



**Artists Documentation Program
Video Interview Transcript**

FRANK STELLA

JUNE 9, 2006

Interviewed by:

**Elizabeth Lunning, Chief Conservator, The Menil Collection;
and Brad Epley, Associate Paintings Conservator, The Menil Collection**

Video: Laurie McDonald | Total Run Time: 00:53:23

Location: The Menil Collection, Storage Room 1 / Menil House

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This interview is part of the Artists Documentation Program, a collaboration of the Menil Collection, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museums.

The Artists Documentation Program has been generously supported by
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

About the Artists Documentation Program

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, artists have experimented with an unprecedented range of new materials and technologies. The conceptual concerns underlying much of contemporary art render its conservation more complex than simply arresting physical change. As such, the artist's voice is essential to future conservation and presentation of his or her work.

In 1990, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection for Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, then Chief Conservator, to establish the Artists Documentation Program (ADP). Since that time, the ADP has recorded artists speaking candidly with conservators in front of their works. These engaging and informative interviews capture artists' attitudes toward the aging of their art and those aspects of its preservation that are of paramount importance to them.

The ADP has recorded interviews with such important artists as Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, and Cy Twombly. Originally designed for use by conservators and scholars at the Menil, the ADP has begun to appeal to a broader audience outside the Menil, and the collection has grown to include interviews from two partner institutions: the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museums. In 2009, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection to establish the ADP Archive, formalizing the multi-institutional partnership and making ADP interviews more widely available to researchers.

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[Speakers (in order of appearance): Elizabeth Lunning, Chief Conservator, The Menil Collection; Brad Epley, Associate Paintings Conservator, The Menil Collection; Frank Stella, Artist; Joseph Helfenstein, Director, The Menil Collection]

[BEGIN INTERVIEW]

[00:00:59]

E. Lunning: My name is Liz Lunning, and I am the Chief Conservator at the Menil Collection. It is June 9, 2006, and we are here in one of the storage rooms at the Menil with Brad Epley, our Painting Conservator, and Frank Stella, who is here on the occasion of his exhibition, “Frank Stella 1958,” organized by the Harvard University Art Museums. We are going to take this opportunity to ask him about the four paintings the Menil owns. I myself am a paper conservator, so I think Brad will be doing most of the talking; and I am just here to be an extra set of eyes. Brad, do you want to start?

Brad Epley: Sure. So maybe we should start from the oldest and work our way forward?

Frank Stella: Fine.

[00:01:50]

Brad Epley: I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about *Avicenna* [1960], and maybe the series in general, and how it fit into it. And then I had some questions as well.

Frank Stella: Well, I think, this is – the aluminum paintings were made as a group, and it was just – they are called aluminum paintings for a very simple reason, because they use a commercial aluminum paint. Basically, a paint used to cover pipes or railings or whatever. It’s a straight commercial paint. It has no other application. It is a particularly inexpensive brand, a competitive brand (laughs) of metallic paint. The paint is suspended, I guess, in some kind of basically an oil. And it might be alkyd-oil solution. But anyway, the paint does, in the can, settle; and so you stir it.

E. Lunning: The aluminum settles?

Frank Stella: Yeah, it settles. Yeah. It has a tendency to settle. And so you had to stir it every day. The only really significant thing about the paintings, the series of

paintings – I don't know how many there are; there are seven or eight, maybe – but of the seven or eight, three of them have two versions. The reason they have two versions – I think it is three; it's two or three; I think it's three; yes, I know it now – have two versions, because I started with the paint that I bought, and then the paint distributor had another new version of the paint, and I liked that a little bit better than the first one. I don't know exactly why. The first one seemed darker and grayer, and this seemed more metallic and brighter, more aluminum to me. So then I started the series. I continued on the series, and then went back and did another version to make it all consistent of the ones that had had the darker paint on them.

E. Lunning: You repainted them in the brighter version?

Frank Stella: Yes. Yeah.

E. Lunning: Do you remember the name of the paint?

Frank Stella: Well, no, I don't remember the name of the company.

E. Lunning: And you would buy it at the hardware store?

Frank Stella: Yeah, more or less, yeah. This guy was a hardware store, and he had a few art colors in there. But basically it was a store that had a lot of metallic paint and everything because they had a lot of powders and everything. At that time, before, it was a place for Donna Karan, West Broadway had a lot of small manufacturers who did toys, and they did a lot of spraying with metal paints and stuff. Decorative things. So they had a lot of metallic powders and things, and metallic paints.

[00:04:50]

Brad Epley: One issue that has come up in interviews and in some of the other catalogues is the way that the paint, this medium separated out a little bit, and you got some bleed onto the raw canvas?

Frank Stella: Yes. This was the first one where – I mean, the black paintings, some of the black paintings had a little bleed, but that's not – I don't think; I don't know. The black paintings were sized. This is the first ones that I actually used unsized canvas. The cotton duck. I sized, and only somebody up there knows why they survived – I sized the paintings for the black paintings with a white ground that was really a grotesque paint. It separated even when I painted.

That's why a lot of the splotchiness you see in the black is really from the unevenness of the sizing underneath.

E. Lunning: It was the sizing that was so grotesque?

Frank Stella: Yes. It separated out, and that's lumps of pigment that you see in the thing, and I spread it out. And I was too bored to – I couldn't bear trying to even it out. I just put some on because – and that, although it was a size, it was not indeterminate, not a true, or not a complete size. So, I mean, there was still plenty of absorption in the size. So when you painted the black enamel on it, it took.

E. Lunning: Now in your painting downstairs, *Morro Castle* [1958], can you...

Frank Stella: *Morro Castle*? Okay.

E. Lunning: It's a black painting.

Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, I got it. I got it, yeah.

E. Lunning: ...and there's, I think actually, a very decided *color* in the intervals.

Frank Stella: Yeah.

E. Lunning: Is that...

Frank Stella: I'd have to go down and look at that. See, everyone has told me about that, but I think it's optical in that particular painting. Yes. A lot of the paintings had underpainting under them, as you can see in the one next to it, *Delta* [1958].

E. Lunning: Yeah.

Frank Stella: But I think that the color in *Morro Castle* is in the mind's eye.

E. Lunning: Interesting. Interesting. Okay.

Frank Stella: Because I just looked at it quickly yesterday, and it's – the lines – everything is quite tight in that painting.

