

# WHITNEY

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## Press Release

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### ***WHITNEY MUSEUM TO DEBUT FIRST MAJOR US RETROSPECTIVE OF THE WORK OF LAWRENCE WEINER***



Lawrence Weiner, *Bits & Pieces Put Together to Present a Semblance of a Whole*, 1991, language and the materials referred to, courtesy of Moved Pictures, New York, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1994

NEW YORK, July 23, 2007 -- The first major retrospective of Lawrence Weiner's work organized in the United States, *Lawrence Weiner: AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE*, opens at the Whitney Museum of American Art on November 15, 2007, and remains on view through February 10, 2008. A key figure responsible for the emergence and foundations of conceptual art in the 1960s, Lawrence Weiner continues exploring possibilities for ways his art can exist in the world. Co-organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA) and the Whitney, this landmark exhibition is co-curated by Whitney Museum Chief Curator and Associate Director for Programs Donna De Salvo and MOCA Senior Curator Ann Goldstein. Following its Whitney presentation, the exhibition will be on view at MOCA from April 13 to July 14, 2008.

*Lawrence Weiner: AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE* is a comprehensive examination of Weiner's remarkable and cohesive oeuvre, assembling key selections and bodies of work from throughout his nearly fifty-year career. The exhibition represents the full range of Weiner's art, from the early *Propeller* and *Removal* paintings of the 1960s, to the artist's renowned "specific and general" works—works using language that have characterized his art since 1968. Also included are works on paper, films, videos, books, posters, multiples, and audio works. In conjunction with the exhibition, a series of Weiner's films will be screened at New York's Anthology Film Archives.

As co-curator Donna De Salvo remarks, "By jettisoning the most fundamental notions about the art object and its dissemination, Lawrence Weiner arrived at a form that has made it possible for him to insinuate his art into the world—the arena he sees for his work. His works exist on the façades of buildings, as song lyrics, as tattoos on bodies, and of course on the walls of galleries. A compilation of these efforts reads more as atlas than exhibition catalogue."

Weiner has defined art as "the relationship of human beings to objects and objects to objects in relation to human beings," and that premise remains at the core of all of his work. As a pioneer of conceptual art, Weiner began in the 1960s to create works that were central to the ongoing debate on the nature and meaning of art. Weiner was at the forefront of a radical shift in which language or text emerged as a primary medium for the making of art. These artists challenged the "object status" of painting and sculpture, proposing that the idea and intention of the artist were as important, if not more important, than the object that resulted.

As co-curator Ann Goldstein writes in the accompanying catalogue: "Weiner's employment of language allows the work to be used by its receiver. It is purposely left open for translation, transference, and transformation; each time the work is made, it is made anew. Not fixed in time and place, every manifestation and point of reception is different—each person will use the work differently and find a different relationship to its content."

This exhibition examines Weiner's work from his first studio-based manifestations (as Weiner refers to the realization of his works), which were included in his landmark 1968 book *STATEMENTS*, to later works that address the physical and cultural landscape, and introduce figures of speech, punctuation, and graphic devices. The installations at both the Whitney and MOCA will be designed in close collaboration with the artist.

Weiner's practice expands into the world – from the spaces of the gallery to the streets of the city. For instance, Weiner's work is to be found embedded in the streets of Manhattan: for a Public Art Fund project completed in 2000, he produced nineteen cast-iron manhole covers running from the West Village to Washington Square Park, Union Square Park, and Tompkins Square Park. On each manhole cover are the words **IN DIRECT LINE WITH ANOTHER AND THE NEXT.**

Since the beginning of his career, Weiner has made films, producing a substantial body of work, including short, conceptual pieces and feature-length narratives. The films will be shown in a series of programs at Anthology Film Archives. Further details will be announced.

Lawrence Weiner was born in the Bronx in 1942 and attended New York City public schools. He spent the late fifties and early sixties traveling throughout the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. The first presentation of his work was in Mill Valley, California, in 1960. He divides his time between a studio in New York and a boat in Amsterdam.

*Lawrence Weiner: AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE* is accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue, co-published by MOCA and the Whitney Museum of American Art and produced in close collaboration with the artist. Designed by award-winning graphic designer Lorraine Wild, the publication features essays by Liam Gillick, Edward Leffingwell, Dieter Schwarz, and Gregor Stemrich, along with exhibition curators Donna De Salvo and Ann Goldstein.

This exhibition was jointly organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

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This exhibition is made possible, in part, by Altria Group, Inc.



## ABOUT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century American art. Founded in 1930, the Museum is regarded as the preeminent collection of American art and includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, Louise Nevelson, and Lucas Samaras, as well as significant works by Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense critical and public debate, the Whitney's signature show, the Biennial, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in America today.

### Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art:

Lincoln Kirstein	Through August 26, 2007
Resistance Is...	Through September 2, 2007
Profiling	Through September 9, 2007
Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era	Through September 16, 2007
Rudolf Stingel	Through October 14, 2007
Danny Lyon	September 7-November 2007
Mark Bradford	September 14-December 2007
Kara Walker	October 11, 2007-February 3, 2008
Lawrence Weiner	November 15, 2007-February 10, 2008
Modernisms	Through November 2007
Demuth's Late Paintings of Lancaster	February 23-April 27, 2008
2008 Whitney Biennial	Opens March 2008

*The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. For information, please call 1-800 WHITNEY or visit [www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)*

### Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria:

Matthew Brannon	Through August 26, 2007
Undone	September 20-December 31, 2007

*The Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria is located at 120 Park Avenue at 42nd Street. Gallery hours: Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursdays 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sculpture Court Hours: Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sundays and holidays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Whitney Museum at Altria is funded by Altria Group, Inc. Admission is free. Free gallery talks are offered every Wednesday and Friday at 1:00 p.m. For further information, please call (917) 663-2453.*