



Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

Artist: Suzan Frecon

Date: April 9, 2012

Location: The Menil Collection

Interviewers: Brad Epley and Jan Burandt

Video/Edit: Laurie McDonald

Total Run Time: 01:25:10

Abstract:

Artist Suzan Frecon discusses her work with Brad Epley, Artists Documentation Program Co-director and Menil Chief Conservator, along with Jan Burandt, Menil Conservator of Works of Art on Paper. The discussion focuses primarily on the materials and methods that Frecon used to create *version 13*, a large-scale painting in the Menil Collection. Additionally, the artist discusses a group of smaller works on paper. Throughout the interview, Frecon reflects on her wishes for her works' future conservation and exhibition.

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)

Burandt, Jan (local)
Epley, Bradford
Frecon, Suzan, 1941-
McDonald, Laurie

Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration
Artists' materials
Art--Technique
Color-field painting--United States
Watercolor painting.

ADP Interview Video Index

Indexed by: Heather Nodler, August 2012

Video: adp2012c_frecon_001va.mp4 / Interview #: VI2000-020.2012c / Interview date: 04/09/2012

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
00:00:03	Opening Credits	
00:00:44	Introduction Brad Epley, Suzan Frecon, Jan Burandt	
00:01:12	Process of Creation and Concept/Nature of Work Frecon describes how her painting, <i>version 13</i> , came into existence and how it relates to her larger corpus of work.	earth color (pigment) exhibitions (events) oil (organic material) red pigment sanding (abrasion) techniques (processes)
00:01:37	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>version 13, 2010</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:02:37	(Exhibition Reference) "Suzan Frecon: Recent Painting" David Zwirner Gallery September 8-October 30, 2010	
00:03:09	Exhibition and Conservation Issues Frecon expresses her preferences regarding lighting conditions for <i>version 13</i> . She also describes having the painting examined by a conservator and her opinion of having the painting at the Menil Collection.	daylight lighting Menil Collection
00:04:30	Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Frecon describes the time that she spent creating <i>version 13</i> , as well as the processes of annotation and preparatory sketching what she employed in her painting.	curves (geometric figures) graph paper marginalia (annotations) mixtures (materials) notebooks notes oil (organic material) pigment preliminary sketches (sketches) proportion scale (relative size) studies (visual works) techniques (processes)
00:07:23	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>version 13, 2010</i>	

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	The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:07:58	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>embodiment of red, version 5 trial, 2006</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:08:07	Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications Frecon describes her studio practices, including how she fabricates her stretchers and prepares her canvases.	assistants Belgian linen gesso ground (material) oil (organic material) panels (wood) sanding (abrasion) stretching
00:10:28	Historical Anecdote Frecon describes how she developed as a painter, focusing specifically on the cultural influences that informed her work.	ancient cave paintings culture Early Medieval European masters (professionals) School of Visual Arts teaching techniques (processes) training
00:13:34	Historical Anecdote and Technical Specifications Frecon continues to describe her background and influences, and how she developed as a painter and undertook comparative research into painting media.	acrylic painting (technique) egg tempera Egyptian (ancient) encaustic painting (technique) fresco painting (technique) manuals (instructional materials) oil painting (technique) School of Visual Arts teaching
00:15:09	(Bibliographic Reference) Merrifield, Mary Philadelphia, <i>The Art of Fresco Painting: As Practised by the Old Italian and Spanish Masters, with a Preliminary Inquiry Into the Nature of the Colours Used in Fresco Painting, with Observation and Notes.</i> London: C. Gilpin, 1846.	
00:15:47	Historical Anecdote and Technical Specifications Frecon continues to describe her comparative research into painting media.	artists' materials Bellini, Giovanni discoloration egg tempera Metropolitan Museum of Art oil paint (paint) painting (image-making)

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00:17:04	Technical Specifications Frecon discusses her use of pigments in great detail.	brazilwood (wood) cadmium red (pigment) cadmium yellow (pigment) colors (hues or tints) composition (artistic arrangement) earth color (pigment) grinding Kremer Pigmente (Firm)* lapis lazuli (rock) Old Holland Classic Colours** orpiment (pigment) pigment raw umber (pigment) red pigment Rublev Colours (Natural Pigments LLC)** ultramarine blue (pigment)
00:20:05	Technical Specifications Frecon discusses her use of medium and her preferences with regard to exhibition of her works.	daylight exhibiting frames (furnishings) lighting luster (optical property) oil (organic material) spotlights varnish vehicle (binder)
00:20:34	(Image) Suzan Frecon version 13, 2010 (detail of writing on verso) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:21:18	(Image) Suzan Frecon version 13, 2010 (detail of writing on verso) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:22:28	Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Frecon describes her studio practice, both in terms of the space and in terms of her work habits.	daylight drying lighting painting (image-making) studios (work spaces) verticality
00:25:13	Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Frecon describes the process by which she manipulated the luster of <i>version 13</i> using oil.	drying luster (optical property) sun-thickened oil surface properties Venetian red (pigment)
00:26:53	Conservation Issues	acceptable aging

