies cultural objects of all types. Asked to act as a guest curator by the Rhode Island School of Design in 1969, Warhol took this opportunity to present items from its Museum of Art in Providence, Rhode Island. His assemblage of museum cast-off objects was titled "Raid the Icebox," and offers an example of the transformative power of the artist-as-curator to identify as art items that were previously considered unworthy of display. Likewise, *Meat Piece with Warhol Brillo Box* re-values the found object as an *objet d'art* while criticizing its commodification. The value of the object (both the simple Brillo box and Thek's wax sculpture) is increased by association with a famous artist like Warhol, but this value is something that is subject to the approval of the art institution rather than something inherent in itself. The scarcity of the object is also an attribute that makes it more valuable to a museum collection. Rather than produce multiples of the sculpture, as was common practice in both Warhol's work and in the serial systems of Minimalism, there is only one *Meat Piece with Warhol Brillo Box*. Still, both artists seem to have criticized the museum structures that celebrate their work. By continuing to present their work in the museum, Thek participated in a sadistic-masochistic relationship with the institution while Warhol enjoyed a profitable career as an artist while pretending to ignore the system that supported him. In *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* he stated that, "Wasted space is any space that

has art in it.”<sup>63</sup> His negation of the value of the museum seems to echo both Dewey’s and Thek’s frustration with that institution.

Thek’s masochism found fulfillment in his symbolic death within the gallery. *The Tomb (Death to a Hippie)* (1967) (Fig. 22) is an installation work that takes over the museum space by setting within it a new temple (here, a ziggurat) that is the tomb for Thek’s own effigy in wax. Reviewing the piece for *Artforum* in 1967, Robert Pincus-Witten called it, “... one of the unanticipated yet representative masterworks of American sculpture of the sixties.”<sup>64</sup> One may find a precedent in Thek’s *Self-Portrait* (part of the *Technological Reliquaries*) (1965) (Fig. 23) where his own face appears in a wax death mask, his tongue protruding and pierced by a ring. Encased in a Plexiglas vitrine like an exhibition at a waxworks museum, Thek’s effigy is presented as a museum specimen just like the other disembodied meat pieces in the series. With *The Tomb*, Thek removed his individual identity by replacing it with a more generalized attribution of “a hippie.” Contemporary artist Mike Kelley sees this work as attacking the very subject matter that Warhol avoided, namely the murder of the counter-culture through its cooption by the museum establishment.<sup>65</sup> Thek’s *Technological Reliquaries* are also anti-institutional artworks presented within the institution they critique. They, like Hesse’s *Accession II*, entered the museum under the cloak of apodictic Minimalist sculpture and confronted viewers within the pristine gallery walls with the anti-establishment hippie “filth” they shunned on the streets. Continuing to inhabit morbid containers, Thek’s *Death to a Hippie* presented the symbolic death of the artist within the tomb of the museum. *Death to a Hippie* rehearsed the moment when Thek and his oeuvre die by their inclusion in the museum and become frozen in

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<sup>63</sup> Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975) 143.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Pincus-Witten, “Thek’s Tomb ... Absolute Fetishism,” *Artforum* 6, no. 3 (Nov. 1967): 24.

<sup>65</sup> Kelley, 21-24.

time. Thek said that, “It really is too crazy to show the work of a still living artist as history of art in a museum.”<sup>66</sup> Instead with this “museomasochistic”<sup>67</sup> gesture, he showed himself dead, visited by viewers in the museum as if it were his own wake.

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<sup>66</sup> Thek, “Selected Confessions,” 187.

<sup>67</sup> This nickname was given by Dutch critics to Thek’s exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam titled “The Procession/The Artist’s Co-op” (1969). Thek, “Selected Confessions,” 187.

– Chapter 5 –

**The Institutionalization of Consciousness:  
Lucas Samaras's Mirrored Rooms (1966-1969)**

Lucas Samaras's boxes started off small. Shoe box-sized treasure chests covered in pins and mirrors, these sculptures contain an assortment of objects that project an air of mystery and memory. Assemblages like *Box #1* (1962) (Fig. 24), *Box #10* (1963) (Fig. 25), and *Box #19* (1964) (Fig. 26) share more in common with Joseph Cornell's boxed collections than with Minimalist cubes, but when Samaras began to make bigger boxes, the environments he created were accepted as Minimalist ones. The first environment, however, was not an imaginary space; rather, it replicated the artist's living quarters in his New York apartment with his actual bed, clothes, books, pictures, and other objects placed like a period piece within the Green Gallery like a period piece. In an installation somewhere between an anthropological diorama and a historical tableau, *Room #1* (1964) (Fig. 27) displayed everything about the artist's private space except the artist himself. It was Samaras's idea to create a portrait using personal objects to stand in for his own bodily presence. Including a body was simply unnecessary as, in Samaras's words, "[*Room #1*] was as complete a picture of me without my physical presence as there could possibly be."<sup>68</sup> This first room, packed with personal items, is in stark contrast to the next three rooms he created. *Room #2* (1966) (Figs. 28 and 29), *Room #3* (1968) (Fig. 30), and *Mirrored Cell* (1969/1988) (Figs. 31 and 32) present austere Minimalist mirrored cubes built with industrial-made materials that do not bear the sign of human touch. Unlike Robert Morris's smaller and completely closed mirrored cubes, Samaras's rooms are large enough for a person to inhabit. The rooms' mirror-covered exteriors reflect the museum space and the spectator within

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<sup>68</sup> Alan Solomon and Lucas Samaras, "An Interview with Lucas Samaras" *Artforum* 10 (1966): 43.

the institution. Once inside the cube, the rooms' dazzlingly reflective surfaces focus the viewer's attention on ideas concerning identity, specifically in staging the process by which individual and cultural identity is created and reflected within institutions like the museum.<sup>69</sup> Whereas Morris's cubes directed our attention to the external frame of the museum environment, Samaras's mirrored rooms, I argue, focus our attention on the internalized recognition of our subjectivity and the ways in which institutions like the museum work to form our understanding of our own identity.

Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *The Consciousness Industry* was translated and published in English in 1974. In this collection of essays, beginning with "The Industrialization of the Mind" (1962), Enzensberger, a German poet and Marxist theorist, explains how educational institutions and mass media create consciousness by means of institutionalized indoctrination – how despite our desire to "reign supreme in our own consciousness" this "sovereignty of the mind" is an illusion.<sup>70</sup> In his view, our thoughts are governed instead by the "mind industry"<sup>71</sup> which includes institutions of formal education like schools, universities (and, by extension, the museum) in addition to mass media outlets like television, radio, and film. Consequently, creation of knowledge and mass distribution of information are a political and economic industry that aims to replicate certain thoughts and ideologies in order to control a population on a large scale. Rather than idealize educational and cultural institutions as above or beyond politics, Enzensberger's work implicated these entities in the process of indoctrination which are subject to economic and political concerns. His essays provide evidence that critics were discussing the institution in terms of its identity-making function at a time when Samaras was working with this

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<sup>69</sup> In all, Samaras designed six human-scale mirrored spaces. In addition to the three rooms, there were also three spaces connoting transition or movement: *Corridor #1* (1967), *Staircase* (1968), and *Corridor #2* (1970).

<sup>70</sup> Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "The Industrialization of the Mind" in *The Consciousness Industry: On Literature, Politics, and the Media* (The Seabury Press: New York, 1974) 3.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5.

same theme in his mirrored rooms. Like Enzenberger and others, Samaras's rooms show how even the seemingly neutral museum space works to institutionalize the mind by effacing the way curators and museum educators manipulate our response to art and other cultural artifacts.

The connection between *art* museums and ideology would come just a few years later in 1978, when Carol Duncan and Allan Wallach analyzed and identified the architecture and curatorial choices of the Museum of Modern Art as a ritualized space devoted to the ceremonial indoctrination of its visitors into the tenets of capitalism. In "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual" they wrote, "More than any other museum, MOMA developed the ritual forms that translated the ideology of late capitalism into immediate and vivid artistic terms – a monument to individualism, understood as subjective freedom."<sup>72</sup> Their exploration of the ways in which the museum acts as an agent of indoctrination through an analysis of both the MOMA's curatorial selections and the manner in which the art work is displayed marks an important milestone in the literature on institutional critique and shares with Enzensberger a common approach to theorizing institutions and their didactic role in our lives. Sometime Minimal artist and oftentimes institutional critic, Hans Haacke, cites Enzensberger's theories in his 1997 essay, "Museums as Managers of Consciousness."<sup>73</sup> Though published decades after Enzensberger's treatise, Haacke expands on his argument to illustrate specific examples of the connection between art museums and their corporate patrons as partners in the "mind industry." These themes were explored in Haacke's own installation work during the 1970s such as *On Social Grease* (1975) in which quotations from corporate executives from multinational companies as

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<sup>72</sup> Carol Duncan and Allan Wallach, "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis" *Studio International* 1 (1978) reprinted in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, eds. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Ashgate Publishing Limited: England (2004) 485.

<sup>73</sup> Hans Haacke, "Museums: Managers of Consciousness" *Parachute* 46 (1997): 84-88 reprinted in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, eds. Ashgate Publishing Limited: England (2004) 400-412.

well as museum trustees were engraved on magnesium and aluminum plates and hung in the gallery. Each quotation provides a frank statement concerning the economic relationship between the business world and the art world, uncovering an uncomfortable relationship between the commercial concerns of industry and the (purportedly) altruistic motives of the modern museum.

Writing in 2007 and expanding on the critique of the “white cube” he presented decades earlier, Brian O’Doherty recognizes this relationship in Samaras’s first environment of *Room #1*, exhibited at the Green Gallery in 1964. O’Doherty says that in creating a “studio bedroom” and presenting it as art, Samaras “inserts the space where art is made into the space where art is bought and sold.”<sup>74</sup> James Meyer cites the Green Gallery as a key player in “making” a new artist’s reputation. He says that the Green Gallery was “... a way-station in this transformation of work by Oldenberg, Samaras, Dine, Grooms, and others into viable commodities.”<sup>75</sup> These conclusions fall in line with the self-stated aims of some artists and critics of the 1960s who sought to reveal that art and the artists who create it are (as they always have been) bound to the industries of making meaning and making consciousness within an industrialized and formal system. Though Pop artists like Andy Warhol brought consumer images and mass production to the museums in the early 1960s, canonizing Coca-Cola and Campbell’s within the hallowed walls of the fine arts institution, there was still more to be said about the museum’s role in the “mind industry” and room for critique of this supposedly impartial mirror to human experience. Yet, though artists participated in critique of the museum institution at this time, no one, as yet, found it in Minimalist forms like the cube.