E. Lunning: It's a beautiful painting.

Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So normally, if there were a color coming through, it would be strongest on the edges where I would have a color, and then I would paint that big space out in black. So then it would really show up, as you can see in the big odd spaces around *Delta*. And that happened in some other paintings, too.

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

Frank Stella: Anyway. I'd have to look at that.

[00:07:19]

Brad Epley: I wanted to ask you about the edge treatment of these paintings, too. I noticed in a documentary photograph from the Leo Castelli show ["Frank Stella," Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, September 27-October 15, 1960] of the aluminum paintings, a couple of them at least have a sort of wooden lath frame, it looks like.

Frank Stella: There was lath on the black paintings, too. Not the paintings in this group. The first ones. But when I showed at Leo – when I showed at the Museum of Modern Art ["Frank Stella: Paintings" (Retrospective Exhibition), March 24-June 2, 1970], you know, I painted the wood, the stripping, black enamel, and then I used the aluminum paint on these. These were all trimmed.

Brad Epley: Oh, all of them were? At one point?

Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah. And especially the aluminum ones, it sort of had to be, because I was covering up the cutaway of the canvas in the notches and corners. As I was saying before, this easily – these could all be fixed by – I'm not sure if we – we didn't really – we cut and fit and glued them to each other. Lapped them ever so slightly so you could just get a straight pull. And so then the whole notch is filled up. And it works fine, and we've had it for over a year with no – it just works. I did it with the restorer Luca Bonetti.

Brad Epley: Um-hum.

E. Lunning: When you say "fixed," you're talking about how the canvas is stretched around the corners?

Frank Stella: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Then that would be filled in, and there wouldn't be a bumpiness there when you put the things in. And certainly in the middle of

that painting (looks at *Avicenna*) – although the wood is still on that, so you don't see. You've still got the wood in the middle, but not on the edges?

Brad Epley: Actually, in the mid-eighties, the tape was replaced. Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, who was the Chief Conservator then...

Frank Stella: All right.

Brad Epley: ...I think spoke with you about that duct tape. It's the...

Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah. Oh right! They used duct tape on this one. Well, that's possible, right. But see, they've got – there's a little bump. (inspects central cutout in painting) But this one is so neat; and, I mean, I wouldn't touch this one actually, since it works so well. But these were original – I don't, you know, maybe I did have a – you know, I could be wrong again. I'll have to look at the photos of Leo's show. But I know on the big paintings I put the – because they were hard to handle, I put the wood on the side. Because people had their hands all over them and everything.

E. Lunning: So it was to protect...

Frank Stella: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it was just, you know, that was it. To protect it.

[00:09:44]

E. Lunning: Can you talk a little about how you feel about the sides of your paintings? If you want them to...

Frank Stella: Well, the early ones downstairs, I painted the sides essentially black, sort of to numb them out. And then I began to put the – you know, as I was exhibiting more, and they were shipped and everything, I put something basically as a protection, and it didn't seem to make much difference. Taping was sort of fine, and the stripping was fine; so I didn't care much where the lattice was, okay.

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

Frank Stella: I didn't have any strong feelings about it. I mean, I just didn't want it to have the – I wanted it slightly finished. I mean, I didn't want to leave it because the edge is uneven on the outside, and I wasn't into having the uneven edges. It didn't prove anything.

E. Lunning: The paint is uneven?

Frank Stella: Yeah. Yeah. Well, yes, because it's the edge, it comes around.

E. Lunning: And you didn't want that to be visible?

Frank Stella: Right. Right. You have to – or, I wanted to, anyway, put enough paint on the edge so that you when you stretched it, you had paint on it. If you tried to gauge or guess where the edge was, and taped it off or something, you'd lose it.

E. Lunning: Uh-huh.

Brad Epley: So it's not – you're not interested in having the sides read as a sort of continuation of the bands across the...

Frank Stella: No. It's really a set-off. Yeah, they have nothing to do with the bands. It's just to set it off the wall, to get the bands up in front of you.

[00:11:10]

E. Lunning: Now *Lake City* [1962, The Menil Collection, Houston], as I recall, has masking tape at the edge.

Brad Epley: It does. It's finished off with masking tape.

Frank Stella: I'd have to look at – oh, that's the little one. Yeah. Oh, my God, that's a nightmare, that picture.

E. Lunning: I like that picture. Why do you think it's a nightmare?

Frank Stella: Oh, you know, I got into it – well, Leo [Castelli]'s gone, so we can have the – I made the big paintings, you know.

E. Lunning: Uh-huh.

Frank Stella: And then, you know, there wasn't much action and everything, so Leo said, "Don't you have any models, or this, or that?" And I had painted a couple of small things like that. But when I made the small ones on raw canvas and everything, everything buckled, and they looked horrible. So I took them to a restorer, a very nice old Czech guy, Rudolph Granek; and I said, "Oh, they're popping all over the place." He said, "Well, I can put it down on Masonite."

And he was a very elegant carpenter and everything, and that's what he did. But it flattens the painting. It just kills it completely.

E. Lunning: He attached it to the Masonite?

Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, he did it for me. He made the panels for me. And he glued them down. Then I went home and painted them. And you can see that I – I think – well, I'll go take a look. I was quite annoyed, and – well, you know, these have been manhandled. I guess I did. I thought I only painted – some were kind of underpainted. But I painted this about four layers. Yeah, I got plenty of the copper on it. And I guess, you know, it wears through. You know, these have had a tough life. And the copper, even more than the aluminum, prints from your hand.

E. Lunning: Yeah.

Frank Stella: I mean, it's antifouling paint for boats. Old fashioned copper paint. And I always considered those as unsuccessful as any art could be. I mean, you can tell by looking at it, that it's a sad...

E. Lunning: (laughs) Because of the scale?

Frank Stella: Yeah, no. But look how it looks. It's a sort of sad sack. I mean, it's like – I don't know, it looks like a Minimalist art object (winks), if I might say so. A lower class of art. (laughs)

E. Lunning: You know, maybe I like it because I like drawings, and it feels like a very drawn – it feels like a studio thing to me.

Frank Stella: Yeah. To me, it looks like something that they made for a – you know, it looks machine-made to me.

E. Lunning: Huh.

Frank Stella: You know, look at the difference of these stretchers compared to that. And it's 'cause Granek was so good at it. I mean, he did a professional job. If you wanted right angles, you got right angles. But the big ones weren't anything like that.

Brad Epley: And the copper paint that you used for the big ones, and then these smaller ones is the same?

