

SAM LEWITT

Sam Lewitt investigates systems of meaning—archives, mediums of communication, and technologies both cutting-edge and obsolete—as they are manifested materially, framed by institutions, and interpreted by subjects. The notion of the collection (defined by Lewitt as “that which stands elsewhere”) and the parallax of language between production and exchange are structuring paradigms for his practice. What does it mean that a cultural field so pervaded by enhanced communication and information storage systems is simultaneous with the continually enforced semantic poverty of exchange relations?

To this end, Lewitt excavates industrial, commercial, and educational materials to uncover the conditions of their production and their relationship to the context in which they emerged. Although he assumes authorship, the artist views his role more as an editor than a source of ideas; the signs he produces function like indices. His works deploy existent systems as source materials—their elements are displaced and manipulated to provoke signifiatory shifts and interpretive ruptures. In foregrounding the relationship between subjective choice and standardized systems, the works reflect a larger concern for the connection between content’s material support and the socially and the historically specific process through which it is interpreted.

In the early work *Paper Series*, Lewitt individually photographed the components of a letterpress and digitally assembled different elements to create configurations that only exist virtually. Viewing and reading are configured in a tense and unreconciled relation in Lewitt’s work. In opening up interpretation to conflict-ridden timeframes, he calls attention to “the peculiar faith placed in the transparency of the messages” within the seeming unity of an image. For *Fluid Employment*, included in the 2012 Whitney Biennial, Lewitt recontextualized Ferrofluid—a material comprised of magnetic particles suspended in liquid that is used in the manufacture of computer hard drives, speakers, and military aircraft—within a self-contained evaporation system of magnets and fans that fluctuated continually over the course of the installation.

With circulation at the crux, Lewitt’s *Weak Local Lineaments* series are etchings on Pyralux, a copper-clad plastic laminate designed for the manufacture of flexible and ultra-thin circuit boards used in a variety of electronic equipment, including cameras, cellphones, and computers. As either enlarged reproductions of these circuits, or etched lines generated by an optimization algorithm that trace paths around a series of keyword pairings, the works physically submit to the flexible control regime that is encoded into the world of materials to which Pyralux belongs. This includes those from *More Heat Than Light*, where the lineaments take the form of custom-designed flexible copper heating circuits that redirect all of the available electricity in the gallery’s lighting grid, affecting the gallery’s circulatory system through the transformation of light into heat.

His recent works, *Stranded Assets* and *Dreamboat Dirtblock*, expand his inquiry into metabolism of production and infrastructure. *Stranded Assets* emerges from a set of lamps found in the stairwell of the recently decommissioned Giuseppe Volpi thermoelectric power plant in Venice’s industrial port of Marghera. In providing light to the exhibition section, the work shades into an uncanny phantasm of the power plant’s namesake figure, Giuseppe Volpi di Misurat, who sought to modernize urban infrastructure as Mussolini’s finance minister. *Dreamboat Dirtblock* revisits and puts under pressure the systems examined in his earlier works, dislocating and rendering malleable the systems of meaning yet again. The lamps of *Stranded Assets*, made from pure compressed ash, become compressed blocks of soil extracted from NYC building foundation pits; the heating circuits from *More Heat Than Light* reemerge as the unrealized Norman Bel Geddes boat design; the Cesariano etchings are supplanted by the Assyrian relief etchings, which stand visually identical to the patterns of the heating circuits. Systems are montaged and morphed under a new contextual frame.

What emerges in Lewitt’s practice, then, are the conditions of knowability and unknowability, and the potential for constellations of graphic and plastic material to bring them into relief. In his view, the contents of an exhibition act as examples of something that have no *given* conditions of knowability, but rather, can generate them retrospectively. Heeding Marcel Broodthaers, who stated, “Fiction enables you to grasp both reality and at the same time those things that reality hides,” Lewitt seeks to inflect a knowledge of reality with elements that reality cannot perceive in its own structure.