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<sup>74</sup> Brian O’Doherty, *Studio and Cube: On the Relationship between Where Art is Made and Where Art Is Displayed* (Columbia University: New York, 2007) 4.

<sup>75</sup> James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2001) 46.

Art and art institutions as symbolic mirrors of human experience are popular notions with a long history. This idea of the “museum as mirror” appears even more recently. Kynaston McShine’s introductory essay within the catalog for the exhibition “Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect,” (1999) used Georges Bataille’s (perhaps satirical) definition of the museum to set the stage for an investigation of the role of that institution:

The museum is the colossal mirror in which man, finally contemplating himself from all sides, and finding himself literally an object of wonder, abandons himself to the ecstasy expressed in art journalism.<sup>76</sup>

Samaras’s mirrored rooms provide additional reflective surfaces within the mirror that is the museum, intensifying our experience of seeing our own image infinitely repeated.

Jacques Lacan’s work on the “mirror stage” of developmental psychology and the creation of consciousness is also relevant here. Lacan first presented this concept in a lecture in 1936 and again in 1949. The lecture was translated into English and reprinted in *Ecrits*, published in 1977. In Lacan’s account, the mirror stage, occurring around the age of six months, is the moment in a child’s cognitive development when he first recognizes his own reflection in the mirror as an image of himself. Lacan states, “We have only to understand the mirror stage as identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image.”<sup>77</sup> This recognition fragments his identity into subject and object (the observer and the thing observed). With this alienating schism the infant is introduced to the concept of “I” which splits the subject in two – the internal “I” of one’s self-concept and the external *imago*, or image of one’s self that is visible in the outside

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<sup>76</sup> Georges Bataille, “Museum” *Documents* 2, no. 5 (1930): 300 reprinted in Kynaston McShine, *Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999) 10.

<sup>77</sup> Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I As Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” in *Ecrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977) reprinted in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1986) 735.

world (me). The identification of oneself with an image or copy (Lacan's ever-unattainable idealization of the self he calls the "Ideal-I") is also essential to an understanding of the spectatorial dynamic in which the viewer identifies with the subject he views in the image of a painting or sculptural form. The mirror stage "establish[es] a relation between the organism and its reality – between the *Innenwelt* (one's inner psychological world) and the *Umwelt* (the external or environmental reality)."<sup>78</sup> This critical moment in psychological development is an *optical* recognition – we come to understand "I" through the eye.

Lacan's mirror stage of psychological development meets Enzensberger's thoughts on the industrialization of consciousness in Samaras's mirrored rooms. In these mirrored spaces, Samaras surprises his viewers by recreating the instant where one recognized oneself as the Other, the point at which one saw oneself as a separate image outside of the internalized "I." By replicating this developmental stage within mirrored rooms at the site of the historicizing museum, Samaras confronted the spectator with countless reflections. The viewer is multiplied and fragmented infinitely, creating an experience that is both thrilling and horrifying much like the child's reaction to the "startling spectacle" of recognizing himself as the "infant in the mirror."<sup>79</sup> With the addition of Enzensberger's implication of educational institutions like museums in the formation of identity, we can see how Samaras's mirrored rooms provide a doubled enclosure within which the formation of identity is played out – inside the museum is the mirrored room, a space that forces the viewer inside the room to recognize the "I," an identity which is regulated by the institution of the museum itself as part of the "mind industry." In Samaras's rooms, the authoritative institution-parent forces this recognition for the viewer-child, illustrating a moment when identity is formed within the context of the institutional space – the

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<sup>78</sup> Lacan, 736. Parenthetical notes the author's.

<sup>79</sup> Lacan, 734.

museum. The museum visitor, like the infant in Lacan's essay, is led to this experience of jubilation/alienation by the parental figure. Here, the visitor is tempted inside in order to take part better in the experience of the art work. Rather than pose an obstacle between the viewer and door, it is necessary to come inside the open passageway to experience the work. In this chapter, I propose to consider Lacan's theory of the mirror stage and Enzensberger's theory of the mind industry in tandem, so as to suggest a fundamental correlation between the two theorists' ideas about the construction of identity, here applied to this process within cultural institutions like the museum. Samaras's mirrored rooms provide the literal mirrored stage within the site of the museum where the process of cultural indoctrination and subjectivity plays out. Examining each mirrored room in turn, we will see how they each present this drama to critique the institutionalization of consciousness.

*Room #2* is an eight by ten by eight foot wooden construction completely covered both inside and outside with two by two foot square mirrors. Inside the room are a table and chair, also made of mirrors and nearly invisible in the complex grid of reflections. Shown in the more austere Pace Gallery, *Room #2* reflected that gallery's Minimalist aesthetic in contrast to the "roughness" of the Green Gallery where his chaotic and messy *Room #1* appeared.<sup>80</sup> Like *Room #1*, this space is prepared for human presence, but lacks a human subject until the visitor enters the installation.<sup>81</sup> Then, as the subject of the installation, the spectator holds a dual role: he is both viewer and viewed. In this fractured state he sees himself multiplied and split, producing an acute tension between image and reality. The walls, ceiling, and floor of the environment reflect nothing but his own image, creating a physical and psychological tension between the *Innenwelt*

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<sup>80</sup> "[The] taste for clean art was reflected in the aesthetics of the Pace Gallery, which, in contrast to the roughness of the Green Gallery, favored a gleaming and immaculate exhibition space and encouraged untouchability." Kim Levin, *Lucas Samaras* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1976) n. 71.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Mc Evilly, "Intimate but Lethal Things," in *Lucas Samaras: Objects and Subjects* (Abbeville Press: New York, 1988) 23.

and *Umwelt* of the mirror stage. If, as O’Doherty states, “Consciousness makes artifacts of us all;”<sup>82</sup> the mirrored room makes the viewer hyper-(self)conscious of his presence in the museum space, objectifying himself as something to view as one would view any other museum “artifact.”

His identity becomes somewhat erased while in the room, as the viewer watches himself in the mirror with the detachment of an omnipotent eye/I. The erasure becomes complete when he exits the space and leaves the artwork subject-less. Samaras describes the relationship between the viewer and the room by ascribing the role of creation to the viewer rather than to himself: “I suppose people paint with their bodies when they enter the room: you know, they inspect themselves, they ‘paint’ themselves; they scribble. Then they go away and their scribble goes away, too, so that they don’t leave their marks. Kind of an instant erasure.”<sup>83</sup> When the viewer leaves the mirrored room there is nothing more to see until another visitor steps over the threshold. The tension between becoming a coherent visible form in the mirrors’ reflection and subsequent erasure, corresponds to the complexity of the mirror stage in which one is simultaneously formed and emptied out by the construction of an I that is contingent on external perception. In Samaras’s metaphor, the institutional space is necessary to provide a frame of meaning for the artist/spectator, for outside of the enclosure of the institution the symbol of the artist/spectator disappears. In this we may find an acknowledgement of the museum as part of the industry that creates meaning – which codifies, collects, and canonizes. Without it, one can be erased from the collective memory of the human history that museums are charged to protect.

Providing an architectural structure designed to protect its contents is a primary aim of the museum. Inside, vitrines and other display boxes house objects, separating them from the

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<sup>82</sup> O’Doherty, 5.

<sup>83</sup> Solomon and Samaras, 43.

damaging environment of the air we breathe and removing the possibility of a corrupting human touch. The architectural form a building takes often identifies the purpose of the institution: the pillared temple of the museum, the schoolhouse, the prison, the factory, and the cathedral. The identification of these institutions' role partly depends on their habitation of a recognizable (and, therefore, symbolic) architectural space. So, too, does Lacan choose an architectural term to identify a psychological state in order to underscore the way in which we place psychological functions within certain architectural spaces. In "The Mirror Stage," Lacan describes the "fortress or arena" that symbolizes the "I."<sup>84</sup> Enzensberger also describes the individual's retreat into the protective psychological space of one's innermost thoughts: "Where else can he expect to withstand the daily siege, if not within himself?"<sup>85</sup> Samaras's *Room #3* looks ever more like these fortresses. Exhibited first at the 1968 *Documenta* in Kassel, Germany, the mirrored walls are covered inside and out with large, mirrored spikes like a human-sized version of the smaller mirrored boxes he created decorated with sharp pins and razors. This room is armored like a fortress, one that contains the "I" of identification that one wishes to protect and keep whole. According to Lacan, the seamless wholeness in the way one perceives the world can never happen again after the mirror stage has been experienced. Instead, we are always left with the conflict of both recognizing ourselves in the mirror and understanding the rift between the external subject and internalized "I." Samaras seems to agree with Lacan and Enzensberger that this image of fortification is not the impermeable and protective structure we may desire. Enzensberger warns that, "... the mind of the individual is considered a kind of last citadel and hotly defended, though this imaginary fortress may have been long since taken over by an

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<sup>84</sup> Lacan, 736.

<sup>85</sup> Enzensberger, 3.

ingenious enemy.”<sup>86</sup> Samaras’s *Room #3* contains mirrored spikes on both the outside and inside of the room, making safety from the harmful intrusion of sharp glass impossible on either side of its walls. The low door discourages entry, and visitors who seek shelter inside the room hit their heads on a large point right above the interior threshold.<sup>87</sup> Samaras says of the room, “For years people had been talking about the danger in my work. With this room you actually did damage yourself ninety percent of the time. It was pretty lethal. Like sending a torture machine to the land of torture. ... [yet, visitors] selected that room themselves; they had a choice.”<sup>88</sup> In Samaras’s equation the “torture machine” was his artwork inside the “land of torture” that is the gallery or museum, a phrase that recalls Thek’s “museomasochism.” Such a pessimistic view of the relationship between art and the place where it is displayed reveals something about his thoughts on the museum visitor’s experience. This is the place in which we again experience the identification and alienation of the mirror stage while also being reminded of the way in which we are subject to controlling forces of the mind industry. Yet, museum visitors choose to enter this dangerous place and even submit themselves to bodily harm while in *Room #3* in order to undergo the transforming psychological effect they expect in experiencing art.

