



### Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

**Artist:** Richard Serra  
**Date:** February 27, 2012  
**Location:** The Menil Collection  
**Interviewer:** Brad Epley  
**Video/Edit:** Laurie McDonald  
**Total Run Time:** 00:39:47

**Abstract:**

Artist Richard Serra discusses his work with Artists Documentation Program Co-director and Menil Chief Conservator, Brad Epley. The discussion focuses primarily on the materials and methods that Serra used to create his paint stick works on paper and canvas, which he describes as drawings. Throughout the interview, Serra reflects on his wishes for the works' future conservation.

**Controlled Access Headings (Library of Congress):**

Corporate Name(s)

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

Genre(s)

Interviews  
Oral histories

Personal Name(s)

Epley, Bradford  
McDonald, Laurie  
Serra, Richard, 1939-

Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration  
Artists' materials  
Art--Technique  
Drawing

**Exhibitions/Works:**

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

ADP Interview Video Index

Indexed by: Heather Nodler, July 2012

Video: adp2012a\_serra\_edmast\_a.mp4 / Interview #: VI2000-020.2012a / Interview date: 02/27/2012

**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	<b>Opening Credits</b>	
00:00:51	<b>Introduction</b> Brad Epley, Richard Serra	
00:00:55	<b>(Exhibition Reference)</b> <b>"Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective"</b> <b>The Menil Collection</b> <b>March 2-June 10, 2012</b>	
00:01:13	<b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b> Serra discusses his use of paint stick and the relationship between material and form.	artists' materials form (composition concepts) paint stick** Welliver, Neil G.
00:02:56	<b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b> Serra describes how he modified paint sticks and used them to create drawings on a larger scale. He also describes the relationships among his smaller drawings, his larger drawings, and the architectural spaces that they inhabit.	architecture (object genre) artists' materials drawings (visual works) invention Johns, Jasper linen (material) melting paint stick** paper (fiber product) Pollock, Jackson scale (relative size)
00:04:42	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>Pacific Judson Murphy, 1978</i></b> <b>Exhibition copy</b> <b>Private collection</b>	
00:05:13	<b>Technical Specifications</b> Serra describes a process by which he created drawings, using window screens and paint stick, and inscribing his image through the verso of a sheet of paper.	drawing (image-making) drawings (visual works) paint stick** paper (fiber product) versos window screens
00:05:14	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>Black Tracks, 2002</i></b> <b>Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky, New York</b>	
00:06:13	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>Black Tracks, 2002</i></b> <b>Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky, New York</b>	

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00:06:30	<p><b>(Image)</b>  <b>Richard Serra</b>  <i>A Drawing in Five Parts, 2005</i>  <b>The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,</b>  <b>Denise and Andrew Saul Fund, 2011, 2011.512a-e</b></p>	
00:06:34	<p><b>Technical Specifications</b>  Serra describes another process by which he created drawings, using lithographic crayons and Mylar.</p>	<p>drawing (image-making)  lithographic crayons  Mylar (TM)  transparency (optical property)</p>
00:08:11	<p><b>Concept/Nature of Work</b>  Serra discusses the implications of using matter to inform one's work, contrasting his practice with the practices of younger artists.</p>	<p>artists' materials  creativity  digital imaging  Grotjahn, Mark, 1968-  handmade  invention  Wool, Christopher  youth</p>
00:09:29	<p><b>Concept/Nature of Work</b>  Serra describes how he differentiates between painting and drawing in his work. He then discusses his one particular series of drawings in relation to other traditions of drawing and painting.</p>	<p>Abstract Expressionist  art history  drawing (image-making)  European  painting (image-making)  paint stick  Redon, Odilon  Seurat, Georges</p>
00:10:20	<p><b>(Image)</b>  <b>Emerson, 2010</b>  <b>The Menil Collection, Houston,</b>  <b>Gift of Frances Dittmer in honor of Louisa Stude Sarofim and Janie C. Lee; and gift of Michael and Diane Cannon in honor of Marion Barthelme</b></p>	
00:10:42	<p><b>(Images)</b>  <i>out-of-round IX, 1999</i>  <b>Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;</b>  <b>purchase with funds from James Hedges and an anonymous donor, 2001.10</b></p> <p><i>out-of-round X, 1999</i>  <b>Private collection</b></p>	
00:11:41	<p><b>Process of Creation and Technical Specifications</b>  Serra explains which methods he used to create his different series of drawings, including those drawings that he worked from the front, those that he worked from behind, and drawings for which he used a template.</p>	<p>drawing (image-making)  footprints (foot impressions)  processes  rectos  Serra, Shelter**  techniques (processes)  templates (shaping tools)</p>

