



Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

Artist: Robert Whitman
Date: December 10, 2018
Location: Pace Gallery, New York
Interviewers: Carol Mancusi-Ungaro and Brad Epley
Video/Edit: Margaret Sclafani/Laurie McDonald
Total Run Time: 01:21:00

Abstract:

Artist Robert Whitman discusses his work with Artists Documentation Program Founding Director and Whitney Museum of Art Associate Director for Conservation and Research, Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, and Menil Chief Conservator, Brad Epley, on the occasion of “Robert Whitman:61” at the Pace Gallery.

Controlled Access Headings (Library of Congress):

Corporate Name(s)

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

Genre(s)

Interviews
Oral histories

Personal Name(s)

Epley, Bradford
Mancusi-Ungaro, Carol
Whitman, Robert

Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration
Art--Exhibitions
Art, Modern--21st century
Artists' materials
Art--Technique
Film installations (Art)
Performance Art

Exhibitions/Works:

ADP Interview Video Index

Indexed by: Megan Peck, March 2021

Video: adp2018a_whitman_001va.mp4 / Interview #: VI2000-020.2018a / Interview date: 12/10/2018

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
00:00:02	Opening Credits	
00:00:43	Introduction Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Robert Whitman, Bradford Epley	
00:01:17	Process of Creation, Exhibition - Robert Whitman discusses the intent and provenance of <i>Untitled Thread</i> , and describes the materials and processes used to create it. He explains that due to being remade for every exhibition, it is an edition of thousands. Whitman offers his preferences regarding how it should be remade in the future based on differing gallery conditions.	Duchamp, Marcel Dunne, Susan** editions Janis, Carroll* Sidney Janis Gallery movement (compositional concept) muslin originals (objects) performance art pressure-sensitive tape Rutgers University Samaras, Lucas Scotch™ tape* signatures (names) space (composition concept) time
00:02:05	(Exhibition/Work Reference) “String and Rope” Sidney Janis Gallery, New York January 7-31, 1970	
00:08:19	Conservation Issues Whitman describes early works of his being left to age and relates the story of one work that he treated for mildew.	Bark, Jared conservation (process) glue Lyso!®** mildew (condition) natural aging
00:10:48	(Image) Robert Whitman Red Square, 1957 Collection of the artist	
00:10:48	Concept/Nature of Work, Process of Creation Whitman describes his intention in creating <i>Red Square</i> , 1957.	Minimal natural aging time
00:13:09	Process of Creation, Conservation Issues	aluminum foil

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	Whitman describes his intent and the methods and materials that he used to create the series <i>Untitled (Checkerboard)</i> , 1957. He answers Mancusi-Ungaro's questions regarding his wishes for the works' future preservation and elaborates about his difference in feelings towards the preservation of <i>Untitled Thread</i> vs. <i>Untitled Checkerboard</i> , 1957.	aluminum oxide artists materials Bark Frameworks** corrosion frames (protective furnishings) gilt paint natural aging paint pressure-sensitive tape Scotch™ tape* white rust**
00:13:12	(Images) Robert Whitman <i>Untitled (Checkerboard)</i> , 1957 Collection of the artist <i>Untitled (Checkerboard)</i> , 1957 Collection of the artist <i>Untitled</i> , 1957 Collection of the Artist	
00:13:36	(Exhibition/Work Reference) "Robert Whitman: Playback" Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona September 15, 2005-January 8, 2006	
00:17:34	(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Untitled</i> , 1959 Collection of the Artist	
00:17:38	(Exhibition/Work Reference) "Robert Whitman" Reuben Gallery, New York November 27-December 17, 1959	
00:17:38	Conservation Issues/Historical Anecdote/Exhibition Whitman describes the processes and materials used to recreate elements of <i>Untitled</i> , 1959 that were believed to have been lost. He offers his preferences regarding the work's installation.	film (material by form) plastic films* Reuben Gallery vinegar zinc
00:21:38	Exhibition Whitman offers his feelings towards seeing the collection of works all together in the gallery show.	age mortality
00:23:00	Concept/Nature of Work Whitman describes his mental process surrounding the creation of <i>Window</i> , 1963, <i>Dressing Table</i> , c. 1964, and <i>Shower</i> , c. 1964.	rationalization (psychology)*

