A girl who paints

Moran Sheleg

‘Good little girls ought not to make mouths at their teachers for every trifling offence. This retaliation should only be resorted to in peculiarly aggravated circumstances.’

Mark Twain, Advice to Little Girls (1867)

As part of her article for a special issue of Artforum, published in 2011, the Brooklyn-based artist Amy Sillman included a digitally reworked scene lifted from Ernie Bushmiller’s classic 1930s comic strip following the exploits of a precocious little girl named Nancy (figure 1). Re-imagining an encounter between the comic’s title character and another, on whom she spies through a hole in the fence that divides them, in Sillman’s version baseball is substituted for a second quintessentially American – and supposedly male – activity: action painting. One can clearly see where the image has been adapted, the character’s mitt replaced with a palette and paintbrush. ‘Wow,’ Nancy remarks as he runs, now with palette in hand, ‘what a painting!’ (rather than ‘what a pitch’), before offering, to her acquaintance’s visible surprise, a token of admiration: a bite of candy. Within her accompanying text, subtitled ‘In Defense of Abstract Expressionism II’, Sillman references T.J. Clark’s 1994 essay of the same title, building on the art historian’s recognition of the ‘vulgarity’ of this much maligned and ‘embarrassing’ artistic legacy, situated in a similarly stereotypical, machismo-laden, and inaccessible domain as that glimpsed by her girl.

Serving as an illustration in a double sense, it is along parallel lines to Nancy’s outsider (almost voyeuristic) position that in her article Sillman recalls the prospect painting presented during her days as ‘a little under-grad painter-girl (. . .) an earnest student with an old-guard teacher,’ a teacher described as:
one of those former AbEx party members who had gotten himself a teaching gig. I didn’t like him, and he warned me in return that I would certainly fail as an artist, but he was the only painter I knew, and he played Sinatra in class and called Abex “action painting,” which sounded exciting, and I wanted to have his clichés and eat them, too.4

With its informal yet direct tone, Sillman’s text and drawing (or re-drawing) marshal the spirit of Mark Twain’s short piece *Advice to Little Girls* (1867), an irreverent guide to public relations for the young, detailing how to deal with irksome people such as parents, playmates, little brothers, old people, and – most pertinently – teachers.5

Whilst clearly savouring such archaism, at the heart of Sillman’s comical exchange lie some serious questions about the ‘peculiarly aggravated
circumstances’ demarcating gestural painting and its legacies. ‘How is it,’ she asks in the accompanying essay, ‘that, despite the complexity of AbEx, its reputation has boiled down to the worst kind of gender essentialism?’ The kind which, failing to get beyond ‘simple butch and femme role-playing,’ has obscured the ‘interesting vagaries and conflicts’ animating its ‘gender clichés,’ such as ‘the fact that (Lee) Krasner was man enough to bend hot-pink planes with her bare hands, and the fact that (Joan) Mitchell was no feminist.’6 Pointing to the pervasiveness of the catchall term ‘woman artist’ as a label synonymous with ‘identity-oriented politics,’ Sillman highlights the limiting quandary of the often-recognized yet little qualified ‘misogyny of the New York School,’ as Krasner herself described it, which ironically enough would appear not to have excluded women.7

Given this longstanding problem it seems pertinent that Sillman alights on the image of a perpetual girl, in the form of Nancy, to picture her scene. Following developments in the study of ‘girl culture’ in sociology, anthropology, and cultural theory since the 1990s, the representation of the ‘girl’ and ‘girlhood’ in contemporary art has emerged as an area of critical enquiry and a specific strand of feminist art history. As posited in a recent volume of essays edited by Lori Waxman and Catherine Grant, the appearance of this aesthetic phenomenon has raised ‘questions about the state of feminism, sexuality and identity’ as asked ‘by a diverse range of contemporary artists for whom politics are ambiguously blended alongside the associations of girlhood with spectacular consumer culture.’8 Seeming to anticipate these sentiments, in a text written for the 2011 Feminism! issue of Texte zur Kunst, Sillman asserts that:

Identity politics hasn’t kept us all bracketed away from each other in separate self-serving units, but has allowed for the luxury of folding gender questions together with all the other things that interest us, like form, colour, history, memory, affect, meaning, visuality, etc.9

