



**THE JCC IN MANHATTAN UNVEILS 36-FOOT-TALL SOL LEWITT WALL DRAWING
MARKS ARTIST'S 20TH WALL WORK IN MANHATTAN PUBLIC SPACE
CORRESPONDING EXHIBITION AUGUST 15 - NOVEMBER 12, 2013**



NEW YORK: JULY 16, 2013 -- The JCC in Manhattan is thrilled to announce the installation of a painted work by groundbreaking contemporary artist Sol LeWitt in the 36-foot-tall lightwell at its lobby entrance. This vibrant work, *Wall Drawing #599: Circles 18" (45 cm) wide, from the center of the wall, with alternating white, yellow; white, red; and white, blue bands*, will be visible through the building's front window on Amsterdam Avenue, welcoming the public and JCC members into the space, while engaging passersby on the street. On view beginning August 1, the mural-sized work features brightly colored circles and arcs of white, yellow, red and blue in an alternating pattern. "The JCC in Manhattan is thrilled and honored to share this amazing piece of art by Sol LeWitt with our community," said the JCC's Executive Director Joy Levitt. "We know our members and visitors will enjoy its vibrant colors, and message of continuity as they enter our building every day."

Sol LeWitt: Wall Drawing #599, Circles 18" (45 cm) wide, from the center of the wall, with alternating white, yellow; white, red, blue bands, First installed 1989; 36 x 11 feet at JCC Manhattan. Artist rendering.

**Corresponding Exhibition: *Sol LeWitt: Shaping Ideas*
August 15 – November 12, 2013**

In conjunction with the installation of *Wall Drawing #599*, the JCC will present *Sol LeWitt: Shaping Ideas*, an exhibition in The Laurie M. Tisch Gallery from August 15 through November 12, 2013. A consideration of LeWitt's deep understanding of surface and depth, color and form, the show will fill the JCC lobby with some 25 works to put the JCC's wall drawing in context. Works on paper include drawings, prints and posters; time-lapse videos will bring wall drawing installations to life; and an interactive map of LeWitt's New York public artworks will set the viewer on a virtual Manhattan walking tour.

Most of the artworks in *Shaping Ideas* are on loan from the LeWitt Estate and private collectors, and date from 1975 to 2005. A stunning large-scale gouache joins prints created for art fairs and cultural organizations, including the artist's seminal Lincoln Center poster (1998), reflecting LeWitt's continued use of drawings and prints to work out ideas throughout his career. Additional highlights include preparatory drawings on view for the first time and a large-scale interactive map. Created in conjunction with CultureNOW, a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultural awareness, the map will provide information accessible in the gallery, online and via the CultureNOW smartphone app. Time-lapse videos will document the installation of wall drawings at the JCC and reveal the unique LeWitt installation process -- painstakingly precise yet inherently collaborative.

Jewish-Related Motifs

A number of works and documentary material in *Shaping Ideas* reflect LeWitt's Jewish heritage. Photographs and preparatory drawings for Beth Shalom Rodef Zedek, the synagogue the artist helped design for his congregation in Chester,



Sol LeWitt: Shul Print, 2005, linocut, 28 1/8 x 28 1/8.



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Connecticut, capture the star-shaped beamed ceiling over the *bimah* (altar's raised platform), and the extraordinary doors to the ark, where the congregation's prized *Torah* (Hebrew text of the first five books of the Bible) is kept. The exhibition also includes drawings for and the soundtrack from *Lost Voices* (2005), a work LeWitt created in an abandoned synagogue in Germany that features traditional music and prayers from High Holiday and daily services heard from behind an imposing brick wall. Also featured are works on paper with a star motif, which LeWitt explored during several periods of his career.

Programs & Events

The JCC will present a series of exhibition-related programs for adults and children throughout Fall 2013. Current plans include exclusive curator-led tours and Family Art Day on Sunday, October 20. Information will be posted online at jccmanhattan.org/gallery.

About the Artist

Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) is known internationally as one of the founders of Conceptual Art. His works are in the collection of every major museum worldwide, including The Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, all in New York.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut to Russian Jewish immigrant parents, LeWitt drew on wrapping paper in his aunt's grocery store as a child, and attended art classes at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford. He received a BFA from Syracuse University, before moving to New York in 1953 to further study and work in design. Various positions included a post at *Seventeen Magazine*, a stint as a graphic designer for I.M. Pei's architecture firm, and then a job at The Museum of Modern Art, where he met many artists and critics of the day, including Dan Flavin, Robert Ryman, Lucy Lippard, Robert Mangold, Jasper Johns, Frank Stella and Robert Rauschenberg.

Throughout his career, LeWitt developed a body of almost 1,300 wall works that thoroughly transformed and enriched the very definition of contemporary art. Realized directly on the wall, yet different from frescoes in their ability to be re-created, LeWitt's wall drawings are intentionally impermanent and purposeful manifestations of an idea. These revolutionary works challenge the idea that art must be a precious object. In a 1969 article for *Studio International*, LeWitt wrote, "Two-dimensional works are not seen as objects. The work is a manifestation of an idea. It is an idea and not an object."

For LeWitt, the artists executing the wall works, the setting, and the viewer were all integral parts of the artwork. LeWitt designed specific instructions and color guidelines but gave trained assistants the liberty to create wall drawings that are site-specific – perfectly suited to their environment. In LeWitt's *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* (1967), he wrote, "When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes the machine that makes the art."



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A steadfast advocate for expanded access to art, LeWitt was committed to bringing art beyond museums and galleries and into public space. In addition to LeWitt sculptures in public plazas in many cities across the globe, New York is home to a large number of his wall drawings accessible in public settings. Some such works nearby include his *Whirls and Twirls* in the Columbus Circle subway station and *Broken Bands of Color* behind the visitor's desk at The Museum of Modern Art.

About 599 @ 334: Sol LeWitt at the JCC in Manhattan

Invaluable assistance with the exhibition *Sol LeWitt: Shaping Ideas* has been generously provided by the LeWitt Estate and The Paula Cooper Gallery as well as several other treasured colleagues and collectors. The JCC is grateful to The LeWitt Estate for providing *Wall Drawing #599* to us on long-term loan.

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About the JCC in Manhattan's Arts & Ideas Program

The JCC in Manhattan's Arts & Ideas program develops and showcases dynamic new work rooted in community, Jewish life, culture and society. We encourage audiences to take part in the exhilarating process of bringing new artistic work to life and creating community around the arts. People of all ages can see, learn, listen, debate and create with leading contemporary artists from around the world. Gallery Exhibits and Programs are made possible by the generous support of The Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund.

The installation of Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #599* and the complementary *Shaping Ideas* exhibition marks the next phase of the JCC's commitment to exposing visual arts to a wider public. Other recent initiatives include the mounting of *Hundreds of Photos* by Gabriel Specter, the twelve-by-eight-foot work Specter created during his 2011-2012 residency at the JCC, inside the lobby. In addition to furthering its rotating series of exhibitions in the Laurie M. Tisch Gallery, upcoming plans include the launch of a photo-mural on the building's roof terrace. Used during all seasons by thousands of adults and children every year, the roof photo-mural project will comprise a revolving presentation of large-scale photographs approximately 40 x 20 feet in size beginning 2014, with subsequent exhibitions in following years.

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