

# MIT List Center

## Sol Lewitt Bars of Color within Squares

Sol Lewitt, a founder of conceptual art, believed the concept behind a work of art was more important than its execution. He may be most famous for his geometric wall drawings, in which he devised a set of instructions that he or a draftsman could execute. He created this work, "Bars of Color within Squares MIT," using the same principles. Curator Andrea Miller-Keller, who knew Lewitt, explains.

Sol loved taking one set of ideas and playing them out in a variety of mediums. What we see in the floor of The Green Center goes back to some wall drawings that he did between 2002 and 2004, which were really based on very similar ideas. It was a kind of experiment. Let's see what happens when we do this. Covering the entire 5,500 square foot floor, Lewitt's work was commissioned through the MIT Percent-for-Art for the Physics, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, and Spectroscopy Lab, Infrastructure project. The floor consists of 15 brightly colored square patterns made from terrazzo, an aggregate of recycled glass and epoxy resin.

Its patterns create a dynamic optical experience, changing from day to day, even minute to minute, depending on the shifting light. That the work is so visually stunning was not something Lewitt planned for nor considered important.

The arrangements that you see, the four colors on the inside and the two chosen for the outside, those are fairly random. He was definitely not trying to make interesting combinations or to make surprises for you. But just by following the rules that he set for himself, he uses rigidly throughout the piece, you get many, many unexpected delights. I think of this piece as MIT's Secret Garden.

Lewitt died in 2007 before the project was finished. True to his principles, he simply left behind instructions for its completion. To view the work from the upstairs gallery, please proceed to the back of the atrium, and take the elevator to the third floor. To learn more about Lewitt's other work at MIT, please press 923, then the pound key.