



## Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

**Artist:** Mel Chin

**Date:** July 22, 1991

**Location:** The Menil Collection

**Interviewer:** Carol Mancusi-Ungaro

**Video:** William Howze / **Edit:** Laurie McDonald

**Total Run Time:** 02:57:02 (Two Parts: Part 1: 01:34:06 / Part 2: 01:22:56)

### Abstract:

Artist Mel Chin discusses his work with Artists Documentation Program Founding Director and Menil Chief Conservator Carol Mancusi-Ungaro on the occasion of the exhibition "Viewpoints: Mel Chin," at the Menil Collection, April 28-August 25, 1991. The discussion focuses primarily on the materials and methods that Chin used to create his highly conceptual sculptural works and installations.

### 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)

Mancusi-Ungaro, Carol  
Chin, Mel, 1951-

#### Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration  
Artists' materials  
Art--Technique  
Conceptual art  
Sculpture, American--20th century

**ADP Interview Video Index**

Indexed by: Heather Nodler, June 2011

Video: adp1991a\_chin\_001va.mp4 & adp1991a\_chin\_002va.mp4

Interview #: VI2000-020.1991a / Interview date: 07/22/1991

**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  | Keywords   |
|----------|---|--|
| 00:00:02 | <b>Opening Credits</b>  |  |
| 00:00:51 | <b>Introduction</b><br>Carol Mancusi-Ungaro<br>Mel Chin   |  |
| 00:01:56 | <b>Process of Creation</b><br>Chin describes the circumstances that led him to create [Urdu Script] ( <i>Belief/Punishment</i> ) <i>Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> , 1986.   | Amnesty International*<br>DiverseWorks Artspace*   |
| 00:02:40 | <b>(Exhibition Reference)</b><br>"Prisoners of Conscience," 1986<br><b>Organized by Amnesty International</b><br><b>DiverseWorks, Houston</b>   | exhibitions (events)   |
| 00:02:47 | <b>(Images)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> , 1986 (details)<br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:03:36 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> , 1986 (detail of museum label text showing Urdu script)<br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:06:30 | <b>Process of Creation and Technical Specifications</b><br>Chin describes the processes and materials that he used to create the work [Urdu Script] ( <i>Belief/Punishment</i> ) <i>Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> . He elaborates on the symbolic meaning of his materials, including books, asphalt tar, fiberglass, and hog's hair. | asphalt (material)<br>books<br>fiberglass<br>hair<br>screws<br>symbolism (artistic concept)<br>tar (bituminous material) |
| 00:08:50 | <b>(Images)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> , 1986 (details of screwed-together books)<br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:09:21 | <b>(Images)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b>  | sculpture (visual work)  |

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|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
|          | <b><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (detail of tar)</i></b><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>  |  |
| 00:10:00 | <b>Process of Creation and Technical Specifications</b><br>Chin continues to describe the processes and materials that he used to create the work [Urdu Script] <i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> . He elaborates further on the symbolic meaning of his materials.   | fiberglass<br>found objects<br>plywood<br>shutters (opening components)<br>wrought iron (iron alloy)               |
| 00:10:15 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><b><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (detail of wrought iron from fire escape shutters)</i></b><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:10:53 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><b><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (detail of rivets on shutters)</i></b><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:12:17 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><b><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (side view of wall mount)</i></b><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:12:16 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin discusses the relationship between physical form, conceptual meaning, and language in his work. Specifically, he discusses the Urdu script that he chose for the title of [Urdu Script] <i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> . He also describes his process of researching Jam Saqi, the prisoner of conscience to whom the work is dedicated. He continues to describe the processes and materials that he used to create the work, elaborating further on the symbolic meaning of his materials. | Butcher's® Paste Wax**<br>beeswax<br>encaustic paint<br>letters (signs)<br>pigment<br>symbolism (artistic concept) |
| 00:13:11 | <b>(Images)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><b><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (details of museum label text showing Urdu script)</i></b><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:15:20 | <b>Conservation Issues and Process of Creation</b><br>Chin offers his opinions regarding specific material issues and long-term conservation of [Urdu Script] <i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> . He begins to describe the processes by which he fabricated the work's two main elements, a wheel of books and a bat.  | bats (game equipment)<br>books<br>natural aging<br>waxed paper   |