Designed in 1969, but not executed until 1988, Samaras’s last mirrored room presents an even more isolating space. First appearing at the Pace Gallery, *Mirrored Cell* is a twelve by eight by twelve-foot room, outfitted with a few pieces of mirrored furniture. There is a bed, a toilet, table, and chest in the room, returning the mirrored space to the livable quarters of his first *Room #1*. However, these austere accommodations are not those of a private bedroom. One imagines *Mirrored Cell* as a jail cell, a small room in a psychiatric ward, or a monastic chamber. Any of

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Levin, 71.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

these spaces connote the kind of institutionalization that provides almost complete isolation and deprivation and are locations where social remediation takes place. It is with *Mirrored Cell* that Samaras makes the clearest link between the “mind industry” and its intrusion into the internal psyche. As the viewer sees his reflections in the mirrored room, he is also aware of the institutional eye that follows his movements. Whether it is the prison guard, the psych warden, or God, the omnipotent eye of authority further fractures one’s self into the internal “I” and the externally visible *imago*. This awareness of outside forces regulates one’s behavior in the cell (both Samaras’s and these other examples), just as the experience of being viewed while viewing takes place outside the mirrored room while looking at other artwork in the museum.

In the museum space, looking is the primary activity – there is no touching, no talking (unless in hushed voices), and movement is restricted to a sedate promenade. The museum visitor is not the only one watching, however, and as he looks at the artworks he is also observed looking by the museum guards and other patrons. Samaras’s mirrored rooms make the feeling of watching and being watched (literally) painfully acute and simultaneous. Duncan and Wallach regard the museum experience similarly, “MOMA’s ritual is a walk through a hall of mirrors in which isolation, fear and numbness, appear as exciting and desirable states of being.”<sup>89</sup> Again, it is the mirror that facilitates this process of rehearsing identity as guided by the institutions we frequent. The museum provides the objects and surfaces within which we discover our society’s ideologies. With Samaras’s rooms, we see the art object and art institution reflected in one another so perfectly as nearly to dissolve the boundaries of these spaces. These rooms re-create the museum as a “stage,” upon which we engage in a drama of alienation through the process of Lacan’s mirror stage. Though critical of the museum, Samaras is nonetheless a participant in its practice of institutionalizing consciousness at the same time that he attempts to subvert this

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<sup>89</sup> Duncan and Wallach, 498.

process. Writing in 1974, Haacke says that, “Artists, as much as their supporters and their enemies, no matter of what ideological coloration, are unwitting partners.... They participate jointly in the maintenance and/or development of the ideological make-up of their society. They work within that frame, set the frame, and are being framed.”<sup>90</sup> One may then wonder if all institutional critique is impossible from within the museum. Samaras seems to indicate that though we may exit the museum, we do so only to enter and repeat the processes of institutionalizing consciousness outside its doors, but within those other boxes of our homes, schools, and other institutional sites. If Samaras’s rooms alert us to this fact, perhaps we are made wiser, but not free.

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<sup>90</sup> Hans Haacke, “All the Art That’s Fit to Show.” in *Museums by Artists*, eds. AA Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto, Canada: Art Metropole, 1983) 152.

## – Chapter 6 –

### Epilogue

Institutional critique, now itself a philosophical discipline that has been institutionalized within the museological and journalistic context it seeks to analyze, is often criticized as being a particularly closed practice or circular thought process. My work attempts to open this closed system to examine artists not usually associated with institutional critique (and Minimalism proper) in order to see new meanings in their artwork and to point to additional methods of inquiry about the museum. While the museum was specifically the subject of artistic practice for some artists working in the 1960s and 1970s like Hans Haacke and Daniel Buren, I have suggested how others also participated in a critique of the art institution during this same period and in ways that anticipate important writing on the museum as cube.

In chapter one, Robert Morris showed how the cube (both Minimalist and museum) is a construction, one that contains meaning despite any pretense to neutrality. In chapter two, Eva Hesse exposed the ideological contents within this Minimalist form and the box-shaped museum spaces which contain it while in chapter three, Paul Thek revealed how the museum's commitment to preservation and isolation corrupted artist and viewer alike. In chapter four, Lucas Samaras expounded on the way in which the museum plays a role in constituting identity and is part of the mind industry that stages our experience of ourselves as subjects. In this epilogue, I would like to explore briefly a few contemporary artists who suggest a legacy for Morris, Hesse, Thek, and Samaras, by working with Minimalist forms and materials in ways that continue to make meaningful the connection between cube and institutional critique.

Rachel Whiteread's sculptures are *all* interior space and so reflect the cube shape of the spaces we inhabit by becoming cubes themselves. *Ghost* (1990) (Fig. 33) and *House* (1993) (Fig. 34), are both constructed of poured plaster and concrete that fill and take the shape of an architectural space. This architectural skeleton is then peeled away and discarded leaving a plaster cast of the interior. Whiteread's subject (the domestic home) and mode of construction offer a new juxtaposition of the confluence of Minimalist cube and the exploration of interior space previously discussed in this thesis: in terms of exploring interiority we find kinship in Hesse; by creating meaning for an artwork outside of the object itself we find echoes of Morris and his *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making*. Indeed, Whiteread offers a compelling example of the continued connection between Minimalist forms and a critique of the institution.

Like Hesse, Janine Antoni takes on feminist themes by reforming the "masculine" Minimalist cube. Antoni's *Gnaw* (1992) (Fig. 35) are two six hundred pound cubes, one of chocolate and one of lard, which the artist has sculpted with her own teeth by literally devouring the form. Evidence of her method is on the surface where, rather than signs of the artist's hands at work, we see teeth marks as she sculpted by consuming. Her cubes say something about patriarchal systems one finds in the museum, which offer institutionalized displays of women's bodies for viewers to consume and which also take part in regulating ideals of female beauty. Additionally, the dual sensuousness and repulsiveness in Antoni's artistic practice and resultant form is akin to Hesse's hybridized box, which both invites and repels a tactile experience of the work.

Another artist who seems to share a Minimalist aesthetic and interest in critiquing the mores of the museum is Damien Hirst, whose sculpture *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (1991) (Fig. 36) mimics the display vitrine of the natural history

museum while revealing its inability to preserve everything forever. Hirst's embalmed shark placed in the context of the art museum offers a different kind of ready-made sculpture, one housed in a Plexiglas box just like Thek's constructions. Even more similar to Thek's bloody constructions is Hirst's *A Thousand Years* (1991) (Fig. 37), another Minimalist box containing, on one side, a rotting cow's head covered in flies and maggots, and on the other side, an electric "bug zapper" that kills the new flies born out of the putrefying flesh in the adjacent compartment. This hideous cycle of death and rebirth, juxtaposed against the sterile environment of the gallery, shares a common concern with Thek's work and brings the shockingly human and mundane realities of life to the fore, reinvigorating our experience within the museum by forcing a confrontation with our own mortality. Similarly, another artist from the Young British Artists movement, Marc Quinn, keeps sunflowers in suspended animation within a museum vitrine in *Eternal Spring* (1998) (Fig. 38). The flowers are dead, but still look alive in their frozen state. This appearance of life is dependent on the museum system just as Thek's specimens or Haacke's cubes were kept in a similar condition through sham technology.

Reflecting the painful reality of the human condition was also part of Samaras's work. His mirrored environments entrapped the viewer in an infinity of reflections, alerting one to the process of cultural institutionalization and implicating the viewer in enforcing and reinforcing this conformity through their participation in ritualized behaviors such as museum viewing. In this combination of cube and watchful gaze, we find Sarah Prud'Homme's revision of the Minimalist cube in *Eye* (1993) (Fig. 39), a cube covered in photographs depicting an all-seeing eye (possibly the artist's eye or the viewer's own eye) staring back at the viewer. This cube (which is the same size as Morris's *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*) gives us an image of ourselves while alienating us from the familiar with the reflection of a disembodied eye. Like the

self-conscious experience within Samaras's rooms, Prud'Homme's cube unsettles the viewer by reversing his gaze to stare back in an unflinching glance. Also like Samaras's mirrored rooms is Thom Barth's *Cube 3-87 Copy Marble Room* (1987) (Fig. 40) which created an environment that simulates or reflects its surroundings; here as an ethereal ghost of a Baroque palace room replicated in gauzy fabric. By making the room transparent and colorless, we have a doubled vision of our environment and can see through to the double enclosure of the cube and museum space we inhabit. Like both Morris and Samaras, Barth's work reveals something about the museum space as it becomes camouflaged within it, focusing our attention on our surroundings by repeating and mimicking the environment.

Though an exhaustive list of contemporary artists working with the cube form as institutional critique would be impractical here, these few examples show that it is still a compelling subject for artists today. Rather than offer proof to Danto that art is dead, or evidence to Smithson that the museum's relevance has expired, the continued renegotiation of the relationship between art, object, viewer, and place of display shows that investigations into this subject are still vital and much remains to be said. Perhaps Morris was right in his choice of this "perfect form" for his first sculpture – the essential geometry of the cube is a primary building block in our understanding of the architecture of our lives in the home, the school, and the museum. In order to open these boxes to interpretation, we must start by examining the cube.

