

## Artwork history

Lawrence Weiner

**EARTH TO EARTH ASHES TO ASHES DUST TO DUST, 1970**

Language + the materials referred to

Dimensions variable

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Panza Collection, Gift, 1992

92.4184

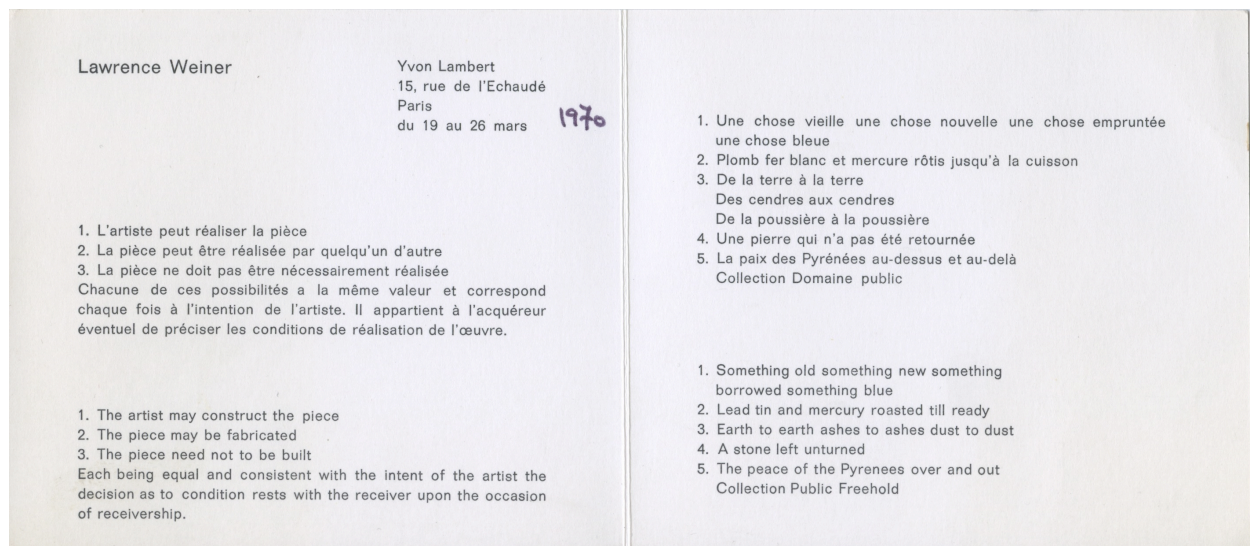
Artist cat. no. 151

### **Provenance:**

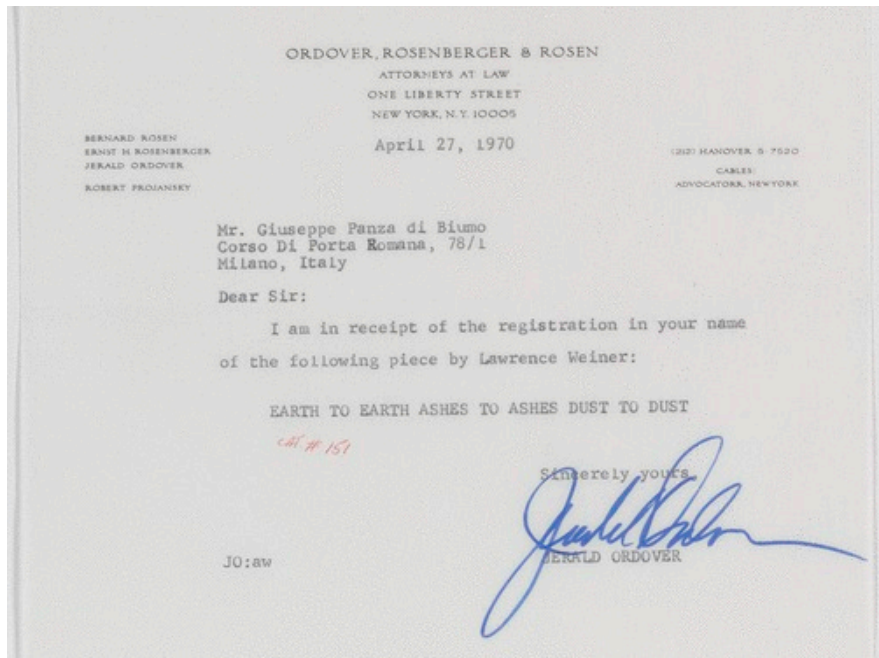
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris; sold to Giuseppe and Giovanna Panza, Milan and Varese, 1970 (Panza no. LW-12); gifted to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1992.

