



ARTWORK **WALL DRAWING #1259: LOOPY DOOPY (SPRINGFIELD)**

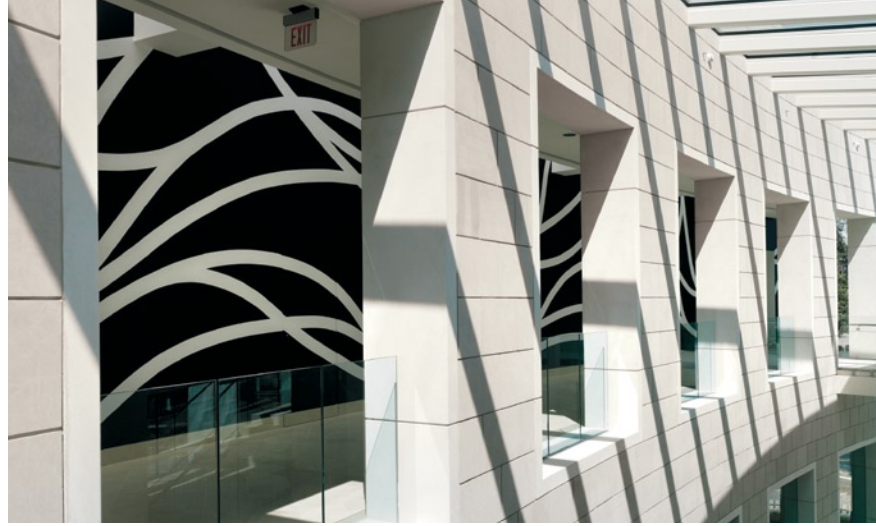
ARTIST **SOL LEWITT**

INSTALLED 2008
U.S. COURTHOUSE
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Sol LeWitt was a pioneer of conceptual art, which he helped define in the 1960s and which still exerts wide influence on many artists working today. In LeWitt's often cited *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art*, he described a method of art making that emphasizes the generative idea for the artwork over its physical creation. "The idea becomes a machine that makes the art," LeWitt wrote. He rejected the notion that artworks must be rare, unique objects hand-made by a solitary artist. For example, one of LeWitt's most celebrated forms of conceptual art is the wall drawing, which is rendered by collaborating assistants following the artist's instructions. Over the span of four decades, LeWitt conceived of more than twelve hundred wall drawings, which range from spare pencil lines on white walls to complex geometries painted in vibrant, pulsating colors.

In April 2001, LeWitt composed an enormous wall drawing for the courthouse in Springfield. A pattern of undulating lines sweeps across the large, curved wall through which visitors enter the building's courtrooms. The pattern is derived from drawings that LeWitt made by holding two pencils together to create parallel wavy lines. The spaces between the parallel pencil trails form the white lines in the courthouse wall drawing. While the composition of the lines is dynamic, the palette is simple black and white. Some versions of LeWitt's other wall drawings that share the title *Loopy Doopy* are brightly colored: orange lines on a green background, blue lines on a red background, purple on yellow, and so forth. For the courthouse in Springfield, LeWitt thought the dignified white-on-black combination would be the most appropriate. The ebullient white lines communicate a sense of movement and energy, as the playful title *Loopy Doopy* suggests. The patterns are not meant to be symbolic or representative of anything, although viewers may create their own interpretations. The wall drawing might evoke water currents, sound waves, winding vines, or countless other associations. This complete accessibility and openness of meaning are hallmarks of LeWitt's art and are also well suited to the civic function of the courthouse. WC

LEWITT



Sol LeWitt (1928–2007) was born in Hartford, Connecticut. He earned a BFA from Syracuse University in 1949 and then served in the U.S. Army. LeWitt moved to New York in 1953 and attended the School of Visual Arts. In 1955–56, he worked as a graphic artist for architect I.M. Pei, followed by jobs at the Museum of Modern Art in the bookshop and as a security guard. While concentrating on his own work, LeWitt also began taking occasional teaching positions at a succession of New York art schools, including the Museum of Modern Art School, Cooper Union, the School of Visual Arts, and New York University.

LeWitt's work was first exhibited publicly at St. Mark's Church in New York in 1963, followed by his first solo exhibition at the John Daniels Gallery in 1965. His influential *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* was published in *ArtForum* magazine in June 1967. LeWitt exhibited his first wall drawing at the Paula Cooper Gallery in 1968. Additionally, his work was included in several of the early and consequential group exhibitions of Minimalist and Conceptual art, including *Primary Structures* at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1966 and *When Attitude Becomes Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern in Switzerland in 1969.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York presented LeWitt's first museum retrospective in 1978. His work has been shown in hundreds of exhibitions around the world and is part of the permanent collections of every major art museum. A forty-year retrospective exhibition of LeWitt's voluminous work—which encompasses wall drawings, works on paper, sculpture, photography, books, posters, and other objects—was organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2000, and traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

LeWitt's two other GSA Art in Architecture commissions are *One, Two, Three* (1979), a painted aluminum sculpture for the James M. Hanley Federal Building in Syracuse, New York, and *Irregular Form* (2003), a 36-by-70-foot gray slate and black granite architectural wall relief for the Alfred A. Arraj U.S. Courthouse in Denver, Colorado.



MEDIUM ACRYLIC PAINT ON PLASTER

DIMENSIONS 14 FT X 300 FT