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

Sam Lewitt (b. 1981, Los Angeles) completed the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2005 after receiving his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2004. In 2017, his work was presented in ARTE VIVA ARTE, the 57th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale. Lewitt's exhibition More Heat Than Light was on view in 2015 at the CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, and then traveled in 2016 to the Kunsthalle Basel, and, under the title Less Light Warm Words, to the Swiss Institute, New York. Previously, Lewitt co-organized the exhibition and Materials and Money and Crisis at the MUMOK, Vienna, with Richard Birkett, a show in which he was also included, and drunken walks/cliché/corrosion fatigue/ebay at Miguel Abreu Gallery. His work "Fluid Employment" was exhibited in the 2012 Whitney Biennial. Solo exhibitions dedicated to Lewitt's work have been held at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2020, 2018, 2014, 2011, 2008, 2006), Galerie Buchholz, Berlin and Cologne (2017, 2013, 2011, 2008), Leopold-Hoesch-Museum, Düren (2014), and Galleria Franco Soffiantino, Turin (2009, 2007). His work has also appeared in exhibitions at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Museum of Modern Art, Bergen Kunsthall, Secession, La Panacée, The Brno House of Arts, the Pulitzer Foundation, Fridericianum, David Roberts Art Foundation, White Columns, SculptureCenter, MoMA PS1, Artists Space, the Swiss Institute, David Zwirner, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, and Andrew Roth Gallery. His work is held in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, MUMOK, Vienna, the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, the Aishti Foundation, Beirut, the Pinault Collection, Fondazione Memmo, Rome, and the Fondation d'Entreprise Galeries Lafayette, Paris, among others. Lewitt was the recipient of the 2018 BMW Open Work commission at the Frieze Art Fair in London, a 2018 Grants to Artists award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and was also the 2018 Teiger Mentor in the Arts at Cornell University. Fluid Employment, a monograph dedicated to Lewitt's eponymous work, was published in 2013, while his catalogues for More Heat Than Light and Stranded Assets appeared in 2016 and 2017, respectively.

In October 2020, Lewitt's solo exhibition CURE (the Work) opened at Z33 – House for Contemporary Art in Hasselt, Belgium.

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

SAM LEWITT

Born in Los Angeles, CA, 1981
Lives and works in New York

EDUCATION

2005

Whitney Museum of American Art, Independent Study Program, New York

2004

BFA, School of Visual Arts, New York

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020

CURE (the Work), Z33: House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture, Hasselt, Belgium
DREAMBOAT DIRTBLOCK, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY

2018

BMW Open Work, curated by Attilia Fattori Franchini, Frieze London, London, UK
COVER, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY

2017

FILLER, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Germany

2016

Less Light Warm Words, Swiss Institute, New York, NY
More Heat Than Light, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland
More Heat Than Light (Airbnb), New York, NY

2015

More Heat Than Light, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA

2014

Verbrannte Erde: Second Salvage, Leopold-Hoesch-Museum, Düren, Germany
Casual Encounters, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY

2013

International Corrosion Fatigue, Galerie Buchholz, Cologne, Germany

2011

0110_ Universal-City_1010, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Germany
Total Immersion Environment, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York

2010

Paper Citizens, Art|41|Basel – Art Statements, Miguel Abreu Gallery, Basel, Switzerland

2009

From A to Z and Back, Galleria Franco Soffiantino, Turin, Italy
Sam Lewitt: From A to Z and Back, Gallery Taka Ishii, Kyoto, Japan

2008

I hereby promise... etc., Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY

Printer, Scriptor: Folios, Galerie Buchholz, Cologne, Germany

2007

1010 in Universal City, Galleria Franco Soffiantino, Turin, Italy

2006

Patience ... Fortitude, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2019

You: Works from the Lafayette Anticipations Collection, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France

Hi Ventilation - 20 Years Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg, Germany

Living in a Lightbulb, curated by Jenny Jaskey and Mia Locks, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, NY

Living in a Lightbulb, curated by Jenny Jaskey and Mia Locks, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

New Order: Art and Technology in the Twenty-First Century, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

2018

On Circulation, Bergen Kunsthall, Norway

Other Mechanisms, curated by Anthony Huberman, Secession, Vienna, Austria

SI Onsite, Swiss Institute, New York, NY

Madeline Hollander, Sean Raspet, Sam Lewitt, The Artists Institute, New York, NY

Crash Test: The Molecular Turn, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, La Panacée, MoCo - Montpellier Contemporain, Montpellier, France