## History

This was one of five works in Lawrence Weiner's solo exhibition at Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, in March 1970. While no documentation has been found for the show, it most likely took the form of the announcement card that Weiner designed, in which the works appeared in both English and French (**fig. 1**). This work was translated as "De la terre à la terre / Des cendres aux cendres / De la poussière à la poussière". (All of the works in the announcement are printed in a combination of upper- and lowercase letters—a format anomalous to Weiner's later realizations, which with very few exceptions feature all caps.) Giuseppe Panza purchased the work out of the exhibition and, in keeping with Weiner's established practice, received a letter from lawyer Jerald Ordovery confirming its registration in his (Panza's) name (**fig. 2**).



**Figure 1:** Announcement, 1970 Galerie Yvon Lambert exhibition. Courtesy MOVED PICTURES, New York



**Figure 2:** Confirmation of registration by Jerald Ordovery, sent to Giuseppe Panza, April 27, 1970. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

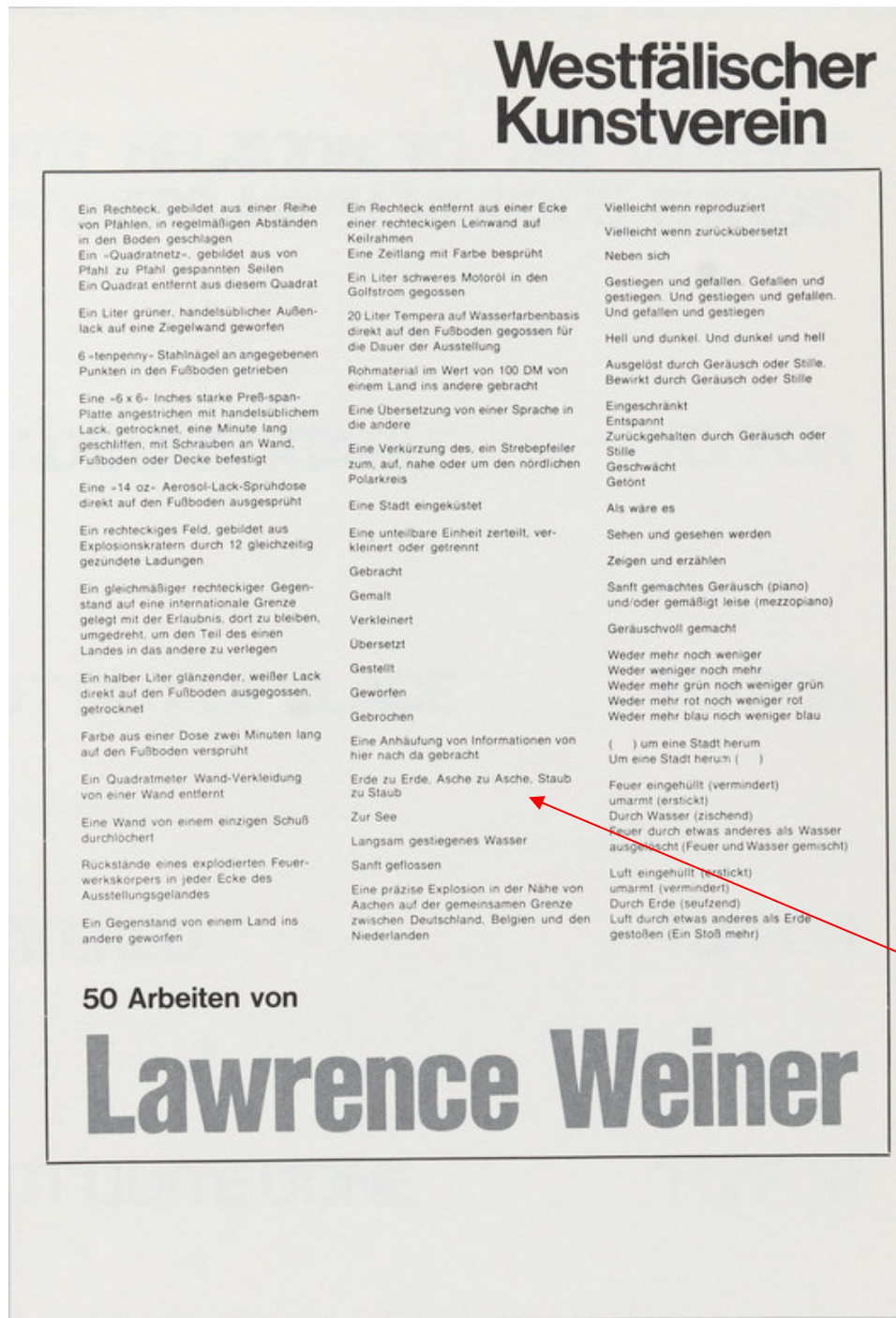
In 1972, Panza lent the work to *50 Arbeiten von Works of Lawrence Weiner*, at the Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster, a retrospective that took the form of a poster (**fig. 3**). (There was also an exhibition catalogue in which each work was identified with a question-and-answer text composed by the artist.) The work appeared in German translation only (“Erde zu Erde, Asche zu Asche, Staub zu Staub”), and, like all the other works on the poster, printed in a combination of upper- and lowercase letters. Klaus Honnef, the show’s curator, recalls that one copy of the poster was mounted on the wall of the large exhibition hall of the Kunstverein, and that copies were also available to the public for one Deutschmark.<sup>1</sup> Copies of the poster were also sent to other museums, which were invited to become additional venues of the retrospective, simultaneously, by mounting it in their exhibition space.<sup>2</sup> (It is not clear how many museums agreed, but Alice Zimmerman believes the Stedelijk Museum was one of them.<sup>3</sup>) The Münster poster was subsequently reproduced in the catalogue for Honnef’s 1974 group

