

The Sol LeWitt wall drawings, particularly Wall Drawing #118, exemplify conceptual art's reliance on a set of instructions rather than a physical object. First conceived in 1971, Wall Drawing #118 is based on a simple yet profound prompt: "On a wall surface, any continuous stretch of wall, using 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 work invites multiple interpretations as artisans tasked with executing the drawing must decide how to evenly distribute these points and connect them. Various practitioners, including installation artisans trained by LeWitt or his estate, are involved in this process. Their task is not mere replication; it requires artistic discretion and insight.

On the opposite page, you'll find a rendition of Wall Drawing #118. In this version, 22 points are used instead of 50, rendered by a pen plotter programmed by a human. Unlike the traditional wall version, this piece transforms the mechanical human process into a digital one, where the artist programs the pen plotter to execute the work. This variation highlights the complexities surrounding authorship, as the digital medium adds another layer of creative input. The individual's role in programming the machine signifies a new form of authorship, different from the physical, manual connection of lines on a wall.

The copyright system, however, often fails to acknowledge the artisans' contributions, pigeonholing them into the realm of "mechanical reproduction," as per the loose guidelines set by the copyright office. This perspective overlooks the artisans' indispensable creative labor and decision-making. In the context of my proposal to break apart copyright authorship into a percentage allocation system, these contributions to Wall Drawing #118 could be distributed as 70% to Sol LeWitt for conceptualizing the piece and 30% to the artisans for their role in its physical manifestation. Such a system would ensure recognition of all entities involved and present a more equitable distribution of rights and royalties.