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## Figures



Fig. 1  
Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Façade and sculpture garden



Fig. 2  
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York  
Façade, 1962 addition (left) and original 1905 building

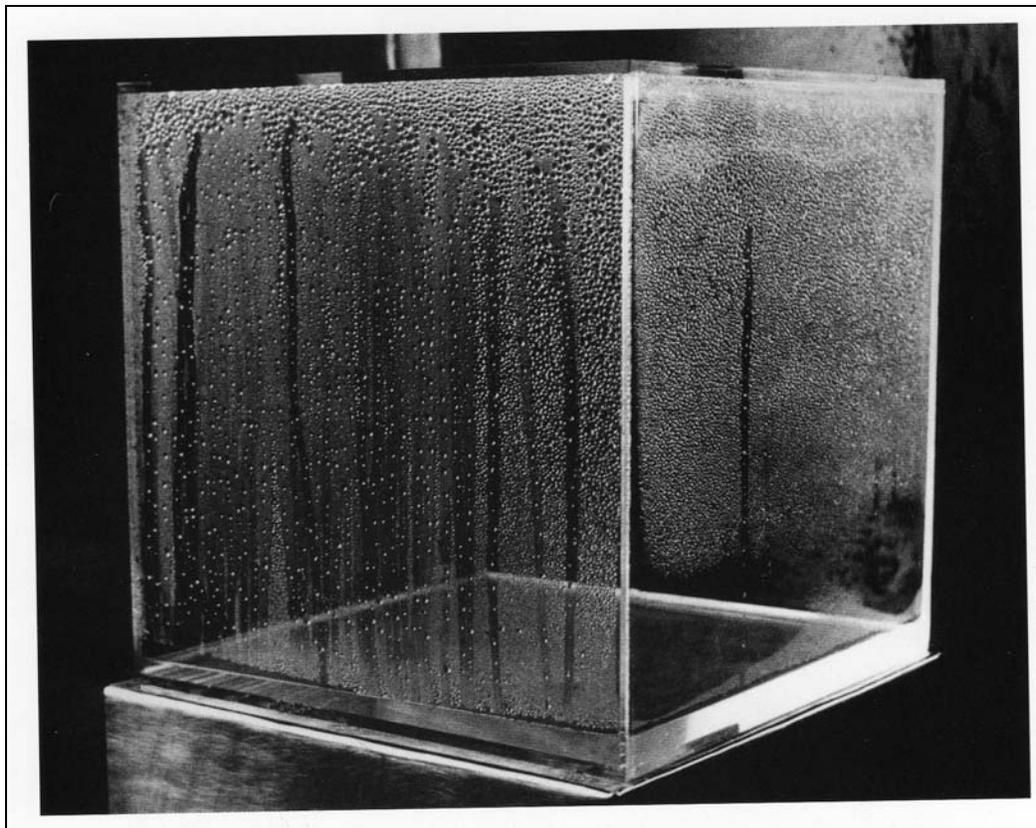


Fig. 3  
Hans Haacke, *Condensation Cube*, 1963-1965  
Acrylic plastic, water, climate in area of display  
30 x 30 x 30 cm.

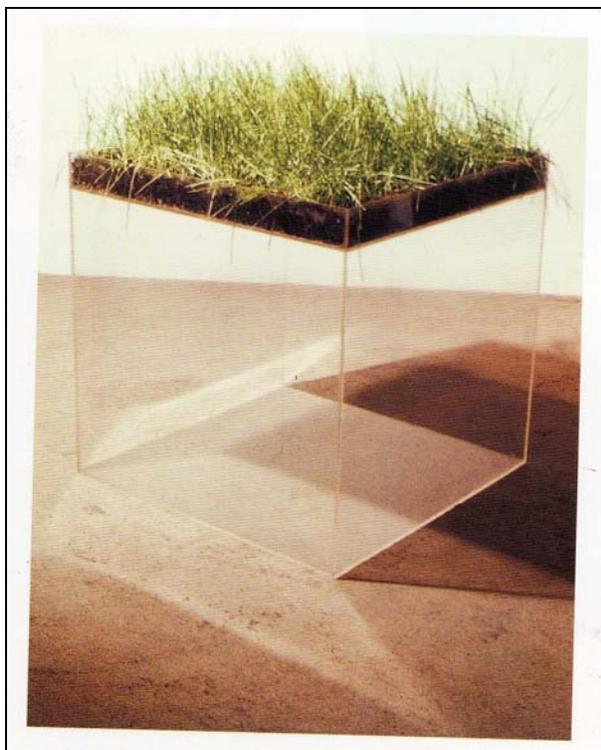


Fig. 4  
Hans Haacke, *Grass Cube*, 1967  
Acrylic plastic, earth, grass seeds  
76 x 76 x 76 cm

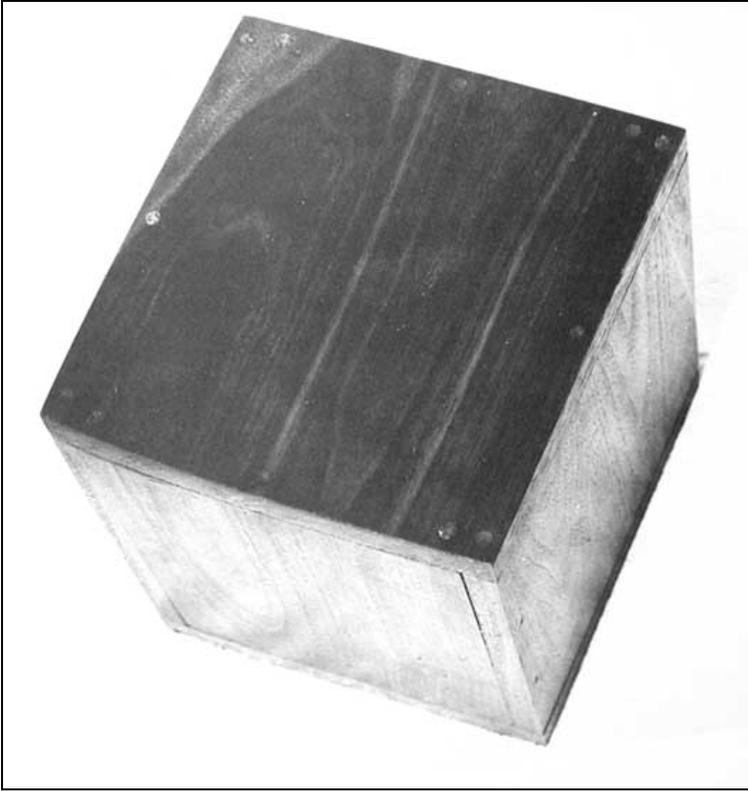


Fig. 5  
Robert Morris, *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*, 1961  
Wood with recorded sound  
9 x 9 x 9 in.



Fig. 6  
Carolee Schneeman and Robert Morris, *Site*, 1964  
Stage 73, Surplus Dance Theater, 0New York

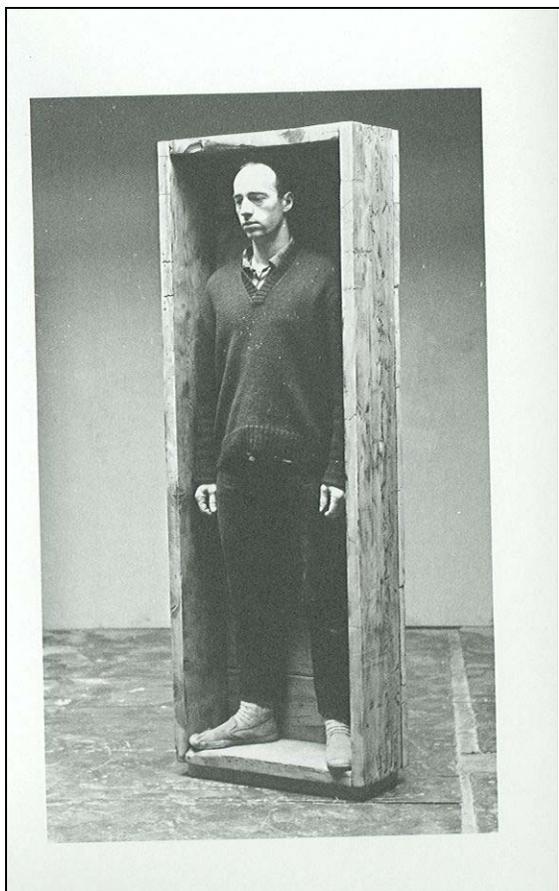


Fig. 7  
Robert Morris, *Box for Standing*, 1961  
Wood  
72 x 24 x 12 in.

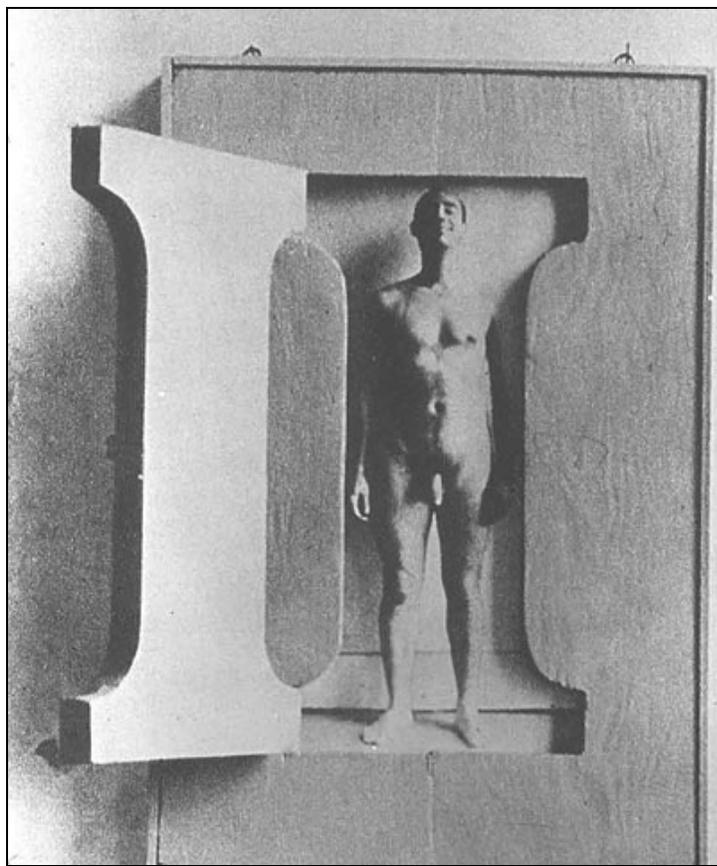


Fig. 8

Robert Morris, *I-Box*, 1962

Painted plywood cabinet covered with Sculptmetal, containing photograph  
19 x 12  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 1  $\frac{3}{8}$  in.



Fig. 9  
 Robert Morris, *Untitled* (Mirrored cubes), 1965  
 Plexiglas mirrors on wood  
 Four units, each 28 x 28x 28in.



