



Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

Artist: Robert Gober

Date: April 18, 2013

Location: The Menil Collection

Interviewers: Brad Epley, Jan Burandt

Video / Edit: Laurie McDonald

Total Run Time: 01:15:27

Abstract:

Artist Robert Gober discusses his work with Artists Documentation Program Co-director and Menil Chief Conservator, Brad Epley and Menil Conservator of Works of Art on Paper, Jan Burandt. The conversation focuses on several of Gober's sculptures and drawings owned by the Menil Collection, including *Long Haired Cheese* and *Slip Cover Armchair*. Gober describes the materials and methods that he used in the works discussed, and reflects on his wishes for their future conservation and exhibition.

Controlled Access Headings (Library of Congress):

Corporate Name(s)

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Artists Documentation Program
Harvard Art Museums
Menil Collection (Houston, Tex.)
Whitney Museum of American Art

Genre(s)

Interviews
Oral histories

Personal Name(s)

Burandt, Jan (local)
Epley, Brad (local)
Gober, Robert, 1954-
McDonald, Laurie

Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration
Artists' materials
Art--Technique
Sculpture
Artists--Interviews

ADP Interview Video Index

Indexed by: Megan Peck, October 2013

Video: adp2013a_gober_edmast_a.mp4 / Interview #: VI2000-020.2013a

Interview date: 04/18/2013

Exhibitions/Works:

Names of exhibitions and works referenced during this interview appear below in gray cells.

Controlled Vocabulary:

Except where indicated, all keywords employ Getty vocabularies (AAT/ULAN/TGN). Those marked with (*) employ Library of Congress Authorities. Those marked with (**) employ local terms.

Time	Contents	Subject Keywords
00:00:01	Opening Credits	
00:00:41	Introduction Brad Epley, Robert Gober	
00:00:52	(Exhibition Reference) Robert Gober “Forrest Bess: Seeing Things Invisible” The Menil Collection April 19 – August 18, 2013	
00:01:00	(Exhibition Reference) “The Man That Got Away” Whitney Museum of American Art March 1 – May 27, 2012	
00:01:18	Process of Creation – Gober and Epley discuss <i>Untitled</i> , 1999 – 2000.	
00:01:19	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Untitled</i>, 1999 – 2000 The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Louisa Stude Sarofim	
00:01:24	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications - Gober discusses the evolution over 30 years of the methods and materials employed to create his sinks.	Benjamin Moore & Co.* casts (sculpture) lath paint plaster Spackle™ USG Strutco-Lite** welding
00:01:40	(Artwork Reference) Robert Gober <i>Untitled</i>, 1984 Private Collection	

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00:05:08	(Artwork Reference) Robert Gober <i>Untitled</i> Edition of 4 + artist's proof	
00:05:13	Process of Creation/Technical Specification – Gober describes the process for casting the leg in <i>Untitled</i> .	casting (process) Moser, Louis** Brown, Gayle** Oates, Daniel silicone wax
00:06:43	Technical Specification/Conservation Issues – Gober discusses his widespread use of wax and his observations on how it ages, as well as various forms of wax supplies and its different suppliers.	bleached beeswax Edward Hess** Pearl Paint** wax
00:07:47	(Artwork Reference) Robert Gober <i>Untitled, 1995-1997</i> Emanuel Hoffman Foundation, permanently installed at Schaulager Basel	
00:07:45	Conservation Issues/Technical Specifications – Gober recounts the effort to discover and remedy the cause of discoloration of the wax in his installation at Schaulager, Basel.	bleached beeswax copper (metal) discoloration polyurethane restoration (process) Schaulager (Basel, Switzerland)* Universität Basel*
00:08:41	(Exhibition Reference) "Outbound: Passages from the 90's" Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston March 3–May 7, 2000	
00:11:00	Conservation Issues/Technical Specification – Gober discusses working with Christian Scheidemann, a New York City based objects restorer.	preventative conservation restoration (process) Scheidemann, Christian**
00:11:55	Conservation Issues – Gober discusses wax as a medium, including different wax suppliers, wax purity, and its unique conservation issues.	bleached beeswax cracking preventative conservation restoration (process)
00:14:10	Conservation Issues – Gober discusses how he handles collectors whose pieces need repair or conservation work.	aluminum (metal) casts (sculpture) damage fragility plaster