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|----------|---|---|
| 00:16:13 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (detail of asphalt)</i><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:17:34 | <b>Process of Creation and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin discusses the processes and materials that he used to create, and the conceptual meaning of, the bat element in [Urdu Script] <i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi)</i> .  | asphalt (material)<br>bats (game equipment)<br>kraft paper<br>wood (plant material) |
| 00:18:44 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (detail of brown kraft paper on bat)</i><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:19:43 | <b>(Images)</b><br><b>Michelangelo Buonarroti</b><br><i>“Saint Bartholomew,” (details of Last Judgement)</i><br><b>Sistine Chapel, Vatican Palace, Vatican State</b>  | paintings (visual works)  |
| 00:20:07 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>(Belief/Punishment) Yaqin Saza (for Jam Saqi), 1986 (detail of brown kraft paper on bat)</i><br><b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:21:12 | <b>Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin explains his practice of fabricating his own tools.   | rituals (events)<br>symbolism (artistic concept)<br>tools                           |
| 00:22:47 | <b>Process of Creation and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, a multi-part work titled <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> . Specifically, he discusses the segment titled <i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus</i> . | alchemy<br>etymology<br>mythology (literary genre)<br>pine (wood)<br>science        |
| 00:23:38 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:23:49 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of pine wood)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |

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|----------|---|---|
| 00:24:32 | <b>Process of Creation and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin discusses the conceptual origins of <i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus</i> .   | cosmology<br>Descartes, René, 1596-1650*<br>keystones<br>megalithic monuments<br>Mercury (Planet)*<br>sandblasting<br>sawing  |
| 00:26:11 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of keystone)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:28:24 | <b>Exhibition and Historical Anecdote</b><br>Chin describes how <i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus</i> is diagrammed and assembled for exhibition. He explains how he became acquainted with Barron Brown, his assistant, during the fabrication of an outdoor sculpture, <i>MYRRHA/P.I.A. (Post Industrial Age)</i> , 1984. | Brown, Barron**<br>chain saws<br>outdoor sculpture<br>schematic drawings<br>sculpture (visual work)                           |
| 00:31:19 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>MYRRHA/P.I.A. (Post Industrial Age), 1984</i><br>Bryant Park (Public Art Fund), New York City, 1984-5;<br>Max Hutchinson Sculpture Fields, Kenoza Lake, NY, 1986-<br>Max Protech Gallery, Beacon, NY  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:33:03 | <b>Concept/Nature of Work and Historical Anecdote</b><br>Chin explains his practice of learning new techniques with each new project.   | alchemy<br>artists' materials<br>Five agents (Chinese philosophy)*<br>materials (matter)<br>techniques (processes)<br>welding |
| 00:36:37 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of hexagonal forms)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:36:44 | <b>Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin offers his opinions regarding the future restoration of <i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus</i> , in the event of damage to the work.  | age<br>band saws<br>damage<br>natural aging<br>pine (wood)<br>restoration (process)   |
| 00:38:23 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and techniques that he used to create the metal ball in <i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus</i> . He also discusses the ball's conceptual meaning.   | brass (alloy)<br>copper (metal)<br>dremel**<br>inscriptions<br>lead (metal)<br>magnets  |

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|          |  | silver (metal)<br>solder   |
| 00:38:29 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of metal ball)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:40:26 | <b>Exhibition and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin explains his installation decisions for <i>Mercury: The Principle of Polarity—The Orbital Rebus</i> , both individually and in relation to the other elements in <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> .   | architecture (object genre)<br>articulation<br>ceilings<br>Cortés, Hernán, 1485-1547*<br>cosmology<br>Eliade, Mircea, 1907-1986*<br>ikenga<br>installations (exhibitions)<br>Loughelton Gallery*<br>sacred objects<br>West African (general) |
| 00:42:05 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (installation view at the Menil Collection)</i>  | installations (visual works)   |
| 00:46:12 | <b>Process of Creation and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> . He focuses on the wire that he used to fabricate the work's net.                | copper (metal)<br>iron (metal)<br>Mars (Roman deity)*<br>mythology (literary genre)<br>Venus (Planet)*<br>Venus (Roman deity)*<br>wire   |
| 00:47:10 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:48:20 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of net)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:49:03 | <b>Process of Creation and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin continues to describe the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> . He focuses on the oyster shell and metals that he used in the work. | copper (metal)<br>iron (metal)<br>metalworking<br>oyster shell<br>patterns (design elements)<br>smelting   |

