

News Release

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Public Artwork by Lawrence Weiner Presented on the Facade of the Jewish Museum

Jewish Museum

New York, NY, November 18, 2020--The Jewish Museum's dynamic temporary installation by renowned artist Lawrence Weiner is presented on the Museum's façade beginning November 18, 2020. Weiner's ALL THE STARS IN THE SKY HAVE THE SAME FACE (2011/20) is a two-story, building-wide banner in red, white, and blue that stretches across the Museum's Fifth Avenue-facing façade at 92nd Street. It transforms the building into a public artwork to spread its message, a plea of shared humanity along New York City's Museum Mile.

Lawrence Weiner (b. 1942, New York City) uses language to create his art, finding it an accessible and flexible medium that allows the viewer to think in new, challenging, and often unexpected ways. Born and raised in the South Bronx, he graduated from Stuyvesant High School and briefly attended Hunter College. Weiner explains how growing up in New York City influenced his approach to making art: "Art was something else; the notations on a wall, or the messages left by other people. I grew up in a city where I had read the walls; I still read the walls. I love to put work of mine on the walls and let other people read it."

Weiner's art is fundamentally social. He believes it is complete only when seen by others; when viewers can interpret it, engage with it, and put it into action. He has addressed charged histories and urgent issues throughout his 60-year career. For this new artwork commissioned by the Jewish Museum, Weiner drew upon an old Yiddish phrase he often heard when growing up, "Ale Yevanim habn eyn punim," meaning all Greeks (i.e., all non-Jews) have the same face. These words, an expression of Jewish self-isolation and anxiety, arose in response to the long history of anti-Semitism, repeating the same insularity and suspicion of "others" to which they were subject. Weiner reconceived this text to read ALL THE STARS IN THE SKY HAVE THE SAME FACE, and translated it simultaneously into English, Hebrew, and Arabic on a field of vibrant blue. His reimagining of the effects of anti-Semitism is inseparable from the resurgences of xenophobia and racism we have seen enacted in our own city and around the globe, urging us to reexamine who we are and where we want to be today. Weiner's artwork signals a restorative, unifying sentiment; it prompts us to think collectively, to imagine all that we may accomplish if we work together.

"This large-scale public art project is a poignant and timely statement that reflects the Jewish Museum's values of inclusion and community,

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as interpreted by Lawrence Weiner's signature style of sculptural language," said Claudia Gould, Helen Goldsmith Menschel Director. "This project has been in the works for over three years, but coincides with an unprecedented moment when people throughout the world are joining together to fight social injustice."

The text on the banner appears in Weiner's characteristic sans serif font, in horizontal as well as gestural lines. The banner is printed on a vinyl mesh material and measures approximately 97 feet by 28 feet.

Lawrence Weiner is widely regarded as a pioneer and leading figure of the conceptual art movement, expanding the parameters of what constitutes fine art. He has exhibited around the world, in numerous languages, both indoors and outdoors, in art institutions and public spaces. Weiner has a long history with the Jewish Museum, where he has been included in and the subject of five exhibitions, beginning in 1970 with *Using Walls*. Elsewhere in New York City, he was the subject of a career retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2007. During the run of that exhibition, he presented *AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE* (2007) on the façade of the Whitney's historic Marcel Breuer building on Madison Avenue. As a recipient of Israel's prestigious Wolf Prize in 2017, honoring artists and scientists for their achievements made in the interest of mankind and strengthening relations among people, Weiner considers the current Jewish Museum project a furtherance of his commitment to these ideals and a way he can continue to uphold this honor.

Support

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About the Jewish Museum

Located on New York City's famed Museum Mile, the Jewish Museum is a distinctive hub for art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. Founded in 1904, the Museum was the first institution of its kind in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. Devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, the Museum offers diverse exhibitions and programs, and maintains a unique collection of nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, and media reflecting the global Jewish experience over more than 4,000 years. Whether visitors come to our Fifth Avenue



building or engage online, there is something for everyone to enjoy and learn. The public may visit TheJewishMuseum.org or call 212.423.3200 for more information.

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