

ART

An Index

to (*see also*
POLITICS)

25 Years of
VERA LIST
CENTER
Fellowships

INDEX

- 1994 5, 117, 123
 1995 15, 34, 121, 123, 126
 1996 27, 35, 122
 1997 27, 39, 117, 120, 123, 125, 126
 1998 48, 123
 1999 15, 45, 46, 48, 49, 117, 118, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127
 2000 5, 63, 117, 123, 125
 2001 69, 117, 123
 2002 5, 79, 122, 123, 132
 2003 27, 64, 81, 82, 97, 105, 106, 129, 132
 2004 46, 87, 121, 123
 2005 68, 87, 97, 102, 117, 121, 123, 125
 2006 48, 69, 93, 97, 117, 118, 121, 123
 2007 39, 69, 93, 95, 100, 118, 120, 121, 122, 123
 2008 48, 123, 125, 129
 2009 5, 9, 46, 49, 83, 93, 119, 120, 123
 2010 7, 8, 35, 69, 83, 117, 120, 122, 123, 125
 2011 5, 7, 9, 45, 49, 79, 80, 93, 117, 118, 119, 122, 123
 2012 80, 81, 99, 102, 105, 118, 120, 122
 2013 20, 27, 31, 34, 39, 45, 79, 80, 87, 93, 94, 99, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 129
 2014 85, 118, 119, 121
 2015 27, 39, 87, 101, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123
 2016 17, 29, 39, 63, 80, 118, 122
 2017 45, 49, 52, 80, 87, 101, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123
 2018 3, 28, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 45, 69, 87, 117, 118, 119, 132
 Abu Hamdan, Lawrence 4, 101, 102, 123
 AIDS 3, 6, 9, 83, 118
 archive 6, 9, 10, 27, 32, 33, 34, 36, 45, 46, 58, 81, 105, 119, 122
 audience 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 46, 48, 68, 93, 98, 99, 106
 Beethoven, Ludwig van 16, 18, 19, 23–25, 112–113, 121
 Berger, Maurice 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12–13, 16, 18, 117, 123–124, 127
 childhood 5, 42, 79, 81, 85, 106–107, 110, 114
 collective 5, 6, 10–11, 13, 80, 81, 85, 90, 93, 95–97, 99–101, 119, 121, 124, 128
see also community
 community 3, 5, 6, 9–10, 12, 17, 19, 62, 64, 87, 91, 96, 99, 120, 124, 125
see also publics
 computer 22, 72, 77
 data 21, 69, 71, 72, 75–77
 decolonization 93
 DNA 77
 Ewald, Wendy 4, 63, 64, 67, 117, 123
 exile 61–62
 failure 52, 69, 75, 112
 feminism 118
 forgiveness 93
 gender 3, 6–7, 9, 85, 119–120, 126
 Geyer, Andrea 95, 97, 100, 123
 Gollan, Casey 4, 87, 117, 123
 Google 69, 71–72, 73
 government 6, 36, 40, 48, 97, 101–102, 124, 126
see also nation state
 Gutman, Margarita 4, 69, 78, 117, 123, 124
 Hapgood, Susan 4, 45, 46, 117, 123, 124, 131
 Hayes, Sharon 4, 93–95, 100, 118, 123
 Hoch, Danny 123
 holocaust 3, 62, 82, 113, 114
 home 12, 17, 25, 31, 32, 34, 42, 49–50, 61, 62, 67–68, 81, 82, 109, 114, 116
 Hunt, Ashley 4, 69, 95, 97, 100, 118, 123, 124
 identity politics 3, 5
 Khalili, Bouchra 4, 93–94, 99, 118, 123
 Lam, H. Lan Thao 4, 49, 51, 119, 125
 landscape 71, 73–74, 76, 107, 112, 118
 Lin + Lam 48, 51–52, 56–57, 119, 123
 Lin, Lana 4, 49–50, 119, 125
 machines 33, 55
 Magid, Jill 4, 27, 29, 31, 119, 123, 125–126
 Mantegna, Andrea 79, 81
 map 69, 71, 73–74, 76
 material 80, 93, 97, 106, 117, 122, 126, 129
 media 117–119
 memory 34, 37, 43, 50, 51–52, 119
 Mercer, Kobena 123, 125
 museum 21, 31, 44, 45, 49, 51–55, 58, 61, 107–108, 117–121, 122, 124, 127
 nation state 93, 95, 97, 99
 O'Grady, Lorraine 39, 40, 43, 120, 123, 125

ART, AN INDEX TO
(*SEE ALSO* POLITICS):
25 YEARS OF
VERA LIST CENTER
FELLOWSHIPS

Edited by Carin Kuoni and
Amanda Parmer

VERA LIST CENTER
FOR ART AND POLITICS
THE NEW SCHOOL

ART. AN INDEX TO (*SEE ALSO POLITICS*):
 25 YEARS OF VERA LIST CENTER FELLOWSHIPS
 Introduction

We welcome you to this book, a compilation of some of the thinking and work accomplished by Vera List Center Fellows since the center's founding twenty-five years ago. Since then, more than thirty individuals—artists, musicians, writers, curators, and scholars—have worked to locate spaces and moments where aesthetic practices translate into political realities. As the only institution committed exclusively to operating at the intersection of art and politics, the Vera List Center has nurtured these diverse fellowship projects in the context of the rich intellectual environment of The New School. Multiple local, national, and international publics as well as generations of New School students have been enriched by Vera List Center Fellows.