Frank Stella: It's the same paint, yeah.

[00:13:44]

E. Lunning: But you were saying the canvas *buckled* a lot when you used it?

Frank Stella: Yes. It does on the big ones, too. Yeah.

E. Lunning: Now that, in a piece of paper, usually means that there's water in the medium. Do you know why it buckled so much?

Frank Stella: Oh, no, no. It has nothing – oh, sorry – I won't say for sure that it has nothing to do with that. No, it's entirely due to the – yes, it is water. It's water that has come through the canvas. It's moisture in the canvas. So the – and it buckles because you have the water in the canvas tightening the picture sometimes. Then you have the dryness shrinking the wood. Everything expands, and then the wood contracts, and then the painting buckles.

E. Lunning: Yeah.

Frank Stella: And, remember, it's quite difficult in these pictures – I mean, you don't get the keying effects that you can on a normal rectangle.

E. Lunning: That's true. You can't key them.

Brad Epley: You noted that you put about four coats of paint on the copper.

Frank Stella: I think so. Yeah.

Brad Epley: Did the aluminum take as many strokes to cover, or was it...

Frank Stella: The aluminum paint? I don't know. I started with the black, and four was a good number somehow. I don't know. You know, around two coats, it didn't really look so good. And the third coat. The fourth coat always seemed to be enough. It was just to get the...

Brad Epley: Surface.

Frank Stella: There was too much of a beat in the painting with one or two coats.

Brad Epley: So it's really just to get an evenness of sheen?

Frank Stella: Some kind of evenness. Yeah, yeah.

[00:15:07]

Brad Epley: Because I noticed on a painting like this one... [referring to *Takht-i-Sulayman I*, 1967, The Menil Collection, Houston]

Frank Stella: No, on this – this is not a problem because the paint...

Brad Epley: It's much thin...

Frank Stella: Yeah, it's much thinner. And you go into the canvas, and these colors, you know, they whack out at you.

Frank Stella: There's no reason why this is like this. It should be completely faded, according to all of the experts.

E. Lunning: We wanted to ask you about that.

Frank Stella: Look, this is the lowest grade of fluorescent alkyd that they made in 1965.

Frank Stella: And have none of this series faded?

Frank Stella: You know, almost none of them. I mean, the only serious fading – I mean, it will fade eventually, or if you give it a *lot* of light, it'll – but if it does it evenly, you'll probably hardly notice it because they are so many of them and so bright. And they are reinforced with – the brightness is reinforced by the darkness. Like the dark green. I mean, it makes that [fluorescent] green ten times brighter. And – I forgot what the point of what I was going to say.

E. Lunning: Fading. You were saying if it faded, they'd all go together.

Frank Stella: What happened in terms of fading or light damage happened mostly to the paintings – happened to the copper paintings and then to the aluminum paintings that were purple. It was a tinted purple, again, from the manufacturer; a decorative paint for railings and stuff. And they told me the purple was just outrageously fugitive. And so most of them look just like that. Like pure aluminum.

E. Lunning: The purple's gone.

Frank Stella: Yeah. Except for Irving Blum. When I told him it was going to fade, he wrapped it in black paper and put it in storage. It's still purple.

Brad Epley: So the color is still there.

Frank Stella: It's pretty amazing. It worked. Denying it completely of light. I thought it would be faded under the paper.

E. Lunning: Some things do fade in the dark still.

Frank Stella: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

E. Lunning: How do the copper ones fade?

Frank Stella: Well, the copper ones don't fade so much as they print. So that if you – if they're not absolutely even – like, I mean, again, I had to repaint some of the copper paintings because they are irregular shapes, and I stacked them in front of each other. And then I went away for two weeks in the summer. When I came back, they were all ruined because this was a different color from the color underneath it. It just had a line printed right across it from the exposure to the light.

[00:17:29]

E. Lunning: Frank, if you were saying uniformity of surface was important to you, or some uniformity, do you want to talk about the...

Frank Stella: Right. But you create a nonexistent topic or condition, which is the uniform surface, which has in the end nothing really to do with it. It isn't there. It isn't a uniform surface. It's the result of what happens from laying four layers of paint over it, and that's the surface you end up with. Uniformity – it just has the sense that you know what it is, or that it's measurable, or that there is a uniform surface.

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

Frank Stella: And I think that's very misleading.

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

Brad Epley: Because we noticed in ours there are some sort of drips, primarily on the left side coming down, that in certain lights you can see clearly. And I was just curious...

Frank Stella: Well, that's from the fire at The Modern [Museum of Modern Art, New York]. That's water damage.

E. Lunning: Oh, really?

Frank Stella: Yeah. That's why you've got the painting. I mean, it was [Nelson A.] Rockefeller's painting hanging in the Modern when they had the fire in '63. You can look it up, whenever it was. [April, 1958.] This painting was damaged, and then, I guess he unloaded it on the de Menil. [Rockefeller sold *Avicenna* to another collector, who then sold it to the Menil Collection.]

(laughter)

E. Lunning: Let's go look at that up close. And let's look at another spot on this painting. Let's see...

(The entire group stands up and walks over to inspect *Avicenna*.)

Frank Stella: But I think you're lucky.

Brad Epley: So that's most of that.

Frank Stella: I think that they gave it to restorers who said, "Uh-uh, you can't do anything with it."

E. Lunning: So did the water dislodge dirt? Or it dislodged paint?

Frank Stella: It didn't dislodge anything, I don't think. I think maybe it dislodged dirt more than anything. Maybe the water came down, and then somebody did clean it, and this is the result of the cleaning, which I think would go along with what you say. It comes out brighter.

E. Lunning: Was this on exhibition when the water came...

Frank Stella: Yeah.

E. Lunning: And that's when they lost the [Claude] Monet *Water Lily*...

Frank Stella: I don't remember what else they lost. But anyway, this was...

E. Lunning: That's fascinating. And this. Do you know what this is, Frank?

Frank Stella: I think that's a piece of damage that somebody tried to paint in.

E. Lunning: So that's a newer paint. They got brighter paint.

Frank Stella: Yeah.

[00:19:47]

Brad Epley: But in terms of its overall condition...

Frank Stella: Look, it's as much – it's one of the most beautiful of the – it's the most beautiful painting of the series. I mean, the most harmonious. And it looks fine. I mean, you know, it's the life of a painting. But I can't make any better paintings than that. And I don't see anything to be gained by, you know, whatever restoration, or whoever tried to do, fix it here and there, they stopped, blessedly, and just let it go at that.

