

# What Is Conceptual Art?

Artist **Sol LeWitt** believed that an idea or concept could be a work of art in and of itself. He played a leading role in an artistic movement called **Conceptual Art** that began in the 1960s. Conceptual artists put focus on the planning and design of an artwork that may be created by someone else or may just exist as an idea. This way of working is similar to the role of an architect or a music composer. LeWitt wrote that “the idea becomes the machine that makes the art,” and believed that it is the idea behind a work of art, not the object itself, that people engage with.



LeWitt in his Manhattan apartment, 1961.

**Many of LeWitt’s artworks exist as sets of instructions. Use a large piece of paper or several standard sheets taped together to try out these instructions created by LeWitt in 1971:**

**USING A BLACK, HARD CRAYON DRAW A TWENTY INCH SQUARE.**

**DIVIDE THIS SQUARE INTO ONE INCH SQUARES.**

**WITHIN EACH ONE INCH SQUARE, DRAW NOTHING, OR DRAW A DIAGONAL STRAIGHT LINE FROM CORNER TO CORNER OR TWO CROSSING STRAIGHT LINES DIAGONALLY FROM CORNER TO CORNER.**

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**Now, inspired by the work of Sol LeWitt, design your own set of step-by-step instructions for an artwork that someone else can produce.**

Your finished artwork should be large-scale, abstract drawings made of geometric or organic shapes and/or lines. You may want to create the artwork yourself first and record the steps you took to make it.

**Write your instructions in ten steps on the next page.** When you are finished, share them or send them to someone else to carry out. Compare their final product with what you had in mind. Were your instructions clear? Make any edits you think are necessary to improve the process.

View Sol LeWitt’s [Modular Cube/Base](#) online in the Collection section of the Nasher website.

## **Instructions:**

1.

2.

3.

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