As we celebrate twenty-five years of Vera List Center Fellowships, we propose the fellowship program itself as an index—an initiative activated by the fellows who use local and very specific instances of contemporary culture to speak to larger aesthetic, economic, and sociopolitical concerns. The mechanism of the index helps bring historical projects into the present. It points to a thing but is not the thing itself; it is a tool and instrument of activation. The fellowship projects are the indices that yield specific questions such as resistance to, and use of, institutions; how to not speak the languages of power; and the protocols that sidestep decisions of power, culminating in a “manual for living.”

The exchanges between fellows included in this publication took place over the course of several weeks in the spring of 2018. We paired fellows by interest, and invited them to consider how each sees the current relevance of their historically located project, how it relates to their practices now, and how it points to ways we may want to figure our

shared futures. In trying to address a comprehensive paradigm shift of political life, we turn to the history of the Vera List Center Fellowships. This book recounts these generative engagements and conjures the meaning, importance, and necessity of the interdisciplinary nature of the fellowship projects today.

Art, an Index to (see also Politics) opens spaces of inquiry within the political histories from which the Vera List Center Fellows have emerged. Starting with the appointment of our first fellow, Maurice Berger, that history has included the persistence of structural racism; the AIDS epidemic and gender rights; educational institutions, teaching, and learning; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the legacy of the Holocaust; identity politics; activism versus aesthetic practices; liberal democracy and freedom of speech; migration and (post) colonialism. Accordingly, the contributions in the pages that follow range from the theoretical to the poetic, from how-to protocols to visuals, from stories to email exchanges. Our manual is not only an expression of the enduring and dynamic engagement across this community of thinkers and makers that has been at the core of the Vera List Center since the very beginning; it also advocates for the crucial role that aesthetic practices in all disciplines and formats play in helping us imagine, and enact, different forms of political life.

Without work, trust and generosity, the Vera List Center would not exist. We are inspired by those who founded this organization, as we are by those who support the center now—chief among them the center's advisory board and the Vera List Center Fellows whose work we celebrate.

It has been a particular joy to work with the fellows on this index. In gratitude for their

contributions to the past, present and future communities of the Vera List Center, we thank: Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Maurice Berger, Wendy Ewald, Casey Gollan, Margarita Gutman, Susan Hapgood, Sharon Hayes, Ashley Hunt, Bouchra Khalili, H. Lan Thao Lam, Lana Lin, Jill Magid, Silvana Paternostro, Alexander Provan, Walid Raad, Sarah Rothenberg, Edward Rothstein, Katya Sander, Robert Sember, Joshua Simon, Victoria Sobel, Elisabeth Sussman, and Jonathan Weinberg.

— Carin Kuoni
Director/Chief Curator

—Amanda Parmer
Curator

Sussman, Elisabeth;

1999

Lam, H. Lan Thao;

2009–2011

Lin, Lana;

2009–2011

In 1938 both Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) and Eva Hesse's (1936–1970) families fled the Third Reich. Hesse was two, and Freud eighty-two. In her essay "Letting It Go as It Will: The Art of Eva Hesse" in *Eva Hesse*, Elisabeth Sussman writes, "[Hesse's sculpture] looked uncomfortable in [its] institutional setting," touching on the displacement of objects from studio to institution and the dissonance this creates. In Lana Lin and H. Lan Thao Lam's video *After Engelman* (2017)—part of a larger installation work, *Saxa Loquuntur*—they emphasize the present conditions of what is now the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna. There, all that remains is the floor, doors, windows, and Freud's hat.

How does the affective evocation of space and objects endure? What are the contextualizing elements that we need to understand in order to connect the past to the present, like the Freud house's resituated objects or Hesse's sculptures, installations, and documentary images of her studios?

In Lin+ Lam's work, Freud's home is revisited in a kind of bicameral vision: on the one hand, through the photographer Edmund Engelman, who was solicited to document the "birthplace of psychoanalysis," and on the other, Lin+Lam's attention to the present conditions of the home, emphasized through an intermittent voiceover.

Sussman writes that Hesse's work "emerged from a liminal space between control and freedom, what she knew and what she couldn't have known in advance, between coherence and fragmentation." Over time, the material conditions of Hesse's work become part of the story the objects tell. This situates both Hesse's work and the representation of the Freud house as inanimate entities in an interstitial space that disavows the demands and control that museum time works to impose.

How does an individual's bodily experience facilitate conversations between objects and spaces, and what can we as artists and curators learn from occupying this intermediary role between the two? To put it another way, can we think of artists as mediums of sorts?

Elisabeth Sussman Thank you for thoughtfully getting us all together and sending great questions. I really appreciate it.

Amanda Parmer Good. I hope that you all found them helpful. The primary question that came up in our last conversation was: How can artists and curators can think about what we're learning from the objects and spaces differently through artistic practices, and this sense of displacement that mobilizes that?