E. Lunning: Would you replace the duct tape with new duct tape?

Frank Stella: No, I wouldn't bother. It looks good with the duct tape. I mean, now, you want to put new duct tape...

E. Lunning: Would you put new duct tape on it?

Frank Stella: Well, I don't – it's a non-question somehow. I mean, yeah, if you want to put new duct tape. I mean, what's the – or keep this duct tape on it. This seems perfectly good. I don't know. I mean, I know duct tape is always going to lift a little.

E. Lunning: See, I think it's fine. One reason I asked the question is that our exhibition designer didn't think it was fine.

Frank Stella: Right. They always want – they want everything cleaned up and everything.

E. Lunning: Everything neat and – well, I was just asking.

Frank Stella: No, I mean, let it be. Actually, the things that are – I mean, what's more important, I think, what you ought to do for yourselves, if you haven't done it,

is take the backing off and take a look at it. I mean, it wouldn't probably hurt. You know, this is pretty – that's the real thing. I mean, those were the tacks. I tacked that, so it hasn't been...

E. Lunning: It hasn't been [words inaudible].

Frank Stella: Yeah.

E. Lunning: So you would say check out the canvas and the color of the canvas?

Frank Stella: Yeah. Because – no, no, just clean it inside. I mean, there's a lot of dirt in there probably.

E. Lunning: Vacuum?

Frank Stella: Yeah, if you want. Look at it. Maybe it's not that dirty. Maybe when they sent it out from the Museum after the damage, someone did clean it. But this definitely proves that it hasn't been overly cleaned.

E. Lunning: Which is nice.

Frank Stella: Yeah. Now the other thing is – I mean, if you ever have to restretch it, which I don't suggest, you're okay because it will be very hard to get it because these are so tight. I was pretty maniacal.

E. Lunning: This is pretty beautiful tacking.

Frank Stella: Yeah. So I would leave it. But you have enough, in an emergency or anything, you have enough canvas to work with here. And the other thing is, I would leave this alone. But this could be fixed, all of this. This could be connected and made solid. And I don't know if there's any great – it's just as easy to fake it with the tape. I mean, you just have to retape the edge. But anyway, that's – this is weak, structurally; but you just have to look and see how close the brace is to that to support it. But it has survived all this time, so it's not going to change really.

E. Lunning: Would you explain again – 'cause I didn't quite understand how you are making this solid now. You...

Frank Stella: It's just simple...

E. Lunning: You insert a triangle?

Frank Stella: No, you just – it’s really simple. You just lift it up a little bit. You’ve got this piece which goes back there, and you attach another piece of canvas to it right out to here. And, you know, with the new glues and everything, you can just glue it enough. It covers like a quarter inch or something like that. That gives you enough strength and enough thing to just reset it, and then that’s filled in. And this is filled in, too. With one piece, it works. But as I say, I mean, only – or you just leave it alone. Now for curiosity’s sake, you might take the back off and check out the bracing and everything. But it’s done very well the way it is. I strongly recommend “less is more” here.

[00:23:28]

E. Lunning: Tell me, did the bleeding in the intervals show up immediately?

Frank Stella: Yes. It was always there in that way.

E. Lunning: Because it gives...

Frank Stella: What happens is that, I don’t think you can make an effect. I mean, it was more pronounced before because the lighter places were lighter, and these appeared darker. But that’s gotten dirty. So it’s much more even...

E. Lunning: It’s a very subtle, beautiful effect now.

Frank Stella: Yeah. It’s subtle and beautiful, but it was a little bit more pronounced in the original.

E. Lunning: Like here’s there’s one bright patch there...

Frank Stella: Right. Right. But that would have – yes, those would have shown more. But I don’t think that – I don’t know if you want to do that kind of cleaning. I don’t know that – I mean, outside of general cleaning, I suppose in some extreme circumstances, again, which I wouldn’t recommend, you could bleach the canvas or something, but I think that would be dopey and dangerous.

E. Lunning: Yes. The paper conservator gasps! (laughs) Yeah, we won’t try that. But I think also what I was driving at was so that you never intended for the intervals to show up as bright white.

Frank Stella: No, it was never, not even close to that.

E. Lunning: Never. No.

Frank Stella: No. And then this kind of stuff you see here, this is – you know, because these stretchers are on edge, that’s just the inevitable bump from the paint. You know, that shows there along the edge.

E. Lunning: Uh-huh.

Frank Stella: It wasn’t one of my happiest things, but it was pretty hard to avoid it. And as they get pressed up against each other, it shows up more and more. But that was always in the painting.

[00:25:03]

Brad Epley: And you built all of these stretchers yourself?

Frank Stella: Yes. I didn’t build this myself, (points at *Takht-i-Sulayman*) but I built the others. Jim Lebron built these.

E. Lunning: Lebron?

Frank Stella: Yeah.

E. Lunning: And all – he built all the Protractors [*Protractor Series, 1967-71*]?

Frank Stella: I think so, yeah.

E. Lunning: When did you stop doing everything yourself?

Frank Stella: Well, when it stopped being...

E. Lunning: Necessary?

Frank Stella: ...right angular.

E. Lunning: Oh, when it stopped being right angles? Yes.

Brad Epley: Can I talk about this one a little bit? [Referring to *Takht-i-Sulayman*]

Frank Stella: Yeah.

Brad Epley: One of the obvious distinctions, aside from color, is that there’s priming applied underneath all of these layers? With the bands...

- Frank Stella: Not that I know of, no.
- Brad Epley: Oh?
- Frank Stella: That's unsized canvas. I mean...
- Brad Epley: I noticed in some areas it looks like there's a white priming kind of bleeding out a little bit from underneath.
- Frank Stella: Ah, yeah you're right. Oh, I know. I think we did for the fluorescent colors. We put the white to make...
- E. Lunning: Because it would make them more fluorescent in a way.
- Frank Stella: Right. Right. You're right.
- Brad Epley: And that was all done with straight masking tape?
- Frank Stella: Yeah. But...
- E. Lunning: And you could stretch the masking tape into a curve?
- Frank Stella: Yeah. You can, like, tcha-tcha-tcha-tcha-tcha. (motions along contour of curved band) You just – it has got enough give in the tape.
- E. Lunning: It's got enough give in it?
- Frank Stella: Yeah. But the trick is – how do you draw the lines?
- E. Lunning: It hadn't occurred to me. How do you draw the lines?
- Frank Stella: You make a stick. You make a big beam compass.
- E. Lunning: Wow!
- Frank Stella: You stick it in there, and then you swing it.
- E. Lunning: So does that mean we would find small holes periodically?
- Frank Stella: No, the holes would be from here. I think I can draw everything from here. No, probably down there, yeah, I had to draw. I don't know. There should be something in it.