One such entanglement emerges in the clump of marks that cover Sillman’s large canvas Big Girl (2006), a towering structure in which the ‘self’ of self-portraiture and self-reflexive painting seem inextricably bound (figure 2). Whilst Helen Molesworth sees Sillman’s work as the materialization of ‘what it feels like when you feel like a girl – that is, when you feel like a person
who is being watched and judged for her ability to withstand being watched and judged,’ it also stands as the self-made proposition of a girl who watches and judges in return.¹⁰ In a second version of the cartoon (figure 3), the action of the pitcher-turned-painter is supplemented by a now visible, if still incomplete, painting. Yet, as before, it is the interaction with the painter

*Figure 2* Amy Sillman, *Big Girl*, 2006. Oil on canvas, 203.2 × 182.9cm. Amy and Vernon Faulconer Collection, Dallas, Texas. © Amy Sillman. Courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York. Photo: John Berens.
Figure 3  Amy Sillman, Nancy 2 (thank you to Bushmiller and Brainard), 2011. Digitally altered comic strip. © Amy Sillman. Courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.
as instigated by Nancy to which our attention is drawn. In Sillman’s hands, painting is both represented and re-presented as the catalyst for a point of contact, if only through a small gap in a seemingly insurmountable, but not impenetrable, barrier.

As part of an attempt to stage such an opening into painting’s past, in 2008 Sillman was invited to select works by her chosen precursors for a group exhibition titled *Oranges and Sardines: Conversations on Abstract Painting*, curated by Gary Garrels and held at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. In the accompanying catalogue, Sillman explains the significance of *H+H* (1965), a painted relief by Eva Hesse (figure 4), to her own work. As she states:

> These works represent what abstraction is to me, homing in on the ideas of colours, shapes, anxieties, eccentricities – a kind of vector where the psychological works itself out through the formal. My thinking about everything for this exhibition starts with the Hesse.

Here Sillman positions as her point of entry a work made at a moment often critically framed as Hesse’s departure from painting. Completed and first exhibited by Hesse during an extended stay in Germany (the country she had to flee as a three-year old child, on account of being a Jew), *H+H* is one of a group of fourteen masonite and wood panels mounted with rope, machine-parts, and masking tape, amongst other materials, all saturated with a vivid spectrum of coloured ink and paint. These surviving reliefs, many of which remained in Europe, constitute what has repeatedly been referred to as Hesse’s decisive ‘breakthrough,’ soon solidifying into the sculptural work begun following her return to New York in the autumn of 1965.

What might it mean for Sillman, an artist concerned with the ambiguously-gendered, historical grey zones of abstract gestural painting, to choose such an ‘exit’ as her own entrance? What kind of ‘historicity,’ to quote Yve-Alain Bois following Hubert Damisch, might Sillman’s choice suggest, and what implications might it hold for a critical reappraisal of the status of painting during the mid-1960s, a moment often viewed as the horizon of its supposed ‘end’?

In the face of these questions, Hesse’s own paintings offer a prominent and appropriately problematic case study with which to test both the
condemnation and reclamation of painting – often, in the first instance, by
the artist herself – during a moment today wagered as proto-feminist. Yet a
moment which, despite its urgent remapping since the 1970s, still remains
something of an art historical no-woman’s-land, as evidenced by even the
most recent scholarly reappraisals in which women feature solely as the objects
and pictorial products of ‘post-war’ painting, as opposed to its producers.16
The hangover of the discursive figure of the ‘woman painter’ here appears to linger, positing a problem area for art historical accounts hitherto unable, or else unwilling, to account for her.\textsuperscript{17}

In the case of Hesse’s paintings, this critical dismissal has proved endemic from the outset.\textsuperscript{18} Although manifesting formal kernels, such as the primary-coloured palette and ‘predilection for “painting out” around shapes,’ (see, for example, figure 5), the vast majority of the artist’s production as a painter receives no mention in Lucy Lippard’s key monographic study, which still
stands as a foundational resource. Important though Lippard’s book was, the palpable need to canonize Hesse’s ‘mature’ work – that is, the sculptural practice that would emerge over the last four years of the artist’s life – has had the polarizing effect of reinforcing the de facto neglect of her disparagingly categorised ‘embryonic’ and ‘early’ output, constituting the hundred or so predominantly abstract canvases of various sizes and visual schemes that the artist produced after graduating from Yale Art School in 1959. In tangential agreement, Hesse’s friend and colleague Mel Bochner has asserted that prior to her return to America, ‘she wasn’t doing work that was consistently good enough to show.’ This indictment, however, seems to speak more to Bochner’s own ‘bracketing out’ of what he has described, in reference to his ostensible return to painting in the 1980s, as the ‘pejorative’ labels of the ‘compositional’ and the ‘subjective’ then attached to the contentious medium, than it does to the status and reception of Hesse’s so-called ‘early’ work.

