

## Sol LeWitt Wall Drawing #118: A Study in Collaborative Creation

Sol LeWitt, a seminal figure in conceptual art, is renowned for his innovative wall drawings that prioritize the idea over the execution. Wall Drawing #118, conceived in 1971, follows a deceptively simple instruction set: “On a blue wall, a white not straight line is drawn, and a white broken line is drawn, and a white straight line is drawn.” This minimalism encapsulates LeWitt’s belief that the artist generates the concept, while execution can be relegated to others—a paradigm shift from traditional art practices. The creation of a LeWitt wall drawing involves multiple contributors, including the artisans who carefully follow his instructions, the gallerists who document the installation, and LeWitt himself, who devised the original concept but did not personally execute it.

On the opposite page, you can observe a rendition of Wall Drawing #118, notably executed using a pen plotter programmed by a human operator. This version diverges from the traditional wall implementation primarily through its medium and method of creation—the mechanical plotter introduces a layer of mediation between the original concept and its manifestation. While a human inputted the plotter’s program, the execution remains a product of machine precision rather than artisanal interpretation. This juxtaposition highlights the dichotomy in LeWitt’s work between the ideal and the tangible. The plotter’s rendition, with its use of 22 points instead of the original 50, offers a reinterpretation of the conceptual framework laid out by LeWitt, illustrating both the flexibility and fidelity of his instructions.

The current copyright system, as applied to LeWitt’s work, often marginalizes the artisans who transform conceptual instructions into physical art. The copyright framework, particularly the “mechanical reproduction” guideline, remains hazy and relies on arbitrary metrics to classify human versus mechanical contributions. Under my proposal to allocate copyright authorship into percentage allocations, Wall Drawing #118 could represent a more equitable division of labor and creativity. Allocate perhaps 70% of authorship to Sol LeWitt for his foundational concept, while the remaining 30% could recognize the artisans’ craftsmanship. This would ensure that all contributors to LeWitt’s works are acknowledged, thus aligning copyright practices with contemporary art’s collaborative nature.