<sup>1</sup> Email message from Klaus Honnef to Ted Mann, May 9, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Email message from Klaus Honnef to Ted Mann, May 15, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Alice Zimmerman, PCI Interview, May 16, 2013. Recording and full transcript of this and interviews with Lawrence Weiner are in the Panza Collection Initiative records, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Archives, New York.

exhibition at the Kunstverein Braunschweig, *Concept Art*. (This was another case in which the catalogue constituted the exhibition.)



**Figure 3:** Poster, *50 Arbeiten von Lawrence Weiner* (Westfälischer Kunstverein, Munster, 1972)



Sometime between 1973 and 1977, Panza had this work installed on a stairwell landing at his villa in Varese in the form of dry transfer Letraset decals on paper, framed, and hung on the wall (**fig. 4**). Panza himself selected the serif Letraset typeface as well as the frame, and the work was executed by the same person responsible for setting a group of other works directly on the wall at the villa.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 4:** Panza's presentation of the work at Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese (photographed in 1977).  
Photo: Giorgio Colombo, Milan

<sup>4</sup> Francesca Guicciardi Panza, June 3, 2013 email to Ted Mann. On the shift of Weiner's works to direct inscription on the wall around 1974, and Giuseppe Panza's role in this, see Francesca Esmay, Ted Mann, and Jeffrey Weiss, *Object Lessons: Case Studies in Minimal Art—The Guggenheim Panza Collection Initiative* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2021), pp. 196–99.

By 1981, Panza had the work installed in the same location in sans-serif Letraset adhered directly to the wall (**fig. 5**). It remained there until the time of the Guggenheim acquisition.



**Figure 5:** Panza's presentation of the work at Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese (photographed in 1981). Photo: Giorgio Colombo, Milan

