

Yumi Janairo Roth: Spin (After Sol LeWitt)

April 19, 2021–July 9, 2021 | Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art

The Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art is proud to present *Spin (After Sol LeWitt)*, an exhibition of sculpture, video, photography, and performance by Colorado-based artist Yumi Janairo Roth. Collaborating with professional sign spinners, Roth creates insightful juxtapositions between the physical presence of street-corner advertising and the work of one of America's founding conceptual artists, Sol LeWitt (1928-2007). The project has special resonance in Las Vegas, the longtime host of the annual World Sign Spinning Championship.



Yumi Janairo Roth, *Spin (after Sol LeWitt)*, Spinners spinning excerpts from “Sentences on Conceptual Art” during practice at the 2019 World Sign Spinning Championship, Las Vegas, NV (image courtesy the artist)

Drawing on a background in anthropological and archaeological research, Roth uses her art practice to join together disparate communities in situations that bring attention to the value we place on different aspects of everyday material culture. “Spinners take great pride in their ability and athleticism,” she says, “yet are sometimes vilified and outlawed for distracting drivers, ‘cheapening’ municipalities, and accepting seemingly low-skill jobs.” For *Spin (After Sol LeWitt)*, she set out to challenge those assumptions by working with a group of spinners to replace the advertising slogans on their signs with maxims from LeWitt’s genre-defining 1968 text, *Sentences on Conceptual Art*. Spinning the signs on street corners, they surprised passers-by with LeWitt’s ideas about the importance of irrational judgments and logical mysticism.

“In *Spin*, spinners see, read, and relate to LeWitt’s sentences,” Roth explains. “They lay claim to some conceptual art pronouncements that enable them to understand and interpret contemporary art on their own terms and in their own spaces.”

Sign spinner Justin Charles Michael Brown, who worked with Roth when she presented the project in the streets around Frieze Los Angeles in 2020, puts the process in his own words. “Making people’s opinions of sign spinning matter is a very hilarious thing to do, because if you see a sign spinner for an apartment complex it doesn’t really matter what you think about it. You can enjoy it or not, and it doesn’t really matter. But when you enter the art world, those opinions are the thing that everybody’s after.”

At the Barrick, Roth’s exhibition shows us this juxtaposition in action by introducing us to video footage of spinners competing with *Spin (After Sol LeWitt)* signs at the World Sign Spinning Championship on Fremont Street. All of the project’s signs will be on view in the Museum’s East Gallery, along with Roth’s photographs of her collaborators’ hands. She describes the hands as “arguably the site where their hard work is made visible.” Professional sign spinners from the Las Vegas community will visit the exhibition twice per week to take signs down from the walls and perform complex spinning routines with the “ability and athleticism” that the artist celebrates.

Equally at home on street corners, on Fremont Street, and in a university art museum, *Spin (After Sol LeWitt)* invites us to question the divisions we create between the exclusivity of conceptual art and the inclusive public life of street corners, parks, and competitive spectacle.

The exhibition runs from April 19–July 9, 2021. Entry to the museum is free. Please see the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art website to read our safety guidelines and make a timed reservation before you visit.

The artist would like to thank her collaborators. “*Spin (after Sol LeWitt)* would not have been possible without all of the enthusiastic and generous collaborations I’ve enjoyed with sign spinners across the country. Laramie Rosenfeld was the first sign spinner I met when I started this project in Denver, CO in 2017. Laramie introduced me to AArrow Sign Spinners and the national and international sign spinning community and for that, I am forever grateful. The project expanded to Southern California, the historical epicenter of sign spinning, where I’ve also been an artist-in-residence at Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, an early supporter of the project. There I met Erik Argote, Christian Altamirano, Joey Castenon, and Justin Charles Michael Brown. Other sign spinners, including Ray Rivera and Evan James have joined the project multiple times and in different cities. Finally, I am immensely thankful to Rayen Jones who has helped me realize the Las Vegas leg of the project.”

Support for this exhibition is provided by AArrow Sign Spinners Las Vegas and the WESTAF Regional Arts Resilience Fund, a relief grant, a relief grant developed in partnership with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support arts organizations in the 13-state western region during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABOUT THE MARJORIE BARRICK MUSEUM OF ART

The Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art believes everyone deserves access to art that challenges our understanding of the present and inspires us to create a future that holds space for us all. Located on the campus of the most racially diverse university in the United States, we strive to create a nourishing environment for those who continue to be neglected by contemporary art museums, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ groups. As the only art museum in the city of Las Vegas, we commit ourselves to leveling barriers that limit access to the arts, especially for first-time visitors. To facilitate access for low-income guests we provide free entry to all our exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and community activities. Our collection of artworks offers an opportunity for researchers and scholars to develop a more extensive knowledge of contemporary art in Southern Nevada. The Barrick Museum is part of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV).

ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Located on the main campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the UNLV College of Fine Arts offers graduate degrees in Art, Architecture, Film, Music, Dance, Theatre, and Entertainment Engineering and Design, a unique discipline that combines engineering with technical theatre training. The College’s facilities include theaters and contemporary art galleries as well as the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art.

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MAKE A RESERVATION

Free Admission. The Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art believes everyone deserves access to the arts. To make an appointment visit Eventbrite (<https://bit.ly/2Dsz8Gv>). The Barrick Museum of Art is open to the public Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., by appointment. Please reserve your spot to see one of our current exhibitions. Please note that for the safety of our community, all visitors are required to wear a face-covering and maintain social distance from others.

FIND US

The Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art is located in the heart of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus. The museum is easily accessed from the west side of campus at the intersection of Harmon Avenue and University Center Drive. Drive east on East Harmon Ave until the road enters the campus and terminates in a parking lot. The Museum will be on your right, next to a desert landscape garden.

PARKING

Visitors may park in metered, staff and student spots free of charge after 7 pm on weekdays, 1 pm on Fridays, and all day Saturday. Daily, weekly, or monthly permits can be purchased from Parking and Transportation Services. Metered parking spaces for visitors can be found in the parking lot outside the Barrick's entrance, along East Harmon Ave, and in the lot behind the Lied Library. Other metered green zones are available in the Cottage Grove Avenue Parking Garage and parking areas throughout campus.

MUSEUM HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday: 10am-4pm. By appointment.

