The Wadsworth Atheneum celebrates its collection of conceptual art with new exhibition:

*Rules & Repetition* opens October 26

Hartford, Conn. (October 19, 2023)—The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art presents works by pioneering conceptual artists of the 1960s and ‘70s alongside more recent acquisitions in *Rules & Repetition: Conceptual Art at the Wadsworth Atheneum*. The exhibition highlights the role played by the Wadsworth in supporting conceptual art and its legacy over the past 50 years. *Rules & Repetition* is on view October 26, 2023—February 18, 2024 at the Wadsworth.

“This exhibition highlights the Wadsworth Atheneum’s long history of engaging with challenging, cutting-edge art thanks to often visionary curators. In the 1970s Andrea Miller-Keller, curator of contemporary art, laid the foundation for the museum’s embrace of conceptual art, with support from Hartford-native Sol LeWitt,” says Matthew Hargraves, Director of the Wadsworth. “It’s a moment of the museum’s history that should be celebrated and much better known, and one that we hope will resonate with today’s visitors.”

*Rules & Repetition* features artists who embraced serial repetition, instruction-based artmaking, and other key conceptualist strategies in their creative practices. Countering the perception that conceptual art is cool or difficult to access, *Rules & Repetition* offers an approachable introduction through key works from the Wadsworth’s collection. Presented as art made by real people with urgent concerns about their world and the role that art can and should play within it, *Rules & Repetition* expands notions about conceptual art and its continuing relevance to contemporary art and life.

“This exhibition highlights an important and underrecognized strength in the Wadsworth’s permanent collection,” said Jared Quinton, Emily Hall Tremaine Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the Wadsworth. “It’s a chance to put well known collection works in dialogue with artworks that haven’t been shown recently and artists that aren’t always associated with conceptual art and its legacy.”
Works in the exhibition include photography and sculpture by Sol LeWitt, all eleven paintings from Lee Lozano’s *Wave Series*, serial photographs by Ana Mendieta, and Louise Lawler’s sound work, *Birdcalls*, on loan from the LeWitt collection. Taken as a whole, the nearly 40 works in the exhibition suggest how our experiences are shaped by patterns, structures, and systems, celebrating the ability of art to help us understand how we relate to the world in new ways.


**Performance: Alvin Lucier's (Hartford) Memory Space**
In conjunction with the exhibition, a performance of the musical composition *(Hartford) Memory Space* by composer Alvin Lucier (1931–2021) takes place on Saturday, November 18 from 1-2pm. The special performance of the 1970 work by Lucier, one of the most influential American composers of the last 100 years, features regional musicians who will create a sound map of Hartford throughout the museum. Lucier’s work invites performers to go into the outside environments of Hartford and “record by any means (memory, written notations, tape recordings) the sound situations of those environments,” then re-create them with their own instruments. The November 18 performance will mark a realization of the work over 50 years after its premiere, offering visitors a demonstration of conceptual approaches to music. The performance is presented in partnership with Wesleyan University’s Center for the Arts and Hartford Art School at University of Hartford.

**About the Contemporary Art Collection**
Since its opening in 1844, the Wadsworth Atheneum has presented artists of its own time, from Thomas Cole and Frederic Church to Salvador Dalí, Piet Mondrian, Andy Warhol, Sol LeWitt, Adrian Piper, and Cady Noland. The Contemporary art collection encompasses works created from 1945 to the present with strong examples of Abstract Expressionism, Color Field painting, Pop art, Conceptual art, and recent movements in painting, sculpture, photography, and video. Supplemented by acquisitions from its groundbreaking MATRIX exhibition program—launched in 1975—the collection includes work by many past MATRIX artists, such as John Baldessari, Duane Hanson, Christian Jankowski, Ellsworth Kelly, Glenn Ligon, Lee Lozano, Robert Mapplethorpe, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, and William Wegman.

**About MATRIX**
MATRIX, a changing series of contemporary art exhibitions, was initially funded as an experimental pilot project with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Since its first exhibition in January 1975, MATRIX has shown more than 1,000 works of art by more than 160 artists. Half of the artists have been in their 30s or younger, and more than one-third did not have an affiliation with a commercial gallery at the time of their MATRIX experience. From its inception, MATRIX has been a forum for art that is challenging, current, and sometimes controversial. Through clear explanation and thoughtful engagement with the viewer, MATRIX exhibitions call into question preconceptions about art and increase understanding of its possibilities. MATRIX has inspired more than 50 similar programs across the country at museums in Atlanta, Berkeley, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC.
Exhibition and Program Support
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About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Founded in 1842 with a vision for infusing art into the American experience, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is home to a collection of nearly 50,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years and encompassing European art from antiquity through contemporary as well as American art from the 1600s to today. The Wadsworth Atheneum’s five connected buildings—representing architectural styles including Gothic Revival, modern International Style, and 1960s Brutalism—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Conn.

Current hours are noon–5pm Thursday–Sunday. Berkins on Main café hours are noon–4pm Thursday–Sunday. The library is open Fridays by appointment only. Admission: $10–20; discounts for members, students, and seniors. Free admission for Hartford residents with Wadsworth Welcome registration. Phone: (860) 278-2670; website: thewadsworth.org.


High resolution image files available on request. Email jessica.kelley@thewadsworth.org.

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