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	Frecon expresses her opinions regarding her works' tendency to change over time.	artist's intent luster (optical property) matte (optical property) natural aging oil (organic material) stand oil surface properties
00:28:33	Conservation Issues Frecon describes conservation problems associated with her use of slow-drying pigments.	acceptable aging artist's intent damage drying Indian red (pigment) moiré overpainting (technique) paint layers plastic (organic material) stand oil
00:31:07	Exhibition and Concept/Nature of Work Frecon expresses her preferences with regard to the exhibition height of her paintings.	exhibiting height installations (exhibitions) Marden, Brice viewers (observers)
00:33:05	Technical Specifications Frecon describes her practice of sanding paintings.	bleeding (seeping) oil (organic material) sanding (abrasion)
00:35:23	(Image) Suzan Frecon version 13, 2010 (detail of oil seepage on verso) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:36:14	Exhibition Frecon expresses her preferences with regard to exhibition of her paintings, including juxtaposition of paintings of different sizes.	De Kooning, Willem exhibiting Hofmann, Hans Kline, Franz Kremer Pigmente (Firm)* lighting perception Piano Rothko, Mark scale (relative size)
00:38:56	(Exhibition Reference) "form, color, illumination: Suzan Frecon painting" The Menil Collection March 7-May 11, 2008	
00:39:26	(Image) Suzan Frecon Lament, 1993 The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky	
00:39:26	Process of Creation	artists' materials paper (fiber product)

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	Frecon discusses her works on paper and how they came into being.	surface properties watercolor paper
00:39:35	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>measured blue on holey paper, 2006</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of Peter Blum	
00:40:33	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>Lament, 1993 (in raking light)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky	
00:41:19	Concept/Nature of Work Frecon discusses her works on paper, how they relate to her large, red paintings, and how she employed color in them.	brush strokes Color-field drawing (image-making) painting (image-making) studies (visual works) surface properties watercolors (paintings)
00:43:59	Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work Frecon describes what inspired her to create her works on paper, as well as the specific materials that she employed.	handmade paper (fiber product) watercolors (paintings)
00:46:20	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>measured blue on holey paper, 2006</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of Peter Blum	
00:48:08	Process of Creation Frecon explains how she arrives at the compositions for her works on paper.	paper (fiber product) proportion watercolors (paintings)
00:48:26	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>measured blue on holey paper, 2006</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of Peter Blum	
00:48:46	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>measured blue on holey paper, 2006 (detail of blue area)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of Peter Blum	
00:49:38	Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work Frecon discusses her choice of paper for her small works on paper and continues to discuss the works' relationship to her larger oil paintings.	agate (chalcedony) burnishing paper (fiber product) rag paper studies (visual works) watercolors (paintings)

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00:52:05	<p>Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications Frecon expresses her opinions regarding watercolor as a medium. She also describes in great detail the manufactured pigments that she uses.</p>	drying gum arabic lapis lazuli (rock) Old Holland Classic Colours** Rublev Colours (Natural Pigments LLC)** Sennelier** Schmincke* watercolor (paint) watercolors (paintings) Winsor & Newton*
00:55:07	<p>Frecon discusses a series of works on paper, in which she employed cadmium yellow-orange.</p>	cadmium yellow (pigment) oil painting (technique) watercolors (paintings)
00:55:07	<p>(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>orange f, 2007</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Anonymous gift</p>	
00:56:16	<p>Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications Frecon continues to discuss her small works on paper, focusing on <i>yellow Euclid, 2006</i>, and <i>blue, yellow, orange and indigo composition, 2006</i>. She describes how the works relate to her oil paintings, as well as the role played by the paper substrate in determining size and paint application.</p>	burnishing (polishing) paper (fiber product) surface properties watercolor paper watercolors (paintings)
00:56:19	<p>(Image) <i>yellow Euclid, 2006</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of the artist</p> <p><i>blue, yellow, orange and indigo composition, 2006</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of Peter Blum</p>	
00:56:52	<p>(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>cathedral series variation 8, 2011</i></p>	
00:58:21	<p>(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>yellow Euclid, 2006 (in raking light)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of the artist</p>	
00:58:33	<p>Conservation Issues Frecon discusses areas of her works on paper that displayed cracks and losses due to heavy application of paint. In doing so, she compares and contrasts watercolor and oil paints and expresses her opinions regarding what constitutes acceptable aging.</p>	acceptable aging** age cracks chipping contraction cracks

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		<p>expansion flaking gum arabic loss** oil paint (paint) paint layers paper (fiber product) preventive conservation relative humidity surface properties temperature visual inspection watercolor (paint)</p>
00:59:06	<p>(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>yellow Euclid, 2006</i> (detail of loss) The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of the artist</p>	
01:00:04	<p>(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>yellow Euclid, 2006</i> (detail of loss) The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of the artist</p>	
01:02:49	<p>Concept/Nature of Work Frecon discusses the source of an element that appears in the composition of <i>yellow Euclid</i>, as well as two other paintings held by the Menil Collection.</p>	<p>composition (artistic arrangement) Euclid</p>
01:03:36	<p>(Image) Euclid. <i>Elementa Geometria</i> Published by Erhard Ratdolt, 1482</p>	
01:05:05	<p>Conservation Issues Frecon expresses her opinions regarding future conservation of her works, especially those on paper, but also her oil paintings.</p>	<p>acceptable aging** conservators cracks flaking gum arabic natural aging paint layers repairing restoration (process) visual inspection</p>
01:11:23	<p>Exhibition Frecon discusses her preferences regarding framing and lighting of her watercolor works on paper.</p>	<p>exhibiting frames (furnishings) framing (processes) glazing (glass) scale (relative size) watercolors (paintings)</p>
01:14:25	<p>Exhibition Burandt discusses the Menil Collection's practices regarding framing, matting, and hinging of works on paper, further eliciting Frecon's opinions regarding her own work.</p>	<p>colorless frames (furnishings) framing (processes) glazing hinging</p>

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		Markey, Lawrence** mats (framing and mounting equipment) paper (fiber product) watercolors (paintings) wood (plant material)
01:19:46	Concept/Nature of Work Frecon discusses the relationship between her paintings and her drawings.	drawing (image-making) painting (image-making) proportion watercolors (paintings)
01:19:47	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>long reds, 2005</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of the artist	
01:20:24	(Image) Suzan Frecon <i>long reds, 2005 (detail of marks on paper)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of the artist	
01:23:52	Closing Credits	