SOL LEWITT WALL DRAWINGS: EXPANDING A LEGACY

Seven wall drawings newly installed at the Gallery celebrate the legacy of a pioneering conceptual artist
March 2–July 8, 2018

March 2, 2018, New Haven, Conn.—Sol LeWitt Wall Drawings: Expanding a Legacy features seven wall drawings newly donated to the Yale University Art Gallery by the artist’s estate—a gift that makes the museum’s collection of Sol LeWitt’s work in this signature medium the largest in the world. The wall drawings on view represent a range of the artist’s techniques, including intricate constellations of fine graphite lines, handwritten text, and bold geometric patterns executed in colorful ink wash or crayon. The exhibition also celebrates the newly inaugurated Sol LeWitt Wall Drawing Study Center at Yale West Campus, which will house the archive of this groundbreaking artist and be an international nexus for research on his work.

LeWitt first conceived of his wall drawings in 1968, and from then until his death in 2007, he created more than 1,300 of them. With the recent gift from The LeWitt Estate, in Chester, Connecticut, the Gallery now has 66 wall drawings in its collection. Underlying these works is the idea that the conception of an artwork can be separated from its execution: LeWitt crafted a set of simple guidelines or a diagram for each wall drawing so that others, such as studio assistants, can produce the work independently. The drawings in the current exhibition were installed by a team of 14 trained assistants, and in the case of LeWitt’s Wall Drawing #1180—on view in the museum lobby—members of the public participated in the final stages of its execution.

To safeguard the integrity of this novel artistic process, the LeWitt Study Center will be responsible for training future draftspeople to execute the artist’s wall drawings, ensuring that these works can be faithfully installed for generations to come. Integral to this mission
is the role of John Hogan, former studio assistant to LeWitt and since 2013 the Gallery’s Mary Jo and Ted Shen Installation Director and Archivist for Sol LeWitt Wall Drawings. Over the past five years, Hogan has led the installation of 580 LeWitt wall drawings on Yale’s campus and all over the globe, including sites in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

The Gallery has had a long and fruitful relationship with LeWitt—and, for the last decade, with his estate. The museum previously collaborated with the artist on a forty-year retrospective exhibition at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), which features 105 wall drawings and is on view through 2033. This landmark retrospective along with the LeWitt Study Center demonstrate Yale’s deep commitment to promoting and securing LeWitt’s legacy. “Getting to know Sol LeWitt and working with him on the Yale/Mass MoCA exhibition was a personal highlight of my tenure at this university teaching museum,” states Jock Reynolds, the Henry J. Heinz II Director. “Such generative relationships with artists are at the heart of what we have been able to accomplish at the Gallery over the past two decades. Now, due to the generosity of The LeWitt Estate, we hold the largest collection of Sol’s wall drawings of any museum and have the distinct honor of preserving his legacy in this unique art form; it is beyond what anyone may have imagined possible at the outset.” Pamela Franks, Senior Deputy Director and the Seymour H. Knox, Jr., Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, elaborates, “The LeWitt Study Center is vital for the preservation of this groundbreaking conceptual artist’s legacy, but is also an emblem of Jock Reynolds’s transformative tenure as Gallery director. It is a happy and humbling charge to ensure this double legacy for future generations of scholars, artists, and museumgoers.”

**Related Programs**

**Costume Ball**
Thursday, March 1, 5:30 pm
“Plaster, Paper, Wood, and Wire”

**Performance**
Thursday, March 29, 5:30 pm
“Drawing a Thousand Melodies”
Caroline Shaw, Estelí Gomez, B.A. 2008, and members of Mixed Company of Yale
Studio Program
Friday, April 6, 1:30 pm
“Mapping LeWitt”
Registration required; please call 203.432.9525.

All programs are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For more detailed programming information, visit artgallery.yale.edu/calendar.

Exhibition Credits
Exhibition organized by Jock Reynolds, the Henry J. Heinz II Director; Pamela Franks, Senior Deputy Director and the Seymour H. Knox, Jr., Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art; and John Hogan, the Mary Jo and Ted Shen Installation Director and Archivist for Sol LeWitt Wall Drawings. Made possible by the Joann and Gifford Phillips, Class of 1942, Fund.

Yale University Art Gallery
The Yale University Art Gallery, the oldest college art museum in the United States, was founded in 1832 when the patriot-artist John Trumbull gave more than 100 of his paintings to Yale College. Since then its collections have grown to more than 200,000 objects ranging in date from ancient times to the present.

General Information
The Yale University Art Gallery is located at 1111 Chapel Street, New Haven, Connecticut. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, 10 am–5 pm; Thursday until 8 pm (September–June); and Saturday–Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. The Gallery is closed Mondays and major holidays. Free and open to the public. For general information, please call 203.432.0600 or visit the website at artgallery.yale.edu.

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