[00:26:56]

Frank Stella: Now this – I don't know why that got whacked.

Brad Epley: I think maybe from the handling and rolling.

Frank Stella: Um-hum. Yeah.

Brad Epley: That's really the only color and the only area where we have that kind of...

Frank Stella: Do you roll this anymore?

Brad Epley: I think...

E. Lunning: Not on my watch.

Brad Epley: Yeah, no, I think not...

Frank Stella: It would be nice if you didn't. Yeah, I don't think it can take it now.

Brad Epley: I think that the last time it was rolled was in maybe '85 or '86 when the collection went to Paris ["La rime et la raison: Du Paléolithique à nos Jours. Deux Generations de Collectionneurs. Les Collections Menil (Houston – New York)," Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, April 17-July 30, 1984], and that was the last time.

Frank Stella: Uh-huh. I mean, it survived pretty well. But they can't – that paint, I mean, it's bright and everything, but the alkyd doesn't have that much flexibility.

Brad Epley: So you remember pretty well the paintings you – the paint you used?

Frank Stella: Yeah, but I was wrong, I mean, about the – that we put the white under it. But I remember for the thing, but I don't remember how we put it on because...

(Stands up to inspect painting more closely)

E. Lunning: It's brus...

Frank Stella: ...but it shows it's there.

E. Lunning: ...it's brushed, isn't it?

Frank Stella: Yeah.

E. Lunning: Oh, you don't remember how you put the...

Frank Stella: Yeah, the white on.

E. Lunning: ...the white on?

Frank Stella: Don't know why I don't remember that. But...

E. Lunning: Is it under every color, Brad?

Brad Epley: It is.

Frank Stella: Yeah, it is, yes. Yeah, we put the tape down.

Brad Epley: Would you have worked with assistants on something like this?

Frank Stella: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Brad Epley: And also, a lot of the passages...

Frank Stella: Some of these things. I think some of these colors are Magna [Acrylic Paint, manufactured by Bocour Artist Colors]. And some of them are Magna paint with fluorescent in them to make them a little brighter.

E. Lunning: Where you would add the fluorescents, or um...

Frank Stella: Yeah.

E. Lunning: ...Bocour?

Frank Stella: No, we would.

E. Lunning: Magna was Bocour's company, wasn't it?

Brad Epley: Um-hum, yeah.

Frank Stella: But, you know, maybe I didn't do that here. This looks like I didn't do it. I did it later. Because at this time, I didn't have the fluorescent powders. I don't think I did that until later when I had them.

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

Frank Stella: Because it was easy to mix the powders into Bocour paint.

Brad Epley: So this would have been a premixed...

Frank Stella: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:29:23]

Brad Epley: Did you know essentially which color was going to go where, and so you were able to – 'cause I notice most of these are painted quite thinly?

Frank Stella: Uh-huh.

Brad Epley: There are one or two passages where it's a little bit – this bright blue...

Frank Stella: Uh-huh.

Brad Epley: Did you ever have to go back in and change the color once you had it put down, or did...

Frank Stella: Well, I used to do it by – I would have a drawing, and then I'd mark the colors in the drawing, and then that would say yellow, so that was easy. Yellow would go in there. And then – I don't know where – we had a lot of colors mixed, so that would have been the tan or orange-yellow, or something; and I just followed the notations.

E. Lunning: But the notations were verbal? Not...

Frank Stella: No, no, they were written on the scheme, on the plan of the painting.

E. Lunning: You wrote a word down. You didn't take a magic marker...

Frank Stella: I wrote – no, I used – I just wrote it on a pencil drawing, a little sketch. But it was just – and I only used letters like OY for orange-yellow, or – I don't know what the peach color...

[00:30:26]

E. Lunning: How do you feel about the condition of this painting?

Frank Stella: I'd say it's a miracle.

(laughter)

Frank Stella: You know, it's really pretty fragile and everything. And it's been around and everything. I mean, that it lasted this long without getting a major pounding is pretty unbelievable.

E. Lunning: I have to tell you what it takes for us to get this down.

Frank Stella: I know, but I'm sorry...

E. Lunning: Have you been told what it takes to take this downstairs?

Frank Stella: No, no. But I can imagine it...

E. Lunning: It's very hard to get it around the corner going out the door. And because it's so thick, it will only fit inside the freight elevator if we lift up the interior grates.

Frank Stella: Um-hum.

E. Lunning: The interior grates take up an extra couple of inches. So the people who care for the elevator have to come out and fix the elevator so that it will move with the grates...

Frank Stella: Moved out? Yeah.

E. Lunning: Yeah. Someone stands on the top. We sign a liability release form.

Frank Stella: Oh, yes, I can...

E. Lunning: But this painting, since I've been here, has hung on the central wall downstairs...

Frank Stella: I saw it once there, yeah, yeah.

E. Lunning: ...and it looks absolutely beautiful there.

Frank Stella: Yeah. You know that the painting – that was in *Life Magazine*, that painting. I don't know what year, but it's a double page spread in *Life* magazine. ["A

New Cut in Art: Oddly shaped canvases by Frank Stella challenge viewers,”
Life Magazine, January 19, 1968. (Bourdon).]

E. Lunning: And it was an article about you?

Frank Stella: I don't know if it was just about me.

E. Lunning: Huh.

Frank Stella: I don't know. I just know that that was reproduced.

[00:32:00]

Brad Epley: Again, just a quick note about the edge treatment on this one. The tape, I think it's just a kind of white...

Frank Stella: Yeah, white tape.

Brad Epley: _____ [word inaudible] the tape is fine.

Frank Stella: The tape is fine, yeah.

Brad Epley: Would you have painted it with the tape on the edge to keep the sides free from paint?

Frank Stella: I tried to explain that, which is, no, because you want some paint over the edge. Otherwise, you have nothing when you're pulling around the edge.

Brad Epley: So you don't really want a clean white – or sort of [word inaudible] to the canvas...