That was present in Eva Hesse's work, but was really drawn out in Freud's and Lana and Lan Thao's project with the Freud House, the displacement of all the objects there, and the fact that it still does hold this effect of quality. Lana and Lan Thao, why don't we start with you? What is it that produced this effect?

Lana Lin I was thinking about the question Amanda had posed to us previously: "I hope we will have an opportunity to talk about how an individual's bodily experience facilitates conversations between objects and spaces and how we as artists and curators may think about what we learn from amplifying this intermediary role. To put it another way, how, can and do we think of artists as mediums of sorts in this sense." I love the idea of artists as mediums. I'm thinking of the Vera List publication on speculation that Lan Thao and I contributed to, in which we looked at the psychic medium through a kind of evolution of the psychic in urban space, and the ways that psychic medium storefronts have been displaced in some neighborhoods and have remained strongholds in others.

I suppose one could think of the psychoanalyst as a medium who transports thoughts and dreams and desires. Freud and Eva Hesse were both oriented to the primacy of the medium as opposed to the end result of how energies and impulses coalesce into an object.

Amanda Could you talk about the process of stratification that you referred to in your project about Sigmund Freud's former home and his antiquity collection? You mentioned the process whereby memory becomes stratified.

Lana That is Freud's language. He regards the work of psychoanalysis as akin to archeological excavation—and, in some sense, the bodies and the memories in which we live are stratified, so our past selves could be considered a compilation of layers. In going through the process of psychoanalysis, our layers are exposed.

Amanda Do you see that process outsourced to either the space of the Freud's former home or the objects that you've recreated for it? In the film,

you mention that the memories begin to live in the spaces and in the objects in this process of stratification.

Lana My desire for the video is to produce an experience in which the viewer goes through that memory and re-memory, as well as the repetition of certain actions and images, that reenacts the processes of memory.



Saxa Loquuntur, work-in-progress, Lin + Lam, Eros and Optimus Prime, digital collage, Archival digital C-print, dimensions: 50" × 37"

H. Lan When we were at the Freud Museum in Vienna, the emptiness of it
Thao Lam was actually very evocative. There's basically nothing there, and yet there's so much. At times, people would remember that they had visited the museum and repeatedly said they remembered the infamous couch being in Vienna. However, it left Vienna with Freud and has resided in a London apartment ever since. It never returned. This kind of misremembering is also very interesting. The past feels

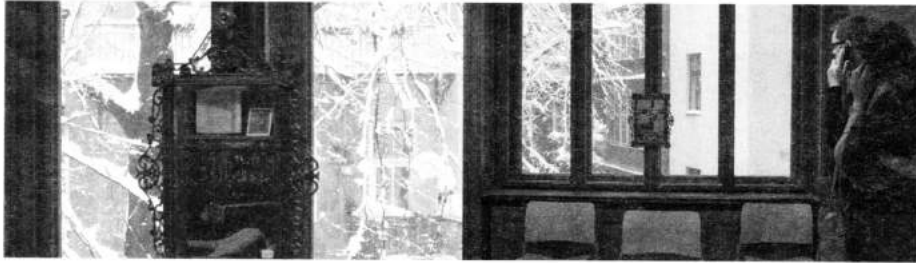
palpable when we enter a space where we know that something has happened.

Looking at an object, we know that it already has a history, like a toy that has been dog-chewed. As viewers or artists or researchers, we have to enter a space with enough time and openness to actually look and learn. I think about the objects we're reworking as possessing a kind of material intelligence, and as an artist, I also try to understand the time and process that the material requires.

Eva Hesse pushed the material beyond its industrial use to make a new language, and now the degradation of her material poses challenges to conservators. Sculptures are always losing something over time. Their loss actually becomes a kind of power.

Elisabeth One of Lan Thao's projects is about the historic actuality of this space in Vienna that still exists in memory and history. With Eva Hesse, it's very different.

I'm not sure that the museum is even capable of capturing



After Engelman, 2017. Lin + Lam, video still, HD video, colour and black & white with sound, duration: 13 minutes.

everything that Hesse's pieces perform. If these materials perform in the way that Hesse knew they would, they would deteriorate. They would, like Freud's sculpture, lose something. They would be a fragment of what they were, a shadow of what they were. They would reveal their life.

The whole idea of the museum as a place to capture time and space and memory works against what is happening in Hesse's work. Hesse's material logic runs counter to museum time.

Amanda What do you mean when you say museum time?

Elisabeth In a museum, an object goes up. It looks a certain way. If an object is only a shadow of what it once has been, if it's deteriorated, it's not allowed to even enter the space. It's considered a failure. It's not exhibitable, which is the phrase that accompanies much of Eva Hesse's work, because it doesn't look the way it did when she made it.

The museum can't cope with that.

Amanda It's fascinating to think of who has the capacity to evaluate that.

Elisabeth The evaluation is usually made by conservators in conjunction with curators or collectors, who make decisions based on the so-called life of the object. They can say the life of the object is over, or the life of the object is going to be extended, or the life of the object is fine, static, stable.

These are kind of the words that enter museum language regarding what can be shown and under what circumstances. It means that a lot of the energies that Eva Hesse was able to capture through her dynamic view toward material are not allowed to play out in museum spaces.