Fig. 10  
 Robert Morris, *Untitled*, 1968-9  
 Felt, copper, rubber, zinc, nickel, aluminum, corten and stainless steel  
 200 pieces

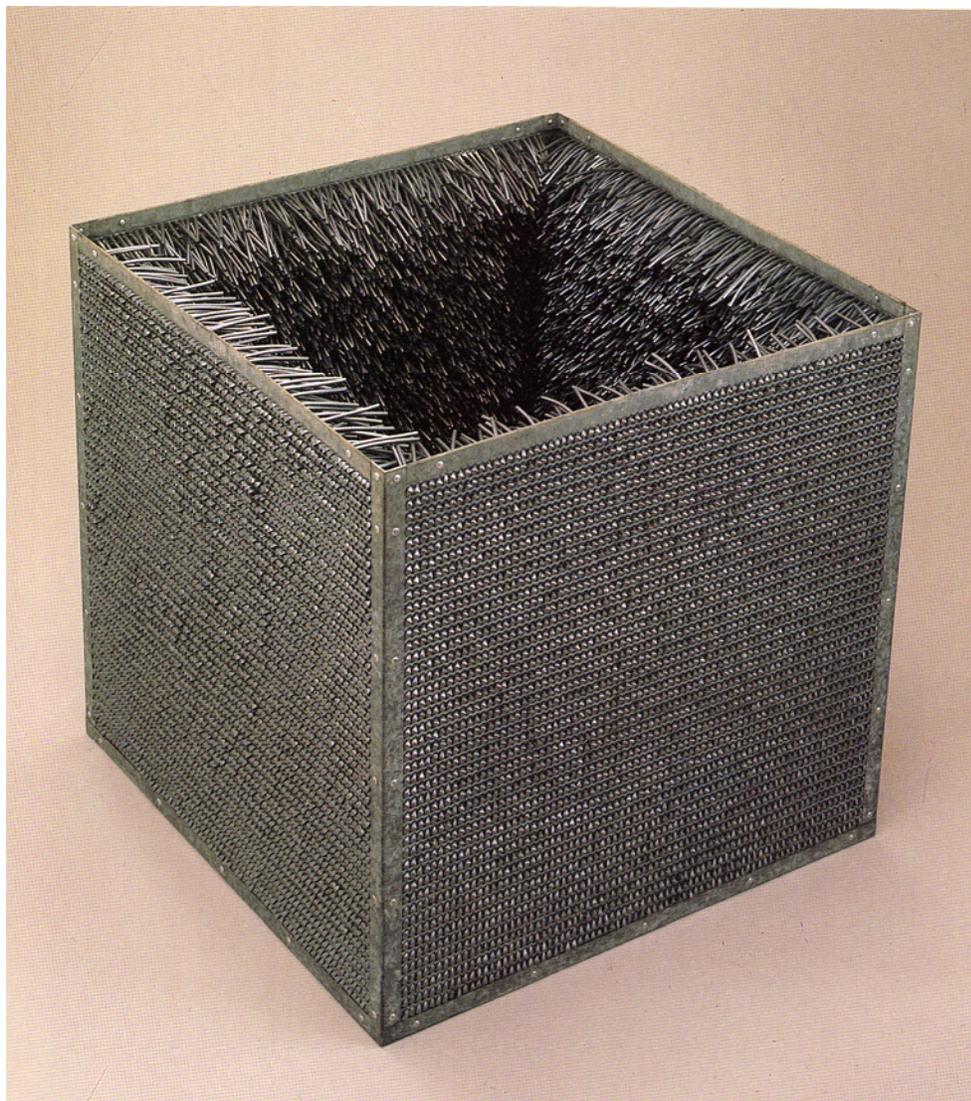


Fig. 11  
Eva Hesse, *Accession II*, 1968  
Galvanized steel and plastic tubing  
30  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 30  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 30  $\frac{3}{4}$  in.



Fig. 12  
Eva Hesse, *Accession III*, 1968  
Fiberglass and polyester resin with plastic tubing  
30 x 30 x 30 in.

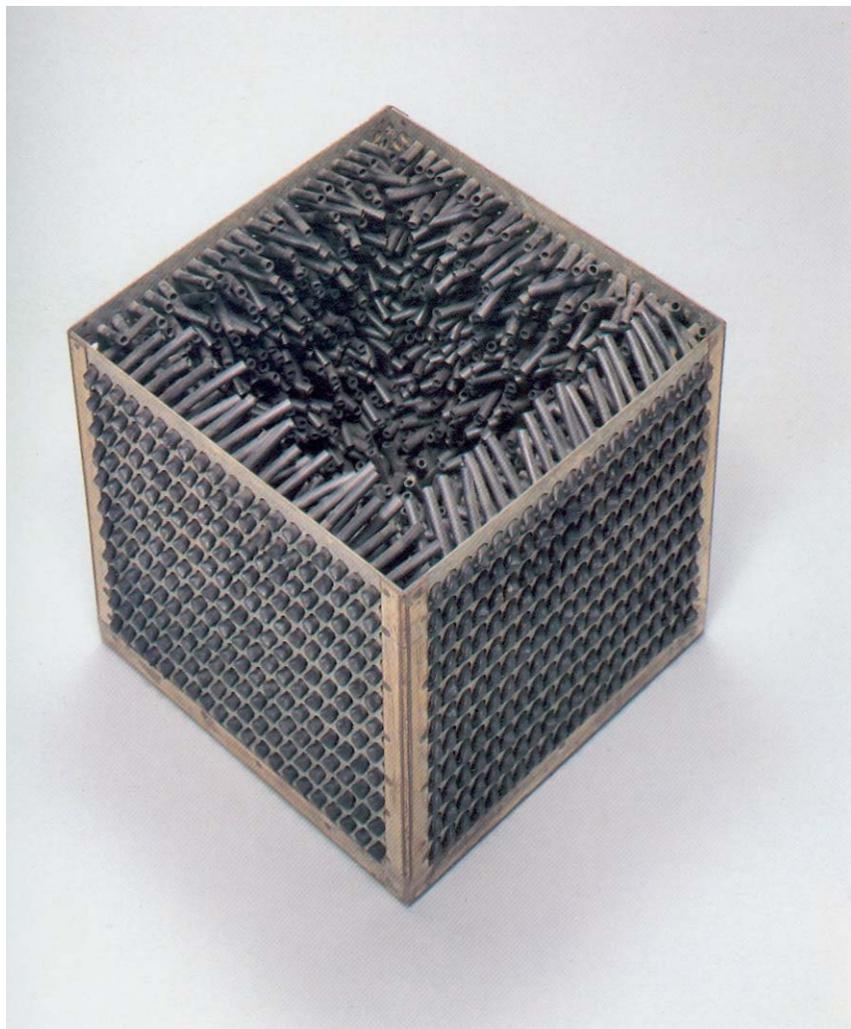


Fig. 13  
Eva Hesse, *Accession IV*, 1968  
Galvanized steel and rubber tubing  
8 1/8 x 8 x 8 1/4 in.

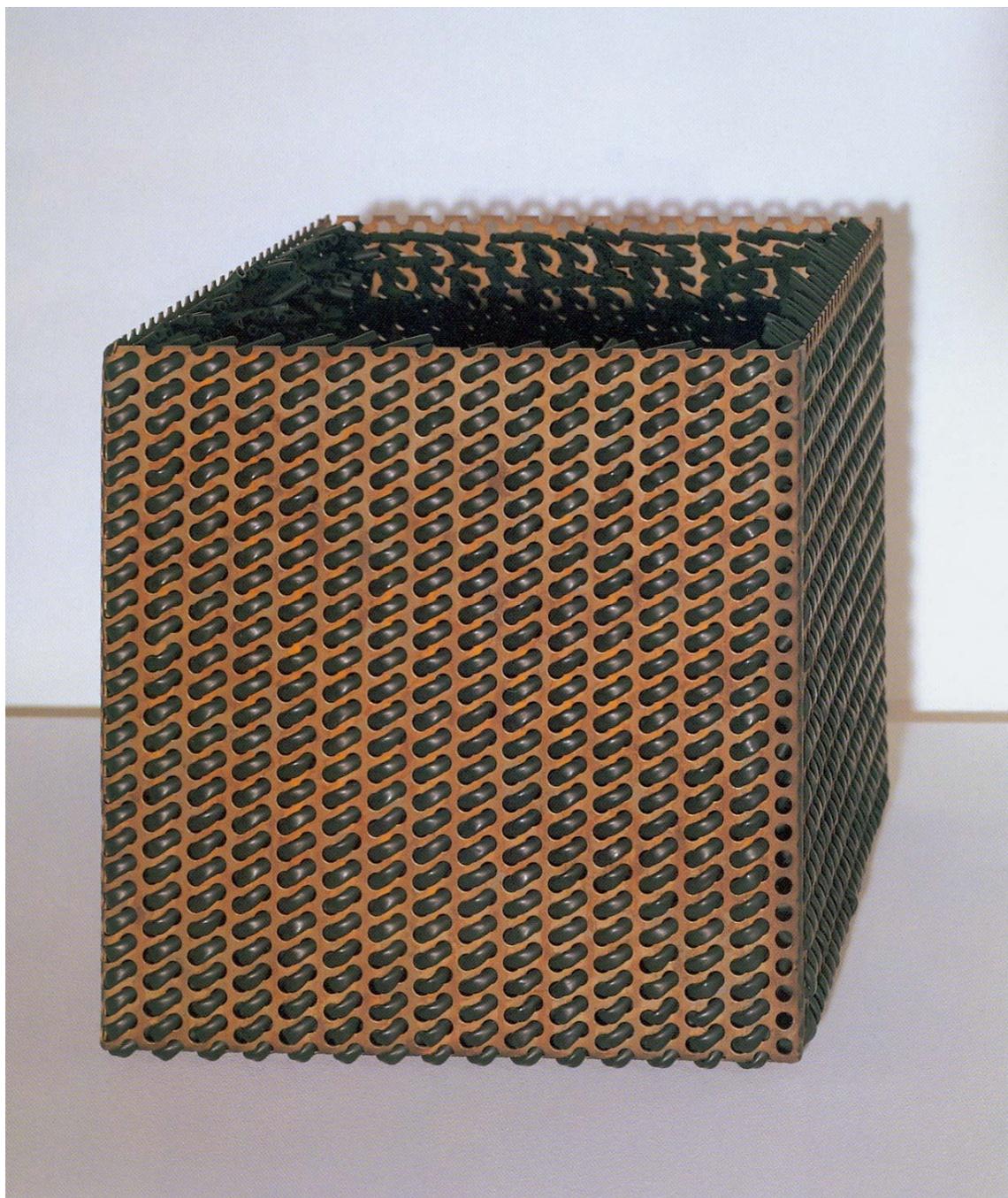


Fig. 14  
Eva Hesse, *Accession V*, 1968  
Galvanized steel and rubber tubing  
10 x 10 x 10 in.