Frank Stella: I mean, it's pretty simple. I mean, you know, you make an arbitrary judgment about – you know, theoretically that would be a white line down there. But it's not practical, so you fade it away. And it's the same thing here. I don't want to try to get a white edge, which would be consistent with the design and everything because it's just a – it just presents many unnecessary problems.

E. Lunning: When you go to stretch it or restretch it?

Frank Stella: Yes. Yeah. And, to tell you the truth, I think it would probably not be better.

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

- Frank Stella: In terms of – it would be more consistent in terms of the design, but I think it would lose something. The painting has to define itself. It has to have its edge, and then the other stuff for the interior edges separating the forms. That would be my excuse. But I think it's also practically true. Although it does happen. Look up – or is that the tape?
- Brad Epley: No, I notice up in the dark green, it does happen a little bit.
- E. Lunning: It happens [word inaudible]...
- Frank Stella: Yeah, it happens. But that's a problem with the stretcher and the restretching and everything.
- Brad Epley: Could I ask you to go over that one more time. I think the camera wasn't rolling when you talked to us about that the first time.
- E. Lunning: Oh, about the crevice?
- Brad Epley: About shaving down the inside of the stretcher to get the...
- Frank Stella: Yeah. I don't recommend it, but it can be done. If we were to take a line and shave it down, that would give you enough room to join the canvas behind there so you could have a straight pull, and it would be all one piece, and you wouldn't have – see, the problem here is that it's cut right to there, but it hasn't turned out to be a problem, for some unknown reason. Theoretically – oh, someone did glue it down, right?
- E. Lunning: It's been glued down.
- Brad Epley: Yeah, there's a piece...
- Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. Well, that's good enough. I mean, you could do a more elegant job than that, but I mean – so, leave it. 'Cause inside it doesn't matter that it's not the same thickness. So I would leave it. I mean, this is a weird choice here, forcing the tape down there. I mean, to tell you the truth, I'd clean it and probably paint that out a tiny bit. But I think best thing is leave it alone. It's fine. It made it this way, and it's not going anywhere, and it's secure. So I don't see any need to...

[00:34:52]

- E. Lunning: Without naming any names of either pictures or conservators, do you feel that you've seen a lot of your pictures interfered with?
- Frank Stella: Yeah. I mean, I suffered along with everybody else when we had this vogue of...
- E. Lunning: Relining.
- Frank Stella: ...relining. Yeah. And that was a nightmare.
- E. Lunning: Yeah. You feel it flattened _____ [phrase inaudible]?
- Frank Stella: Made them look like that. (Gestures toward *Lake City*) If you reline...
- E. Lunning: Like the copper painting?
- Frank Stella: Yeah. No, it's just a terrible – it does it, not just to my paintings. It does it to everybody's paintings.
- E. Lunning: It's very aggressive.
- Frank Stella: Yes. And it doesn't really prove anything. I mean, the other thing was that – again, right, we're not naming names. But some people – I think it's only on one or two – have tried to even out the beat in the black paintings, too. Which is also a really bad idea.
- E. Lunning: To even out the...
- Frank Stella: The beat. You know, you can read it.
- E. Lunning: Ah.
- Brad Epley: More so, maybe, on the copper than the aluminum one.
- Frank Stella: Right. Right. But downstairs on the black paintings we'll be able to see it. But there's a beat in this here. Anyway, that's what it is. It's trying to even out the beat. And it just doesn't – it just puts more paint on the painting, and it doesn't do anything for it. And it always – and then the other thing is, inevitably when they work on a piece, they don't leave their paint alone. You can always tell if it's a restorer 'cause they always varnish over it.
- E. Lunning: Over *their* paint.

- Frank Stella: Right.
- E. Lunning: Now let me go back for a minute. I think this is a stupid question, but what's the beat?
- Frank Stella: Well, we have to look downstairs. The beat is the brush. You can only have so much paint on the brush. You can't get from the top to the bottom with one brush stroke.
- E. Lunning: Right.
- Frank Stella: So you paint. Then you have to put the paint in the bucket – put more paint on the brush in the...
- E. Lunning: I just never heard that word.
- Frank Stella: Yeah.
- E. Lunning: But I can't imagine trying to even that out because we...
- Frank Stella: Well, I try. I mean, that's why you have four coats. Because the beat is one way, and maybe you turn it upside down or something, and then the beat is a little different. You try to have the beats cancel themselves out a little bit, like interference. But you can only go so far.
- E. Lunning: 'Cause in another artist, you would consider that the brush stroke. And you would consider it evidence of how the artist had touched the canvas.
- Frank Stella: Yeah, well, it's relative. I mean, I could have, I suppose. But I would have never done it, or something. I mean, you could make these paintings by spraying them. So then there wouldn't be any beat. But that wasn't the point of them.
- E. Lunning: You know, Brad is working on this Barnett Newman [*Be I*, 1949] that's had a very hard life. Taking off a lot of coatings that have been put on top.
- Frank Stella: Um-hum.
- E. Lunning: And one of the very beautiful things that is appearing is what I now think we would call the beat.
- Frank Stella: Um-hum.

- E. Lunning: These very subtle differences in reflection.
- Frank Stella: Um-hum. Well, I have my own opinions about Barney.
- E. Lunning: We'd love to hear them. Tell us.
- Frank Stella: No way.
- E. Lunning: No?
- Frank Stella: Well, I can make it simple. He was very inconsistent in his application. About everything in his thought. So you can't – you don't get any information from one picture to another. I mean, what happened in one picture has, you know, nothing to do – but it was very powerful in the show in 1958, I think in the fall of '58, that he had in French and Company ["Barnett Newman: A Selection 1946-1952," French and Company, New York, March 11-April 5, 1959] with a lot of big pictures. And they were just all over the place.
- E. Lunning: Ours was in that show.
- Brad Epley: The...
- E. Lunning: *Be I*.
- Brad Epley: Ours – *Be I*, the one I'm working on how, was supposed to be in that show. But it was the damage to it that kicked it out of the show.
- E. Lunning: That made it *out of* that show.
- Frank Stella: Um-hum.
- E. Lunning: Yeah.
- Brad Epley: Yeah, that's what makes Newman restorations and conservation treatments so difficult is, you can't really base it on...
- Frank Stella: I remember seeing, in one of the big – I don't know, what's the biggest blue painting, the ultramarine blue one that's really long?
- Brad Epley: Cathedra? [1951, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam]

Frank Stella: Yeah, Cathedra. I mean, that – I thought it was a lot like – that looked like he just had – I don't know if he painted it out or not. That looked like a sizing problem. I mean, there were just sort of whole parts of it that were painted, but that just had a totally different absorption level from anything else. Unless he had painted – I thought a few things. Either the sizing. Or he may have painted something in there. But you could tell by looking at it, if he had really actually painted over something that was in there.