When compared, a palpable distinction can be seen between the artists’ projects at the time. Whereas Bochner’s excessive layering of colour on masonite board (figure 6) results in a lumpy patch of brown pigment, a sort of Robert Rauschenberg-esque scatological experiment emphasizing the base ‘materiality’ of oil paint, Hesse’s canvas (figure 5), painted with the solvent-based acrylic Magna, appears more concerned with building up an abstract visual vocabulary in which enclosed shapes partition the picture plane, a governing strategy in much of her subsequent art. Whilst Hesse’s work does not totally obscure the traditional formula of painting as tableau, neither does it fully relinquish hold of the canvas as a space of agency – a remnant of the artist’s ‘action,’ as famously posed by Harold Rosenberg in 1952. In order to broach what may have been at stake in upholding the kind of ‘phenomenology of making’ available in abstract gestural painting ten years post factum, not only of the main event but also its almost immediate lampooning and quite literal ‘erasure,’ to recall Rauschenberg again, I want to argue that Hesse’s works reverse the logic of the ‘pejorative’ terms identified by Bochner. For rather than putting them aside, Hesse’s canvases elicit, exaggerate, and even relish the much-maligned and ‘vulgarised’ aspects of abstract expressionist painting – to return to Clark’s defense – precisely by displacing its founding phallocentric tenets.
Writing in 1992 for the earliest exhibition to focus solely on Hesse’s large abstract paintings, which included *Untitled* of 1964 (figure 7), Max Kozloff identifies the ‘cockiness – and contrariety’ of its ‘cartoonish’ elements as a rejection of ‘the feminine side’ of Arshile Gorky’s work, namely his ‘insinuating hothouse colours’ and ‘aromatic exaltations.’

Not quite able to move beyond the ‘gender essentialism’ highlighted by Sillman however, Kozloff describes Hesse’s parodic twist of an admired forbear’s bodily, and distinctly erotic, imagery as ‘a necessary payment of dues in the male art world.’ On the other hand, Kirsten Swenson suggests *Untitled* as a more or
less direct remodelling of one of Gorky’s *Betrothal* paintings belonging to the Yale University Art Gallery, which she claims the artist had been familiar with since her student days. Swenson goes on to interpret the work as ‘an expression’ of Hesse’s frustration with traditional marriage designations, and the incompatibility of the roles of ‘artist’ and ‘wife’ as she experienced them at the time.29 Whilst I do not wish to understate these challenges, viewing Hesse’s paintings solely through the biographical lens that Swenson proposes (or else Anna Chave’s anthropomorphic take on the later objects in terms of ‘a girl being a sculpture’) risks eliding what Bochner has called ‘the problem’ of ‘the Eva Hesse “mythology”’ surrounding the artist’s work, at the expense of its critical appraisal.30 Consequently, the shifting concept of the girl offers a useful pivot around which to unhinge the framing of these paintings as biographical self-portraits, stylistic ventriloquisms of – in Kozloff’s words – ‘idolised patriarchs’, or failed attempts to sustain a ‘dialogue’ with art history.31

In her study on feminine adolescence in popular culture and cultural theory, Catherine Driscoll identifies the girl as a ‘historically specific’ construction of cultural discourse, ‘an index’ of broad cultural changes and continuities in modernity, cited as a time privileging the person as ‘the knowing centre of the world.’32 Distinguishing girlhood as a set of historical fictions surrounding the experience of becoming a woman, Driscoll traces the emergence of the girl as a mutable discursive locus shaped, in part, with the involvement of young women themselves. Accordingly, as both the visible ‘marker’ of a particular subjective experience, and the maker of a culture specific to it, the concept of the girl as a destabilising rubric helps to consider the possibility of Hesse’s paintings as parallel attempts at self-generation by someone who precisely in having occupied this subject position is excluded from standing accounts of the experimental strategies at work in, and the subjectivity mined by, mid-twentieth-century painting.33