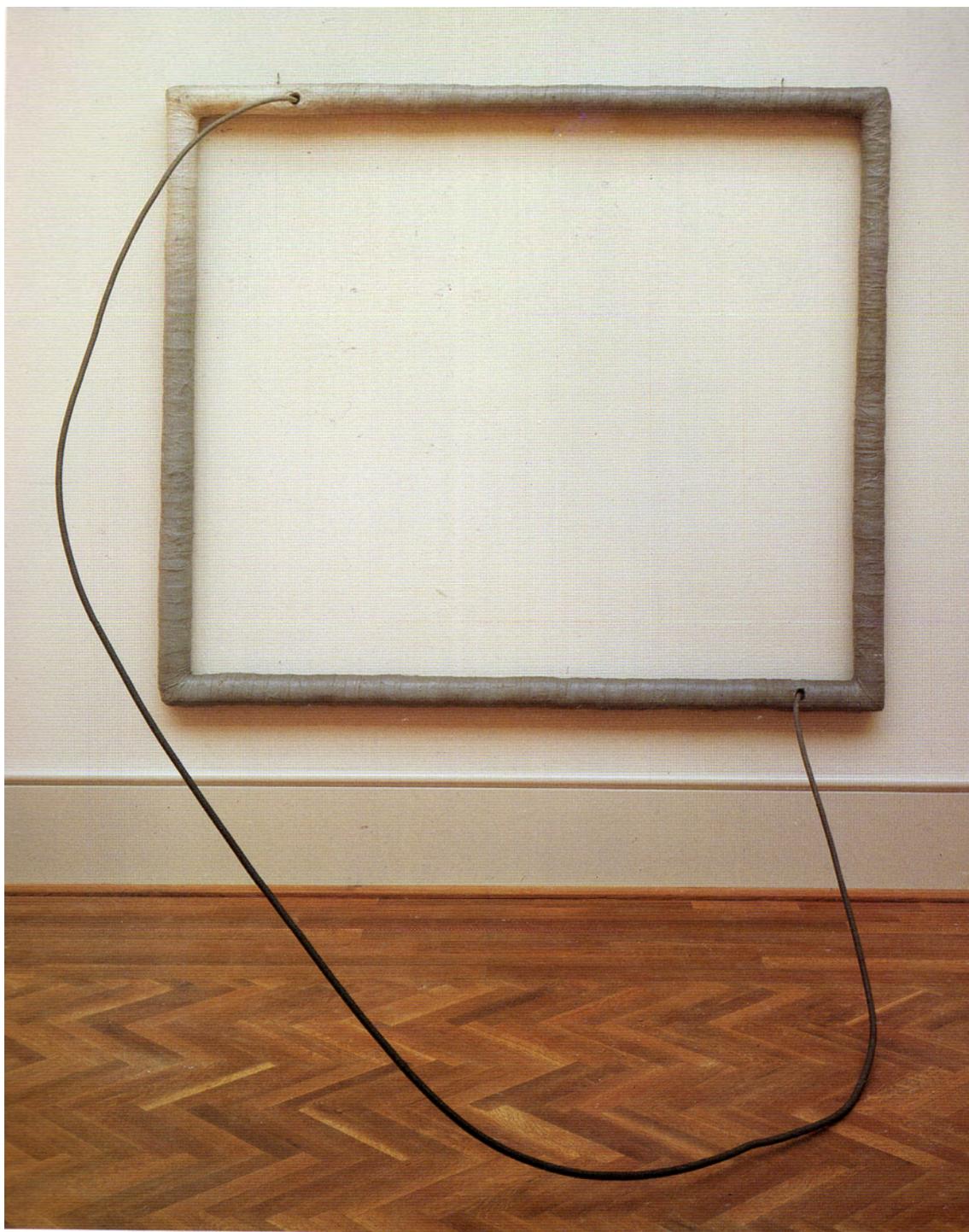


Fig. 15

Eva Hesse, *Hang-up*, 1966

Acrylic paint on cloth over wood; acrylic paint on cord over steel tube

72 x 84 x 78 in.



Fig. 16  
Eva Hesse, *An Ear in the Pond*, 1965  
Mixed media

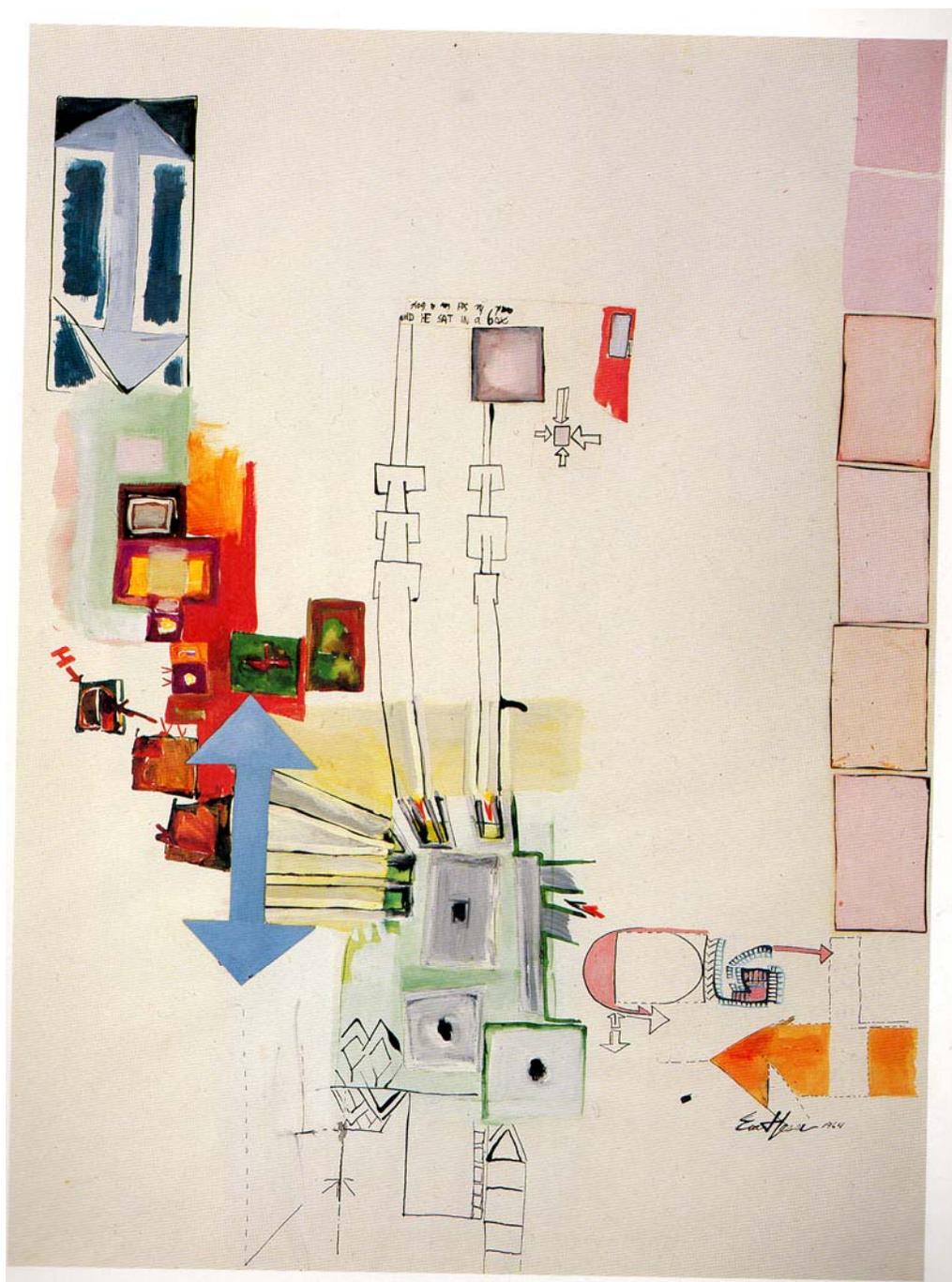


Fig. 17  
 Eva Hesse, *And He Sat in a Box*, 1964  
 Collage with ink, gouache, and watercolor  
 30 x 22 in.



Fig. 18  
Paul Thek, *Hippopotamus* (from the *Technological Reliquaries*), 1965  
Wax, metal, Plexiglas  
26.5 x 46 x 27 cm

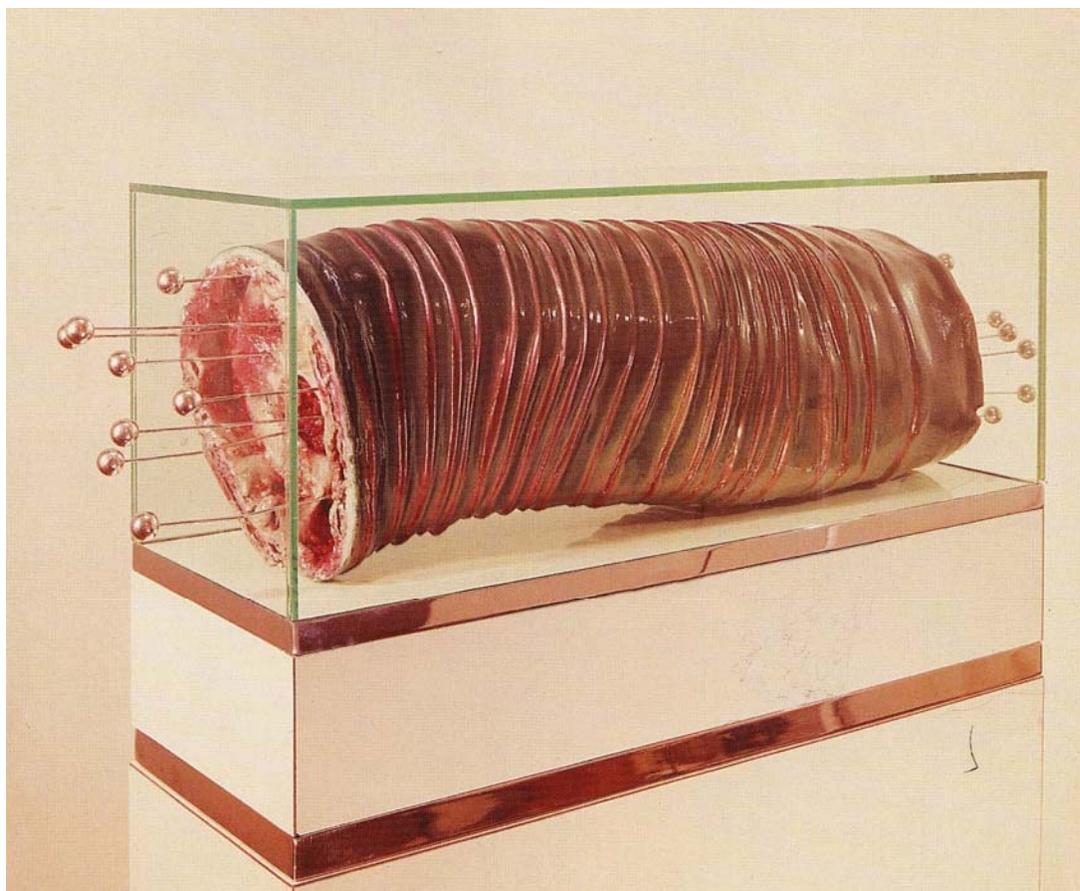


Fig. 19  
Paul Thek, *Untitled* (from the *Technological Reliquaries*), 1965  
Wax, formica, metal pins, Plexiglas  
37.5 x 63.5 x 23 cm

