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For Lawrence Weiner, "art is the empirical fact of the relationships of objects to objects in relation to human beings and not dependant upon historical precedent for either use or legitimacy." In other words, Weiner is a sculptor, and his work focuses primarily on investigating how we experience the materiality of being, the relationship between people and objects. Our appreciation of it does not rely on connoisseurship, and its value is not contingent on its physical existence in the world. "The work need not be built," but it *can* be built, if you want to make it, and it need not remain at the stage of an artist's intention expressed in words. If you own the work *A REMOVAL OF THE CORNER OF A RUG IN USE* (1969), for instance, you can conceivably take a rug that is currently in use, remove its corner and exhibit it in a gallery; that, too, will be the work in one of its possible conditions. Or you can choose to write the words on the wall, only referring with language to the materials with which it could be made.

The artist's work is thus vulnerable, dependent, as in a relationship, upon the receiver (the audience, collector, museum, public or, more generally, the 'other' who experiences it): "the decision as to condition rests with the receiver," Weiner has stated, since his art is in essence not prescriptive, nor authoritarian, but vertiginously open. Basically, he makes democratic art. When I think about his strategy, I am reminded of non-productivity and leisure as radical gestures and of Anarchist slogans such as "have a nice day", rooted in a utopian tradition that has existed within American culture since its beginnings. I remember John Cage's *4"33'* (1952), a vast sonata made up of all the sounds audible in the concert hall when the score is being executed by a pianist sitting before a piano but doing nothing for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, and I remember the poet Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* (1855): "I celebrate myself; / And what I assume you shall assume;/ For every atom belonging to me, as good as belongs to you. / I loafe and invite my Saul; / I lean and loafe at my ease, observing a spear of summer grass (...) All I mark as my own, you shall offset it with your own; / Else it were time lost listening to me."

Weiner's approach has not changed over the years, and yet every new work is different. For Castello di Rivoli, he took a walk up the stairway that connects the ground floor entrance of the museum to the three storeys of the castle where the galleries are located. A number of artworks in the collection, some permanently on view, some temporary, hang along the walls of this stairwell, where there are also some empty niches in which sculptures were perhaps placed in the past. Weiner thought about the experience of visitors walking up the stairs, looking at different art works and making sense of this fragmented experience, or capturing glimpses from different points of view and heights along the central stairwell, and he came up with the work *MADE TO PRODUCE A SPARK* (2006). Because the piece is built backwards, the words of the title are the first you experience when walking up the stairs, wrapping your self a round the core of the space, taking in fragments of meaning as you go along, until you reach the top, where you find the beginning of the

piece: *A GENTLE RAIN (CAPTURED)*. You might think of the helix form, and its philosophical connotations (something that wraps around itself) or about the hydroelectricity that is produced in the mountains above Rivoli, or of how the experience of artworks is constituted by a 'spark' in one's consciousness produced by materials to which something has been done (as rain is 'captured'), but any metaphor is less the intention of the artist than the result of the receiver's freedom of experiencing it in whichever way he or she pleases.