



WOLFSONIAN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE WOLFSONIAN-FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY TO UNVEIL
SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY
LAWRENCE WEINER**

*Presented as Part of the Museum's Celebration of
Art Basel Miami/ Beach 2006*

MIAMI BEACH, FL (September 6, 2006) –In celebration of Art Basel/Miami Beach 2006, The Wolfsonian–Florida International University, a museum dedicated to the examination and appreciation of art and design as an agent and reflection of change, will unveil a new work created by U.S. artist Lawrence Weiner that was commissioned by the museum especially for this occasion.

(LO & BEHOLD) (MIRA & VE) is Weiner's response to the extensive collections found at The Wolfsonian, its location, and its place in its community. His installation will begin on The Wolfsonian façade at Washington Avenue Street and will line the walls of the lobby of the museum, culminating at the lobby fountain. Like much of Lawrence Weiner's oeuvre, the work is grounded in language and a mix of common signs. The result is a simple structure put before The Wolfsonian public to, literally, (LO & BEHOLD) (MIRA & VE). Its presentation in both English and Spanish, the artist notes, is in recognition of Miami's diverse culture and its strong Hispanic community.

A poster has also been designed by Weiner to mark the occasion of the exhibition and will be available to museum-goers at nominal cost.

Lawrence Weiner was born February 10, 1942, in the Bronx, New York. An adventurous youth, Weiner traveled throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico doing odd and occasionally dangerous jobs. His experiences included work as a stevedore, on commercial fishing vessels, and tankers. In the early 1960s he settled back in New York, and set out to make a career as a painter in the downtown art scene. Work from this period included experiments with systematic approaches to shaped canvas. With that work, the interactive, collaborative approach to his work began to develop. The paintings were produced

on demand; their color, size, stripes, and notches were based on the needs or desires of the receiver, the viewer, or the collector. As time went by, the limitations of painting brought Weiner, along with many other compatriot artists, to abandon painting and to realize his work as sculpture. Using language meant making ideas accessible. The framework for this is built on a factor he calls Statement of Responsibility, in which three possibilities for his work to exist are put forward. The first is that the artist can build the work; the second is that the receiver can build the work; and the third states that the work does not need to be built at all. For Weiner, this means the work exists as language itself.

In Weiner's view, his sculpture is three-dimensional; it comprises language and the referenced materials, and this makes his work accessible to the public. Fabrication is crucial to the work; over the years it has taken various forms. He has incorporated his work into film and video scenarios, as songs on records and CDs, as cartoons on DVDs, on posters, books, multiples, and editions, as well as the installations for which he is perhaps best known.

From the beginning, however, the work has been realized by literally whomever and whatever has suited the situation best. And so at times, the work has not been built at all.

Engagement in new forms of communication has always been a factor in Lawrence Weiner's work. A quiet practitioner of mail art since the 1960s, Weiner followed that line of engagement to other forms. He created an online interactive environment in 1997 with *ada web*, showing how a Web site's space can be defined by linguistics rather than typical design features. *Homeport* was an early chat room that used meaning—text and graphics—to engage its players to ultimately end their engagement—with a crash.

The work has been engaged in this kind of material up to the present. For example, Weiner's exhibition *Au Point*, at Marian Goodman Paris in 2005, explored chance transitions within space, using words like SCOOPED WITH and MIXED FOR and FOR A LACK OF to expose the paradox of the relations of simultaneous and parallel realities. The work, without specifying materials or quantities, floats as a realm within itself.

Weiner delves into symbolism carried by text, exploring the interaction and application of punctuation, shape, and color. Material, quantity, and action carry a further meaning to his work. In one of his earliest works in language, from 1968, ONE QUART EXTERIOR GREEN ENAMEL THROWN ON A BRICK WALL, we see material, action, and process. If we isolate components and think about "thrown" paint in 1968, obviously a Jackson Pollock gesture comes to mind. Or we could look at Weiner's contemporaries like Barry Le Va or Bruce Nauman using "throwing" as a component to make their work at that time. It also recalls Carl Andre's use of brick as a sculptural material. Another early example from 1970 was EARTH TO EARTH ASHES TO ASHES DUST TO DUST, to borrow a familiar phrase from the Bible, in which the artist isolates pertinent art issues: appropriation, process, and entropy.

The works of Lawrence Weiner seek to embody the complexity of simplicity, and are, in that succinct simplicity, cultural signposts of their time. This is why The Wolfsonian has chosen to make this presentation of (*LO & BEHOLD*) (*MIRA & VE*) available to the public.

Lawrence Weiner will be the subject of a major retrospective in fall 2007 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, which will travel to the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in 2008. Selected past solo exhibitions include those held at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (1990); Dia Center for the Arts, New York (1991); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1992); Philadelphia Museum of Art (1994); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (1995); Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg and Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2000); Palacio Crystal, Reina Sofia, Madrid; and Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama (2001); Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio (2002); SAFN Museum, Reykjavik (2003); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2004); Museum der Moderne Salzburg; Tate Gallery, London (2005); and Museo Contemporaneo Rivoli, Torino (2006).

For further reading about Lawrence Weiner, see: Schwarz, Dieter, ed., *Lawrence Weiner: Books 1968-1989 Catalogue Raisonné*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, Köln & Le Nouveau Musée, Villeurbanne, 1989; Marí, Bartomeu & Zimmerman, Alice eds., *Show & Tell: The Films & Videos of Lawrence Weiner*, Imschoot, uitgevers, Ghent, 1992; Caldwell, John, *This Is About Who We Are: The Collected Writings*, San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1996; LAWRENCE WEINER, London: Phaidon Press, 1998; Birgit Pelzer, "Dissociated Objects: The Statements/Sculptures of Lawrence Weiner," October 1990, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, fall 1999; Fietzek, Gerti & Stemmerich, Gregor eds., *Having Been Said, Writings & Interviews of Lawrence Weiner 1968-2003*. Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern-Ruit (ISBN 3-7757-9194-9), English edition, November 2004.

The Wolfsonian commission is sponsored in part by Kate and Andy Spade.

About The Wolfsonian—Florida International University

The Wolfsonian is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collections comprise approximately 120,000 objects from the period of 1885 to 1945—the height of the Industrial Revolution to the end of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, Fla. Admission is \$7 adults; \$5 seniors, students, and children six-12; free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, children under six, and Miami Beach residents with ID. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday from noon-6pm; Thursday and Friday from noon-9pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at www.wolfsonian.org.

The Wolfsonian receives ongoing support from the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council; Crispin Porter + Bogusky; Continental Airlines, the preferred airline of The Wolfsonian; the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation; and Karla Conceptual Event Experiences.

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