

<b>Book Trucks &amp; Returns</b>	<b>Library Supplies &amp; Signage</b>	<b>Media Storage/ AV &amp; Security</b>	<b>Children's Supplies &amp; Furniture</b>	<b>Furniture &amp; Seating</b>	<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b>Archival</b>	<b>Exhibit &amp; Display</b>
Contact Us	Customer Service	Bid & Quote	Quick Order	Custom	International	Sign Up for Emails	



## Spotlight on the Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Soloman “Sol” LeWitt, having graduated from Syracuse University in 1949, was no stranger to upstate New York when he selected the main stairwell of the **Albright-Knox Art Gallery** in Buffalo, NY for his largest wall drawing ever. Considered a founder of minimal and conceptual art, LeWitt favored creating two- and three-dimensional pieces on every medium from walls to paper to geometric structures. In a revolutionary gesture, LeWitt transformed the simplicity of the drawn line into an extension of architecture itself with his first wall drawing at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York in 1969. Since then, over 1,200 of LeWitt’s drawings have been installed directly onto walls.



The last of which was **Wall Drawing #1268**, which Albright-Knox began acquiring in 2006 under director Louis Grachos. LeWitt sent representatives to the museum who chose the 2,200 square feet of the main stairwell—a transitional space that joins the 1962 Knox building with the 1905 Albright building—for his scribe drawing. Although **LeWitt died in 2007** at the age of 78, installation of this monumental piece moved forward in August 2010.

While standing for hours at a time, hanging from scaffolding and crouching in corners, 16 artists scribed on the walls for seven hours a day for 54 days with these simple posthumous directions from LeWitt: *Lines. Continuous gradation. Feel of*

*steel*. The goal? To create massive tubular shapes in varying horizontal and vertical directions in perfectly continuous gradations of randomly scribed graphite.

Envisioned in the last years of LeWitt’s life, **Wall Drawing #1268** does not include the array of colors and structure typical of his past work. Rather, the dark and somber installation reflects the chaos of its creation. When viewed up close, the thousands of randomly drawn scribbles can be seen, but when viewed from afar, the solid, dimensional structure of the tubes appear. Despite its massive size and ability to completely transform the space that it covers, the work was created with little more than pencil leads, kneaded erasers, sewing thread and masking tape.

“Someone was joking that we could do this with a can of spray paint in a day or two, but that’s not the idea,” says Ilana Chlebowski, the curatorial assistant responsible for coordinating the massive installation. “The idea is to use very traditional materials in a very open but specific way.”

is to use very traditional materials in a very open but specific way.

Before the wall drawing was started, the gallery had to extensively prepare the walls it would be applied to. They were sanded seven times and received two applications of plaster skim coat, two coats of oil-based primer and five coats of latex paint. The objective was to give the artists the feeling that they were drawing on paper. Twenty-six foot high scaffolding was installed to allow the artists to freely scale the three adjoining walls to completely cover them with LeWitt's design.

Challenges also had to be taken into consideration during the process due to the scale and length of the project. One very important issue for the art gallery was the detrimental affect of graphite dust produced by thousands of pencil leads on the rest of its works of art. To combat this, the project was done entirely within a large plastic encasement with suction tubes connected to an air filtration system to prevent the artists from breathing in graphite dust. The artists could enter and leave the work area through tent-like zippered openings, and sticky mats grabbed graphite from their shoes at every entrance.

And while a piece composed entirely of scribbles sounds fairly simple to execute, it is more work intensive than you would imagine. "Scribbling is the most physically and mentally demanding wall drawing that I have ever experienced," says Gabriel Hurier, one of the artists on the team from the LeWitt studio.



Chlebowski, who additionally contributed to the piece by trying her hand at scribbling one weekend early on in the project, can also attest to what hard work scribbling can be. "My expectation for scribbling was that it would tire my mind," she says. "The physical demands of holding onto the scaffolding and assuming awkward positions for extended periods of time created an exhaustion so deep that I was completely satisfied in putting in my three hours and getting back to my desk on Monday."

Two viewing windows built into the structure of the scaffolding at the top of the stairwell allowed museum visitors to view the progress of the wall drawing over the two-month period. Spectators likened the view inside the plastic cocoon to what they imagined the inside of a beehive full of scurrying bees might be like. Most often heard, however, was a resounding "Wow!"

This team of 16 "worker bees" scribbling towards one unique concept was part of LeWitt's vision, says Chlebowski. "He believed the artist could come up with the idea, the concept, and 16 other people could make it, and that was fine with him." While LeWitt often supplied very thorough and explicit directions for his art, he also gave directions that were intentionally vague, as with *Wall Drawing #1268*, to make the results unpredictable and let the artists' interpretation shape the piece.

In October 2010, 5,026 hours and 1,717 pencil leads later, **the installation was completed**. The walls were given a matte varnish to reduce the shiny nature of the graphite and to protect the work from the patrons who will be within touching distance every day as they climb the stairs into the museum. The wall drawing will be on display indefinitely, and **you can view it for the price of admission or a membership** at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, NY, Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

To truly appreciate the magnitude of this piece, you must experience it in person. From an idea to a scribble to a monumental work of art, *Wall Drawing #1268* forges a connection between LeWitt and the artists who realized his vision. It blurs the line between chaos and structure and transforms the mundane into the

realized the vision it bare the line between chaos and structure and transforms the mundane into the extraordinary.

**For a view of the completed work, visit Albright-Knox's LeWitt Scribble Wall Drawing Blog**

*Image Sources:* All photographs by Tom Loonan. All images courtesy the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

*Share your special projects, exhibitions and events in our Spotlight Series.  
Contact Ariel Servadio at 315.634.8118 or email [ariel.servadio@gaylord.com](mailto:ariel.servadio@gaylord.com)*

[Resources](#)

[About Us](#)

[Request a Catalog](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Need Help?](#)

Powered by 