Amanda We keep on talking about the present and the past, but we haven't brought up this question of futurity much, which in both of these projects, seems like it has been institutionally arrested—in this case, through conservators, and with the Freud House, through displacement.

Lana It's so interesting to think about Hesse's work as resisting or confounding certain museum practices. It hadn't occurred to me that is a shared trait with the Sigmund Freud Museum, which is something of an anti-museum at the same time as it is a museum. It seems that what is being preserved is actually an absence.

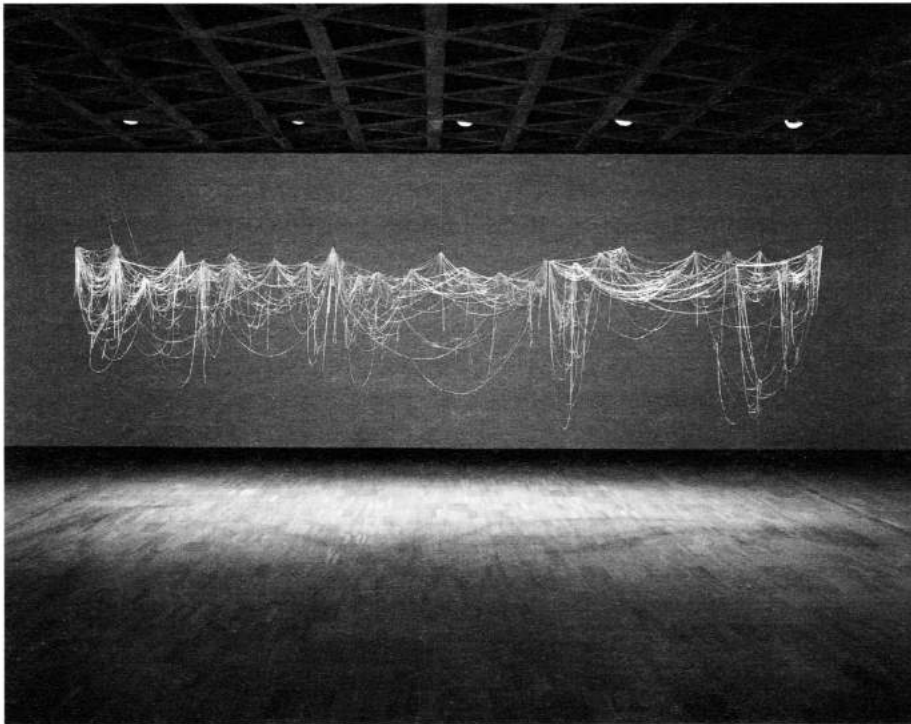
Amanda That does not seem to be the intention with the Freud House at all. It seems like it's a space for a very specific form of projection facilitated through text and sound and the single object that exists in the space.

Lan Thao What we saw when we spent so much time at the Sigmund Freud Museum was that people would spend as long as they could in the space. It was fascinating. They spent a lot of time wandering around the apartment and really engaging its parameters - the walls, the wall text, listening to the audioguide, looking at grainy photographs.

We watched how people interact with time, with past and present. The future, past and present are all happening at once. For instance, the sculptures we're making now are grafted with Transformers toy parts. We're recreating them to scale to Freud's collection of antiquities. They're small, ranging from three or four inches to about twelve inches high. Grafting these broken sculptures with Transformers prostheses propels this past myth into the future.



Eva Hesse, *Expanded Expansion*, 1969. Fiberglass, latex, cheesecloth. Installation variable, 3 units. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, gift of the family of Eva Hesse, 1975. Installation view from the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1969. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth.



Eva Hesse (American, b. Germany, 1936–1970), *Right After*, 1969. Fiberglass approximately: 5 × 18 × 4 ft (152.39 × 548.61 × 121.91 cm). Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Friends of Art, M1970.27

Elisabeth I'm thinking about the generational difference between Sigmund Freud and Eva Hesse; he was old when he left Germany and she was very, very young.

When you go a generation younger—the people who have actually been influenced and helped by psychoanalysis, like Hesse—you see someone who has internalized Freud's ideas, like the unconscious, and sort of given birth to them as dynamic art objects.

This installation in the Freud Museum is like a history of that moment, but reflects on the future as well. Eva Hesse's work, on the other hand, is emblematic of this first generation after Freud. There's a generational difference between these two people who have been victims of Nazism.

Amanda In terms of industrialization and mechanization, I'm thinking about Eva Hesse's machine drawings, in which she anthropomorphizes machines and creates an almost empathetic relationship to them.

In these digital prints you were making, Lana and Lan Thao, there's this rough collision of temporalities between the Greco-Roman sculptures and the Transformer parts that telegraph a form of futurity. Also, those toy figures are from thirty years ago now. Even though they point toward a future, they're also very old-fashioned.

This idea of play and becoming also comes up in Eva Hesse's work and practice, which, in my mind, contains a strong sense of play. That seems to come through in Freud as well. Elisabeth, could you say something about the relationship between play and Eva's work?

Elisabeth I agree with you entirely, that play is very, very important in her work. She kept this sense of play with her her whole life; kind of a free use of her imagination as she dealt with material. I think Eva Hesse's process of making is a dynamic exchange between herself and the material, in which they almost have equal standing.

