



Summer opening of the Venet Foundation  
18 June — 16 October 2020

A new installation by Lawrence Weiner  
and reopening of the sculpture park  
Le Muy, South of France



## This summer, the Venet Foundation is pleased to present in Le Muy (Var) a new installation by the artist Lawrence Weiner

The new piece by the American artist is adapted to a visit that is solely focused on the outdoor areas in response to the exceptional health measures that have been put in place. Conceived for the site, the *statement* Lawrence Weiner has come up with for the Venet Foundation is installed inside the long glass-walled gallery yet is completely visible from the sculpture park. Weiner's statement has become a key to the park display.

Visitors will discover or rediscover the work making up the sculpture park, including monumental pieces by artists represented in the collection, such luminaries as Richard Long, Larry Bell, Tony Cragg, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Sir Anthony Caro, Phillip King, Arman, Richard Deacon, and Ulrich Rückriem, as well as Bernar Venet, whose sculptures for the Palace of Versailles show in 2011 have been put on view in a collapse-based reinstallation. The Stella Chapel, created on site by Frank Stella for the Foundation's 2014 inauguration, brings together six of his large reliefs. Visitors will be able to see the Chapel along with James Turrell's permanent installation called *Elliptic Ecliptic*, which is part of the series of *Skyspaces*.

The 7 hectares dedicated to conceptual art and Bernar Venet's installations allow visitors to enjoy an exceptional display in a natural setting of extraordinary beauty in the heart of Provence.

## The pandemic lockdown brings back a practice inherited from conceptual art

The conditions for preparing the exhibition have also been transformed since things were done via telephone and digital communications. Because of the pandemic and the subsequent confinement, workarounds took shape to help design and put together exhibitions, breathing new life into practices that presided over the birth of conceptual art in the 1960s. What comes immediately to mind, for example, is *Art by Telephone* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (1969), in which Jan van der Marck invited the featured artists to call in their instructions based on the model of László Moholy-Nagy's paintings by telephone from 1923 (the exhibition catalogue did not show completed paintings but consisted of a vinyl record containing the different instructions). But there is also the Mel Bochner show from 1966 *Working drawings and other visible things on paper not necessarily meant to be viewed as art*; Lucy Lippard's *Numbers* exhibitions (including **557,087'** at the Seattle World Pavilion and **955,000** in Vancouver in 1970); Seth Siegelaub's shows and works, **Xerox Book, July, August, September 1969**; and Bernar Venet's show at the Templon Gallery in 1971. He hadn't seen the works, which were created at a distance, and did not go to the show itself. All of the works in the exhibition involved proposals that had been communicated from a distance. It is worth recalling here that this possibility of creating a work of art for a specific site according to a protocol and without the artist's intervention – a practice that spread far beyond its original birthplace – constitutes a contribution of conceptual art to the meaning of the historic movement, which appeared in New York in the late 1960s.

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<sup>1</sup> The shows that Lawrence Weiner took part in are indicated in bold.

## The origins of Lawrence Weiner's *statement*

Lawrence Weiner is one of the major historic players in the conceptual art movement, whose practice in the years 1968-1971 illustrates the search for dematerialization. When the students of Windham College destroyed the sculpture called *Staple, Stakes, Twine, Turf* because the piece blocked their entry to the campus lawn, Weiner established his *statements* (1968), that is summary descriptions of artworks, either executed or not. The artist defined their use in one of the most significant declarations of the art of the last fifty years:

"1. The artist may construct the piece.

2. The piece may be fabricated.

3. The piece need not be built.

Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership."

At that time, objects, which were still reappropriations of pictorial practices, were always of central importance. It was in 1971 with the painting of statements on walls becoming widespread that the realization of works of art started becoming obsolete. The text and its physical presence served as telepathic sculptural interventions, sufficient unto themselves and infused with a certain mystique, which recalls Sol LeWitt's declaration, "Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach. If words are used and they proceed from ideas about art, then they are art and not literature, numbers are not mathematics."



## Health measures

The current situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic has naturally led to new ways of managing events and institutions that normally welcome crowds. The number of participants in guided tours will of course be reduced in keeping with official recommendations (probably a maximum of 15 people). Lawrence Weiner's piece for this summer is suitable for a visit focused on our outdoor areas. The *statement* he has devised for the Venet Foundation is written out on one wall of the glass-enclosed gallery and is completely visible from the sculpture park, where it now serves as a key to how the park is toured.

Visitors will be able to move around the park on a designated pathway and possible contacts with others will be strictly limited since the sculpture park's exit is now located at the very opposite of the entrance. New signage will also be installed to make foot traffic easier.

Visits continue to be by reservation in order to limit the number of people touring the grounds at once.



## Captions of the visuals above and below

PAGE 1 View of the gallery with a simulation of Lawrence Weiner's artwork installed. Courtesy Moved Pictures Archive, New York, and the Venet Foundation

PAGE 2 Portrait of Lawrence Weiner. Courtesy Moved Pictures Archive, New York

## Practical infos

The Venet Foundation at Le Muy, Var is open from 18 June to 16 October 2020, by reservation only via [www.venetfoundation.org](http://www.venetfoundation.org)

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