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		repairing restoration (process) Scheidemann, Christian** shipping
00:17:01	Process of Creation/Technical Specification - Gober discusses his decisions regarding specific details of <i>Untitled</i> , including the sandals, socks, and shoe buckles. He also addresses the confusion surrounding the gender of the child because of his use of a European-style sandal.	pop top tabs** Budweiser** RIT Dye ™**
00:20:59	Process of Creation/Technical Specification/Conservation Issues – Epley and Gober discuss <i>Untitled</i> , 2003 – 2007 (also referred to as “Prison Window.”)	
00:21:08	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Untitled</i> , 2003-07 The Menil Collection, Houston, anonymous gift	
00:21:38	(Artwork Reference) Robert Gober <i>Untitled</i> , 2003 Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution Joseph H. Hirshhorn Bequest and Purchase Fund, Holenia Purchase Fund, in memory of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, and Museum Purchase, 2003 (03.32.1-2)	
00:22:05	(Exhibition Reference) “Robert Gober” Dia Center for the Arts, New York September 24, 1992-June 20, 1993	
00:22:10	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Untitled</i> , 1992	
00:22:28	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications/Exhibition – Gober discusses working with a lighting designer to develop prison window. He describes the technical aspects of lighting the diorama, and gives his opinion on how successfully it was exhibited at the Menil Collection.	fluorescent lamps (lighting devices) incandescent lamps (lighting devices) lighting designer Tipton, Jennifer Wilson, Robert Fitzpatrick, Daphne
00:25:03	(Exhibition Reference) “Robert Gober: The Meat Wagon” The Menil Collection, Houston October 28, 2005-January 22, 2006	

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00:25:17	(Image) Installation View, “Robert Gober: The Meat Wagon”	
00:25:29	Conservation Issue - Epley and Gober discuss his wishes for how to exhibit his dioramas in the future when incandescent bulbs are no longer available. Gober concludes that it is not the specific material, but the final effect that he cares about.	incandescent lamps (lighting device components) LEDs product obsolescence**
00:25:55	(Artwork Reference) Robert Gober <i>Slides of a Changing Painting</i> 1982-1983 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, T.B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 1992	
00:26:55	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications/Conservation Issues - Epley and Gober discuss Gober’s work <i>Slip Cover Armchair</i> .	
00:26:56	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Slip Cover Armchair</i>, 1986-1987 Collection of the artist	
00:27:12	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications - Gober describes <i>Slip Cover Armchair</i> ’s lath and plaster structure and his inspiration and process for creating the slipcover pattern. He also comments on the condition of the piece from a conservation standpoint.	DEKA™ Permanent Fabric Paint** Hicks, Sheila lath linen (material) plaster Scheidemann, Christian sewing (process)
00:30:37	(Artwork Reference) Robert Gober <i>Chair with Pipe</i>, 1994-1995 Emanuel Hoffman Foundation, on permanent loan to the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel	
00:30:52	Exhibition – Gober discusses his intentions and preferences for the exhibiting of <i>Slip Cover Armchair</i> . He addresses the need to occasionally compromise on ideal exhibition for the sake of protection.	exhibiting security
00:32:34	Process of Creation/Technical Specification/Conservation Issues – Epley and Gober discuss <i>Untitled</i> , 2005.	

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00:33:09	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Long Haired Cheese, 1992-1993</i> Unique + artist's proof	
00:33:12	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Short Haired Cheese, 1993-1993</i> Unique + artist's proof	
00:33:19	Technical Specifications - Gober describes the casting process and his method for inserting the hair into the cheese pieces. He also talks about working with human hair in general.	beeswax casts (sculpture) human hair molds (shaping tools) Wright, Suzanne**
00:36:22	(Image) Detail Robert Gober <i>Untitled, 1999-2000</i>	
00:38:12	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Untitled, Lightbulb, 1990</i> [Made in collaboration with Sherrie Levine] Sketch 1 of 2 The Menil Collection, Houston, purchase, with funds provided by Agnes Gund	
00:38:12	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications - Epley and Gober discuss <i>Untitled, Lightbulb</i> . Gober describes the process of making the <i>Untitled, Lightbulb</i> in collaboration with Sherrie Levine. He also clarifies some confusion in the naming convention of the piece and its editions, artists' proofs, and sketches.	Levine, Sherrie Oates, Daniel casting (process) clay molds (shaping tools) plaster wax
00:40:06	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Untitled, 1990</i>	
00:40:08	(Bibliographic Reference) Jacobson, Karen, ed., <i>Robert Gober: Sculpture + Drawing</i> . Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1999	
00:40:16	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Untitled, 2000-2001</i> Edition of 4, artist's proof 1 of 2, The Menil Collection, Houston, purchase, with funds from Agnes Gund	

