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Themes of the liminal, the absurd and the unstable in the sculpture of Eva Hesse

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Abstract

The creative component of the research project explores, through the medium of sculpture, the notion of the liminal, with a particular focus on themes of the absurd and the unstable as characteristics of liminality. These themes may be useful for investigating and providing a valuable source for critical assessment, so as to allow for the opening of and extending of debates on reading and thinking about art regarded as 'in-between' the poles of a binary opposition. Broadly, it seeks to explore the historical trajectory of the 1960s artist Eva Hesse in relation to these themes, and how it resonates with my own sculpture-making and development. The aim of the written research is, therefore, through engaging with a close critical and theoretically informed reading of selected examples of Hesse's work, to identify themes and approaches which may inform and advance the understanding of my own work produced in the context of this study. Connections will be drawn to the way in which these themes facilitate a favourable space in which the making of art flourishes. As far as viewers are concerned, such work may encourage the viewer to be an active participant in a dimension of human experience potentially not yet encountered, thereby liberating viewers' fixed and rigid perceptual constructs. Entering into a discussion of the themes of liminality, the absurd and unstable, serves this aim.