Sol LeWitt was born in 1928 in Hartford, Connecticut. From 1945 to 1949 he studied at Syracuse University, followed by two years in the Army, in Japan and Korea. In 1953, he moved to New York, first attending the Cartoonists and Illustrators School, and then working as a graphic designer for architect I. M. Pei.

Until the early 1960s, LeWitt created paintings as well as graphic designs. In 1962, he began to make abstract reliefs, followed by geometric relief constructions and serial and modular units. From 1968 he also explored wall drawings. Later he would produce conceptual drawings and instructions for drawings to be executed by others.