



## Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

**Artist:** Frank Stella  
**Date:** June 9, 2006  
**Location:** The Menil Collection  
**Interviewers:** Elizabeth Lunning and Brad Epley  
**Video/Edit:** Laurie McDonald  
**Total Run Time:** 00:53:23

### Abstract:

Artist Frank Stella discusses his work with Menil Chief Conservator Elizabeth Lunning and Menil Associate Paintings Conservator Brad Epley. The discussion focuses primarily on the materials and methods that Stella used to create four works owned by the Menil Collection: *Avicenna*, 1960; *Lake City*, 1962; *Takht-i-Sulayman I*, 1967; and *Lipsko IV (Polish Village Series)*, 1972. Throughout the interview, Stella expresses his wishes for the future exhibition and conservation of his work.

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

#### Corporate Name(s)

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

#### Genre(s)

Interviews  
Oral histories

#### Personal Name(s)

Epley, Bradford  
Lunning, Elizabeth  
McDonald, Laurie  
Stella, Frank, 1945-

#### Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration  
Art--Technique  
Painting, American--20th century

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Indexed by: Heather Nodler, March 2011

Video: adp2006c\_stella\_001va.mp4 / Interview #: VI2000-020.2006c / Interview date: 06/09/2006

**Exhibitions/Works:**

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

**Controlled Vocabulary:**

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

Time	Contents	Subject Keywords
00:00:01	<b>Opening Credits</b>	
00:00:59	<b>Introduction</b> Elizabeth Lunning Brad Epley Frank Stella	
00:01:19	<b>(Exhibition Reference)</b> <b>"Frank Stella 1958" (Traveling Exhibition)</b> <b>Organized by Harvard University Art Museums</b> <b>The Menil Collection</b> <b>February 4–December 31, 2006</b>	
00:01:50	<b>Process of Creation and Technical Specifications</b> Stella describes the materials and techniques that he used to create a series of aluminum paintings.	aluminum paint industrial paint metallic paint oil paint (paint)
00:01:53	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Avicenna</i>, 1960</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:04:50	<b>Conservation Issues</b> Stella explains a phenomenon that occurred in his metallic paintings, e.g., <i>Avicenna</i> , in which some of the paint bled onto the raw canvas. He also suggests that what people perceive to be color in the intervals of his black paintings may be an optical illusion.	canvas cotton (textile) duck (textile) optical illusion unprimed canvas
00:06:09	<b>(Work Reference)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Morro Castle</i>, 1958</b> <b>Kunstmuseum Basel</b>	
00:06:30	<b>(Work Reference)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Delta</i>, 1958</b> <b>National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.</b>	
00:07:19	<b>Technical Specifications</b> Stella discusses the edge treatments that he applied to both his aluminum paintings and his black paintings. He demonstrates how he was able to stretch canvas across the notched corners of <i>Avicenna</i> .	Bonetti, Luca* canvas duct tape frames (furnishings) glue Mancusi-Ungaro, Carol*

ADP Interview Video Index

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Video: adp2006c\_stella\_001va.mp4 / Interview #: VI2000-020.2006c / Interview date: 06/09/2006

		stretching wood (plant material)
00:07:22	<b>(Exhibition Reference)</b> <b>"Frank Stella"</b> <b>Leo Castelli Gallery, New York</b> <b>September 27-October 15, 1960</b>	
00:07:39	<b>(Exhibition References)</b> <b>"Frank Stella"</b> <b>Leo Castelli Gallery, New York</b> <b>September 27-October 15, 1960</b>  <b>"Frank Stella: Paintings" (Retrospective exhibition)</b> <b>Museum of Modern Art, New York</b> <b>March 24-June 2, 1970</b>	
00:09:44	<b>Concept/Nature of Work</b> Stella expresses his opinions regarding the edges of his paintings, including how he treated them and how they relate to the overall composition of his works.	adhesive tape edges (object portions)
00:11:10	<b>Process of Creation and Technical Specifications</b> Stella traces the origin of <i>Lake City</i> and also describes the materials and processes that he used to create it.	antifouling paint Castelli, Leo damage edges (object portions) glue Granek, Rudolph** masking tape Masonite (TM) oxidation
00:11:12	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Lake City</i>, 1962 (overview and detail of tape)</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:12:04	<b>(Images)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Lake City</i>, 1962 (details of verso)</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:12:18	<b>(Images)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Lake City</i>, 1962 (details of printing on copper paint)</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:13:44	<b>Conservation Issues and Technical Specifications</b> Stella describes how the copper antifouling paint that he used in <i>Lake City</i> caused canvas to buckle. He also discusses how many coats of paint he applied to his paintings	antifouling paint buckling canvas paint layers
00:15:07	<b>Technical Specifications</b>	Blum, Irving, 1930-* colorfastness