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|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| 00:50:24 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of oyster shell and shucking knife)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:52:32 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of pattern on copper)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:53:09 | <b>Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin offers his opinions on the future treatment of the copper in <i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment</i> . He also details treatments that he applied to the metal during the fabrication process. He and Mancusi-Ungaro discuss three aspects of his creative process: his choice of material, his choice of form, and his material treatments. | copper (metal)<br>patina (condition)<br>processes<br>wax<br>welding                             |
| 00:53:39 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Venus: Conjunction and Entrapment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of copper)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:56:55 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Earth: Ceration and Putrefaction from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> . He details the casting processes that he employed.  | casting (process)<br>cast iron<br>charcoal (plant material)<br>granite (rock)<br>Styrofoam (TM) |
| 00:57:30 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Earth: Ceration and Putrefaction from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:58:28 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Earth: Ceration and Putrefaction from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of cast iron)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 01:00:01 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Earth: Ceration and Putrefaction from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of fungus and wax)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 01:00:41 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Mars: Fixation and Desecration from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of olive branches)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)   |

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|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| 01:02:17 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Mars: Fixation and Desecration</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987. He focuses on the work's clay elements, which he arranged to resemble a Chinese character.             | Chinese<br>clay<br>composition (artistic arrangement)<br>halberds<br>red bole<br>symbols                                    |
| 01:04:45 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Mars: Fixation and Desecration</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987. He focuses on a series of failed experiments with the work's steel elements, which resemble axe heads. | axes (weapons)<br>Benner, Lee<br>blanks (object genre)<br>Glover, Tim<br>Love, Jim<br>Massing, Jack, 1959-<br>steel (alloy) |
| 01:08:47 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Mars: Fixation and Desecration</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987 (detail of axe heads)   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 01:09:02 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Mars: Fixation and Desecration</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987. He focuses on his desire to forge, rather than cast, the steel axe heads.                              | axes (weapons)<br>forging (metal forming)<br>oil (substance)<br>steel (alloy)<br>stone (rock)                               |
| 01:12:37 | <b>Exhibition and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin explains the practical and conceptual choices that he made regarding installation of <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987, specifically his decision to embed elements of <i>Mars: Fixation and Desecration</i> in the wall.  | installations (exhibitions)<br>mounting<br>walls  |
| 01:15:58 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987. Specifically, he focuses on his use of wood, silk, and blown glass.                           | cosmology<br>electricity<br>oak (wood)<br>tools   |
| 01:17:00 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987 (detail of red oak)  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 01:17:30 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand</i> , 1987 (detail of blown glass)  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 01:17:43 | <b>Process of Creation</b>  | annealing   |



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|          | Chin describes his experience of learning glassblowing techniques and applying them to the fabrication of <i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> .   | glassblowing<br>molds (shaping tools)<br>newsprint<br>New York Experimental<br>Glass Workshop*<br>silk (textile)<br>tin (metal)                                    |
| 01:23:26 | <b>Historical Anecdote and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes an uncanny experience that followed the creation of <i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> . He also discusses the symbolism of his pecking holes in the glass.  | Io (Satellite)<br>javelins<br>Pelecanus (genus)<br>tools   |
| 01:26:13 | <b>Concept/Nature of Work and Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin discusses his use of Chinese silk in <i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> . He also offers his opinions regarding the long-term conservation of the work.  | breaking<br>glass (material)<br>shipping<br>silk (textile)<br>wood (plant material)  |
| 01:26:15 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> (detail of silk)   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 01:26:56 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Jupiter: Circulation and Self Sacrifice</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> (detail of wood splinters in silk)   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 01:27:34 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Saturn: Deception and Digestion</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> . He focuses on his use of rawhide, fieldstone, wool, and oil. | cutting (dividing)<br>fieldstone<br>Graves, Robert, 1895-1985*<br>hide glue<br>lead (metal)<br>oil (substance)<br>rawhide<br>Śani (Hindu deity)*<br>wool (textile) |
| 01:27:52 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Saturn: Deception and Digestion</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i>  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 01:29:41 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Saturn: Deception and Digestion</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> (detail of fieldstone and wool)  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 01:30:15 | <b>Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin discusses his use of hide glue in <i>Saturn: Deception and Digestion</i> .   | flaking<br>hide glue<br>restoration (process)<br>wool (textile)  |