Reclaimed by later generations of artist and activist collectives such as the Guerrilla Girls and Riot Grrl groups, the upholding of the girl as a critical (and empowering) cultural term, rather than one of condescension, offers a further way of rethinking the gestural aspects of Hesse’s paintings beyond the supposed fixity of the ‘female identity’ of the artist and the gendered body in painting, as well as the body of painting itself – that is to say, of painting as a body.34 For whilst the sumptuously coloured, ovoid
forms variously segmented and framed in one of her last canvases (figure 8) might suggest the kind of elemental, even primordial, essence as evoked in the egg-shaped Spatial Concepts of Lucio Fontana, their resolute flatness belies the material emphasis of the canvas as a bodily substitute vulnerable to abjection and mutilation. Where Fontana’s piercing of the surface disrupts the physical cohesion and sublime ideological form of his canvas-eggs, suggestively subtitled La Fine di Dio (The End of God), Hesse’s cut remnants operate on a deflationary rather than a destructive principle, by which sexual allusion appears perfunctory rather than provocative. Take for example the collaged scraps of painted paper that form Penetration of 1965 (figure 9), which, whilst knowingly euphemistic, just as graphically diagram the piecing together of a particular visual vocabulary commandeered from

Figure 8  Eva Hesse, Untitled, 1965. Ölfarbun auf Leinwand, H: 87.5, B: 104.5cm. Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Purchased with funds from the Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zürich, 1993. © Hans Humm, Zürich.
Figure 9  Eva Hesse, *Penetration*, 1965. Collage with acrylic, India ink and watercolour, mounted on board, 13.5 × 8.2 cm. fluid archives. © The Estate of Eva Hesse. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth.
the exhausted remains of a readily available – if faulty and ultimately faltering – toolbox.

Through such works, the experience of painting is recast as a physical process of ‘construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction,’ as Sillman describes it, which highlights rather than hides ‘every saggy place (. . .) between what you tried and what really happened.’37 During an interview given just before her death in 1970, Hesse retrospectively described her painting practice as a move ‘backwards.’38 Rather than regression however, this statement seems to indicate a condition of belatedness similar to that seen in Sillman’s own mode of painting. As if to illustrate this, in the inaugural issue of her self-published zine, the O-G, Sillman lays out a lexicon of her imagery (figure 10), recasting the kind of vector recognized in Hesse’s work as a makeshift apparatus with which to shape the ‘struggle’ with the figure of painting itself, rather than

figuration or abstraction as such. Mining the historical equation of ‘the paint stroke, the very use of the arm (...) to a phallic spurt,’ by graphically rehearsing its impotence as a canonical form, Sillman simultaneously calls to mind a tradition of artist’s explanatory notes, such as those collated in Marcel Duchamp’s *Green Box*, whilst establishing a framework for her own idiosyncratic procedure. With their sketchy, arbitrary, and composite details, it is as visual litanies of the dynamics and dilemmas of painting as a fallible experience that Hesse’s canvases similarly appear.

Around 1963, Hesse started to incorporate collage into her paintings. Whilst not a sustained practice as such (it seems inappropriate to even call this collage, since the pieces are so finely pasted as to almost elide distinction, let alone disjunction), it would provide a sort of manual manoeuvre with which to trial different forms, from the pre-given, such as crosses, numbers, letters, arrows, even pictures within pictures, to the painterly, in the wide variety of scrubbed, striated and looped brushstrokes, and gestural drips, dabs, and doodles drawn from the same ‘reserve’ later delved into by Sillman. A crisscrossing of prevalent modes is also seen in one of her works on paper made the previous year (figure 11), in which a visual interplay is set up between the appropriated image (itself a frame full of images) and the rectangular forms and coloured marks that in turn frame it. This is a rare instance of Hesse incorporating a real-world element as it were, but I think it registers a salient step in staking out ways to append the indexical image of representation to abstract elements of gestural picture-making, such as colour, form and line, without putting pay, or ‘paying dues,’ to either. In this sense, both are ‘free’ for the taking, as the work so graphically declares. Rather than attempts at mimicry then, Hesse’s canvases appear as incremental testing-grounds against which to see what is useful and what is superfluous, what does and does not work within the subjective and compositional graft of ‘painting a painting’ to quote the artist herself. ‘Making art,’ as Hesse wrote in 1964, ‘the Art, the history, the tradition, is too much there (...) I don’t want to know the answer before but want an answer that can surprise.’