She comes to realize that her material has a mind of its own late in her life. At the end, I think what play meant to her was that everything was playing out, the artist and the material. Play is the essential way of thinking about her work.

Amanda Just to stay on this question about Eva and industrialization for a moment, wasn't her studio in Dusseldorf an old, industrial factory? Isn't that a big part of how she started working with these resin pieces?

Elisabeth That's how she became a sculptor, actually. She worked in a factory and the machine drawings were drawings of the machines that she

saw there. She anthropomorphized them and turned them into cartoons of themselves. Then she began to make her own Duchampian kind of sculptures, sometimes using discarded machine parts.

Amanda There's a link between her practice and what Lana and Lan Thao are doing with the 2D prints that will be 3D printed of the sculp-



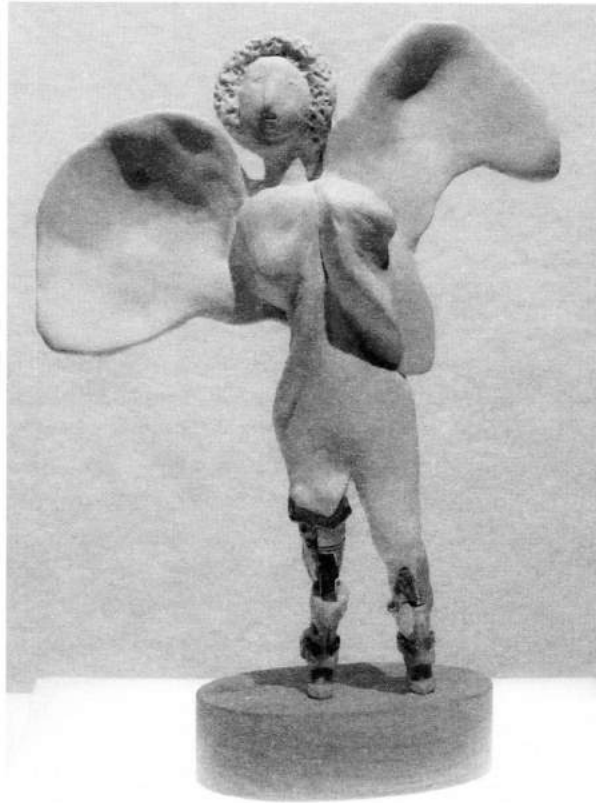
Sara Loquuntur, work-in-progress. Lin + Lam, Eros and Optimus Prime, digital collage, archival digital C-print, dimensions: 50" × 37".

tures from the Freud House. This cartoonifies them, to a certain degree, and is animated by this sense of play.

Lan Thao Initially, we were going to 3D-print the sculptures, but the sculptor in me wanted to actually take up the challenge and re-sculpt them by hand first. We're using the same sculpting clay used by kindergarteners, to engage in the sense of play you mentioned. One of the discoveries that we made while working with it is that the polymer clay can fuse with the Transformer parts.

The discovery of the possible fusion between the clay and the toy parts was very exciting. After that, it made sense to re-create all of Freud's figurines by hand with this clay, allowing it to fuse with the toy parts.

The materials themselves are industrially made: the clay is a plastic, petroleum-based product and so are all the toy parts made by Mattel. I think there's some relation here to Eva Hesse's material



Saxa Loquuntur, work-in-progress. Lin + Lam, Eros and Elita One, sculpey clay and Transformers parts, dimensions: 5.5" × 4.5" × 1.5"

or sensibility—she's using fiberglass, resin, latex, and plastics, all this material that was, at that point, more for industrial use. I believe she was one of the first artists who made large-scale installation with this kind of material.

Elisabeth Other people used fiberglass, but she was one of the only people who made large sculpture out of latex. She did so knowing that it would not last, and she came to like the fact that it had a mind of its own. She also liked that it was very much like paint or watercolor.

It was transparent. You could see through it. It was very fluid; it could cast. She figured out all sorts of strange ways to cast it. She gradually came to see that, over time, its character would change. All those things I just mentioned about its transparency and its fluidity, it's absent from her work now, all of it. She knew that would happen.

Amanda Is there a record of what her expectations were as the sculptures aged?

Elisabeth In interviews toward the end of her life, she said, "This is going to happen. I know it's going to happen, but that's what happens to everybody and everything. Why shouldn't it happen to what I'm making?"

Amanda Why does it sound as if Eva's wishes for her work aren't being respected or recognized?

Elisabeth Various things have happened. Objects have fallen over after they were put up for display. In Berkeley, latex objects that are supposed to hang on the wall like big quilts started to ooze water which, I guess, is some occasional physical property of latex.

Some of the things that she made at the end of her life have chipped, like toffee. When she made them, they were transparent. They were loose like paper. Now they're more like a sheet of cardboard—the nature of them has really changed. They're dangerous. They're always changing.

Amanda In spite of her openness to that alternative future life of the objects, it still seems the sculptures as they stand now no longer represent the work that she made.

Elisabeth Museums have a way of wanting to hide the age of an object. A photograph that's scratched or dented is fixed up. People would rather have a clean sheet than paper that's yellowing. All of those things are considered when things are displayed.

Amanda So they arrest time.

Elisabeth Yes.