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00:40:18	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications – Gober and Epley discuss <i>Untitled</i> , 2000-2001 (also referred to as The Gin Bottle.) Gober relates the story of finding the bottle that inspired the work.	
00:41:17	(Exhibition Reference) 49th Venice Biennale, The United States Pavilion June 10-November 4, 2001	
00:41:20	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications/Exhibition – Gober describes working with glass artists Linda Ross and Deborah Czeresko to create the gin bottle. He recounts the challenges of creating a hollow bottle that led to the creation of the final solid glass piece. He also discusses the custom security device that he designed for the piece.	casting (process) casts (sculpture) Czeresko, Deborah** exhibitions (events) glass (material) molds (shaping tools) plastic (organic material) Ross, Linda** security
00:45:18	Technical Specifications – Gober describes the techniques employed to create the label on the gin bottle.	acrylic paint screen printing painting (image-making)
00:46:45	Exhibition – Gober discusses his preferred security methods for exhibition of his works and describes some custom solutions he developed for specific pieces.	exhibitions (events) security
00:48:02	Process of Creation - Gober discusses his relationship with the printmaking process with Jan Burandt, Paper Conservator at The Menil Collection. He expresses his preference to using printmaking as an aspect of creating an object, not for the sake of printmaking itself. He also discusses the reason he provides detailed specifications of the materials used in his works.	photolithography printmaking woodcut (process)
00:51:45	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Newspaper</i>, 1992 Photolithography on archival (Mohawk Superfine) paper, twine AP ½; Edition 10 + 2 artist's proofs The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist	
00:51:22	Exhibition/Conservation Issues – Gober discusses variations on the display of <i>Newspaper</i> , and his preferences for its presentation. He also addresses damage to the work, and his feelings about what should be repaired, and what wear becomes part of the work.	damage exhibiting paper (fiber product) repairing restoration (process)
00:51:58	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Untitled [filler bundle for a Gober Newspaper]</i>, 1992 The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist	

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00:54:48	(Image) Robert Gober Monument Valley, 2007 wood engraving on Legion interleaving paper #5/15 The Menil Collection, gift of William J. Hill and Michael Zilkha in honor of Josef Helfenstein	
00:54:27	Exhibition – Gober discusses his involvement in and preferences for the framing of his works.	artist-designed frames Bark Frameworks** framing (processes) Helfenstein, Joseph* Marks, Matthew**
00:54:03	(Image) Untitled, 2011, Trial Proof, Ed. of 30 + 2 APs, 2 PPs, 1BAT Photo etching on copper, hand-printed on Kitkata paper, printed by Rob Swainston at Prints of Darkness, Brooklyn, NY, hand-distressed The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist	
00:57:22	Process of Creation/Technical Specifications – Gober discusses the inspiration for and methods employed in the creation of the Monument Valley print. He talks about the different details he needed to address to achieve the desired effect, including etching the woodblock and tearing the edges of the paper.	Miller, Leslie* printmaking tears (condition) templates (shaping tools) woodcuts (prints)
00:59:56	Technical Specifications – Gober identifies the types of paper used for a selection of his drawing and discusses his approach to drawing and choosing paper.	drawings (visual works) paper (fiber product)
01:02:47	Technical Specifications/Exhibition? – Burandt and Gober discuss the physicality and 3-dimensionality of paper. Gober talks about working with the damage done in the process of creation when framing or exhibiting working drawings. Burandt and Gober also discuss erasures on the paper as evidence of the creation process.	erasing framing (processes) lighting paper (fiber product) working drawings
01:03:58	(Image) Robert Gober Untitled, 2012	
01:04:24	(Image) Robert Gober Study for Sink with Arms, 2012	
01:06:40	(Artwork Reference) Robert Rauschenberg Erased de Kooning drawing, 1953 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art	

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01:07:37	Exhibition – Gober comments on the framing of his drawings and expresses his preferences. He discusses his feelings about flaws such as creases, folds, and tape glue that are left behind as documentation of the artist’s process.	Breckeen, Debby** Drutt, Matthew* frames (furnishings) Lunning, Elizabeth* Marks, Matthew** preparatory studies
01:11:13	Process of Creation – Gober explains the purposes of the drawings, most of which were preliminary sketches for sculptures.	drawings (visual works) preliminary drawings preparatory studies working drawings
01:11:57	(Image) Robert Gober <i>Leg with Anchor, 2008</i>	
01:12:14	(Image) Robert Gober <i>The Subconscious Sink, 1985</i>	
01:12:34	Technical Specification - Gober discusses his process for documenting the progress of the creation of his works.	documentation (activity) documentary photographs preventative conservation
01:14:04	Closing Credits	