The procedure of turning things around, both physically by cutting and pasting and pictorially by painting, comes to figure a kind of ‘phenomenology of making’ experienced, I would argue, less in terms of the painter who acts, but the girl who paints – both on her own terms and in her own terminology. When seen in this light, Hesse’s canvases take on a pointed criticality of the
common, if specific, artistic experience drolly summarized in a historical anecdote collated by John Cage for his 1959 lecture titled *Indeterminacy*:

One of Mies van der Rohe’s pupils, a girl, came to him and said, “I have difficulty studying with you because you don’t leave any room for self-

**Figure 11**  Eva Hesse, *No title*, 1962. Collage, crayon, and pencil, 25.4 × 22.5cm. Allan Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio. © The Estate of Eva Hesse. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth.
expression.” He asked her whether she had a pen with her. She did. He said, “Sign your name.” She did. He said, “That’s what I call self-expression.”

‘That’s what I call self-expression’: so comes the authoritative response of a teacher to his pupil, identified simply as ‘a girl.’

Like Sillman forty years later, Hesse would retrospectively note her (elder, male) teachers’ hostility to her chosen mode of painting, and the control exercised over even the most elemental aspects: ‘If you didn’t follow their idea, it wasn’t an idea. And in color you had to. You were given coloring papers so your choices were less and you had to work within certain confines.’ Recognising the teacher’s lesson as a betrayal of his own limited purview, the girl here emerges not only as a product of the notably misogynistic discourse surrounding expression and selfhood in art of the mid-twentieth century, as well as a construct of that discourse felt across time, but also as a producer who shifts the valence of painting as a pre-given and inherently antagonistic site of artistic production. Trespassing on the bounds of an inherited tradition, Hesse’s canvases collectively posit an eye of the needle – or peephole in the fence, to return to Sillman’s cartoon – through which to glimpse the possibility of a girl who paints.

Notes
I would like to thank my supervisor, Briony Fer, for her invaluable support and advice. My thanks also to Dieter Schwarz, Director of the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, and Jörg Daur, Deputy Director and Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Museum Wiesbaden, for their kind assistance and generosity during the initial stages of my research towards this paper. For funding my PhD studies, I am immensely grateful to the London Arts and Humanities Partnership set up by the AHRC. Finally, my thanks to Amy Sillman, Mel Bochner, and the Estate of Eva Hesse for granting image permissions.

4 Sillman, op. cit., p. 322. Here the phallic appearance of the candy Nancy pokes through the fence takes on a targeted sense of humour.
5 Twain, op. cit., pp. 244–245.
9 Amy Sillman, ‘Affirmative Reaction’, in *Texte zur Kunst*, issue no.84, December 2011, p. 80. Earlier in her essay, Sillman asserts that: ‘if we repudiate the politics of identity, we are left with a gap of neglectful public articulation, left at the kitchen table in little balkanized ruts complaining to each other privately about how badly we’re being treated. I often think about how mere resentment to male privilege is not the same thing as feminism, though the latter could be born from the former.’ Ibid., p. 78.
12 Sillman quoted in ibid., p. 66.

14 Denoting a finality to the practice of painting by the early 1980s, the term ‘exit’ frames Thomas Lawson’s polemical article, ‘Last Exit: Painting’, in Artforum, vol.20, issue no.2, October 1981, pp. 40–47.


16 Two prominent examples are Potts, op. cit., – with the exception of his brief discussion of Niki de Saint Phalle’s large ‘shooting painting,’ King Kong (1963), pp. 313–315 – and Hal Foster, The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Warhol, Lichtenstein, Richter and Ruscha, New Jersey and Oxford, 2012. Whilst Potts acknowledges this omission as a result of ‘the constitution of the art world in the mid-twentieth century and its very masculinist gender politics,’ as well as his own art historical choices, Foster contends that the ‘primary’ objectification and fetishization of women inherent to Pop art denied them any possibility of also being its main subjects, let alone its producers. Potts, op. cit., p. 19. Foster, op. cit., p. 15. Foster does, however, note the emergence in recent years of studies and exhibitions on women Pop artists. Ibid., p. 260n36.

17 A figure so forcefully outlined, in terms of the history of modern art in America, by Anne Wagner in Three Artists (Three Women), op. cit., 1996.