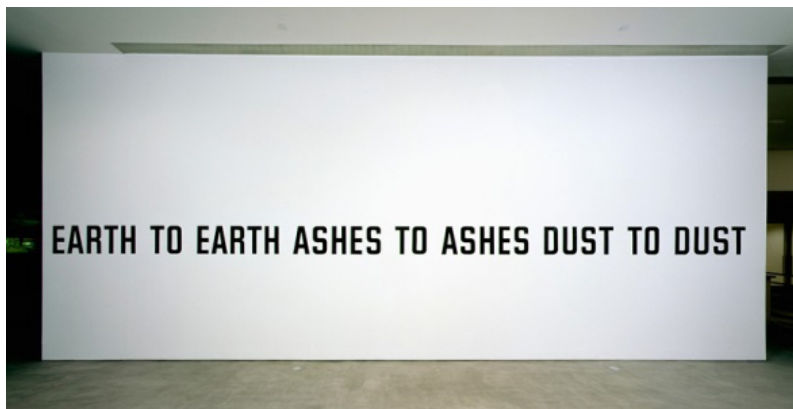
In 1990, Panza lent the work to the Montgomery Gallery, Pomona College (*Crossing the Line: Word and Image in Art, 1960–90*); the artist does not appear to have been consulted. (No good photograph of this installation has been found, but it appears to have been painted in sans serif letters on the wall.)

In 1992, just prior to Guggenheim's acquisition, the work was included in an exhibition of Panza's collection at the Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano (**fig. 6**). Weiner was also not involved in this presentation, and the lettering, while sans serif, departed from the artist's typical font selection.

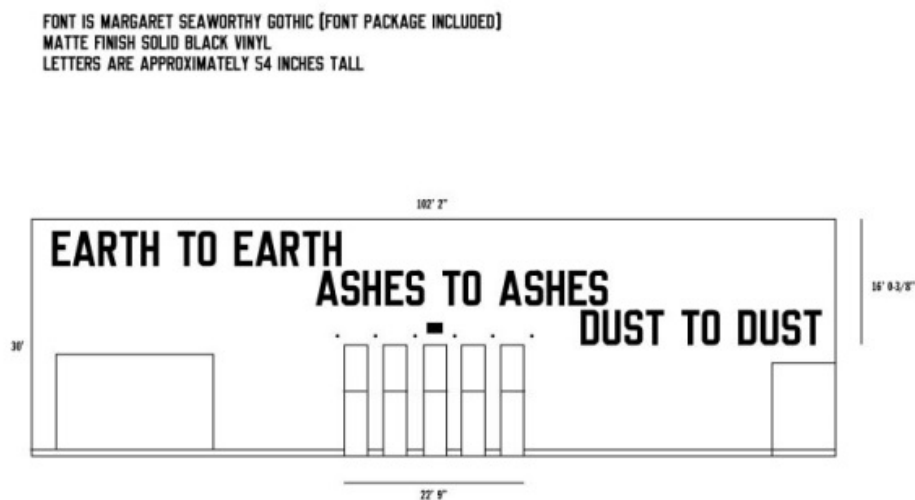


**Figure 6:** Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, 1992. Photo: Giorgio Colombo, Milan  
(installation produced without Weiner's involvement)

Since the early 1990s, this has been the most frequently exhibited work by Weiner in the Guggenheim's collection. In each instance, the museum has obtained plans and specifications from the artist and its appearance has varied significantly. For a 1995 exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, the work was hand-painted in black Margaret Seaworthy Gothic typeface (a font Weiner himself designed in the 1990s) by Joe Amrhein, an artist whom the artist has entrusted to produce a number of his works (**fig. 7**). It was also realized in black Margaret Seaworthy Gothic, in vinyl, for an installation in a monumental exhibition hall at the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn in 2006–7 (**figs. 8, 9**).



**Figure 7:** Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 1995. Photo: David Heald



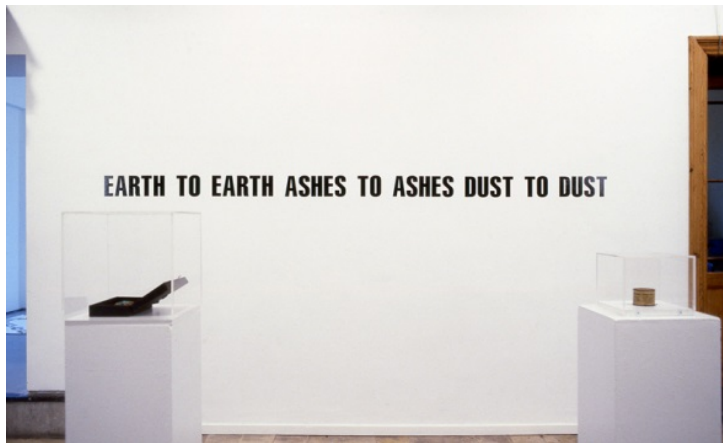
**Figure 8:** Weiner's design for the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 2006



**Figure 9:** Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 2006 (partial view). Photo: Getty Images



In 2000–01, Weiner specified black Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed for three different exhibitions, in Ghent (**figs. 10, 11**), Bordeaux (**fig. 12**), and Bilbao. At the Guggenheim Bilbao, it appeared in large letters on an irregular, undulating wall in Frank Gehry's massive atrium (**fig. 13**). (See *Exhibitions*, below, for complete information for these and all other exhibitions.)