The Dutch Savannah, Schouwburg De Domijnen, Sittard, Netherlands

2017

Social Surfaces, Artists Space, New York, NY

Venice Biennale 2017: VIVA ARTE VIVA, curated by Christine Macel, Venice, Italy

Grounding Vision: Wacław Szpakowski, Works by Guy de Cointet, Hanne Darboven, Trisha Donnelly, Sam Lewitt, Hilary Lloyd, Florian Pumhösl, and R.H. Quaytman, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York

Sam Lewitt, Cheyney Thompson, curated by Karel Cisar, The House of Arts, Brno, Czech Republic

2016

A Slow Succession with Many Interruptions, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA

Sam Lewitt and Lucy Raven: Wild Sync & Weak Locals, Pilar Corrias, London, UK

The Westreich Wagner Collection, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

Takashi Murakami's Superflat Collection, Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan

2015

Collected by Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

National Gallery 2: Empire, Chewday's, London, UK

An Eye for Excellence: Twenty Years of Collecting, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA

Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

No Shadows in Hell, Pilar Corrias, London, UK

The Radiants, curated by UNITED BROTHERS and Jacob King, Bortolami Gallery, New York, NY

bare code scan, Fused Space, San Francisco, CA

2014

Sequence 5, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY

nature after nature, curated by Susanne Pfeffer, Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany

Warm Side of Zero, Overduin & Co., Los Angeles, CA

Art of Its Own Making, organized by Gretchen Wagner, Pulitzer Foundation, St. Louis, MO
Geographies of Contamination, David Roberts Art Foundation, London, UK

2013

and Materials and Money and Crisis, co-organized with Richard Birkett, MUMOK, Vienna, Austria
drunken walks / cliché / corrosion fatigue / ebay, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
Looking Back / The 7th White Columns Annual – Selected by Richard Birkett, White Columns, New York, NY

2012

How do it know?, Essex Street, New York, NY
Surface Affect, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
Whitney Biennial 2012, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

2011

Quodlibet III, Alphabets and Instruments, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Berlin, Germany
The Lifestyle Press, Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA
Time Again: Novel, Sculpture Center, Long Island City, New York, NY
Commodity / Fetish, curated by Nicolás Guagnini, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
New York to London and Back: The Medium of Contingency, Thomas Dane Gallery, London, UK

2010

Today I Made Nothing, Elizabeth Dee, New York, NY
The Evryali Score, curated by Olivia Shao, Gallery David Zwirner, New York, NY
Greater New York: The Baghdad Batteries, curated by Olivia Shao, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, NY
So Be It: Interventions in Printed Matter, Andrew Roth Gallery, New York, NY

2009

Frottage, curated by Alexander Kitnick, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
Notices, International Project Space, Birmingham, UK
Collatéral, organized by Yann Chevallier, Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France
Dreaming the Mainstream, Vilma Gold Gallery, London, UK
Quod Libet II, Galerie Buchholz, Cologne, Germany
Practice vs. Object, organized by Margaret Liu Clinton, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
Re-gift, curated by John Miller, Swiss Institute, New York, NY

2008

Power Structure, organized by Nicolás Guagnini, Andrew Roth Gallery, New York, NY
Lure, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, France
Sequence, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
A Rictus Grin, curated by Christopher Eamon and Anke Kempkes, 1602 Broadway, New York, NY
Skipping the Page, curated by Graham Parker, Center for Book Arts, New York, NY

2007

Regroup, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
Form as Memory, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
Massiv Analog Academy, curated by Gareth James and John Kelsey, Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne, Germany
For the People of Paris, Sutton Lane c/o Ghislaine Hussenot, Paris, France

2006

Hands up/Hands down, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, NY
Patti's New Mantra, performance with Ei Arakawa, Artists Space, New York, NY
Slow Burn, Galerie Edward Mitterand, Geneva, Switzerland

2005

New Labor, LeRoy Neiman Gallery, Columbia University, New York, NY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2021

Rottmann, André. "Compression and Circulation: Sam Lewitt's CURE (the Work)," *Z33*, January 1

2020

Moioli, Chiara. "Meditation has the Strongest Echo: Sam Lewitt," *Mousse Magazine*, February 7

2018

Azzarello, Nina. "Sam Lewitt on CORE, Creativity, and Being Commissioned for BMW Open Work at Frieze," *Designboom*, October 11

Banks, Nargess. "BMW And Frieze Collaborate With Innovative Art Commission," *Forbes.com*, June 26