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|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 01:31:12           | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Saturn: Deception and Digestion from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of flaking hide glue)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 01:33:08           | <b>Closing Credits, Part 1 of 2</b>   |   |
| <b>PART 2 OF 2</b> |   |   |
| 00:00:01           | <b>Opening Credits, Part 2 of 2</b>   |   |
| 00:00:50           | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual underpinnings of, <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> .  | mythology (literary genre)<br>silk (textile)<br>textiles                          |
| 00:01:07           | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:03:08           | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin continues to describe the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> . Specifically, he focuses on his use of museum nails.   | astronomical charts<br>brass (alloy)<br>fluorite<br>mud<br>nails<br>steel (alloy) |
| 00:04:01           | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of nails in blue silk)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:04:56           | <b>(Images)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of nails in spiked elements and overview of spiked elements)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:05:18           | <b>(Images)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (details of blue fabric and wall cavity)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:06:06           | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin continues to describe the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> . Specifically, he focuses on the spiked elements and the wooden form ("casket") that he embedded in the wall. | cherry<br>China paper<br>gauze<br>mud<br>papier mâché                             |

ADP Interview Video Index

Indexed by: Heather Nodler, June 2011

Video: adp1991a\_chin\_001va.mp4 & adp1991a\_chin\_002va.mp4

Interview #: VI2000-020.1991a / Interview date: 07/22/1991

|          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| 00:06:26 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (overview of spiked elements)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:09:18 | <b>Process of Creation and Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin describes the order in which he created the various elements in <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> , and the relevance of their order. He also discusses his preferences regarding their long-term conservation. | aging<br>cloth<br>wallboard  |
| 00:12:09 | <b>Concept/Nature of Work and Exhibition</b><br>Chin discusses the importance of scale in the individual components of, as well as the exhibition of, <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> .   | installations (exhibitions)<br>scale (relative size)   |
| 00:13:37 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> .  | alloy<br>bronze (metal)  |
| 00:13:44 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Neptune: Filtration and the Purification of Desire from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of barnacles)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:16:21 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Neptune: Filtration and the Purification of Desire from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of barnacles)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:17:09 | <b>Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin describes material problems with <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> following its fabrication at a foundry. He also discusses the sea sponges that he used in the work and speaks in general regarding conservation of his works.                                 | bronze (metal)<br>carving (processes)<br>cracks<br>damage<br>foundries<br>sponge (material)<br>welding |
| 00:19:54 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Neptune: Filtration and the Purification of Desire from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of sponges)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |

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Video: adp1991a\_chin\_001va.mp4 & adp1991a\_chin\_002va.mp4

Interview #: VI2000-020.1991a / Interview date: 07/22/1991

|          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| 00:20:12 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin continues to describe the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> . He focuses on his use of hemp rope and fan coral.  | alchemy<br>coral (material)<br>hemp<br>mythology (literary genre)<br>traditional medicine<br>twine |
| 00:23:14 | <b>(Work Reference)</b><br><b>Marcel Duchamp</b><br><i>The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass), 1915-23</i><br>Philadelphia Museum of Art  | paintings (visual works)   |
| 00:24:29 | <b>Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin describes his efforts to prevent fraying of the hemp twine in <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> . He also discusses the material's special conservation issues and his preferences regarding future treatment.   | beeswax<br>brittleness<br>coating (process)<br>hemp<br>twine<br>wax                                |
| 00:24:38 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Neptune: Filtration and the Purification of Desire from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of hemp twine)</i>  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:25:54 | <b>Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues</b><br>Chin discusses the techniques by which he applied a patina to the bronze component of <i>Uranus: Castration and Concealment</i> . He offers his opinions regarding future treatment of the bronze, discusses how he arrived at the work's form, and demonstrates how he rolled the hemp twine. | bronze disease<br>hemp<br>humidity<br>patina (condition)<br>pitting<br>twine                       |
| 00:29:19 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>Pluto: Projection and Permutation</i> from <i>The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987</i> .   | alchemy<br>ceramic (material)<br>coal<br>copper (metal)<br>gold (metal)<br>helmets                 |
| 00:29:30 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Pluto: Projection and Permutation from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of gold/ceramic helmet and coal)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:30:19 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Pluto: Projection and Permutation from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of copper grid on underside of work)</i>   | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 00:30:50 | <b>(Image)</b>  | sculpture (visual work)  |