19 Lippard, op. cit, p. 9. The book was first published in 1976, six years after Hesse’s death.

20 Ibid., p. 24. As Renate Petzinger, co-editor of the catalogue raisonné of Hesse’s


23 It is important to note that at the time of painting *Untitled* (1964) Bochner did not yet know Hesse, or of her work. Achim Borchardt-Hume describes Bochner’s canvas as a ‘swamp of faecal-coloured paint.’ Borchardt-Hume, ‘Colour My Mind’, in *Mel Bochner: If The Colour Changes*, exh.cat., Achim Borchardt-Hume and Doro Globus (eds.), London, 2012, p. 15. As noted by Hesse in the diary entry for June 19, 1964: ‘Started work in oil paint today. This is new since last 1½ years I used magna paint.’ Reprinted in *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Helen A. Cooper et. al., New Haven, 1992, p. 28. Magna paint was favoured at the time by artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Barnett Newman, Frank Stella, and Morris Louis, as well as Roy Lichtenstein for the black outlines and flat areas of colour in his comic-strip paintings. See Jo Crook and Tom Learner, *The Impact of Modern Paints*, London, 2000, p. 117.


25 In her essay, Sillman states that ‘it’s not that you’re going to be working “like” an AbExer, but the tools themselves will mandate a certain phenomenology of making that emanates from shapes, stains, spills, and smudges.’ Sillman, op. cit., 2011, p. 322. This ‘erasure’ refers to Robert Rauschenberg’s work, *Erased De Kooning Drawing* (1953), as cited by Sillman, ibid.

26 Whilst outlining the ‘homosocial atmosphere’ surrounding the kind of painting under discussion, Clark notes that: ‘Vulgarity is gendered, of course. At the time we are examining, it belonged (as a disposable property) mainly to men, or more precisely, to heterosexual men. Not that this meant that the art done under its auspices was closed to reading from other points of view.’ Clark, op. cit., p. 40.

Ibid.


Kozloff, op. cit.; Swenson, op. cit., p. 21.


Ibid., p. 15.

Swenson states that: ‘The breasts or nested ovular forms ostensibly borrowed from Gorky also signal the female identity of the artist.’ Swenson, op. cit., p. 21.


After stating, ‘I think at the time (in New York, after Yale) (. . .) I shouldn’t say I went backwards, but I did,’ Hesse continues: ‘It is true, there were stages, but in retrospect –


43 John Cage, ‘Indeterminacy’ (1959), in *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage*, London, 2004, p. 269. In 2011, a painting by Hesse completed c.1963–1964 was included as an example of ‘self-expression’ in *Shifting the Gaze: Painting and Feminism*, held at the Jewish Museum in New York. Here I want to suggest a more dialectical and complicated historical aspect to such a categorisation. The exhibition also included a painting by Sillman, amongst many others. For an overview of the exhibition see Daniel Bulasco, ‘Size Matters: On the Triumph of Feminist Art’, in *Lilith*, Fall 2010, pp. 24–29. Although outlining the general curatorial impetus to consider painting through the dual lenses of gender and Judaism, Bulasco does not discuss this specific exhibition category in detail.

44 Hesse quoted in Nemser, op. cit., p. 5. To expand on Hesse’s account: ‘I think that struggle between (being a) student and finding one’s self is, even at the beginning level of maturity, something that cannot be avoided. I don’t know anyone who has avoided it.’ ‘I loved (Josef) Albers’ color course but I had had it at Cooper (Union School), I did very well in it. I was Albers’ little color studyist – everyone called me that – and every time he walked into the classroom he would ask, “What did Eva do?” (. . . .) But Albers couldn’t stand my paintings and, of course, I was much more serious about the painting. I had the abstract expressionist student approach and that wasn’t Albers’s, not really Rico LeBrun’s nor Bernard Chaitin’s (sic) approach either.’ Ibid. Lippard also notes Hesse’s memories of being a student at Yale (with some minor deviation in phrasing from the corresponding passage quoted in Nemser, ibid., p. 4): ‘I don’t know that the students were bad, but they immediately responded to the tension and friction and uninterest (in the painting department). Albers was past Yale’s retirement age but was allowed to remain because they had no one to replace him, and Rico LeBrun and Bernard Chait (sic) fought each other through us. The result was that