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00:23:57	(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Window</i>, 1963 Edition of 2 Collection of the Artist	
00:24:21	(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Shower</i>, c. 1964 Edition of 1 + AP Collection of the artist	
00:25:00	Concept/Nature of Work, Process of Creation, Historical Anecdote Whitman discusses his intent and the process and materials that he used to create <i>Shower</i> , c. 1964. He describes the limitations of the camera dictating certain aspects of the work. Whitman relates an anecdote about acquiring the plumbing fixtures used in <i>Shower</i> , c. 1964, including replacing Robert Rauschenberg's destroyed original. Whitman and Mancusi-Ungaro also discuss the courage and trust of the female models who performed in Whitman's works.	models (people) motion-picture cameras motion pictures (visual works) performance art place plumbing fixtures Rauschenberg, Robert sandblasting Smith, Howard time trust* Wright, Frank Lloyd
00:32:34	Conservation Issues/Exhibition Whitman discusses the digitized version of the film from <i>The Shower</i> , c. 1964. He describes the difficulties of projecting the film in the original installation of the work.	black (color) conservation (discipline) digitizing film projection systems installations (exhibitions) projections (visual works)
00:36:07	(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Dressing Table</i>, c. 1964 and 2018 Video component collection of the Newark Museum, Purchase 1999 Alberto Burri Memorial Fund Established by Stanley J. Seeger	
00:36:09	Concept/Nature of Work, Process of Creation Whitman discusses the conceptual meaning of, and the processes and materials that he used to create <i>Dressing Table</i> , c. 1964 and 2018. He describes differences in various aspects of creating the first component on film and the later with video. Whitman also relates an anecdote about making the 2018 video.	8mm (photographic film size) 16mm (photographic film size) artists' films Bolex H16 motion picture camera* Burckhardt, Jacob** Burckhardt, Rudy computer monitor

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		<p>Cooke, Lynne* film projection systems mirrors Ricky's NYC** Scanga, Bill time video recording (process) Warwick (inhabited place) Whitman, Pilar** Whitman, Sylvia Palacios* Wilson, Susanna De Maria**</p>
00:37:45	<p>(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Dressing Table, c. 1964</i> Archival Image Expanded Cinema Festival, New York, 1965</p>	
00:44:40	<p>Process of Creation Whitman describes his intent and the process he used in creating <i>Inside Out</i>, 1963 and 2012, providing details especially about the later film. He introduces the actors appearing in the film, and specifically recalls details of Susanna De Maria Wilson's conversation.</p>	<p>Childs, Lucinda Forti, Simone Ludlam, Charles Ridiculous Theatrical Company* Rudder, Larry D.* Vaccaro, John Warhol, Andy Wilson, Susanna De Maria**</p>
00:44:48	<p>(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Inside Out, 1963 and 2012</i> Edition of 6 + 1 AP Collection of the artist</p>	
00:45:35	<p>(Exhibition/Work Reference) "Robert Whitman: Window/Inside Out" Broadway 1602, New York January 19-February 20, 2013</p>	
00:47:44	<p>Concept/Nature of Work, Process of Creation Whitman discusses creating <i>Local Report</i>, 2005. He specifically addresses the limitations of technology determining some aspects of the work.</p>	<p>image quality technology (general associated concept)</p>
00:47:57	<p>(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Local Report, 2005</i> Edition of 4</p>	