**Figures 10 and 11:** Witte Zaal, Ghent (organized by S.M.A.K., Ghent), 2000



**Figure 12:** CAPC, Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, 2001



**Figure 13:** Guggenheim Bilbao Museum 2000.  
Photo: Erika Ede

The work was realized in silver FF Online typeface with black outlines at the Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (**fig. 14**) in 2005, and red FF Online typeface with blue outlines at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (**figs. 15–17**) in 2007.

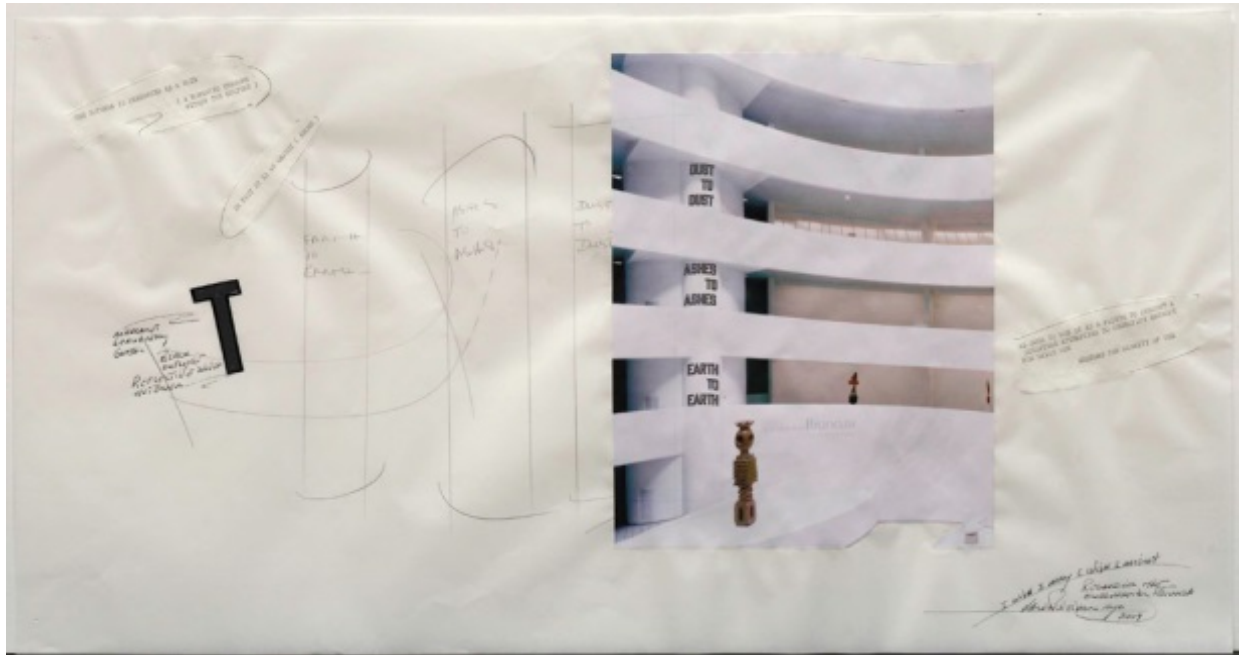


**Figure 14:** Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, 2005



**Figures 15 and 16:** National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2007

(Margaret Seaworthy Gothic frequently incorporates a border around each letter or glyph.)