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		versos walls window screens
00:11:47	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>A Drawing in Five Parts, 2005</i></b> <b>The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,</b> <b>Denise and Andrew Saul Fund, 2011, 2011.512a-e</b>	
00:12:44	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>Institutionalized Abstract Art, 1976/2011</i></b> <b>Collection of the artist</b>	
00:13:03	<b>Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications</b> Serra describes the materials and methods that he uses to define or diffuse edges in his works. Specifically, he discusses his use of window screens. He also discusses the relationship between process and product in his work.	edges (object portions) foil (metal) processes tape (materials) templates (shaping tools) templates (shaping tools) window screens
00:13:04	<b>(Image)</b> <b><i>Pittsburgh, 1995</i></b> <b>Museum of Modern Art, New York</b> <b>Gift of the Denise and Andrew Saul Fund and The Edward John Noble Foundation</b>	
00:15:18	<b>(Image)</b> <b><i>Robert Frank, 1997</i></b> <b>Private Collection</b>	
00:15:41	<b>Technical Specifications</b> Serra discusses the process by which he manipulates surface properties of his works. He also describes how his installation drawings work in relation to the viewer's body.	experimentation surface properties surfaces (object portions) window screens
00:16:48	<b>Concept/Nature of Work</b> Serra continues to describe how his installation works function in relation to the viewer and to his or her body.	floors (surface elements) installations (visual works) optical illusion viewers (observers) walls
00:17:02	<b>(Image)</b> <b><i>Two Corner Cut: High Low, 2012</i></b> <b>Collection of the artist</b>	
00:18:37	<b>(Artwork Reference)</b> <b><i>Abstract Slavery, 1974</i></b> <b>Collection of the Kröller-Müller Museum,</b> <b>Otterlo, The Netherlands</b>	

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00:21:33	<b>Technical Specifications</b> Serra outlines specifications required to mount his installation drawings. He then contrasts the installations of his work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and at the Menil Collection.	installations (visual works) Menil Collection Metropolitan Museum of Art specifications weight (attributes and properties)
00:24:09	<b>Concept/Nature of Work</b> Serra reflects on the surface properties of his work and the importance of the original object.	canvas duck (textile) paint stick** Pulitzer, Emily Rauh* rabbitskin glue Rothko Chapel (Houston, Tex.)* surface properties wash (coating)
00:24:41	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b>Taraval Beach, 1977/2011</b> <b>Exhibition copy</b> <b>San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Phyllis C. Wattis Fund for Major Accessions</b>	
00:24:55	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Detail of surface of a work on canvas</b>	
00:26:50	<b>Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues</b> Serra describes age-related phenomena in his large-scale drawings on paper: oil bleed due to his use of paint stick; and efflorescence due to his use of paraffin. Epley shares results of a chemical analysis that the Menil conducted on some of the artist's materials. Serra offers his opinions regarding treatment of his works.	artists' materials bleeding (seeping) chemical analysis cleaning efflorescence dust Hiromi Papers, Inc.** Museum of Modern Art oil paint (paint) paint stick** paper (fiber product) paraffin (wax) Rothko Chapel (Houston, Tex.)* solvent
00:27:34	<b>(Image)</b> <b>"Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective"</b> <b>The Menil Collection</b> <b>March 2 - June 10, 2012</b> <b>Installation view of oil bleed on rounds showing color change</b>	
00:30:32	<b>Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues</b> Serra responds to several questions from Epley regarding the	Belgian linen Cranmer, Dana**

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	<p>artist's preferences for treatment of his works. He then describes the materials and techniques that he typically uses to create his installation drawings.</p>	<p>gesso oil paint (paint) paint stick** rabbitskin glue strip-lining</p>
00:31:17	<p><b>(Image)</b> <b><i>Compressed Below, 2001, (detail of swelling in center)</i></b> <b>Private Collection</b></p>	
00:32:50	<p><b>Conservation Issues and Technical Specifications</b> Serra offers his opinions regarding treatment of his installation drawings in the event of damage to them. He also offers his opinions regarding the planarity and tonality of his <i>Deadweight</i> drawings, in which the paper overlaps and in which Serra employed paint stick. He briefly discusses the materials he used to create his <i>Forged Drawings</i>.</p>	<p>Berri, Claude* canvas damage paper (fiber product) oil paint (paint) paint stick** planarity** restoration (process) resurfacing** steel (alloy) tone (color effect)</p>
00:34:23	<p><b>(Images)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>Deadweight (The Hedgehog and the Fox), 1991 (details of paper overlap)</i></b> <b>Collection of the Artist</b></p>	
00:34:50	<p><b>(Artwork Reference)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>Double Rift #3, 2011</i></b> <b>Private collection</b></p>	
00:35:23	<p><b>(Artwork Reference)</b> <b>Richard Serra</b> <b><i>Forged Drawing in Four Parts (Octagon, Circle, Rectangle, Square), 1977/2008</i></b> <b>Private collection</b></p>	
00:36:05	<p><b>Exhibition and Concept/Nature of Work</b> Serra reflects on the Menil Collection as an exhibition venue for his work.</p>	<p>African (continent) Chirico, Giorgio de Couturier, Marie-Alain Cy Twombly Gallery, The Menil Collection** Ernst, Max Flavin, Dan Magritte, René Newman, Barnett religion (discipline) Ronchamp Rothko Chapel (Houston, Tex.)* Rothko, Mark Surrealist</p>
00:38:32	<p><b>Exhibition</b></p>	<p>artificial light</p>

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	Serra expresses his opinions regarding lighting of his works.	color (perceived attribute) lighting sunlight
00:38:58	<b>Closing Credits</b>	