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	Collection of the artist	
00:48:52	(Artwork Reference) News, 1972 Radio performance, on WBAI, New York; Houston; Minneapolis	
00:48:52	Process of Creation Whitman describes his intent and the process that he used to create the radio work, <i>News</i> , 1972.	cellular telephones coin-operated telephones Galveston (inhabited place) Houston (inhabited place) Leeds (inhabited place) Leeds International Film Festival (Leeds, England)* Manhattan (inhabited place) Minneapolis (inhabited place) New York (inhabited place) radio (telecommunication system) regional accents** Winkler-Fosdick, Helen**
00:51:44	(Artwork Reference) Robert Whitman “21st Century Happening: Robert Whitman” Leeds International Film Festival Leeds, England October 11, 2002	
00:52:37	Process of Creation/Historical Anecdote Whitman continues to discuss creating the films in <i>Local Report</i> , 2005. He specifically addresses the video quality of the early Nokia phones that he used. Whitman recounts details of touring the locations where he recorded the videos, and describes composing early morning walks as performance works. Whitman also responds to a question regarding the identification of a performance staged in Houston.	Alpine (inhabited place) Breidel, Joseph frame rates** Grooms, Red Houston (inhabited place) Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston Kaprow, Allan LaBelle Pal** Leeds (inhabited place) Martin, Julie, 1938-* Minneapolis-Saint Paul (inhabited place) natural aging Nokia Corporation,

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		<p>Finland San Jacinto Museum of History smartphones Houston Ship Channel Turning Basin** video recordings (physical artifacts) walking walking tours Winkler-Fosdick, Helen**</p>
01:00:26	<p>Process of Creation, Exhibition Whitman describes the materials used to create <i>Window</i>. He comments on its installation, and notes that it has been slightly different at each exhibition. He also discusses visiting junkyards to find used objects.</p>	<p>Cooke, Lynne* exhibition curators installing junkyards Masonite™ paneling Segal, George windows woods</p>
01:02:43	<p>(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Window, 1963</i> Archival Image, Sidney Janis Gallery New York, 1964</p>	
01:02:57	<p>(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Window, 1963</i> Archival image, Dia: Chelsea New York, 2003</p>	
01:03:02	<p>(Exhibition Reference) “Robert Whitman: Playback” Dia: Chelsea, New York March 5, 2003 – January 11, 2004</p>	
01:05:43	<p>(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Glass (tall glass with ice), 2015</i> Edition of 3 Collection of the artist</p>	
01:05:45	<p>Process of Creation, Exhibition Whitman discusses the process used to create <i>Glass (tall glass with ice), 2015</i>. He describes using a high-speed camera for the film, and the resulting effect on the audio. Whitman relates an anecdote about a performance that incorporated the sound of the ice falling into the glass.</p>	<p>Gossiaux, Emilie Louise** performance art slow motion sound effects</p>

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01:06:35	(Artwork Reference) Robert Whitman “Swim” Kasser Theater, Montclair State University March 26-29, 2015	
01:07:29	(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Diving Board</i>, 2015 Edition of 3 Collection of the artist	
01:07:29	Process of Creation Whitman describes acquiring from the Internet the accompanying sound effects for <i>Diving Board</i> , 2015.	sound effects
01:08:05	(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Wavy Red Line</i>, 1967 Collection of the artist	
01:08:07	Exhibition, Process of Creation, Conservation Issues Whitman discusses <i>Wavy Red Line</i> , 1967. He offers his opinion on the current versus original installation, and describes challenges to achieving the desired effect. Whitman also discusses his preferences for its future conservation and installation.	AT&T Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ engineers Experiments in Art and Technology installations (exhibitions) lasers mercury lamps technology (general associated concept)
01:11:48	(Artwork Reference) “Robert Whitman” Whitney Museum of American Art April 8, 1968	
01:12:19	Process of Creation and Historical Anecdote Whitman describes the materials and construction techniques that he used to fabricate <i>Great Lakes</i> , 1996.	bags (generic containers) body shops kraft paper painting (coating) papier mâché
01:12:23	(Image) Robert Whitman <i>Great Lakes</i>, 1996 Collection of the artist	
01:16:38	Conservation Issues, Concept/Nature of Work Whitman discusses being remembered for the stationary works in the gallery and not for his primary medium of performance. He	conservation (discipline) exhibition catalogs Grooms, Mimi Gross

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	offers his preferences for the future treatment of his work.	memory (psychological concept) performance art Rauschenberg, Robert time
01:19:45	“Conservation Downtown Forever: Artists and Conservators in Conservation” The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation February 9, 2017	
01:20:07	Closing Credits	