**Figure 17:** Lawrence Weiner, "Contemplating the Rotunda," collage and ink on tracing paper, 2009. (Drawing produced for *Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Museum*, Feb.–April 2010)



**Figure 18:** Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2010. Photo: Kristopher McKay, SRGM



In 2012, Weiner adapted the work to a monumental neoclassical crossing in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (*Guggenheim Collection: The American Avant-Garde*), fitting the three parts of the text—in silver Margaret Seaworthy Gothic letters with black outlines, as in *Haunted*—on Corinthian entablatures over the entrances to three separate exhibition halls (figs. 19–22). It appeared in both English and Italian (translated "TERRA ALLA TERRA CENERE ALLA CENERE POLVERE ALLA POLVERE".) Weiner describes being especially pleased with this installation.<sup>5</sup>



LAWRENCE WEINER  
 GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION: THE AMERICAN AVANT-GARDE AT THE PALAZZO DELLE ESPOSIZIONI  
 CAT. #151 (1970)

EARTH TO EARTH

TERRA ALLA TERRA

ASHES TO ASHES

CENERE ALLA CENERE

DUST TO DUST

POLVERE ALLA POLVERE

**Figures 19, 20 and 21:** Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2012). Photos: Alfredo Cacciani.  
**Figure 22** (bottom right): Weiner design for the letter for Rome, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Weiner, PCI Interview, March 21, 2013.



As part of a 2013 exhibition at Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese—which featured the realization of a number of Weiner’s works according to plans prepared by Giuseppe Panza before his death in 2010—the installation previously situated on the wall of the stairwell landing was temporarily recreated, this time in vinyl lettering (**figs. 23, 24**).



**Figures 23 and 24:** Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese (2013)

In 2019–20, the work was once again realized in silver/reflective Margaret Seaworthy Gothic letters with black outlines at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, for the exhibition *Artistic License: Six Takes on the Guggenheim Collection* (artist Julie Mehretu selected it for her section). This time, the three phrases were stacked directly over another on a column (**fig. 25**).



**Figure 25:** Guggenheim Museum, New York (2019–20). Photo: David Heald

## Exhibitions

Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, *Lawrence Weiner*, March 19–26, 1970. (Work most likely took the form of an announcement card designed by Weiner.)

Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster, *50 Works of Lawrence Weiner*, 1972. (Poster constituted the exhibition, texts in German only. “Erde zu Erde, Asche zu Asche, Staub zu Staub”). Catalogue (artist’s Book): *Lawrence Weiner: Jahresgabe*, pp. 74–5 (text in English and German on facing pages).

Kunstverein Braunschweig, *Concept Art*, 1974 (catalogue constituted the exhibition). Catalogue: b/w ill. (Münster 1972 poster).

[Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese, installed on main stairwell landing prior to 1977. Letraset on paper, framed and hung on the wall; Panza selected the serif Letraset typeface and frame.]

[Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese, installed on main stairwell landing by 1981; until 1991. San-serif Letraset typeface, directly on the wall.]

Montgomery Gallery, Pomona College, Claremont, *Crossing the Line: Word and Image in Art, 1960–90*, Sept. 2 – Oct. 14, 1990. (Loan from Panza, produced without Weiner’s consultation.) Catalogue: unpag., no. 103, not ill.

Museo Cantonale d’Arte, Lugano, *Panza di Biurno: Gli anni 80 e 90 dalla collezione*, April 11 – July 5, 1992. (Produced without Weiner’s consultation.) Catalogue: unpag., color ill. (Varese installation by Panza).

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York, *The Material Imagination*, Nov. 18, 1995 – Jan. 28, 1996. (text in Black Margaret Seaworthy Gothic.) No catalogue.

Frac Bourgogne, Dijon, *Poussière (dust memories)*, June 13 – Sept. 5, 1998. Catalogue: p. 71 (layout in Black Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed typeface, in English).<sup>6</sup>

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent, *Dust & Dirt*, Feb. 29 – March 25, 2000 (offsite, at Witte Zaal, Gent). (Black Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed typeface in English). Catalogue.

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, *Percepciones en transformación: la Colección Panza del Museo Guggenheim*, Oct. 10, 2000 – April 22, 2001. (Black Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed typeface on an irregular, undulating wall in the museum’s atrium.) Not in catalogue.

CAPC Musée d’art contemporain de Bordeaux, *Imago Mundi*, 2001. (Black Franklin Gothic Extra Condensed typeface.) Catalogue.

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<sup>6</sup> No views of this installation could be found by staff at Frac Bourgogne in 2013.

Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, *Douglas Gordon's The Vanity of Allegory*, July 16 – Oct. 9, 2005. (Silver FF Online typeface with black outlines.) Catalogue.

Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, *The Guggenheim Collection*, July 21, 2006 – Jan. 7, 2007. (Black Margaret Seaworthy Gothic typeface, vinyl, in English only.) Catalogue: pp. 290–291, color ill. (Guggenheim SoHo 1995–96 installation).

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, *The Guggenheim Collection: 1940s to Now*, June 30 – Oct. 7, 2007. (Red FF Online typeface with blue outlines.) Catalogue p. 192; p. 193, color ill. (Guggenheim SoHo 1995–96 installation).

Guggenheim Museum, New York, *Haunted: Contemporary Photography / Video / Performance*, March 26 – Sept. 6, 2010. (Text mounted in vinyl in reflective silver Margaret Seaworthy Gothic lettering with black outlines.) Catalogue: p. 78, color ill. (Guggenheim SoHo 1995–96 installation).

Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, *Guggenheim Collection: The American Avant-Garde*, Feb. 7 – May 6, 2012. (Reflective silver Margaret Seaworthy Gothic lettering with black outlines, installed in English and Italian on three sides of atrium. Trans: "TERRA ALLA TERRA CENERE ALLA CENERE POLVERE ALLA POLVERE"). Catalogue: no. 52, pp. 118–19, color ill. (Guggenheim SoHo 1995–96 installation).

Villa Menafoglio Litta Panza, Varese, *Esplorazioni/1. Lawrence Weiner, opera 1969–73*, Jan. 24 – March 10, 2013. Organized by Fondo Ambiente Italiano. (Vinyl lettering.)

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *Artistic License: Six Takes on the Guggenheim Collection*, May 24, 2019 – January 12, 2020. (Text mounted in vinyl in reflective silver Margaret Seaworthy Gothic lettering with black outlines.) No catalogue.

### **Artist's Books**

*Works* (Hamburg: Anatol AV and Filmproduktion, 1977), unpag.

*Lawrence Weiner: Specific & General Works* (Villeurbanne, France: Le Nouveau Musée / Institut d'Art Contemporain, 1993), unpag., in English, French, and German. (Trans.: "DE LA TERRE À LA TERRE DES CENDRES AUX CENDRES DE LA POUSSIÈRE À LA POUSSIÈRE")

### **Other published references**

François Pluchart, *Pop Art + Cie: 1960–1970* (Paris: Martin-Malburet, 1971), p. 200, b/w ill. (Yvon Lambert announcement card).

“Lawrence Weiner at Amsterdam; Interview by Willoughby Sharp” (interview conducted 1971) in *Avalanche* no. 4 (Spring 1972), p. 65. Reprinted in Gerti Fietzek and Gregor Stemmerich (eds.) *Having Been Said: Writings and Interviews of Lawrence Weiner, 1968–2003* (Hantje Cantz, 2004), p. 45.

*heute Kunst* no. 3, Oct. 1973<sup>7</sup>

Germano Celant, *Das Bild einer Geschichte 1956/1976, Die Sammlung Panza di Biumo / Die Geschichte eines Bildes: Action painting, Newdada, Pop art, Minimal art, Conceptual and Environmental art* (Milano: Electa International, 1980), p. 147, b/w ill. (Varese installation by Panza).

École régionale des beaux-arts Georges Pompidou, Dunkerque. *Ghislain Mollet-Vieville, Agent d'Art*, 1986, p. 14.

Helmut Draxler, “Das Brennende Bild: Eine Kunstgeschichte des Feurs in der Neuren Zeit,” in *Kunstforum* 87 (Jan./Feb. 1987), p. 166.

*Art of the Sixties and Seventies: The Panza Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), plate 87, b/w ill. (Varese installation by Panza).

*Art of the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies: The Panza Collection* (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book; Wappingers' Falls, N.Y.: Antique Collectors' Club, 1999), 141, b/w ill. (Varese installation by Panza).

Francesca Esmay, Ted Mann, and Jeffrey Weiss, *Object Lessons: Case Studies in Minimal Art—The Guggenheim Panza Collection Initiative* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2021), p. 224, color ill. (Varese installation by Panza, 1981 view); p. 311, checklist, color ill. (Guggenheim SoHo 1995–96 installation).

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<sup>7</sup> Citation according to MOVED PICTURES ARCHIVE, New York; information has not been confirmed.