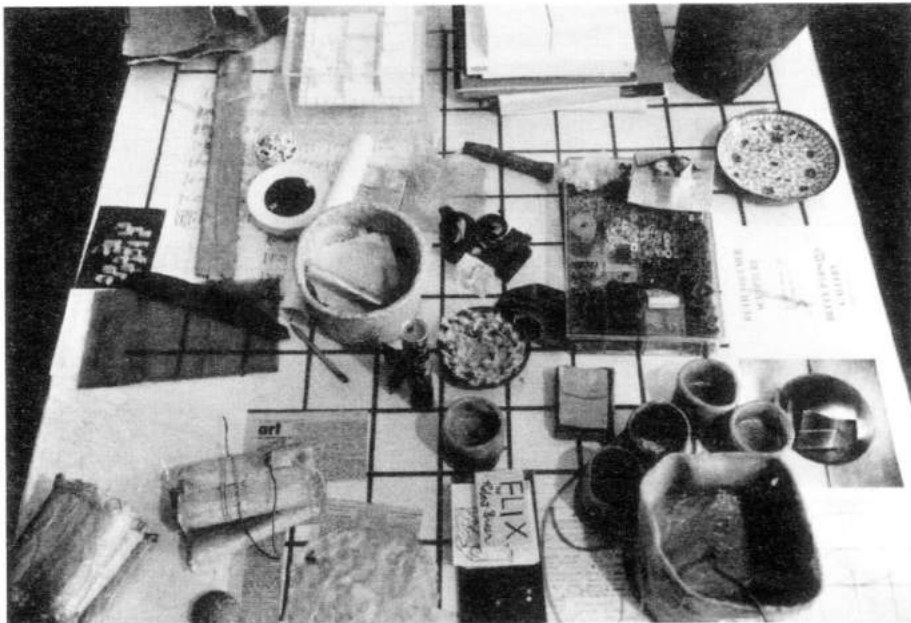
Amanda Lana and Lan Thao, what do you think of that?

Lan Thao When we work in archives, we find those broken, yellowing, fraying edges and scratches so compelling. We actually take those as cues or





Eva Hesse in her Bowery studio, ca. 1966



Eva Hesse's table, ca. 1968-69. Photo: Mel Bochner.

prompts for our own work. At the same time, I understand that collectors, museums and galleries might want the most pristine prints. I think about Barbara Kruger. At one point, she was a visiting artist when I was an undergrad. At the time, there was a controversy around one of her prints. The collector wanted a new print because he kept it folded and it had all these creases. She refused to make him a new one because she thought he was careless with the work and with his collection. Her argument during our class discussion was that you wouldn't ask Da Vinci to repaint the Mona Lisa.

Lana In our work, we are definitely interested in the effects of the wear and tear of time. In my research on the Sigmund Freud Museum, I found that in their attempts to preserve something of the past, they want to hide those effects of wear and tear and aging.

Amanda It's interesting how a sense of control over the past might shift into a capacity to control what the future holds—how the past might traffic in the future. I'm wondering if we can talk about the place that illness, and specifically cancer, held for both Hesse and Freud. For both, illness displaced parts of their bodies as they got older, and there was a sort of parallel to the displacement from their homes from which they were also ejected. There were also these parts of their bodies that were no longer what we would think of as a whole, healthy corporeality any longer—for example, Freud and his jaw. This changed what a normative embodiment meant for both of them.

Elisabeth Eva Hesse considered her own illness as part of a chain of events that started with her having to leave Germany, and then resulted in her mother killing herself. She saw all these events on a spectrum of absurdities.

Amanda From an outsider perspective, that seems quite different than Freud. Does that seem true to you, Lana and Lan Thao?

Lana It doesn't seem that that was Freud's experience. Hesse, I believe, struggled with cancer for a far shorter period of time. Freud's illness was a process that lasted sixteen years. Freud once wrote to his friend, Arnold Zweig, that he regarded the process as uncanny.

The literal meaning of the uncanny is unhomeing or unhomeliness. His experience of illness was not unlike the dispossession of his home. Therefore, yes, you're completely right that there was a kind of parallel with his exile.

Elisabeth We should discuss the historical circumstances of Hesse and Freud; both of these people were profoundly important twentieth-century people who were displaced. Of the artists of her generation, Eva Hesse is the only one who became very, very famous after she suffered through the Holocaust. She wasn't in a concentration camp, but she lost relatives and faced exile, displacement, deep depression, and a complete shift in social and economic status as a result. She lived, however.

She lived, which was very important. The whole of her short life, she carried within her a deep recognition of what she and her family lived through. She was genetically predisposed to depression, but it was also formed, to a large extent, by her life and her family history. Her depression had a really particular historic root.

Lana It's as if Hesse lived out Freud's understanding of the plight of modernity. He was writing *Civilization and its Discontents* even before his exile.

Lan Thao Even though he left toward the end of the war, all five of his sisters were killed in concentration camps. I believe it was when his children were detained for questioning, after that, it became clear to Freud that they had to leave. The psychoanalytic community elsewhere in the west, and particularly London, helped him find a home.

This enforced fleeing and being stateless caused Freud great pain from which he never recovered. In a way, I think he also decided when he would die. The pain of the prosthesis and the cancer was too great, but so was the pain of knowing that he would never return to Vienna.