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Video: adp1991a\_chin\_001va.mp4 & adp1991a\_chin\_002va.mp4

Interview #: VI2000-020.1991a / Interview date: 07/22/1991

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
|          | <p><b>Mel Chin</b><br/> <i>Pluto: Projection and Permutation from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of gold/ceramic helmet)</i></p>   |   |
| 00:31:06 | <p><b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br/> Chin discusses the coal and gold that he used in <i>Pluto: Projection and Permutation</i>.</p>   | arsenic<br>Brown, Barron**<br>coal<br>gold (metal)<br>Magnesium oxide*<br>Pluto (Dwarf planet)*<br>solder<br>Tombaugh, Clyde<br>William, 1906-1997* |
| 00:33:00 | <p><b>(Image)</b><br/> <b>Mel Chin</b><br/> <i>Pluto: Projection and Permutation from The Operation of the Sun Through the Cult of the Hand, 1987 (detail of gold)</i></p>  | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 00:34:05 | <p><b>Exhibition and Conservation Issues</b><br/> Chin expresses his preferences regarding the installation height of <i>Pluto: Projection and Permutation</i>. He offers his opinions on future conservation of the work's coal, including both how it might change and how to treat areas of loss. He also describes the processes by which he secured the individual pieces of coal.</p> | adhesive<br>asphalt (material)<br>Brown, Barron**<br>coal<br>height<br>loss<br>restoration (process)<br>rubber (material)                           |
| 00:36:25 | <p><b>Conservation Issues and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br/> Chin offers a general statement regarding his preferences for future conservation of his works. He relates those preferences to his use of unusual materials and his opinions regarding natural aging.</p>  | artists' materials<br>coal<br>conservators<br>documentation (activity)<br>hemp<br>natural aging<br>notebooks<br>restoration (process)               |
| 00:38:50 | <p><b>Conservation Issues and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br/> Chin and Mancusi-Ungaro discuss the significance of the hands of the artist and conservator in restoring a work of art. They also discuss the question of what constitutes the "essence" of a work, or what must be preserved.</p>  | artists' materials<br>conservators<br>natural aging<br>restoration (process)  |
| 00:41:27 | <p><b>Conservation Issues and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br/> Chin and Mancusi-Ungaro discuss how conservation has traditionally emphasized an artwork's appearance over its materiality. Mancusi-Ungaro describes her own inclination to reconsider the tenet of reversibility when conserving modern and contemporary art.</p>  | artists' materials<br>conservators<br>inpainting<br>lining (process)<br>professional ethics<br>reversibility  |
| 00:44:33 | <p><b>Conservation Issues and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br/> Chin offers his thoughts on the natural aging of his works. He reflects on the idea of an artwork having its own life in relation to the life of an artist.</p>   | natural aging<br>restoration (process)  |

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Interview #: VI2000-020.1991a / Interview date: 07/22/1991

