



Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

Artist: Arman
Date: November 11, 1991
Location: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Interviewer: Carol Mancusi-Ungaro
Video: William Howze / **Edit:** Laurie McDonald
Total Run Time: 00:44:11

Abstract:

Artist Arman discusses his work with Artists Documentation Program Founding Director and Menil Chief Conservator, Carol Mancusi-Ungaro on the occasion of his retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, "Arman 1955-1991: A Retrospective." The discussion focuses primarily on the materials and methods that Arman, a leading figure in the French Nouveau Realism movement, used to create his found object, assemblage sculptures.

Controlled Access Headings (Library of Congress):

Corporate Name(s)

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

Genre(s)

Interviews
Oral histories

Personal Name(s)

Arman, 1928-2005
Mancusi-Ungaro, Carol

Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration
Art--Technique
Assemblage (Art)
Found objects (Art)
Nouveaux réalistes (Group of artists)
Sculpture

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 |
|----------|---|---|
| 00:00:02 | Opening Credits | |
| 00:00:51 | Introduction Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Arman | |
| 00:01:17 | Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Arman describes the processes and materials he used to create a series of works titled <i>Allures d'Objets</i> , or "Traces of Objects." | enamel paint found objects India ink (ink) rubber stamps stamps (marks) |
| 00:01:20 | (Image) Arman <i>Allures aux Pistons (Traces of Pistons), 1958</i> Allure d'objet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:01:54 | (Image) Arman <i>Allures aux Pistons (Traces of Pistons), 1958</i> (detail of white enamel paint) Allure d'objet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:02:21 | (Image) Arman <i>Allures aux Pistons (Traces of Pistons), 1958</i> (detail of red and blue enamel paint, and black India ink) Allure d'objet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:02:56 | (Image) Arman <i>Allures aux Pistons (Traces of Pistons), 1958</i> (detail of patterns) Allure d'objet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:03:07 | Conservation Issues Arman explains his use of inexpensive and found materials, as well as the conservation challenges that those materials present. | artists' materials canvas found objects mounting paper (fiber product) |
| 00:04:18 | Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work | allover patterns musique concrète |

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| | Arman describes the processes and materials that he used to create his <i>Cachets</i> series, including <i>Sombre Dimanche (Black Sunday)</i> , 1958. He also discusses that work's connection to <i>musique concrète</i> and Jackson Pollock. | Pollock, Jackson Radigue, Eliane* Schaeffer, Pierre, 1910-1995* |
| 00:04:19 | (Image) Arman <i>Sombre Dimanche (Dark Sunday)</i> , 1958 Cachet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:04:29 | (Image) Arman <i>Sombre Dimanche (Dark Sunday)</i> , 1958 Cachet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:05:17 | (Image) Arman <i>Sombre Dimanche (Dark Sunday)</i> , 1958 Cachet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:05:28 | Conservation Issues and Process of Creation Arman discusses the condition and quality of the paper, as well as the type of rubber stamps, that he employed to create <i>Sombre Dimanche (Black Sunday)</i> . | paper (fiber product) rubber stamps stamps (marks) visual inspection yellowing |
| 00:05:58 | (Image) Arman <i>Sombre Dimanche (Dark Sunday)</i> , 1958 (detail of stamp marks) Cachet Collection of the artist | paintings (visual works) |
| 00:06:15 | Concept/Nature of Work and Process of Creation Arman describes the conceptual meaning of, and the processes and materials that he used to create, a series of "robot portraits," or composite portraits of people made from their own personal objects. Arman details the individual elements that he incorporated into a robot portrait of the artist Yves Klein, <i>Premier portrait-robot d'Yves Klein (First Robot Portrait of Yves Klein)</i> , 1960. | assemblages (sculpture) Bachelard, Gaston, 1884-1962* found objects Judo* Jiu-jitsu* Klein, Yves Klein-Moquay, Rotraut portraits Tintin (Fictitious character)* |
| 00:06:16 | (Image) Arman <i>Premier portrait-robot d'Yves Klein (First Robot Portrait of Yves Klein)</i> , 1960 Poubelle Mme. Rotraut Moquay-Klein, Arizona | assemblages (sculpture) |

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| 00:09:45 | Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Arman describes the materials and construction techniques that he used to fabricate the robot portrait of Yves Klein. He compares the work to other robot portraits and discusses his use of Plexiglas. | assemblages (sculpture) boxes (containers) Clert, Iris* fasteners glass (material) glue nails Plexiglas (TM) portraits restoration (process) screws staples |
| 00:11:23 | Concept/Nature of Work and Process of Creation Arman describes his intent and the methods and materials that he used in creating <i>Suffragette héroïque (Heroic Suffragette)</i> , 1963. | cutting (dividing) found objects glue wood (plant material) |
| 00:11:34 | (Image) Arman <i>Suffragette héroïque (Heroic Suffragette)</i> , 1963 The Menil Collection, Houston | assemblages (sculpture) |
| 00:13:14 | Conservation Issues Arman describes the origin of cracks, separation, and blanching in the polyester resin that he used to suspend slices of metal sculpture in a wooden box frame for <i>Suffragette héroïque (Heroic Suffragette)</i> . Additionally, he details the conservation issues that he discovered in his early experiments with plastics. | cracking blanching (clouding condition) damage detaching plastic (organic material) Plexiglas (TM) polyester restoration (process) wood (plant material) |
| 00:14:09 | (Image) Arman <i>Suffragette héroïque (Heroic Suffragette)</i> , 1963 (details of cracks in polyester) The Menil Collection, Houston | assemblages (sculpture) |
| 00:15:23 | Conservation Issues and Historical Anecdote Arman describes the history of his use of plastics. He offers a candid assessment of the consequences of that use on both his work and his health. He also describes his career in the early 1960s and provides suggestions for restoring his polyester-based works. | César Dwan Gallery (Los Angeles, Calif.)* illness injecting plastic (organic material) polyester Sidney Janis Gallery Valentine, DeWain |
| 00:15:29 | (Exhibition Reference) Solo Exhibition Sidney Janis Gallery, New York December 29, 1964-January 27, 1965 | art galleries (institutions) exhibitions (events) New York Sidney Janis Gallery |
| 00:17:08 | (Exhibition Reference) Solo Exhibition Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles | art galleries (institutions) Dwan Gallery (Los Angeles, Calif.)* |