Elisabeth He obviously knew he was going to die shortly after leaving Austria. Knowing that he would be uprooted from his home of the past forty years, he said he wanted to die in freedom.

Amanda I think it's a great note to end on this question of what it means to feel perpetually in exile. It's such a timely question, and it helps very much to link it to the present moment.

Lana I agree.

Elisabeth Thank you for the great questions.

Amanda Thank you for the great answers. This was really a pleasure.

Lan Thao Thank you so much.

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conjunction with *This Place. America, Border, Culture, Dreamer* (Brooklyn Museum), and will be published by Little, Brown in fall 2018 to accompany an installation in Philadelphia. Ewald has published *I Wanna Take Me a Picture* and *Literacy and Justice through Photography* for teachers and families. She has collaborated with partners in Tanzania for ten years to create photographic teaching materials for the national primary school curriculum.

Casey Gollan is an artist based in New York and was a fellow at the Vera List Center from 2015 to 2017.

Margarita Gutman is an Argentine architect, urbanist and historian, and a professor of urban studies and international affairs at The New School. She is co-director of the New School's Observatory on Latin America. She holds a PhD in architecture and urban history from the Universidad de Buenos Aires. She has taught and researched at the Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño, y Urbanismo of the Universidad de Buenos Aires where she won a chair (cathedra) in urban history. She also did research at the International Institute for Environment and Development – America Latina, the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC, and the International Center for Advanced Studies at New York University. She is the author of *Buenos Aires: El Poder de la Anticipación* (2011) and fourteen other books, as well as many articles. Gutman was a 2001 Fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics.

Susan Hapgood is a curator and the executive director of the International Studio & Curatorial Program in New York. The founding director of the Mumbai Art Room in India, Hapgood received her initial professional training at

2011–2013 Fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics.

Carin Kuoni is a curator and editor whose work examines how contemporary artistic practices reflect and inform social, political, and cultural conditions. She is director/chief curator of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School and teaches there. Prior to joining The New School, she was director of exhibitions at Independent Curators International and director of The Swiss Institute, New York. A founding member of the artists' collective REPOhistory, Kuoni has curated and co-curated numerous transdisciplinary exhibitions, and edited several books, among them *Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America*; *Words of Wisdom: A Curator's Vademecum*; *Speculation, Now*; *Entry Points: The Vera List Center Field Guide on Art and Social Justice*; and *Assuming Boycott: Resistance, Agency, and Cultural Production*. She is the recipient of a 2014 Andy Warhol Foundation Curatorial Fellowship, directed SITAC XII: *Arte, justamente* in Mexico City in 2015, and is a Travel Companion for the 57th Carnegie International in 2018.

H. Lan Thao Lam's work examines the ramifications of the past for the current sociopolitical moment through object making, installation, film, video, writing, and intervention. For over fifteen years, she has produced collaborative multidisciplinary projects about immigration, residual trauma, national identity, and historical memory as Lin + Lam. Her work has been exhibited and screened at the New Museum; The Kitchen; Carpenter Center, Harvard University; the Third Guangzhou Triennial; Arko Art Center, Korean Arts Council, Seoul, Korea; Taiwan International Documentary Festival, Taipei; rum46, Denmark; Cold City Gallery, Toronto; and Lennox Contemporary, Toronto. She has been awarded the Canada Council for the Arts

Media Art Grant, H.L. Rous Sculpture Award, and James Robertson Environmental Design Award. Lam's work has been reviewed in *Artforum*, the *New York Times*, *Art Journal*, the *Huffington Post*, *Time Out Hong Kong* and *Art Asia Pacific*. She was a 2009–2011 Fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. Lam is assistant professor of fine arts at Parsons, holds an MFA from CalArts, was a Whitney Independent Study fellow, and considers her experiences in refugee camps and housing projects part of her education.

Lana Lin is an associate professor in the School of Media Studies at The New School. Her recent research concerns embodied vulnerabilities that emerge at the confluence of race, gender, technology, and malignant cell growth. She is the author of *Freud's Jaw and Other Lost Objects* (Fordham, 2017). Her experimental films and multidisciplinary projects (as Lin + Lam) have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, Stedelijk Museum, and China-Taipei Film Archive. She has received awards from the New York State Council on the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, and the Jerome Foundation, and has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony, Civitella Ranieri, and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. She is currently completing a film that "re-visions" Black feminist poet Audre Lorde's 1980 memoir, *The Cancer Journals*. Lin was a 2009–2011 Fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics.

