

Kunsthhaus Graz

Sol LeWitt's Wall. Performed *Re-Imagine the Future*

Space01
28.09.2023–09.06.2024

Opening: 27.09.2023, 7 p.m.
Curated by Katrin Bucher Trantow

The plan designs the work.[§]

02 Work and Labour

According to LeWitt, the idea is followed by the production of the work as a collective endeavour in which the rules of the concept are scrupulously followed. In this second erection of the *Wall*, the process of building the wall becomes a visible part of the artistic concept. Together with the original crew members from 2004, the physical act of building opens up discussions on issues of visibility and validity of work, co-production and delegation.

When an artist uses a multiple modular method he usually chooses a simple and readily available form. The form itself is of very limited importance; it becomes the grammar for the total work.[§]

03 Variation and Dialogue

Finally, the reactivation of the *Wall* as an exhibition reflects LeWitt's concept of the modular, its evolution in variations. Over the course of a year, artists will engage with it, exploring the modularity of language and geometric forms as ways of understanding contemporary cultural codes.

With exhibitions and interventions by artists such as **Franz Vana**, **Superflex** and **Renate Krammer**, controversial themes of language and attribution, accessibility and exclusion, but also the right to one's own idea or authorship, are opened up and reflected in various ways in the *Wall*.

§ From: Sol LeWitt, *Paragraphs & Sentences on Conceptual Art*, 1967/1969

Biography

Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) had over 400 solo shows and his works are represented in the collections of the most important museums in the world. Retrospectives of his complete works have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Tate Gallery, London, the Kunsthalle Bern, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, among others. The most important retrospective was organised by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2000 and was subsequently shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Wall* at the Kunsthhaus Graz is one of his last works.



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01 Concept – Protocols for Utopia
Over the past 20 years, ideas and conceptions of art have changed. While *Wall* 2004 was an initial vehement response to the new building, today it is also more politically controversial as an independent work, for example when it is seen not as a neutral wall but as the erection of a symbolic wall.
In search of an idea of the future, the reinstallation of the wall with performances and interventions questions polyphony as utopia. The first chapter begins in 2023 in an almost empty space. Inscribed in the floor, the imprint of the wall has been a silent but ever-visible trace in Space01 since 2004. John Baldessari sings LeWitt's *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* in a video that combines pop with heavyweight theory. In 1972, this attempt at wider exposure is a tongue-in-cheek bow to Sol LeWitt. In 2023 at the Kunsthhaus, it is also a reference to its own programme. John Baldessari had his large solo exhibition at the Kunsthhaus Graz in 2005 – one year after Sol LeWitt.
During the opening days, from 27 to 30 September, lectures, collaborative experiments and vocal performances will open up a polyphonic space along the lines of present and past utopias.
The music for *Protocol for Utopia: A Participatory Choral Performance* has been arranged and in part newly composed by **Franz Jochum**. The choir he has assembled, made up of singers, staff and visitors, sets to music the responses of 20 artists from the last 20 years to the question of an idea for the future.
In her *Protocol for Utopia: The Dreams We Call Our Own* (2023), **Jasmina Cibic** quotes artists, scientists and politicians who discussed strategies for achieving self-determination at a congress of cultural workers in Titograd (former YU) in 1985. Cibic uses excerpts from the speeches as a libretto for a performance with music by Barbara Kinga Majewska. The piece is performed by eight singers spread out on swings in the Kunsthhaus.
Winfried Ritsch performs a computer music experiment with his impulse response in revision of his work for measuring the space at *Tuning in 2003*, which measures the space with different impulses, cuts it up and creates a reactive composition in real time
Protocol for Utopia: Being One is a poetic-performance evening co-created by former Graz city writer **Abdelaziz Baraka Sakin**. A variety of protagonists join together to create a poetic space of thought.

Perception of ideas leads to new ideas.[§]

For the first solo presentation of an artist at the Kunsthhaus Graz, Sol LeWitt used Space01 to realise an impressive work in giving the house a conceptual commission. LeWitt sent a fax to Peter Pakesch, the Kunsthhaus's artistic director at the time. The fax contained his idea of a curved, stacked and impassable wall running through the space. The Kunsthhaus Graz has remained true to this idea of an open space for the production of art. Now, 20 years later, in the spirit of 're-imagining the future', we look back to re-read the present through the work of Sol LeWitt. For a period of nine months, the *Wall* will become a counterpart and a podium for artistically related works, allowing us to imagine possible futures.
00 Idea
For Sol LeWitt, the beginning was always the idea. It is the beginning of each work. As a sketch of an idea, it already contains the reflection of the space and, subsequently, its tangibility. The artist's gesture on paper carries with it all that has been materialised in the subsequent process over several weeks.
Sol LeWitt's *Wall* was the first solo exhibition at the unique exhibition space Space01 in 2004, and remains groundbreaking in its conceptual and material engagement with space itself. The erected *Wall* focused on the physical experience of space in its construction, its design, but above all in its overwhelming dimension. This important initial spark by Sol LeWitt became a precursor to site-specific engagements with so-called 'living architecture' in order to enter into multiple relationships. Spatial works such as those by Katharina Grosse (2014), Michael Kienzer (2012) or Erwin Wurm (2017) were created in reflection of this first work, whose traces are inscribed in the ground.
For Sol LeWitt, the idea was not only the starting point, but also the most important aspect of his work, to which the execution was secondary. His texts *Paragraphs & Sentences on Conceptual Art*, in which he formulated the importance of the idea for art, now also serve as a point of departure for what is to come in 2023. In three chapters, the work is examined in its facets as a concept, as an erected work, and as a modular spatial intervention. It serves as a surface for reflection and interaction.