Brad Epley: I think he actually may have even experimented with a spray gun. There are some patches in it that were spray-applied by him. He abandoned it quickly. I think he said it was too dangerous. He used some funny word like that to describe it. But, abandoned it very quickly.

[Break in video]

[00:39:40]

E. Lunning: It's still June 9th, and we are sitting here with Frank Stella. And now we are at Mrs. de Menil's house on San Felipe with Frank's – I call it a painting – called Lipsko [*Lipsko IV (Polish Village Series)*, 1972, The Menil Collection, Houston].

Frank Stella: No, I think it's a wooden relief.

E. Lunning: It's a wooden relief!

Frank Stella: I thought it was painted like that one.

E. Lunning: Like that one. No. And Frank was just talking about the wood that it's made out of. Could you say that again?

Frank Stella: Yeah, it's a Malaysian hardwood called jelutong, J-E-L-U-T-O-N-G, I think.

E. Lunning: And you chose it for its color, or because it took an edge very well?

Frank Stella: No, it's because the people who were making the smaller models, that's the wood that they worked in. And we made it in California, in Gardena, and a guy named Tomkins Tooling...

E. Lunning: Hmm.

Frank Stella: ...and that's who I was doing a lot of work with – right after this, with honeycomb aluminum. The Brazilian pieces.

E. Lunning: And what was the surface on the honeycomb aluminum?

Frank Stella: Aluminum. (laughs)

E. Lunning: Aluminum? Okay. 'Cause we use it sometimes, you know, when they put – they put all different kinds...

Frank Stella: I know, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes.

Brad Epley: Could you talk a little bit about – I know some of these have collage. Some different pieces have a wooden version and then a collage version, or...

Frank Stella: Yes. I made about – I can't be sure, three or four wooden pieces. And then they were heavy and sort of hard to handle; and I liked them, but I just stopped. I'm sort of sorry I didn't make a couple for myself. But anyway, they're nice. I don't know how many there are. I think there are four, though.

Brad Epley: So is there a version of this that has painted or collage elements?

Frank Stella: Yeah, there would be many versions of it. The painted one. Sort of a painted flat one, and a painted one with relief that would be parallel to the picture plane.

E. Lunning: But of different shapes?

Frank Stella: No, no. The same shape, but...

E. Lunning: The same shape?

Frank Stella: Yeah. Yeah. This is the third version, and tilted – with tilted planes. But there would be a painted version of this. So everything had basically three versions. And the ones that had a wood one had a fourth version.

[00:41:57]

E. Lunning: Do you feel it has changed color a lot? Is it yellower, or is it warmer?

Frank Stella: No, I don't think it's changed much at all.

Brad Epley: Did they...

Frank Stella: I really don't. I'm kind of surprised, too, because I don't know what they used. They were good craftsmen. I mean, I don't know what they used. Usually, the sealer is much – you know, it doesn't hold up that well, and is much – but this hasn't really changed.

Brad Epley: So they did varnish it or put some kind of sealer?

Frank Stella: Well, they used whatever coating they, whatever top coat they used. But I don't know what it was. But they sealed it and then top-coated it, as they'd call it. And that's it. And they didn't seem to put a lot on.

Brad Epley: And it's not a veneer? It's the solid wood all the way through?

Frank Stella: Yes.

Brad Epley: Okay. There are a few areas where the fill – where they filled knots and things like that, you can see the fill material as a distinctly different – is that bothersome to you, or is that...

Frank Stella: No. I don't know if that is – if their fill popped out, or it changed color, or it got banged. I don't know.

Brad Epley: Hmm.

E. Lunning: Is that something where you think we should try to make it match a little better?

Frank Stella: I don't see the point in it. Honest to God, I don't know.

E. Lunning: You are a conservator's dream!

(laughter)

Brad Epley: Don't touch it.

E. Lunning: Don't do anything.

Frank Stella: I mean, I really – you know, what can you say? Thirty-five years? I mean, it's a miracle, you know. I mean, think of how few chips or dents or anything.

- E. Lunning: Well, I was going to say there are some chips at the edge.
- Frank Stella: Right. But what are you going to do? I mean, once you start sanding it down and filling them in, you go down a road that there's no end to.
- E. Lunning: Okay.
- Frank Stella: I mean, that's the way I see it. I mean, what would really be accomplished? If it were splintering, I could see securing it or something like that.
- E. Lunning: Well, and as I looked at it, I noticed, too, I don't see any – there are no major distortions in its profile.
- Frank Stella: No, none. I mean, it's amazing – it's pretty heavy and hard to handle, as you probably know – that it got as few dings as it did.
- E. Lunning: It was very hard to hang on this wall.
- Frank Stella: Yeah.
- E. Lunning: It's hard to hang anywhere, but there's a sliding door in that wall. So they had to calculate very carefully...
- Frank Stella: Oh, where to hit? Yeah.
- E. Lunning: ...where to...
- Frank Stella: No, it's not an easy piece to handle. They never were. And they're heavy. I mean, relatively.
- E. Lunning: They are very heavy.
- Frank Stella: But what I think is really good about them. Is this in three pieces? Or four?
- E. Lunning: Hm?
- Brad Epley: It actually – in the collection, it's all attached and...
- Frank Stella: Right. But it's made in – I think it's...
- Brad Epley: I think it's about three pieces.

Frank Stella: About three pieces? Yeah. Well, it's good. Don't take it apart, I guess. But it was taken apart a few times, so it's pretty well engineered.

[00:44:45]

E. Lunning: Now tell me. In our files, we have this dated as 1972.

Frank Stella: Yeah, I don't think that can be correct.

E. Lunning: And the collage dated 1973.

Frank Stella: Right. This has to be later. I mean, because I worked on the whole series for quite a while, and the wooden ones evolved towards the end. Because I was making all the other things. Or we were making them at home, and this was made out in California, and it was made at the time I was working out there with Ken Tyler [Kenneth E. Tyler, Master Printer]; and at the time, we were starting on working with these people on the honeycomb aluminum. So it has to be...