Artist and writer Jill Magid explores themes of intimacy and secrecy within systems of power. Magid's work develops from her own experiences inside systems like the military (being trained to embed with the US Army in Afghanistan), the police (being followed by the Liverpool Police Department through its citywide CCTV system), and the intelligence agency (being mentored as a spy after being commissioned by the Dutch General

FELLOWS REFLECTIONS

- Maurice Berger I was awarded the first Vera List Fellowship in 1993, as it turned out, at a critical juncture in my career. As my work focused increasingly on race, my stock in a university and museum world controlled largely by white people declined precipitously. The Center—with the blessing and support of the amazing benefactor for whom it was named—provided a safe space to explore controversial and difficult issues. Out of that fellowship emerged a number of key projects, including *White Lies*, my experimental memoir on race and whiteness, and retrospectives of the work of Adrian Piper and Fred Wilson. I will always be grateful for the support and encouragement.
- Margarita Gutman My two years at the Vera List Center as a fellow allowed me to continue my research on the anticipations of the urban future in Buenos Aires, while expanding it to New York through the organization of very well-attended public events. They were a series of activities in the aftermath of 9/11. They focused on “New York 2050,” including several workshops with local community leaders, and panels composed by well-known urban academics and government officers. It was a sad and complicated time for everyone in New York. These activities, together with many others in the city (like “Imagine New York”), were part of a collective reflection and elaboration on the loss of lives and significant parts of the city. Now, I think about those two years when I was also teaching as a stimulating time of conversation with faculty, colleagues and students at The New School. But most of all I think that this was a period of a substantial broadening of my horizons, where I developed a clear global social orientation to address the needs of vulnerable populations.
- Susan Hapgood My fellowship in 1999 advanced my own and others' research on John Cage's life and importance to broader New York art and music communities. This led to a panel discussion and research into Cage's history with The New School. My ongoing connection to the Vera List Center keeps the power of politics in art, and civic responsibility, central to my field of vision.
- Ashley Hunt Big yes to the intellectual resources and history of The New School: our fellowship was shaped in part by the faculty and students we were able to connect to, engaging their research, learning and action, and pushing the pleasure and challenge of our project.

- H. Lan
Thao Lam
and Lana
Lin
- The Vera List Fellowship introduced us to the vital and diverse population, culture, and intellectual discourse at The New School. We were honored to have the opportunity to meet with faculty, students, artists, and thinkers who share our goals of social justice and facilitated our project goal of speculating on change.
- Jill
Magid
- I'm thankful for the community of people the Vera List Center has created, and to be a part of it.
- Kobena
Mercer
- The two panel discussions I organized during my fellowship at the Vera List Center were catalysts that helped clarify a range of issues I was working on at the time (1999–2000), and as I look back I can see the vital role this played in the publication series I went on to edit, i.e. the four titles in the *Annotating Art's Histories* series co-published by MIT and by the Institute of International Visual Arts in London between 2005–2008.
- The fellowship was thus one of the highlights of my career, and I will always be indebted to the immense generosity and encouragement shown to me by everyone—New School faculty, students and other fellows—who made my experience so generative.
- Lorraine
O'Grady
- When I received the VLC Fellowship in 1997, it's safe to say that few people in the art world knew who I was. The award was a much-needed confirmation that the work I would do over those two years might be interesting and important. At least it was risky. In *Flowers of Evil and Good*, the French poet Charles Baudelaire, and his Haitian-born common-law wife Jeanne Duval were having a spectacular conversation at the dawn of modernism that, for a century and a half, nobody had wanted to hear. It was hard work and still is. Perhaps one day I will finish it. For the 2010 Whitney Biennial, I made four diptychs with Michael Jackson substituted for Jeanne Duval, called *The First and the Last of the Modernists*. The piece was so distilled and pure that the struggle with *Flowers* felt worth it. Recently, I reread the titles of the four VLC panels I did—which, at the time, had felt a simple respite from the studio: "Not For Sale: the Legacy of the Feminist Art Movement," "Miscegenated Modernism: the Black/White Co-Creation of 20th Century Culture," "The Resurrection of 'Live Art': What Kind of 'Life' Will It Be?" (on the new interest in performance art), and "Art and Politics: Women in the Theater" (with the Guerrilla Girls). I was shocked to find in the panels, in retrospect, a summary of my enduring interests. Perhaps the Vera List Center's most lasting gift has been the conjunctive phrase "for art and politics." It would support my instinct that political art, misunderstood at the best of times, could be a solid base for career and life.

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Contents

- 3 Art, an Index to (see also Politics):
25 Years of Vera List Center Fellowships
Introduction
Carin Kuoni, and Amanda Parmer, editors
- 5 Maurice Berger (1994) &
Robert Sember (2009–2011)
- 15 Sarah Rothenberg (1995) &
Edward Rothstein (1999)
- 27 Silvana Paternostro (1997) &
Jill Magid (2013–2015)
- 39 Lorraine O'Grady (1997–1998) &
Alexander Provan (2013–2015)
- 45 Susan Hapgood (1999)
- 49 Elisabeth Sussman (1999),
Lana Lin (2009–2011),
H. Lan Thao Lam (2009–2011)
- 63 Wendy Ewald (2000)
- 69 Margarita Gutman (2001),
Ashley Hunt (2006–2007),
Katya Sander (2006–2007)
- 79 Jonathan Weinberg (2002) &
Joshua Simon (2011–2013)
- 87 Walid Raad (2004–2005),
Casey Gollan (2015–2017),
Victoria Sobel (2015–2017) with Lin Carver
- 93 Sharon Hayes (2006–2007) &
Bouchra Khalili (2011–2013)
- 101 Lawrence Abu Hamdan (2015–2017)
- 105 From the Archive: A Conversation between
Maurice Sendak and Jonathan Weinberg
- 117 Contributor Biographies
- 123 Vera List Center Fellows 1994–2017
- 130 Vera List Center for Art and Politics

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