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| | May 1962 | exhibitions (events) Los Angeles |
| 00:18:30 | (Image) Arman <i>Ainsi, Font, Font: Little Hands (Patty cake, patty cake), 1960</i> <i>Accumulation</i> Collection of the artist | assemblages (sculpture) |
| 00:18:30 | Process of Creation and Conservation Issues Arman describes the materials and processes that he used to create <i>Ainsi, Font, Font: Little Hands (Patty cake, patty cake), 1960</i> . He discusses some of the conservation issues that he encountered with the work. | adhesive found objects glass (material) Plexiglas (TM) restoration (process) tape (materials) |
| 00:20:17 | (Image) Arman <i>Ainsi, Font, Font: Little Hands (Patty cake, patty cake), 1960</i> (detail of black tape on frame edge) <i>Accumulation</i> Collection of the artist | assemblages (sculpture) |
| 00:21:11 | (Image) Arman <i>Dreaming Crystals, 1964</i> <i>Accumulation</i> The Menil Collection, Houston | assemblages (sculpture) |
| 00:21:11 | Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Arman describes the materials and processes that he used to create <i>Dreaming Crystals, 1964</i> , as well as some of the conservation problems that the work later exhibited. | casting (process) Chelsea Hotel* cutting (dividing) film projection systems found objects mirrors Mylar (TM) patina (condition) prismatic glass prisms projections (visual works) restoration (process) |
| 00:25:20 | Exhibition Arman expresses his preferences with regard to exhibition of <i>Dreaming Crystals</i> . | bases (object components) exhibiting height Sidney Janis Gallery |
| 00:25:59 | Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Arman describes the process by which he created the sculpture <i>Untitled, 1968</i> , in which he suspended paint in layers of polyester resin. | Formica (TM) layering molds (shaping tools) paint polyester resin (organic material) suspended (positional attributes) tubes (object forms) |

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| 00:27:25 | Conservation Issues Arman assesses the current condition of <i>Untitled</i> , 1968, specifically its color and the overall condition of its resin. | acrylic (plastic) age casting (process) hardness tone (color effect) polyester resin (organic material) suspended (positional attributes) transparency (optical property) visual inspection |
| 00:28:59 | Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Arman describes the materials and processes that he used to create <i>Frozen Civilization #1</i> , 1971. He discusses some of the conservation challenges inherent in working with garbage. | casting (process) decomposition found objects garbage molds (shaping tools) polyester Rauschenberg, Robert resin (organic material) Valentine, DeWain |
| 00:29:00 | (Image) Arman <i>Frozen Civilization #1</i> , 1971 <i>Poubelle</i> Collection of the artist | assemblages (sculpture) |
| 00:31:48 | Concept/Nature of Work Arman reflects on a unique social phenomenon that he observed while fabricating garbage-based works, including <i>Frozen Civilization #1</i> , in France and in the United States. | Americanization* consumers garbage mass production |
| 00:34:02 | Conservation Issues Arman describes instances of damage to his works, as well as restorations that went badly. He offers his preferences regarding the restoration of his works and also details the preventive measures that he takes to ensure their permanence. | acrylic (plastic) assistants conservators damage glue Plexiglas (TM) polyester restoration (process) vacuum |
| 00:37:22 | Concept/Nature of Work and Process of Creation Arman describes the materials and processes that he used to create <i>Philemon and Baucis</i> , 1990, as well as his intent in creating the "Archaeology of the Future" series from which it came. | bronze (metal) cultural artifacts patina (condition) Peplum films* sculpture (visual work) |
| 00:37:22 | (Image) Arman <i>Philemon and Baucis</i> , 1990 <i>Atlantis Series</i> Collection of the artist | bronze (metal) sculpture (visual work) |
| 00:38:04 | (Image) Arman <i>Philemon and Baucis</i> , 1990 (montage of details) | bronze (metal) sculpture (visual work) |

ADP Interview Video Index

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| | Atlantis Series Collection of the artist | |
| 00:40:38 | Technical Specifications Arman describes the processes that he used to create <i>Philemon and Baucis</i> , 1990, and discusses his preferences regarding the coating of his bronze works. | bicycles bronze (metal) casting (process) coating (material) foundries molds (shaping tools) |
| 00:43:20 | Closing Credits | |