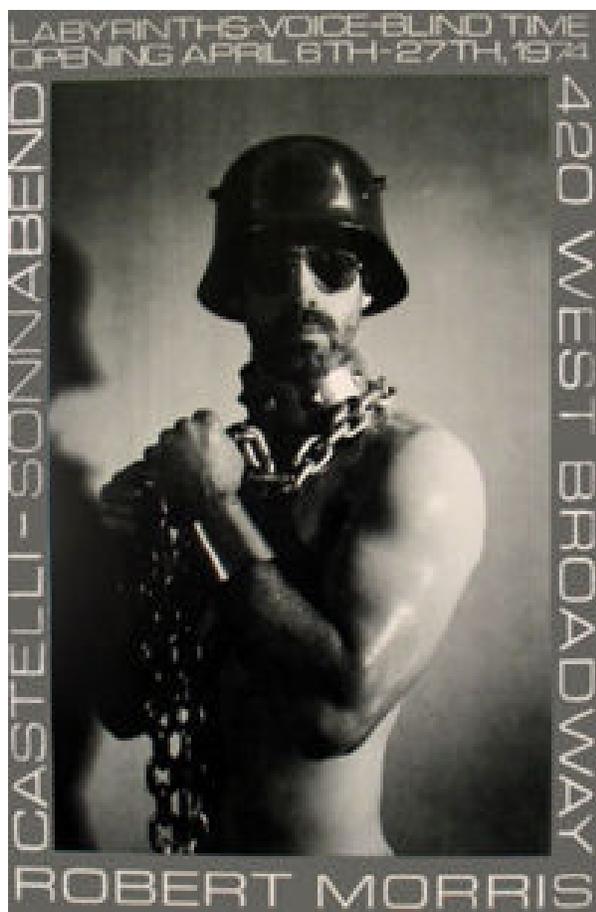


Fig. 20  
Robert Morris, photograph in *Artforum* magazine, 1974



Fig. 21  
Paul Thek, *Meat Piece with Warhol Brillo Box* (from the *Technological Reliquaries*), 1965  
Wax, silk-screen on wood, Plexiglas  
35.5 x 43 x 43 cm



Fig. 22  
Paul Thek, *The Tomb* (Death to a Hippie), 1967  
Wood, figure in wax  
259 x 320 x 320 cm



Fig. 23  
Paul Thek, *Self-Portrait* (from the *Technological Reliquaries*), 1966-67  
Wax, plaster, metal ring, Plexiglas  
57 x 32 x 37.5 cm



Fig. 24  
Lucas Samaras, *Box #1*, 1962  
Mixed media. 9 X 16 ½ X 17"



Fig. 25  
Lucas Samara, *Box #10*, 1963  
Mixed media. 6 ¼ X 10 7/8 X 6 5/8"



Fig. 26  
Lucas Samaras, Box #19 (the S Box), 1964  
Mixed media. 20 X 20 X 21"



Fig. 27  
Lucas Samaras, *Room #1*, 1964  
Mixed media. 10 X 15 X 7 1/2'



Fig. 28  
Lucas Samaras, *Room #2 (exterior)*, 1966  
Wood and mirror. 8 X 10 X 8'

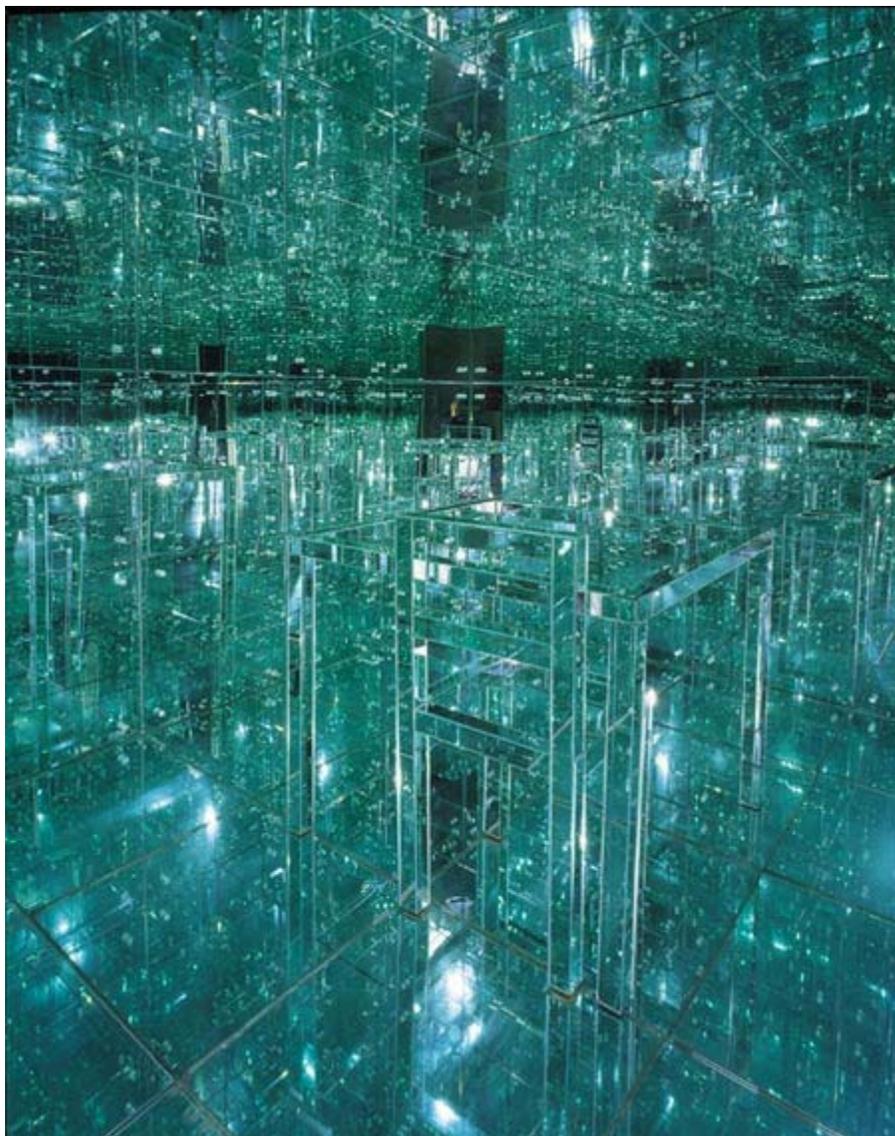


Fig. 29  
Lucas Samaras, Room 2 (interior), 1966  
Wood and mirror. 8 X 10 X 8'

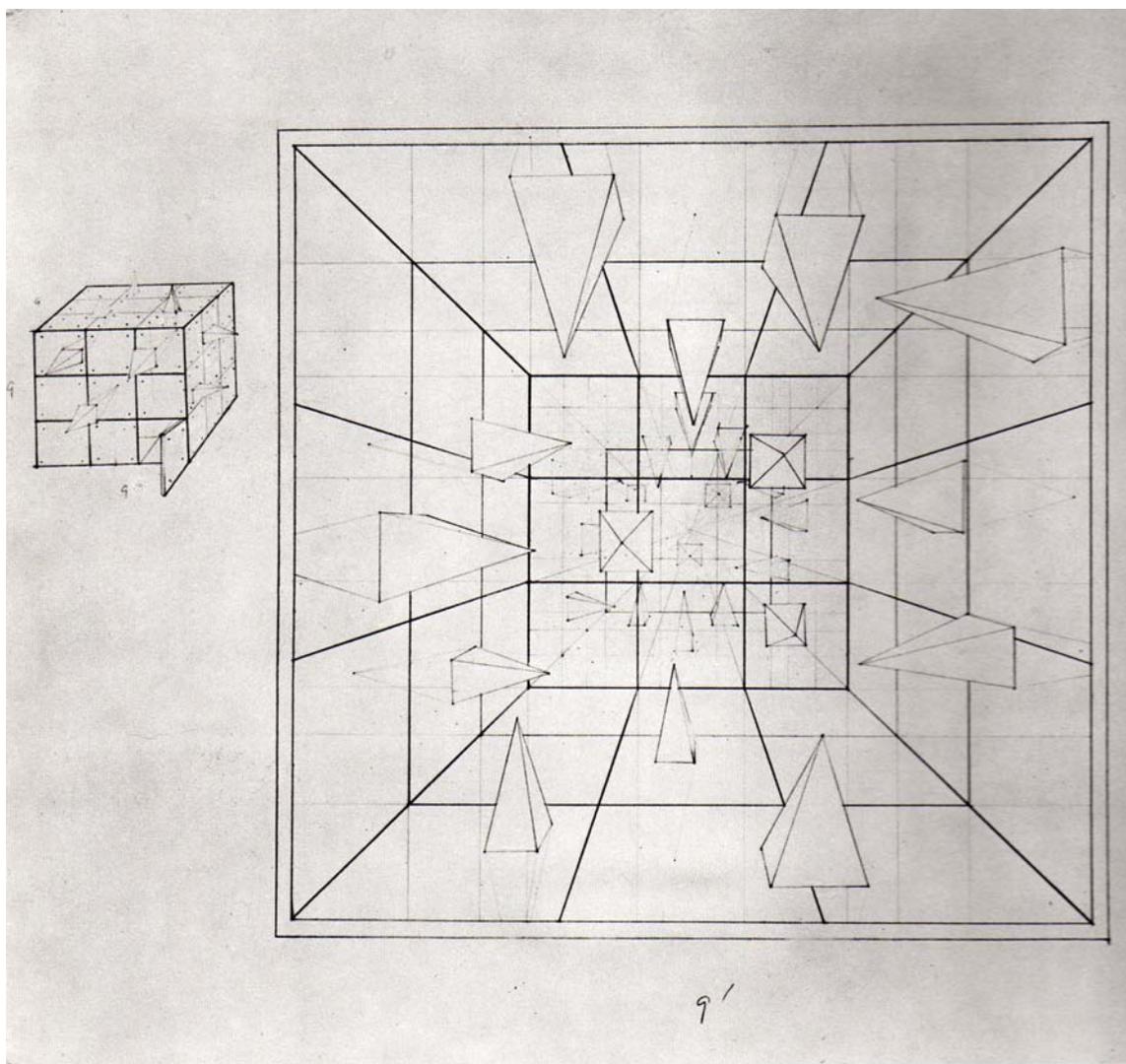


Fig. 30  
Lucas Samaras, Room #3 (drawing), 1967  
Pencil. 14 X 16 1/4"