ADP Interview Video Index

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	Stella describes the brightly colored paints that he used to create <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> , 1967. He reflects on the fugitive nature of various pigments that he used over the years, including copper and aluminum paints.	fading fluorescence fugitive (pigment attribute) industrial paint
00:15:09	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i>, 1967</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:17:29	<b>Conservation Issues</b> Stella discusses the importance of achieving a uniformity of surface in his painting. He describes conservation treatments that have been undertaken on <i>Avicenna</i> , including a treatment for water damage that occurred during a 1958 fire at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.	damage fire extinguishing systems inpainting Museum of Modern Art New York restoration (process) surface properties visual inspection
00:18:42	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Avicenna</i>, 1960 (detail of water damage/drips)</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:19:08	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Avicenna</i>, 1960 (detail of water damage/drips)</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:19:47	<b>Conservation Issues</b> Stella assesses the overall condition of <i>Avicenna</i> . He expresses his wishes with regard to its future conservation and suggests possible treatment strategies.	artist's intent cleaning duct tape exhibiting restoration (process) visual inspection
00:21:07	<b>(Images)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Avicenna</i>, 1960 (details of verso with backing removed and canvas tacking exposed)</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:23:28	<b>Concept/Nature of Work and Conservation Issues</b> Stella discusses the bleed that appeared in the intervals of <i>Avicenna</i> . He considers the possibility of cleaning the painting's intervals and also highlights other areas of concern.	cleaning damage restoration (process)
00:24:58	<b>(Images)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <b><i>Avicenna</i>, 1960 (detail of line from stretcher)</b> <b>The Menil Collection, Houston</b>	
00:25:03	<b>Technical Specifications</b>	beam compasses

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	Stella explains how he had his stretchers fabricated, including the stretcher for <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> , 1967, and others from his <i>Protractor Series</i> , 1967-71. He also describes other processes and materials that he used to create <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> .	Lebron, James** masking tape primer (material) priming (coating process) stretchers (framing and mounting equipment) unprimed canvas
00:25:50	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> , 1967 (detail of primer bleed in intervals) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:26:56	<b>Conservation Issues and Technical Specifications</b> Stella points out an area of damage on <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> and expresses his preferences with regard to rolling the painting for shipment. He describes how he applied paint to the work's surface.	acrylic paint Bocour, Leonard, 1910-* damage shipping
00:27:17	<b>(Exhibition Reference)</b> "La rime et la raison: Du Paléolithique à nos Jours. Deux Générations de Collectionneurs. Les Collections Ménéil (Houston - New York)" Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris April 17–July 30, 1984	
00:27:56	<b>(Images)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> , 1967 (details of intervals with priming) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:29:23	<b>Process of Creation</b> Stella describes how he used a schematic with color codes to map out where he would apply colors to <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> .	colors (hues or tints) schematic drawings
00:30:26	<b>Conservation Issues</b> Stella assesses the current condition of <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> . Lunning describes measures that the Menil must take to move the painting out of storage within the museum. Stella mentions that the painting appeared in a 1968 <i>Life Magazine</i> article.	visual inspection
00:32:00	<b>Technical Specifications</b> Stella expresses his opinions regarding the edge treatment of <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> .	adhesive tape edges (object portions)
00:33:47	<b>(Images)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <i>Takht-i-Sulayman I</i> , 1967 (details of crevice with cut canvas) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:34:52	<b>Conservation Issues</b> Stella describes occasions when he felt that conservation	conservators lining (process)

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	treatments had interfered with his work. He briefly discusses the work of Barnett Newman.	Newman, Barnett restoration (process)
00:37:34	<b>(Work Reference)</b> <b>Barnett Newman</b> <i>Be I, 1949</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Annalee Newman	
00:38:49	<b>(Work Reference)</b> <b>Barnett Newman</b> <i>Cathedra, 1951</i> Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam	
00:39:40	<b>Process of Creation</b> Stella describes how he created a large wooden relief sculpture, <i>Lipsko IV (Polish Village Series)</i> , 1972. He explains how his wooden relief sculptures relate to a series of collages.	collages (visual works) Gardena hardwood reliefs (sculptures) Tomkins Tooling Industries, Inc.** wood woodworking
00:41:57	<b>Conservation Issues</b> Stella assesses the current condition of <i>Lipsko IV</i> and makes recommendations for its future conservation.	Tyler, Kenneth E. visual inspection
00:44:45	<b>Process of Creation</b> Stella traces the chronology of his <i>Polish Village Series</i> reliefs and collages.	collages (visual works) reliefs (sculptures) studies (visual works)
00:46:49	<b>Technical Specifications</b> Stella describes the materials that he used to create the collage <i>Lipsko (Sketch)</i> , 1973. He also discusses how and where he would obtain his materials.	artists' materials canvas collages (visual works) cotton (textile) duck (textile)
00:47:18	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <i>Lipsko (Sketch), 1973</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:48:56	<b>Conservation Issues</b> Stella conducts a visual inspection of <i>Lipsko IV</i> . He expresses his opinions regarding areas of damage and restoration on the work.	damage reliefs (sculptures) restoration (process) wood (plant material)
00:52:11	<b>(Image)</b> <b>Frank Stella</b> <i>Lipsko IV (Polish Village Series), 1972</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:49:20	<b>Closing Credits</b>	