

## **Sol LeWitt Wall Drawing #118: History and Instructions**

Sol LeWitt's Wall Drawing #118 is an exemplary piece within the realm of conceptual art, illustrating his pursuit of decentralizing the artist's role in the creative process. Created in 1971, Wall Drawing #118's instructions are simple yet profound: "On a wall surface, any continuous stretch of wall, using a hard pencil, place fifty points evenly. All of the points are connected by straight lines." These instructions encapsulate LeWitt's philosophy that the idea behind the art is of primary importance, whereas the execution is secondary and can be achieved by anyone following his directions.

### **Practitioners and Reproductions**

The creation of Wall Drawing #118 typically involves a team of practitioners who meticulously adhere to LeWitt's instructions. This includes the initial artist who drafts the instructions, artisans who execute the drawing, museum staff who oversee its installation, and sometimes individuals who restore the work over time. As a visual reference, you can look to the opposite page to see a rendition with 22 points instead of 50. This version was created with a pen plotter—not a human—though a human programmed the plotter. This mechanized reproduction differs from the original wall versions since a computer, instead of an artisan's hand, traces the design. Yet, the essence of LeWitt's instruction allows for this variance, raising questions of authorship in generative art.

### **Copyright and Proposed Allocation System**

The copyright system, as dictated by the "mechanical reproduction" guidelines outlined by the U.S. Copyright Office, often marginalizes those who physically create these artworks. Under current law, LeWitt holds primary authorship, overshadowing the artisans who contribute significant labor and skill. This discrepancy becomes more pronounced when the works are mechanically reproduced. In the context of my proposal to break apart copyright authorship into a percentage-based allocation system, Wall Drawing #118 could see a division where Sol LeWitt retains 70% of authorship for his conceptual idea, and the artisans, who add their craftsmanship to bring his vision to life, receive 30%. This would be a more equitable reflection of the collaborative nature inherent in these conceptual works.