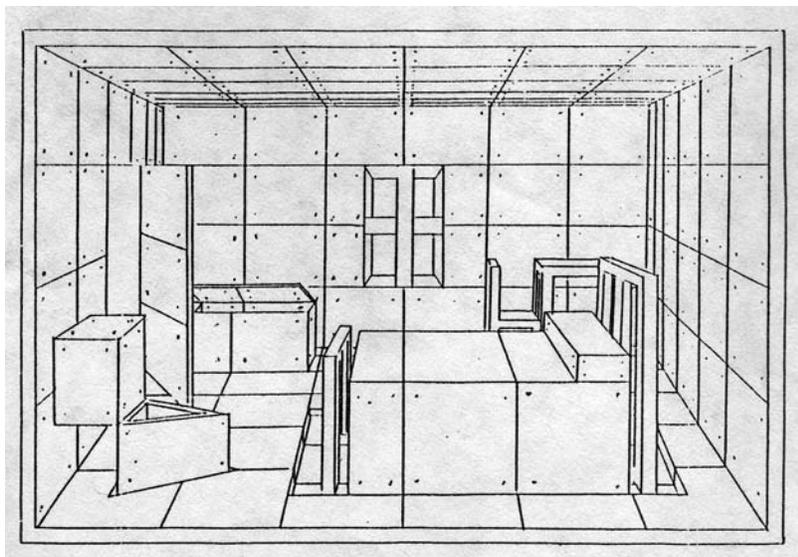


Fig. 31  
Lucas Samaras, *Mirrored Cell* (drawing), 1969



Fig. 32  
Lucas Samaras, *Mirrored Cell* (exterior), 1969/1988  
Mirror and wood.

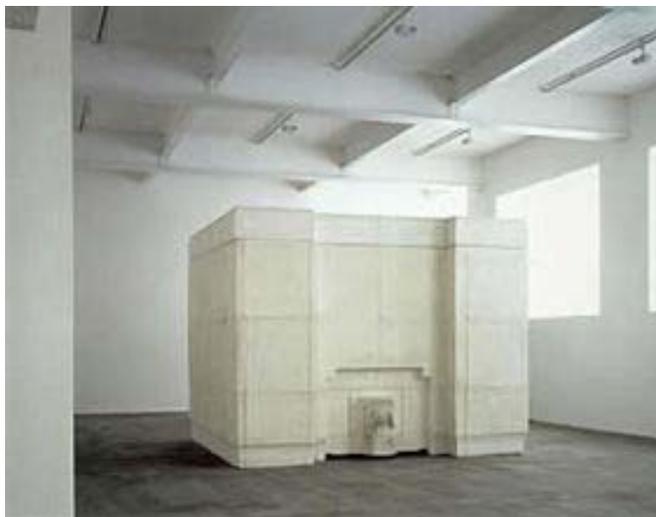


Fig. 33  
Rachel Whiteread, *Ghost*, 1990  
Plaster on steel frame  
269 x 355.5 x 317.5cm



Fig. 34  
Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993  
Concrete cast of a terraced house



Fig. 35  
Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992  
600 pounds of chocolate, 600 pounds of lard

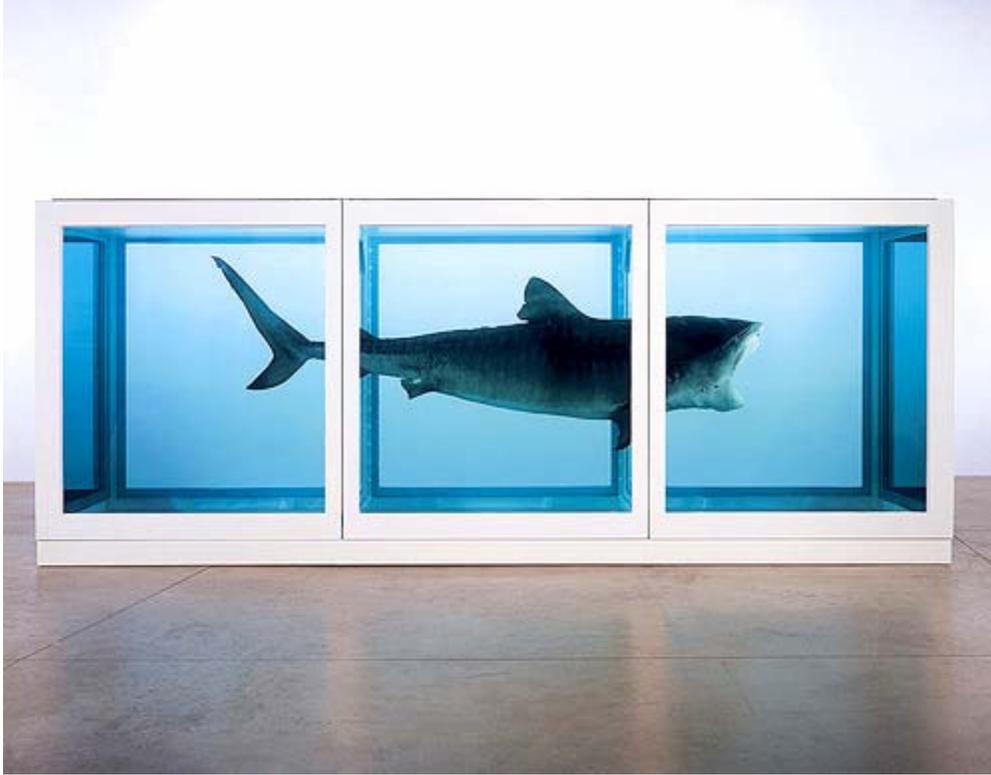


Fig. 36  
Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991  
Tiger shark, glass, steel, 5% formaldehyde solution  
213 x 518 x 213 cm



Fig. 37  
Damien Hirst, *A Thousand Years*, 1991  
Cow head, flies, maggots, electric bug zapper, steel, glass



Fig. 38  
Marc Quinn, *Eternal Spring (Sunflowers)*, 1998  
Glass, steel, sunflowers, refrigeration system

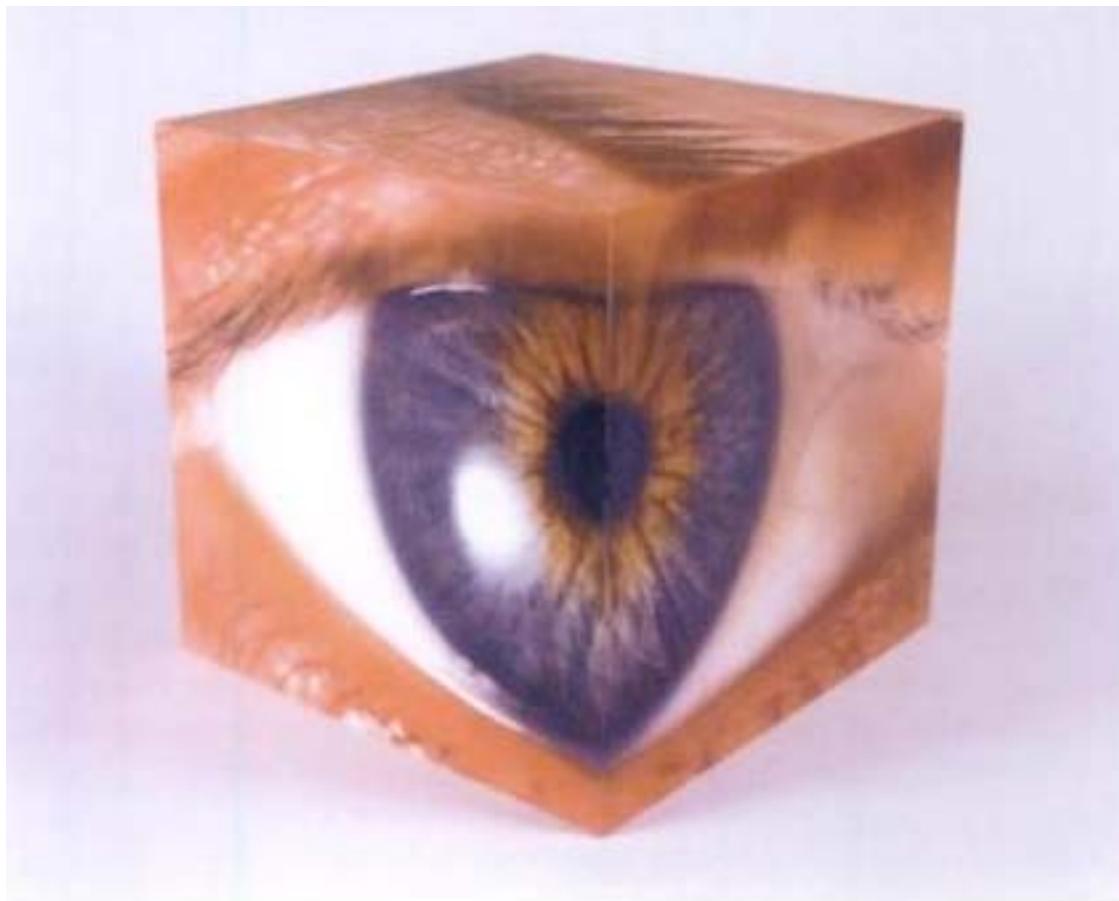


Fig. 39  
Sarah Prud'Homme, *Eye*, 1993  
C-prints on Plexiglas  
9 x 9 x 9"



Fig. 40  
Thom Barth, *Cube 3-87 Copy Marble Room*, 1987  
Steel, printed gauze