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| 00:47:01 | <b>Historical Anecdote and Conservation Issues</b><br>Mancusi-Ungaro describes an occasion when she had to conserve another artist's work, illustrating a point about aging of works and the roles of the conservator and the artist, respectively, in the restoration of a work.   | conservators<br>natural aging<br>restoration (process)<br>Rice University Institute for the Arts, Rice Museum                                     |
| 00:49:22 | <b>Conservation Issues and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes his philosophy regarding the artist's right to rework or destroy a work after it has left the studio.   | artist's intent<br>reworking  |
| 00:53:22 | <b>Historical Anecdote and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes an occasion when he reworked a painting after it had left his studio.   | DiverseWorks Artspace<br>Houston<br>Museum of Fine Arts<br>paintings (visual works)<br>Studio One   |
| 00:56:31 | <b>Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create, as well as the conceptual meaning of, <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823</i> , 1988-89.   | columns (architectural elements)<br>plaster<br>sculpture (visual work)<br>signatures (names)<br>structural frames<br>wood (plant material)        |
| 00:56:49 | <b>(Exhibition Reference)</b><br><b>"Directions: Mel Chin"</b><br><b>Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden</b><br><b>Washington, DC</b><br><b>February 1-April 23, 1989</b>   | exhibitions (events)<br>Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden   |
| 00:58:23 | <b>Technical Specifications and Historical Anecdote</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823</i> , 1988-89. He focuses specifically on the columns and also tells the story of visiting the White House to obtain preparatory information for the work.   | columns (architectural elements)<br>curved<br>Duron Paints & Wallcoverings**<br>entasis<br>plaster<br>scale (relative size)<br>surface properties |
| 00:59:17 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><b><i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89</i></b><br><b>(details of columns' carved portions)</b><br><b>Collection of the Artist</b>   | sculpture (visual work)   |
| 01:03:30 | <b>Conservation Issues and Exhibition</b><br>Chin describes the measures that one should take when transporting the columns of <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823</i> , 1988-89. He describes an incident of damage during the columns' fabrication and how he restored them. He also details the work's exhibition history. | cracks<br>damage<br>exhibiting<br>pipe fittings (objects)<br>plaster<br>shipping<br>Walker Art Center   |
| 01:06:36 | <b>Technical Specifications and Historical Anecdote</b><br>Chin describes the materials and processes that he used to create  | banana-fiber cloth<br>baskets (containers)  |

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Video: adp1991a\_chin\_001va.mp4 & adp1991a\_chin\_002va.mp4

Interview #: VI2000-020.1991a / Interview date: 07/22/1991

|          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
|          | <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89.</i> He focuses specifically on the cornucopia form or basket.   | blood (animal material)<br>mud<br>South American mahogany (wood)<br>weaving    |
| 01:08:07 | <b>Concept/Nature of Work and Historical Anecdote</b><br>Chin describes the experience of collecting blood at a local slaughterhouse for <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89</i> , and how that experience had an impact on his work.  | blood (animal material)<br>slaughterhouses                                     |
| 01:11:40 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Biographic Diptych (Study for The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823), 1989 (detail of drawing of fallen column)</i><br>Collection of Yu-Lin and Haun Saussy  | drawings (visual works)  |
| 01:11:56 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>Biographic Diptych (Study for The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823), 1989 (detail of drawing of goat in basket)</i><br>Collection of Yu-Lin and Haun Saussy   | drawings (visual works)  |
| 01:13:23 | <b>Conservation Issues and Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin discusses the tendency for mud to flake from the basket, and offers his advice regarding treatment of <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89</i> . He also discusses the conceptual (and political) significance of the materials that he used in the work. | banana-fiber cloth<br>commentaries<br>cornucopias (motifs)<br>flaking          |
| 01:13:42 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89 (detail of basket)</i><br>Collection of the Artist  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 01:15:42 | <b>Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin explains how he incorporated silhouettes of presidential signatures into <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89</i> , as well as the conceptual significance of the signatures.   | commentaries<br>edges (object portions)<br>signatures (names)                  |
| 01:16:03 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89 (detail of signatures)</i><br>Collection of the Artist  | sculpture (visual work)  |
| 01:18:26 | <b>Conservation Issues and Exhibition</b><br>Chin offers his opinions on the natural aging of his <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89</i> . He expresses his thoughts regarding the work's long-term conservation and provides insight into special conservation problems that could arise from his                    | artist's intent<br>installations (exhibitions)<br>natural aging<br>silhouettes |

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Video: adp1991a\_chin\_001va.mp4 & adp1991a\_chin\_002va.mp4

Interview #: VI2000-020.1991a / Interview date: 07/22/1991

|          |  |                                     |
|----------|--|-------------------------------------|
|          | installation methods.  |                                     |
| 01:19:50 | <b>Concept/Nature of Work</b><br>Chin discusses the conceptual significance of the forms in <i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89</i> . | herms<br>mythology (literary genre) |
| 01:20:17 | <b>(Image)</b><br><b>Mel Chin</b><br><i>The Extraction of Plenty from What Remains: 1823, 1988-89</i> (side view of "herm")<br><b>Collection of the Artist</b> | sculpture (visual work)             |
| 01:22:00 | <b>Closing Credits</b>   |                                     |