Andrew Witkin, gallery director and conceptual artist

The Placement of the Sculpture

Personally I love the balance in the work. It both fits into the landscape, it reaches up high, it’s of great scale, but at the same time that is rigid rectilinear forms of industrial fabrication on grass in a rolling landscape. In many regards, it makes me think of Olmstead, and sort of these fabricated landscapes. You know, so is that a broken trunk? No! It’s not going to that literal end, but the contrast is there in a beautiful realm, and it’s very simple. And from any side you get a sense of the other sides. You can look at any small amount of it and it continues to take you somewhere, whether it’s higher literally horizon-wise or it takes you inside your own head. At least that’s what it does for me.

Denise Markonish, Mass MOCA curator

Timelessness of Tower (DC)

I think the thing that makes LeWitt so timely is all of his work is based on very simple principles. Whether it’s the wall drawings which are about a set of instructions that involve the most elemental aspects of art which are lines and color, or the sculptures, the incomplete open cubes. And I think the fact that he takes those elemental things and then it’s all about permutation, so how many different varieties of these things can we get, makes it very timeless because artists, no matter what they’re doing, are still looking at these very elemental things. Almost every artist that we show here you can find links to what Sol is doing whether it was in the forms he used
or in his method of using that idea of conceptual art.

Jeremy Ziemann, fabricator
Construction of Concrete Blocks
Concrete block appealed to him because the shape of them is a unit that’s 1 to 1 to 2 ratio. These particular blocks here are 8” by 8” by 16”. And it’s fairly universal internationally that you can find the material, not always concrete but usually that’s in that shape. So it’s because a module that was accessible, and also the process of construction is standardized, so he was able to utilize mason unions from whatever state or particular country to install these works, and they could produce them in a manner that was in tradition of laying concrete block, so I think that’s general appeal to this material. Pieces can vary in ratio. We’ve done a few works that were cubed, so they’d be 8 x 8 x 8. Now in Europe it’s become somewhat more complicated because European unions have deviated from this scale of block because of a weight concern, so now across the boards workers can’t lift over certain amounts to like 15 kilograms. In these particular blocks the solids are 70 lbs. We did a project in Italy and about six years ago when I said, “We need these concrete blocks.” And they showed up the next day with two options one was something that was made out of lava and the other was marble and in the end we ended up using marble because it was whiter and it wasn’t as dark and brown as this other material. Traditionally they were all concrete, and that was the intent but he was open to some options. The idea was to typically try to find a material that was locally available and that had laborers that could locally install.

Jeremy Ziemann, fabricator
Building Tower (DC)
For this piece here we had to prepare a footing, so they poured an earth-formed concrete footing that helps to support the work from sinking into the ground or shifting. And then upon that, the pieces will lay one first course of block to establish its footprint and then in the footing up, the blocks are laid and pinned to the footing and filled with concrete so that they won’t fill up with water ultimately, because concrete block traditionally would be used in a condition where there would be a wall and roof covering it and so they’re not constantly exposed to the elements like this piece will be. The blocks for this project are actually coined a premium block—they have a kind of mixture in them that doesn’t absorb water as much as a typical block does so that it allows this work to hopefully sustain the elements longer. And then the process of the construction is typical for masonry block construction. Other than that, the bond, which is called a stacked bond, as opposed to a staggered... if you visualize a brick wall, that’s typically a staggered bond, where one block is laid halfway over the other block. This particular piece, if you were to look down on it, and if you were to look down on the drawing that Sol provided for this work, would have a series of numbers to each column. And each of those columns, this ultimately is a progression from one block to twenty-five, and spiraling upward or downward, depending on how you look at it.
**Mystery Family Tour**

You are looking at a sculpture by Sol LeWitt, titled *Tower (DC)*. Look and listen carefully to solve the mystery of what it means to be a conceptual artist. The artist who created this sculpture, Sol, was a conceptual artist. Conceptual artists are more interested in ideas and thoughts than the actual making of the art and the final product. What do you think this artist was thinking about when he was planning this sculpture? What does this sculpture look like to you? This sculpture reminds me of a building. Sol often called this sculpture a ‘structure.’ ‘Structure’ is a word used by architects and builders when they’re talking about buildings. Sol titled this piece *Tower (DC)*, so maybe he thought of this sculpture as a building, too. Does it look like any building you have seen? Sol spent a great deal of time planning and making decisions about this sculpture. In fact, he was so interested in the ideas and thoughts behind the piece that he let other people build the sculpture for him! Do you think Sol should be called an artist even though he wasn’t the person who built the sculpture? What do you think is more important: the ideas you have about your artwork or the way your artwork looks when it is finished?