E. Lunning: Oh, that's where...

Frank Stella: ...'74 or later.

E. Lunning: So the collage *would* have preceded it?

Frank Stella: Well, I dated the collage, didn't I?

E. Lunning: Yeah. The collage is dated '73.

Frank Stella: So that's it. But this surely is later. Although those collages were made after I made a lot of the paintings, I must say. But, you know, I hadn't done that much. It's 40-some odd pieces, maybe 50 when you get all done. I mean, big pieces. And I didn't really – the thing that I did after them didn't really start until '75 or '76, so I was working on them for four or five years.

E. Lunning: Um-hum. And did you do the collages as – what was their relationship to...

Frank Stella: I did the collages so we could have something to sell.

E. Lunning: Okay.

(laughter)

E. Lunning: We're familiar with that.

Frank Stella: And they were ostensibly color studies...

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

Frank Stella: ...as with many other artists who have made color studies of the work that they've already done. (laughs)

E. Lunning: Yes.

Brad Epley: So there wouldn't necessarily be a *Lipsko* that corresponds exactly with that?

Frank Stella: No.

Brad Epley: Okay.

Frank Stella: No, no. Almost no chance.

[00:46:49]

E. Lunning: I want to ask you – and, Brad, maybe you can help me because I know the collage isn't in [referring to the filmmaker] Laurie's field – but there's one material in this collage that I can't identify. Can you help me move it...

Brad Epley: Sure.

Frank Stella: I can go over there. Why don't we go?

E. Lunning: But I think you're not – Laurie [referring to the filmmaker], can you see anything if we're over here? It's this purple netting.

Frank Stella: Yeah, it's just some kind of mesh material.

E. Lunning: It would have been sold for...

Frank Stella: I bought a lot...

E. Lunning: A fabric shop?

Frank Stella: Yeah. I went to a lot of fabric shops. But most of these things came from the canvas wholesalers. Guys that did felt and canvas.

- E. Lunning: Where you bought the canvas you painted with?
- Frank Stella: Well, I had, in the old days, yeah. But there's a whole – in the Yellow Pages, there used to be miles of guys that did flags, fabrics, canvas, felt.
- E. Lunning: All in one neighborhood?
- Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah.
- E. Lunning: Were you very conscious at a certain point of being able to get canvas in a larger size? Or, at an earlier point, not being able to get it?
- Frank Stella: Well, I was making some big canvases around the time I was doing these, until about '75. I made some big concentric square paintings and stuff.
- E. Lunning: Uh-huh.
- Frank Stella: And I was able – I still have some of the big canvas. It's probably pretty valuable now. Larry Poons's father was a coffee importer, but he did a lot of business in Belgium and the Netherlands. And he got a mill, a linen mill – they also did cotton – to make cotton duck on their linen loom, which was more than 15 feet wide; and I think it's the widest canvas you can get unseamed.
- E. Lunning: Wow!
- Frank Stella: And I still have a couple of rolls of it left, actually.
- E. Lunning: That would be...
- Frank Stella: But it's the biggest canvas I've seen that doesn't have a seam in it.
- E. Lunning: Right.
- Frank Stella: So the width is over 15 feet.
- E. Lunning: How tall is our *Protractor*?
- Frank Stella: That's only ten feet.
- Brad Epley: It's about ten feet.

E. Lunning: Ten feet?

Frank Stella: You could get 12-foot. That was a normal size.

E. Lunning: Um-hum.

[00:49:20]

E. Lunning: I just saw the director [Josef Helfenstein, Director, The Menil Collection] drive up. Do you have any other questions?

Brad Epley: I don't really unless Frank has anything else he'd like to add about anything.

Frank Stella: Nope, I can't...

E. Lunning: It looks beautiful on that wall, I think. Everybody thinks it looks beautiful on that wall.

Frank Stella: I think it's really okay. I mean, it's done pretty well. I mean, it looks like that's just a scratch, but you can use your furniture polish experts to do that if you want.

E. Lunning: And the damages look to me to be on the corners.

Frank Stella: Actually, this is a little bit interesting. Why do you think – do you think – I think that fill came out, and someone refilled it. You think? Because that looks like a fill done at the time.

E. Lunning: That looks like a much better fill.

Brad Epley: Right. The tone is better. Yeah.

E. Lunning: And – yeah, this one just isn't right.

Frank Stella: I mean, it took some pretty good dings and stuff, and I'm sure – and I don't wonder – do you think somebody played around with that? That was in the wood, and it looks like someone was fooling around with it.

Brad Epley: Trying to grain it, maybe, or something. Yeah.

E. Lunning: Is that another, more intense version of what's going on here?

- Frank Stella: Yeah, someone has sanded it, or played with it, yeah.
- E. Lunning: Done something.
- Frank Stella: Yeah. But I think here they did it mistakenly. Yeah. Is that another fill, or is that a stain? That's a stain of, like, water or something, right?
- E. Lunning: This looks to me like someone might have removed the surface, and where they did it, the grain has gotten dirty.
- Frank Stella: That's a possibility, yeah. I hadn't thought of that. Still, it's pretty good.
- Brad Epley: I think that's...
- Frank Stella: I really think that – I don't know how to answer. I mean, I think that that – I don't know if that fill just got uncovered somehow, or it was refilled. I don't know. It's possible it was such a big fill that it popped out at some point and...
- E. Lunning: That it came out.
- Frank Stella: And you can see it takes a lot of punishment when people put it down on that edge.
- E. Lunning: That's what you can see. And this corner has taken punishment.
- Frank Stella: Yeah, yeah.
- E. Lunning: And I see that that point has a crack going through it.
- Frank Stella: Yeah. You think someone reglued it? I can't tell from here. It's too far away.
- Brad Epley: I think it may be an added piece. A little veneer repair for a loss.
- Frank Stella: Lost veneer technique.
- (laughter)
- Frank Stella: Hi.
- JH: Hi.

Frank Stella: Howdy. You know, that gray [referring to the wall] is the color that I used to think was – it was in Sidney Janis Gallery [New York]...

E. Lunning: Oh, really?

Frank Stella: ...and he was one of the first to use gray walls, yeah.

E. Lunning: I always see this as very blue-y purple.

Frank Stella: Oh, yeah? Yeah. I see it as very gray...

E. Lunning: Gray. But I see a lot of blue-purple in it.

(Stella looks at the wall, then he walks away into the corridor.)

[END RECORDING]