2017

Urbano Ragazzi, Francesco. "Sam Lewitt." *L'Uomo Vogue*, May-June

Speed, Mitch. "A Parasitic 'joie de vivre' in 'Viva Arte Viva'," *Momus*, May 30

Polera, Justin. "Escaping Reality: A Tour Through the 57th Venice Biennale with Patrik Ervell," *Document Journal*, May 22

"Sam Lewitt," *KUNSTFORUM International*, Vol. 247: 57th Venice Biennale

"2017 Venice Thematic Highlights," *LEAP Magazine Venice Biennale 2017 Special*, May

Andrew Tracy and Sam Lewitt on Straub-Huillet, *TIFF.net*, March 22

2016

Voon, Claire. "Two Shows that Expose the Unseen Infrastructure Around Us," *Hyperallergic*, July 19

Cohen, Alina. "The Artist Who's Making Viewers Sweat," *Forbes*, July 7

Schwendener, Martha. "Sam Lewitt, 'Less Light Warm Words'," *The New York Times*, July 1

Curtis, Tyler. "Sam Lewitt," *Critics' Picks, Artforum.com*, June

McDermott, Emily. "Sam Lewitt's Electrical Discourse," *Interview Magazine*, June

Greenberger, Alex. "Short Circuit: Sam Lewitt Turns Up the Heat at the Swiss Institute," *ARTnews*, June 9

Chu, Christie. "10 Millennial Artists to Watch in 2016," *artnet News*, June 6

"The Logorrheic Impulse, Or Tide Pool As Historical Experience: Sam Lewitt and Max Hooper Schneider In Conversation," *Mousse*, No. 53, pp. 100-108

2015

James, Gareth. "Weak Local Lineaments: On Sam Lewitt at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco," *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 100, December 2015, pp. 242-245

Omori, Toshikatsu. "100 Contemporary Artists of Our Time: Sam Lewitt," *Bijutsutecho*, Spring

Allen, Gwen. "Previews: Sam Lewitt: More Heat than Light" *Artforum*, September

"Museum Previews: Sam Lewitt," *Art in America*, August 2015

Akel, "Sam Lewitt: Material production and the march of history," *Frieze*, March 2015

2014

Fiske, Courtney. "In the Studio: Sam Lewitt," *Art in America*, April

Banai, Nuit. "and Materials and Money and Crisis," *Artforum*, March

Rappolt, Mark. "and Materials and Money and Crisis," *ArtReview*, March

Sam, Sherman. "Geographies of Contamination," *Critics' Picks, Artforum.com*, March

2013

Cotter, Holland. "Looking Back: The 7th White Columns Annual," *The New York Times*, February 7

Pollack, Maika. "Looking Back / The 7th White Columns Annual at White Columns," *GalleristNY.com*, January 15

2012

- Lee, Pamela M., "Media Specificities," *Artforum*, September
- Schjeldahl, Peter. The Art World, "Not Like the Other Ones," *The New Yorker*, March 12
- Budick, Ariella. "Whitney Biennial 2012," *Financial Times*, March 6
- Yablonsky, Linda. Scene & Herd, "Different Strokes," *Artforum.com*, March 3
- McGarry, Kevin. "Out There, Live From the Whitney Biennial," *T Magazine Blog*, March 2
- Smith, Roberta. "A Survey of a Different Color: 2012 Whitney Biennial," *The New York Times*, March 1
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- Moran, Jarret & Ryan, Amanda. "Whitney Biennial Guide," *Artlog*, February 29
- Nathan, Emily. "Whitney Biennial 2012: Risky Situations," *Artnet*, February 29
- Pollack, Maika. "Be Here Now: Eccentric Historicism Emerges at the 2012 Whitney Biennial," *Gallerist NY*, Feb. 28

2011

- Ledare, Leigh. Best of 2011, "The Artists' Artists," *Artforum*, December
- Baier, Simon. "Plastik und Impressum," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 82, June
- Boucher, Brian. "Sam Lewitt," *Art In America Online*, May
- "Goings on About Town: Art, Commodity/Fetish," *The New Yorker*, April 4
- Johnson, Paddy. "Commodity Fetishism in a Speakeasy Gallery," *The L Magazine*, March 30
- Smith, Roberta. Museums and Gallery Listings March 35-31, "Commodity/Fetish," *The New York Times*, March 24
- Yago, Dena. "Striving Toward Coherence: Q+A With Sam Lewitt," *Art In America Online*, March
- Aletti, Vince. "Goings On About Town: Art, Sam Lewitt," *The New Yorker*, January 31

