

## **Sol LeWitt Wall Drawing #118**

Sol LeWitt was a seminal figure in the conceptual art movement, known for his wall drawings that created art through instructions rather than singular, fixed pieces. One example is Wall Drawing #118, which was conceived in 1971. The exact instructions for Wall Drawing #118 read: “On a wall surface, any continuous stretch of wall, using a hard pencil, place fifty points at random. The points should be evenly distributed over the area of the wall. All of the points should be connected by straight lines.” This means that the resulting artwork is inherently variable, adapting to the space and the practitioners involved. The practitioners could include the installers, who transform LeWitt’s idea into physical form, and potentially other assisting crew members.

### **Practical Realization and Reinterpretation**

On the opposite page, you can see a rendition of this work where 22 points, instead of 50, have been laid out randomly and connected with straight lines. This particular rendition was made using a pen plotter, a machine programmed to execute the instructions. While no human hand touched the paper mid-process, there was indeed a human who programmed the plotter to act, therefore transforming LeWitt’s instructions into a new medium. The result is distinct from a traditional wall installation, with the method emphasizing computational precision and repeatability over the tactile, scaled quality of a wall drawing. The differences highlight not only the flexibility embedded in LeWitt’s instructions but also the evolving dialogue between machine and human authorship.

### **Challenging Copyright Authorship**

The copyright system tends to disenfranchise the artisans who physically create Sol LeWitt’s art under his guidance, reflecting the “mechanical reproduction” guideline by the Copyright Office. This guideline, which posits that works created by machines lack human authorship, becomes hazy when considering both the deliberations of the humans implementing LeWitt’s instructions and the work of those who program machines to execute such instructions. My proposal suggests a reimagined system in which authorship is disaggregated into a percentage allocation system. For Wall Drawing #118, this might translate to allocating 70% of authorship to Sol LeWitt for his conceptual framework, while 30% goes to the artisans or programmers who realize each instance in tangible form. This split acknowledges that the artistry in LeWitt’s work is a collaboration between conceptualization and realization across different modalities.