2010

- Smith, Roberta. "The Varieties of Abstract Experience," *The New York Times*, Aug. 6
- Diaz, Eva. "Critic's Pick: Frottage," *Artforum.com*, January 10

2009

- Johnson, Ken. "The Lower East Side, Home to the Young and Emerging," *The New York Times*, December 4
- Baier, Simon. "An Archive of Language," *Mousse Magazine*, November/December
- Kitamura, Katie. "Back: Ei Arakawa & Sam Lewitt," *Frieze*, September
- Lewis, David. "Critic's Picks: Collatéral," *Artforum.com*, July
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2008

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2007

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BOOKS & CATALOGUES

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Mackay, Robin, ed. *The Medium of Contingency*. London: Urbanomic; London: Ridinghouse, 2011.
Skipping the Page. New York: Center for Book Arts, 2008.
Stranded Assets – Modulo 2: Protezione Ambientale. Paris: onestar press, 2017.
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Wagner, Gretchen, L. *Art of Its Own Making*. St. Louis, MO: The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, 2014.

PUBLICATIONS (CONTRIBUTOR)

2017

Stephen Hoban and Kelly Kivland (eds.), *Artists on Hanne Darboven*, New York: Dia Art Foundation

2016

"A Questionnaire on Materialisms," *October*, No. 155, Winter 2016, pp. 67-69

2015

"DIMM Memories of the Ruhr," *Starship #12*, edited by Henrik Olesen and Ariane Müller, Berlin

2014

"Notes from New Jersey," *Collapse* vol. VIII, edited by Robin Mackay, Falmouth, UK: Urbanomic

2013

"Stare Naked," *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 89, March

2012

"The Artists' Artists: Moyra Davies's *Les Goddesses*," *Artforum*, December

"Miscellany on Signatures, Interiors, and Erotic Misery," D. A. F. de Sade, *Société Populaire*, edited by Erik Wysocan, New York: Halmos

2009

"The Art of the Con: on Graham Parkers *Fair Use: Notes from Spam*," *Artforum*, October

"Pyrrhic Victories," *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 75, September

2008

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2007

"Great Expectations: Discussion Between Jutta Koether, Sam Lewitt, Eileen Quinlan," *Jutta Koether* (DuMont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, 2007)

2006

"Club You Can't Get Into: Sam Lewitt on *Make Your Own Life*, *Artists In & Out of Cologne* at the ICA Philadelphia," *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 63, September

2005

The sky is as thin as paper here 1, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne
Robert Alexander Foundation, Floating IP, Manchester

Sam Lewitt is the co-founder with Gareth James and Cheyney Thompson of *Scorched Earth*, a lecture/research space (defunct) and forthcoming publication that focuses on the practice and politics of drawing.

TEACHING

Faculty, MFA, Milton Avery Graduate School of Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

2018

Teiger Mentor in the Arts (Spring Semester), Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

LECTURES & TALKS

2021

"A Conversation with Sam Lewitt & Felicity D. Scott," Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture (Online)

2019

"SC Conversations: Jean-Luc Moulène, Same Lewitt, and Yasmil Raymond," Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY

2018

"Talk with artist Sam Lewitt, BMW Open Work," in discussion with Attilia Fattori Franchini and Dr. Thomas Girst, Frieze London, UK

"Sam Lewitt: A Certain Trouble with Language," Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

2017

"Art + Research Center Lecture," ICA Miami, Miami, FL

2016

"The Whole Cool System," symposium with Simon Baier, Sebastian Egenhofer, Devin Fore, Felicity D. Scott, and André Rottmann, eikones forum / Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland

2014

"Artists on Artists Lecture Series: Sam Lewitt on Hanne Darboven," Dia Art Foundation, New York, NY

2013

"Critical Issues in Contemporary Art Series," School of Art, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

2012

Whitney Biennial Symposium: "Materials, Money, Crisis," with Nathan Brown, Craig Buckley, Melanie Gilligan and Benjamin Lee, Artists Space, New York

GRANTS & AWARDS

2018

Grants to Artists, Foundation for Contemporary Arts

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Aishti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

Fondazione Memmo, Rome

Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL

Mumok, Vienna, Austria

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Pinault Collection
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY