



**Artists Documentation Program
Video Interview Transcript**

**RUDOLF STINGEL
SEPTEMBER 17, 2007**

Interviewed by:
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Founding Director, Artists Documentation Program, and
Associate Director for Conservation and Research, Whitney Museum of American Art;
with Matthew Skopek, Assistant Conservator, Whitney Museum of American Art

Video: Ronald Bronstein | Total Run Time: 01:19:20

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Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

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About the Artists Documentation Program

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, artists have experimented with an unprecedented range of new materials and technologies. The conceptual concerns underlying much of contemporary art render its conservation more complex than simply arresting physical change. As such, the artist's voice is essential to future conservation and presentation of his or her work.

In 1990, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection for Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, then Chief Conservator, to establish the Artists Documentation Program (ADP). Since that time, the ADP has recorded artists speaking candidly with conservators in front of their works. These engaging and informative interviews capture artists' attitudes toward the aging of their art and those aspects of its preservation that are of paramount importance to them.

The ADP has recorded interviews with such important artists as Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, and Cy Twombly. Originally designed for use by conservators and scholars at the Menil, the ADP has begun to appeal to a broader audience outside the Menil, and the collection has grown to include interviews from two partner institutions: the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museums. In 2009, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection to establish the ADP Archive, formalizing the multi-institutional partnership and making ADP interviews more widely available to researchers.

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[Speakers (in order of appearance): Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Founding Director, Artists Documentation Program and Associate Director for Conservation and Research, Whitney Museum of American Art; Rudolf Stingel, Artist; Matthew Skopek, Assistant Conservator, Whitney Museum of American Art]

[BEGIN RECORDING]

[00:00:50]

CM-U: Today is September 17th, 2007. We are in the exhibition with Rudolf Stingel, the artist, and Matt Skopek, Conservator at the Whitney; and I'm Carol Mancusi-Ungaro. The intent is just to talk about these works and to have a sort of better understanding of their physicality. Okay.

[00:01:08]

CM-U: What I guess I would like to start with, an ext... – kind of a discussion of the technique itself. You know, a lot has been written about how you did this.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, I published an instruction of how to do it.

CM-U: Yes, in your artist's book. Is that right?

Rudolf Stingel: Right.

CM-U: Yes.

Rudolf Stingel: How do I do this?

CM-U: I'm sorry?

Rudolf Stingel: You want to know how...

CM-U: Yes. Yes.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, in this case there's yellow oil paint...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: ...spread evenly over the canvas.

CM-U: With a brush? With a palette knife?

Rudolf Stingel Interview Transcript, Artists Documentation Program, Whitney Museum of American Art, 09/17/2007

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Rudolf Stingel: With a brush.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: There's all kinds of stuff, but then, you know, you just get it on.

CM-U: Right. Exactly. Get it on. Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: And then you spread it evenly. And then on top of that, I put tulle.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: You know, the fabric. The bridal fabric.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: That has been seamed here because it's not big enough. You see, this is the seam.

CM-U: Uh-huh. How wide does it usually come? It looks like it's maybe sixty inches, maybe?

Rudolf Stingel: It comes ten feet – nine feet or ten. I don't know – ten feet _____
[phrase inaudible].

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: And then I put that over, and I smooth over with a big palette knife.

CM-U: Hmm.

Rudolf Stingel: And the creases that you see here, this is the tulle, the fabric, you know, laying into the paint.

CM-U: Right. Into the wet paint. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Into the wet paint, yeah.

CM-U: Do you allow it to dry up somewhat so it's a little tacky?

Rudolf Stingel: No. No, no. Everything at one shot.

CM-U: No. Right away. Okay.

[00:02:27]

Rudolf Stingel: And then I spray it silver. Enamel paint.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Again, try to do it evenly over the whole painting. And then I pull it off.

CM-U: Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: And that creates this kind of surface.

CM-U: It's beautiful.

Rudolf Stingel: Um-hum.

CM-U: Now, the creasing of the fabric...

Rudolf Stingel: Uh-huh.

CM-U: ...is that from when you go over it with the spatula, when you are kind of pushing...

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: ...the fabric into the paint? Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: And then the actual imprint we see in the paint of the tulle pattern is when you are lifting it off.

Rudolf Stingel: Which one – you mean?

CM-U: In the actual...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: ...pattern of the fabric.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Fabric, yeah. That's when I pull it off.

CM-U: But I guess when you're going over it with the spatula...

Rudolf Stingel: You see this is?

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: You see these? These marks here?

CM-U: Yeah. Is that your...

Rudolf Stingel: This is when I stop pulling it off. I stop, and then – not intentionally, you know.

CM-U: Right. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: But sometimes I have to...

CM-U: Sure.

Rudolf Stingel: ...stop there. Even if you stop just for a fraction of a second, for some reason, I don't know why, it happens. This happens. You know. The whole thing is kind of – it just happens, you know. I can't really control.

CM-U: Do you do this vertically?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: You do?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. I did it actually by myself, just me painting. I think I must have been young and crazy...

CM-U: Yeah. And really...

[both voices speaking and laughing at the same time]

CM-U: I'm impressed.

Rudolf Stingel: I carried that thing around. I have a spray booth, you know, where I put it in. And there's all kinds of accidents that happens, you know. You see that wet paint – you see this mark here?

CM-U: Yes.

Rudolf Stingel: That is – it was a summer, I remember, summer in '94. And this is some kind of a bug...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: ...that got onto the painting, and then walked its way out of the painting, I guess. Or in there, I can't remember.

(laughter)

CM-U: So that would have been after – obviously – after, when it's drying? When you're allowing it to dry, then it comes in.

Rudolf Stingel: The night after I did it, you know.

CM-U: Right. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Because it was summer. The windows are open in the studio. Lights. Things happen, you know. And they actually attractive to animals.

CM-U: I'm sure they are.

Rudolf Stingel: _____ [phrase inaudible].

CM-U: I was interested in that, the spray enamel, which is just kind of an industrial – do you buy it like a canned spray?

Rudolf Stingel: No, it's not a canned spray.

CM-U: No?

Rudolf Stingel: It is an enamel that I found in Italy before I came to New York.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: And I just stayed very faithful to that paint, and I keep buying it and shipping it over here.

CM-U: Do you remember the brand?

Rudolf Stingel: The big difficulty is because that it's – no, it's still around. It's called Silverall [sounds like].

CM-U: I'm sorry?

Rudolf Stingel: Silverall [sounds like].

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: From a company, Keller. It's a very small company.

CM-U: Yeah. How do you spell...

Rudolf Stingel: And that's the only – the only paint that has that kind of really reflective, chrome-like.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: 'Cause I couldn't get it in New York when I came here in '87. So I called my mother and I said...

CM-U: Oh, mothers are great.

Rudolf Stingel: ...“Just ship it over.”

CM-U: I'm all for mothers.

Rudolf Stingel: Now it's very difficult to ship it over because of the explosive thing, you know.

CM-U: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: It's all kinds of – but we still have some in the studio.

CM-U: And the name of the company? How do you spell the name of that company?

Rudolf Stingel: Keller. K-E-double L-E-R.

CM-U: Okay.

[00:05:36]

CM-U: And so it's – I was curious when you said the enamel over the oil. But, because it's such a thin spray, I suppose – 'cause the oil paint isn't dry at that point. It's still quite tacky.

Rudolf Stingel: No, it's completely wet, yeah.

CM-U: Right. But this adheres well, I guess, 'cause it's a thin spray. Right?

Rudolf Stingel: Well, spray paint adheres onto everything, you know.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: If you don't touch it, it just covers everything.

CM-U: Yeah. How long does it...

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, it wouldn't work if you did, you know, water-based on oil...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ...but, you know, oil-based on oil-based, yes.

CM-U: There's enough of a compatibility of the base material?

Rudolf Stingel: Well, yes. But I didn't really check that.

CM-U: That's okay _____ [phrase inaudible].

(laughter)

Rudolf Stingel: I just did it.

CM-U: But you don't have a problem. I mean, flaking is not an issue here with these paintings at all. At all.

Rudolf Stingel: No. Not yet. Yeah.

CM-U: So it's – go ahead.

Rudolf Stingel: No, it's a quite thick layer of oil paint underneath, you know. Then these paintings need to be folded or rolled.

CM-U: Hmm.

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, I never rolled them, but they are folding stretchers.

CM-U: Oh, you don't roll them? You prefer to fold?

Rudolf Stingel: I never do. Yeah. And then I, you know, I open them right away and store it in this state.

CM-U: So they stay open when they're stored? Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: The canvas is pre-primed?

Rudolf Stingel: The canvas is pre-primed.

CM-U: Do you do the priming, or do you buy it that way?

Rudolf Stingel: I buy it that way.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Or have it primed by somebody...

CM-U: Right. And the edges, too, I noticed...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, it's a – but you mean, it's a...

CM-U: ...tacking edge.

Rudolf Stingel: It's a primed canvas that is obviously bigger than – it's no primed...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ...on the stretcher.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: It's a roll that I buy, and then I stretch it.

CM-U: And you choose that for its body that it gives you to work against? Or you like the whiteness, or safety, or...

Rudolf Stingel: I choose what?

CM-U: The pre-primed canvas like that?

Rudolf Stingel: Instead of priming it myself?

CM-U: No, instead of a raw canvas, as you get to later on.

Rudolf Stingel: It's not a raw canvas. That's just a fancy footwork if you want to know. If I...

CM-U: Well, good. I want to hear about all that fancy footwork.

Rudolf Stingel: That's just because I said, "Oh, wouldn't it be nice to have like these raw edges?"

CM-U: Yeah. That is nice.

Rudolf Stingel: But these are primed. These are primed.

CM-U: Oh?

Rudolf Stingel: But these are primed on the stretchers.

CM-U: I was just noticing the tacking edge. That you were leaving the tacking edge...

Rudolf Stingel: I just wanted to see it _____ [word inaudible].

CM-U: Yeah, it's beautiful. I understand completely.

Rudolf Stingel: I know. Some people like it, yeah.

[00:07:51]

M. Skopek: And it's also important, right, to not have staples on the edges...

Rudolf Stingel: No, I don't care about that.

M. Skopek: Oh, you don't care? Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: Because the black paintings have staples on the side.

M. Skopek: Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: The big ones.

M. Skopek: All right.

Rudolf Stingel: Not that. These – I didn't stretch them myself. The Lebron brothers did it.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: And they just did it that way.

CM-U: I noticed that, too...

Rudolf Stingel: And what they do is, actually they do staple it onto the – and then they take them off.

CM-U: They take them off.

Rudolf Stingel: They turn it around and take it off. It was taped here.

CM-U: At what point is the tape in the process?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, before I paint it, so...

CM-U: Before you do anything?

Rudolf Stingel: ...not to get any – back then, I wanted to keep it clean...

CM-U: Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: ...and not to get...

M. Skopek: Does the soiling bother you? Is that...

Rudolf Stingel: No, no. No, to me, everything is okay. That's okay. You know, I actually like it when I see it. When it's less – becomes this fancy object, you know. The painting. _____ [phrase inaudible]. It's okay. It comes out of the studio.

CM-U: Yeah, it has a certain life to it.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. It's something that I adopted. In Europe, when I was working, I never cared about that. And I came to New York, and the whole thing, you know, I got so into the thing. The way people do it here. Yeah.

(laughter)

Rudolf Stingel: And now I'm going on with it again. You know. I don't care anymore.

CM-U: And the depth of the stretcher is determined by the bulk, the size of the painting, pretty much?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: Even though these paintings are almost – they are a little higher than those.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: But those are thinner. And that is also – that changes, you know, there's ten years – no, more than ten years – between those...

CM-U: It changes...

Rudolf Stingel: ...uh, '94, and 2007.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: It changes – your taste, or your – whatever you want – it depends, the look [sounds like]. This is more like an object.

CM-U: Right.

M. Skopek: Right.

- CM-U: That was the feeling I had, and I wondered if that was your intent.
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. But also, now, if you want to look back at these years, and painters and artists who painted big paintings, they all have this kind of thing [sounds like].
- CM-U: That's right. This very much is true [sounds like].
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. I mean, like that Peter Halley had, like, you know, things like that. This is, I think – what is it? A three inch, four inches. Three and a half or something?
- CM-U: Three, maybe.
- M. Skopek: _____ [phrase inaudible].
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.
- [00:10:09]**
- CM-U: The silver, obviously, has – I mean, the choice of silver seems to – I mean, as we go through, this idea of reflectance. And the idea of that – the way the light falls on the paint?
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. It's like a magic trick, how to make an interesting painting, you know. A process that gives it an interesting surface that then changes if you move, or if...
- CM-U: How long does it take you to do one?
- Rudolf Stingel: Oh, not very long.
- CM-U: I'm just trying to get a sense of the process, you know. I just want...
- Rudolf Stingel: Well, a painting like this takes some time. But, you know, I can do it, of course in a day.
- CM-U: Oh, you can?
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.
- CM-U: So it's important _____ [phrase inaudible]. You have to, because the oil paint has to stay tacky...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Yeah.

CM-U: ...the cloth has to be able to imprint and pull off and then...

Rudolf Stingel: Right.

CM-U: ...and then – it's a busy day for you. An active day.

Rudolf Stingel: It's busy. It's an active day. It's a physical...

CM-U: Have you done some that you've then rejected. That something went wrong
_____ [phrase inaudible]?

Rudolf Stingel: Never. No.

CM-U: So you accept whatever happens?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: Nice.

Rudolf Stingel: This over there is the first painting I did in New York. When I came to New York.

CM-U: Was it the beginning of this process?

Rudolf Stingel: No, I figured out the process just before. Just before I took the plane to come here. (laughs) In the summer there. And I did the very...

CM-U: So this is – when is this, roughly?

Rudolf Stingel: This is '87.

CM-U: Eighty-seven?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: So the summer of '87.

Rudolf Stingel: The summer of '87, I did some smaller paintings in Italy, and maybe one of that size. And then I came here, and I rented a space in Tribeca like a room in one of these...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: ...kind of lofts, and I did this painting. In order to show it to people.

CM-U: Right. The feel...

Rudolf Stingel: Nobody liked it.

CM-U: Nobody liked it?

Rudolf Stingel: No, no. No.

CM-U: Well...

Rudolf Stingel: No, that's not true.

CM-U: No, I don't believe that for a minute.

Rudolf Stingel: No.

CM-U: But the sense of – the technique is the same, but I think...

Rudolf Stingel: It's the same.

CM-U: ...but it's definitely evolved.

Rudolf Stingel: But here I tried to leave a little more _____ [word inaudible] as possible.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: So it is really like nothing. Just a silver screen or something. And I got a little more expressive with these (gestures behind his back).

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: But there are many years, from '87 to '94, in between, you know. Slowly, they evolved...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ...and, yeah, there are some subtle changes. But I did these kind of paintings for ten years. I still do them, but then I started doing other things, too. I still do this technique.

CM-U: The technique?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. The same process. Yeah.

CM-U: And have you had trouble – are you ever tempted to change the tulle?

Rudolf Stingel: Uh...

CM-U: The weight of the tulle?

Rudolf Stingel: I had to because I can't get – couldn't get this. This came from a factory in Naples...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: ...then they went out of business.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: And I went crazy, you know, to find it. This has a different – has a difference, but – this one. This has like a – it's hexagonal...

CM-U: Oh, yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. And there is only a very – very few paintings like this. These are the best, because...

CM-U: They're beautiful.

Rudolf Stingel: ...because it breaks the light in a certain way that that kind of tulle doesn't do anymore.

CM-U: Yeah. I see that. I absolutely – in fact, I think the lighting is critical because it really comes alive when you get closer.

Rudolf Stingel: It comes alive when you get like from the side somewhere.

CM-U: Yeah. The raking light. Absolutely. It really makes _____ [phrase inaudible].

Rudolf Stingel: I also did some paintings back then with a sample, like color charts...

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: ...with different colors, how it would look like with red, blue, pink, and so on.

CM-U: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: On one painting.

[00:13:50]

CM-U: Did you tend to stay with the primary colors, red, yellow, and blue?

Rudolf Stingel: Nuh-uh.

CM-U: No?

Rudolf Stingel: Well, this is – there is white in this one, too.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: This is like a light blue. Cerulean. Or something. No, no, I did all kinds.

CM-U: Okay. So then, in this case, it's more than just the application of one color. You were adding the white and the cerulean.

Rudolf Stingel: No, I'd mix it up first.

CM-U: Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: In a bowl, with a mixer, like you do when you do a cake or something like that. Dough. (laughs)

CM-U: Right. Do you have a favorite oil paint?

Rudolf Stingel: No.

CM-U: Okay.

- Rudolf Stingel: I mean, I don't want to take the cheapest. I forgot what this was now.
- CM-U: Well, the scale itself would alter your process and your technique. I mean, to deal with something this size is one thing, but then to deal with something that size...
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.
- CM-U: ...is something completely different.
- Rudolf Stingel: Of course it's very difficult. But you can smooth it down. It's not that. I could have done this the same way if I wanted to. See, it's just very difficult to control. You see – I mean, it is very cloudy.
- CM-U: Yeah.
- Rudolf Stingel: You know, the silver.
- CM-U: Yeah.
- Rudolf Stingel: It's not because I wanted to make it cloudy. Just because it's basically impossible. You don't see anything when you're in front of it and you spray silver on top of it. You know, and it reflects. You don't know what you're doing, basically.
- CM-U: Right.
- Rudolf Stingel: You just try to do it evenly. That's the hardest thing. And on a big surface. That's easier on a small painting.
- CM-U: Right.
- Rudolf Stingel: To make it even. So, you know, I adapted to this kind of difficult thing. First accepting everything, and also, then, maybe leaving a certain, uh, wounds [sounds like]. I don't know how you call these things.
- CM-U: Yeah. Do you – are you tempted to go back – is it one...
- Rudolf Stingel: One.
- CM-U: ...one spray? Or are you tempted to go back...

Rudolf Stingel: No, no, one spray.

CM-U: No, no, no? So it's, you do it, and that's how it's left?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: And even the way it absorbs into the paint, I should imagine, is differently, depending upon how viscous...

Rudolf Stingel: _____ [phrase inaudible], but the...

CM-U: The silver.

Rudolf Stingel: ...the silver?

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: The silver doesn't absorb into the paint. It dries actually before – the silver dries before the oil paint dries.

CM-U: Yeah. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, it is much faster.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: That dries basically in a day.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: You know. Or even less.

[00:16:05]

Rudolf Stingel: No, but it – the silver oxidizes.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: It's a metal paint.

CM-U: Yeah, sure.

Rudolf Stingel: A metal paint. And they sure do change a little bit in time. Some more, some less. I don't know why, but that's one of the – they lose that kind of chrome...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: ...quality, you know. And especially for conservators, if you touch them, if you clean them, if you do whatever you want to do with them, you destroy them.

CM-U: You leave a mark, right.

Rudolf Stingel: You destroy it. You take the sheen off, and it – some people have tried to – especially now, just now in Italy, a very good conservator. And it's impossible.

CM-U: Did he try to clean it because it had lost its luster?

Rudolf Stingel: No, there were some holes there.

CM-U: Oh, there was some damage?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: So he had to go ahead...

Rudolf Stingel: They redid – tried to – uh, they took a cast of the surface...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: ...and, you know, and reapplied the whole thing. But that's all okay, you know. You can do that. But you can't get the same quality in the surface. Either it's too bright because it's...

CM-U: New.

Rudolf Stingel: ...it's new. Or, you know, or too dull, or – I mean, that's where you see it, the patching, yeah.

CM-U: I think, in my experience in my career, I guess the most experience I've had with this kind of silver lumen [sounds like] would be like on Jackson Pollock's paintings, maybe?

Rudolf Stingel: Um-hum.

CM-U: And what I've seen there is, over time, it goes kind of a yellow brown. It takes on – I don't know if it's the medium. I don't – I think that your paintings would be less likely because yours is much thinner...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: ...and yours is a spray, and not so much thicker, you know, and fine...

Rudolf Stingel: I'm sure back then they had different kinds...

CM-U: That's true, too. That's true, too.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: And so those paintings have a very different look than yours. I mean, these already have age on them, and they just don't have it.

Rudolf Stingel: They look quite okay. I mean, the lighting here is really great, you know.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Because it's a high...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: ...the ceilings are high, and you can get this radiant light, and they come alive with the light.

CM-U: Oh, fabulous.

Rudolf Stingel: If – I have paintings I have seen – I have just seen the one painting where I thought, you know, that looks more like lead on it than – which is okay, too, you know. They have – they change. They get like a patina you know.

CM-U: Right. Which is lovely.

Rudolf Stingel: _____ [phrase inaudible].

[00:18:31]

M. Skopek: Warhol, like the *Gold Marilyn* and those paintings – I mean, it's the metallic spray paints and – they do...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, from a can. Did he do from a can?

M. Skopek: I think that is.

CM-U: I think he did – I'm sure he did.

Rudolf Stingel: And the first painting, actually, was with a can.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: And they – of course, they changed.

CM-U: Yeah. So now you have this paint that you mix up yourself and have your own sprayer...

Rudolf Stingel: I don't mix it up. It's just a commercial paint.

CM-U: It's a commercial paint.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: And you have your own spray gun...

Rudolf Stingel: I have my spray gun, and...

CM-U: ...and your mask, right?

Rudolf Stingel: ...spray booth. And now a mask, yes.

(laughter)

CM-U: We all of a certain age now wear masks, right?

Rudolf Stingel: Back then I didn't.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: So your intent when you're doing this is really to get it as even as possible?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: Sort of the way we might varnish a painting, as even as possible, and then it just – this is the way it ends up?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. It was an attempt to make a painting that happened by itself, you know. That maybe the painting painted itself. Because I didn't know how to do a painting anymore. And so I just invented that process that would take care of it.

CM-U: So you used the painting materials, but you allowed the materials to do what they would do?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. I wouldn't be able – wouldn't have been able to decide where to make creases or not, and where to make marks and stuff like this. I would have said, "Why is that one here? Why not there too?" So, you know, composition and all that.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: I didn't want to deal with it. The only thing here is the limitation here, which at that time, I was rather worried about, was that seam. Which here, it is not – there is no seam.

CM-U: Right. Here it was wide enough.

Rudolf Stingel: Because these are too big for one sheet of, uh – yeah, you get into a different kind of (makes vertical gesture with hand) – Barnett Newman – you deal with who knows what, you know.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: All kinds of things. And now that I even – I didn't want it, but now it's okay. Even that is okay now.

CM-U: It's beautiful. I mean, it's really – to me, it's part of the life of the work.

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: It just enlivens the surface, in a way. And that's the way...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, you know, but you have to – it's always – it's linked to what the concept of what you – I didn't want to say anything. I didn't want to give any information, so I tried to minimize all the marks. Well, like here.

CM-U: I understand.

Rudolf Stingel: It's like a – I wanted to create like a barrier that was alive, but you couldn't get past. There is no – that wouldn't tell you anything about my emotions or _____ [phrase inaudible]. Well, I changed that.

CM-U: Okay. We are going to move on.

(laughter)

CM-U: And I just wanted to point out – and then you left the edge on some of them. So, I mean, at some point you...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, I am a painter, you know. That's – yeah, that is, again, going, still with content, the history of painting, and other painters that you want to dialogue with and so on. You know? How I didn't finish it. The unfinished painting somehow.

CM-U: Right. Beautiful. Really lovely. Especially beautiful with the dark floor. Yeah. Okay.

CM-U: Shall we go into this room? Or which way would you like – where do you want to go next?

Rudolf Stingel: Chronological? Oh, it's this...

CM-U: Let's go here. Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, not everything.

[00:21:57]

Rudolf Stingel: This is – this is my studio floor?

CM-U: Yeah. What I've read is that this was your studio floor. Well, you tell me, yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, it was on the floor of a part of the studio where I did the gold paintings and the black paintings.

CM-U: And so the marks are left from, right, where you were working on those paintings?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. This is where you go into the spray booth.

CM-U: Uh-huh. You have a nice studio. A nice big studio.

Rudolf Stingel: Oh, that's only a fraction...

CM-U: That's only part of it?

(laughter)

CM-U: We wouldn't mind having a studio like that, right, Matt?

Rudolf Stingel: It looks much bigger on the wall. If you take this down, it would come to here.

CM-U: That's true.

Rudolf Stingel: It's a room like that.

CM-U: That's true. That is true, I know.

M. Skopek: It's interesting that scale...

CM-U: Okay, so it's what left is the working of you on your studio floor?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Well, there is a history of me doing carpets.

CM-U: Yes.

Rudolf Stingel: These carpet installations.

CM-U: Yes.

Rudolf Stingel: First on the floor...

CM-U: Yes.

Rudolf Stingel: ...and then it went up the wall.

CM-U: Yes.

Rudolf Stingel: And at some point then, I took dirty carpet. Used carpet. This is the first time I did it on purpose in my studio.

CM-U: I see. I see. So you would take the accident that was on a used carpet...

Rudolf Stingel: We knew that I was going to have a show at the Whitney, and we put the white carpet down.

CM-U: Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: That's why. So it was in there for six months or something like that. No? Six? Yeah.

CM-U: And is it the same kind of methodology that, once it's done, it's done? You don't then, when you see it vertically, go back and...

Rudolf Stingel: No. No, no, I didn't do anything on that thing. That's just [sounds like].

CM-U: Okay. I just thought I'd ask.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, yeah. No, nothing. It's all droppings and, you know, there was a big table there where there's less marks.

CM-U: Yeah. I see it. Oh, yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. This is the wall where the paintings were hanging. Then, sometimes, you know, when you apply the black paint, you know, some of it falls down.

[00:24:04]

CM-U: And the Styrofoam (TM). The pink Styrofoam (TM). Questions come to my mind. Well, let's talk about technique, and then I'll sort of tell you what I'm sort of thinking about preservation...

Rudolf Stingel: Technique? Uh, this is just a commercial – it's not even a Styrofoam (TM). It's poly – oh, what is it called? I've forgotten. This is Owens Corning...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: Or, Owens...

CM-U: Corning.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. No doubt, it's Owens Corning, yeah. That's the company, but is. They are insulation panels.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: And they come in different – two by eights, and different – two-inch, one-inch, two-inch, four inch, and so on.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: And this is the two-inch. And I, I carved it out with a drill bit. A five-inch drill bit...

CM-U: Hmm.

Rudolf Stingel: ...that I attached onto a drill.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: And I just scoop it up like this.

CM-U: Hmm. And there's no – you don't need to seal it before in any way? It's just...

Rudolf Stingel: No, I didn't do it.

CM-U: It's already commercially sealed.

Rudolf Stingel: No. This goes against everything that you care about.

CM-U: No, that's wonderful.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. But I mean it's really like you...

CM-U: This is what we need to know.

Rudolf Stingel: ...take the cheapest material, worthless, and make something beautiful out of it.

CM-U: Absolutely.

Rudolf Stingel: I, I really didn't care if that would, you know, stay around for a long time or not. You know, back then, it was not really the issue.

CM-U: Right. Right. But it becomes the issue, doesn't it?

Rudolf Stingel: Now, I guess, for – yeah. But I think, I assume it's hard to destroy now.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: In terms of – I mean, it's very fragile, but chemically, I think, that's something that will last longer than we do, eventually.

CM-U: I think so, too. And we have in our field now, conservation scientists who – that's what they do. I mean, they spend a lot of time thinking about how we preserve – understanding the material, and then addressing issues of preservation that we wouldn't have had to address with different types of materials.

CM-U: One of the things that struck me as I look at it is the – of course the shadow and reflectance in it, but also the uniformity of the color. You are not taken by a distraction of color. Should something happen, I mean in terms of damage or just aging in which certain – an area might change in color, how would that – how would we address that?

Rudolf Stingel: I would just accept it.

CM-U: You would accept it?

Rudolf Stingel: That's a – yeah, that's okay for me. Do you think it would change in color differently than...

CM-U: I can't – I can't – see, it strikes me that if it's going to change naturally, it's going to be an overall effect...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, I think so, too.

CM-U: ...which would probably be quite beautiful. What I could imagine being a problem is a localized damage.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: Somebody falling into it. Something going into it.

Rudolf Stingel: Oh, yeah. It has happened.

CM-U: That has happened?

Rudolf Stingel: It has happened.

CM-U: And what did you do?

Rudolf Stingel: We destroyed it.

CM-U: You destroyed it?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: Good. That's what I wanted to know. I mean, if – I could imagine...

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, back then, we destroyed it. It was in the first museum show that I had in Italy. It was next to a room, the silver room – first time I did the silver room – so the people thought they could do it on everything, you know.

CM-U: Oh.

Rudolf Stingel: There were not enough guards, so they would write on the center piece. It was a green one. Same kind of – and it was an insurance – it was not mine any more.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: It was an insurance thing. So it got destroyed.

CM-U: Did you remake it?

Rudolf Stingel: No.

CM-U: No. That was it.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, the collector – no, I don't want – I'm not going to say that.

CM-U: You don't need to go into that anyway.

Rudolf Stingel: So...

[00:27:52]

CM-U: Uh, was the choice of securing hook or screws – was that important?

Rudolf Stingel: That...

CM-U: I mean, how did you know...

Rudolf Stingel: No, it was just where I needed to put one to keep it flat on the wall. It was like a kind of brutalist way of doing that.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Just so show everything. Show the screws, show...

M. Skopek: If in the future one of those areas, from repeated installation, becomes like weakened...

Rudolf Stingel: Well, we'll just put another screw somewhere else.

M. Skopek: Put another screw somewhere else? And what about the hole that gets left?

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, I know that will be a problem, probably, sometime.

M. Skopek: But would you want that hole to just remain as a hole...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

M. Skopek: ...where the screw no longer is? Or would you like that to be...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, yeah, yeah. _____ [phrase inaudible] everything.

CM-U: So it's a track of its life? A track of its history?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. I mean, there are several holes there already, you know.

M. Skopek: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: Because I took it up and down the wall that I want to use. So you could actually put one in an existing hole already.

M. Skopek: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: But, you know, people have come up to me, asking me to – if I could come up with another way of putting them on the wall on panels. Wood panels. _____ [phrase inaudible]. I was just not – I think, if you add another material to it, another layer of material, then it becomes something else.

CM-U: Something else. Exactly. Yeah. I see that very clearly. So beautiful.

Rudolf Stingel: The only thing I could imagine, maybe, for that – but not for these – is to put it on a stretched canvas, you know. To glue it onto a stretched canvas.

CM-U: Well, I noticed that happened. You did that with some of the white Styrofoam (TM) – the one Styrofoam (TM) piece.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, that, I worked...

CM-U: You made it on the canvas?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, it was on the canvas.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: _____ [word inaudible]

CM-U: But that would be the same sort of look that...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, it would be the same _____ [word inaudible]. It would look like as if the Styrofoam (TM) would be the paint...

CM-U: Right. Correct. Right. Would you – let's just go on that train of thought, should you ever – would that ever happen. Would you want it, then, to be as flat against the wall as possible so the canvas would just be a support? But then...

Rudolf Stingel: No, no, no. On a stretcher.

CM-U: On a stretcher?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: So you'd be willing to accept the depth...

Rudolf Stingel: I did that once with – there are, from the silver panels...

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: ...I do paintings. I make paintings out of used – out of already graffitied panels. How's that, yeah?

CM-U: Yeah. Good. I wanted to ask you about that.

Rudolf Stingel: I don't know if I'm going to do this, but...

CM-U: That's what you would...

Rudolf Stingel: ...that's what I did with – in the past.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: And I had a show in Düsseldorf ["Rudolf Stingel," Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, March 21-May 10, 2003], and I did four or five paintings that I applied – I mean, I glued them onto a stretched, white canvas. So it looked like, you know, instead of paint, there was the insulation.

CM-U: Yeah. I like that.

Rudolf Stingel: And that was – it was very satisfying to me.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Everything else becomes something else, you know. Different. It stays a painting like that, you know.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: If you put it on wood, it becomes like it's something else.

CM-U: I understand that. I also understand this not wanting to get too prissy about it.

Rudolf Stingel: Right.

CM-U: You know, just make it practical...

Rudolf Stingel: Yes.

CM-U: ...and make it solid.

Rudolf Stingel: Um-hum.

CM-U: They have that wonderful feeling about them.

M. Skopek: Were they to be mounted on canvas, should the heads of the screws...

Rudolf Stingel: You wouldn't need them.

M. Skopek: You wouldn't need them, so you would – so that's...

Rudolf Stingel: But I don't want to say now that that has to be done.

CM-U: No, no, no.

M. Skopek: No, no, no, no. Certainly not. I was just saying...

CM-U: Well, one would never do that...

M. Skopek: This is all theoretical.

CM-U: ...unless there were absolutely no alternatives.

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, I still own these. I think.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: And so I might do it with these.

(laughter)

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, in my studio one day, you know.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: But it's not the rule now that I want to say, you know, I want this to be done.

CM-U: Yeah, but I think it's important that – that the way you've re-stressed – that it's a paint layer.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: I mean, it's intended at that point...

Rudolf Stingel: Everything I do...

CM-U: ...of the structure...

Rudolf Stingel: ...is related to painting.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. I am not a sculptor. So the key to read it is that.

CM-U: And the key to restore is that.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, yeah.

CM-U: It is. No, it is because that's the way we would think about it, then.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: That's very helpful.

[00:32:08]

CM-U: And what about this work?

Rudolf Stingel: Well, this is late, I mean...

CM-U: Okay. We'll come to that when we go...

Rudolf Stingel: Well, anyway, this was me as a soldier.

CM-U: ...do you want to talk to...

Rudolf Stingel: This was me as a soldier.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: This is from my, uh – I mean, the subject, the subject is that picture of my ID...

CM-U: Right.

- Rudolf Stingel: ...when I was nineteen. In Italia [sounds like]. And I had my eyes closed, but, who knows why? Because, I refused, I guess, to be part of that. And they left it in the ID. I just blew it up and we painted that. So what do you want to know about this? How we painted it?
- CM-U: What's the process on this?
- Rudolf Stingel: The process is, you paint it out the same size. You grid it out, and then you paint it, square by square.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- Rudolf Stingel: Oil paint.
- CM-U: You mean you, you – when you said you print it out the exact size of this...
- Rudolf Stingel: On paper. On paper.
- CM-U: Uh-huh. So it's a very traditional technique of squaring...
- Rudolf Stingel: Yes.
- CM-U: It's gridding, and then transferring, like a cartoon...
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Actually, I mean, I do something. I mean, in order for you guys, this is printed before – on canvas, in a very, very light print.
- CM-U: Uh-huh.
- Rudolf Stingel: And so I don't have to trace it.
- CM-U: Right.
- Rudolf Stingel: But it's very light, you know. It's not the same _____ [phrase inaudible]. And then I do a digital print of the full scale and grid it out and then repaint it. Square by square.
- CM-U: Smart. Makes sense. With a very small brush? Oil paint?
- Rudolf Stingel: No, the size of the brush, you can tell here. It's not too small, you know. It's a little bit, you know.

CM-U: Well.

M. Skopek: Quarter inch or half inch.

CM-U: It's fabulous.

Rudolf Stingel: Oh no, it's less than that.

M. Skopek: Less?

CM-U: You know, one of the beautiful aspects of the surface, from my perspective, is the difference in reflectance of the materials, and the way they go on. And if you're under it, you know, it's a very live surface – like your first silver one, in the sense that you see all the different inconsistencies of the shine of the material.

Rudolf Stingel: Right. We did have a problem, I mean, a – concerns about – not on this one because this is light paint. It's different than dark paint. Because if you varnish that, you kill that.

CM-U: Oh, it would be awful. Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: _____ [phrase inaudible].

CM-U: Destroyed.

Rudolf Stingel: But we had some problems with the dark paint because we can't do everything in one day here. This is for sure, yeah? So when you stop, and then you start again, if you go over something already dry, painted, it dries differently then.

CM-U: Correct.

M. Skopek: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: And matte. But you don't see it with the white, but you can really see it with the dark, with the black.

M. Skopek: Oh, yes.

CM-U: Oh, that's good. We'll talk about that when we come around.

M. Skopek: I was wondering if that's...

Rudolf Stingel: And there is no way. We tried to – I don't know what to do about it.

M. Skopek: But it's very interesting because _____ [word inaudible], I mean, it makes it look like *giornate*. That was what – my impression, when I saw that.

Rudolf Stingel: What is that?

M. Skopek: In the frescoes.

Rudolf Stingel: Oh, that's where they do it in one day – yeah, yeah...

M. Skopek: ...where they do it in a day, yeah.

[00:35:28]

Rudolf Stingel: So these paintings comes first. And then this.

CM-U: Sorry?

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, chronologically, this is first, and then this.

CM-U: Okay. All right.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, this is polystyrene, you know.

CM-U: All right.

Rudolf Stingel: And it's four inch. And I put it on the floor, and I wear rubber boots and a sock on top of the rubber boot. And I have a tray with lacquer thinner, where I go in (demonstrates stepping into a tray) _____ [phrase inaudible] and then I walk on there.

CM-U: And...

M. Skopek: _____ [word inaudible]?

CM-U: Does it happen immediately? I mean, does it...

Rudolf Stingel: This?

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: It does? As soon as the solvent hits the polystyrene [sounds like].

Rudolf Stingel: Well, you have to wait on it. If you stand a little longer, then you'll sink in completely. Fsssst. Yeah.

(laughter)

CM-U: And sometimes you...

Rudolf Stingel: You have to do it twice, maybe, sometimes, if you want it really – if you just walk fast like this, you know, you will get it – they are all deep on this one, you know. But you will get like these kind of...

CM-U: Right. Just like imprints.

Rudolf Stingel: If you just walk fast, then you get _____ [phrase inaudible]. If you stop, and you let it absorb, you know, and it goes down – well, here, then I go crazy sometimes.

CM-U: Now this look where people have said, “Well, it looks like it's some sort of melting, or some sort of...” – it's not. It's just the way that the Styrofoam (TM) reacts to the solvent, right?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. The solvent melts...

CM-U: The solvent melts?

Rudolf Stingel: ...melts the Styrofoam (TM). Lacquer thinner melts the Styrofoam (TM).

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Actually, I think Styrofoam (TM) – _____ [word inaudible], I mean, whatever that stuff is out there, and this – was invented by the military. You know, it came out from the military industry.

CM-U: I didn't know...

Rudolf Stingel: It's a byproduct of napalm.

CM-U: I didn't know that.

Rudolf Stingel: If you do – if you, with lacquer thinner, you can manufacture a bomb, you know. A napalm bomb.

CM-U: Was that part of its appeal for you?

Rudolf Stingel: No, but somebody told me that.

CM-U: Oh, but you found out?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. It smelled like napalm in my studio.

(laughter)

[00:37:40]

CM-U: So it looks like you must have had these four joined on the floor. You did this all at once, right? These four parts.

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. And sometimes even bigger than that. You know, I would do more than four. I mean, I did – the first time I did it, it was like – I did it for a big mural. Big wall in MCA Chicago, way back. And I had, I don't know how many. It was a huge thing in the studio. Just – I walked over it for days.

CM-U: And do you always choose the ones that are adjacent? You've never thought about it...

Rudolf Stingel: No, no. I did some...

CM-U: ...where you took the other parts...

Rudolf Stingel: ...other _____ [phrase inaudible]. Yeah. But then when I – yeah, I know where you want to get, so...

CM-U: You want to know where I want to get to?

Rudolf Stingel: I know...

CM-U: No, I don't want to go anywhere. I'm just...

Rudolf Stingel: No, no. But there is a way of accepting things...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ...the way they are. And then there is composing it. But that's a different – maybe that's not...

CM-U: But that's chance, too.

Rudolf Stingel: No, but I do look at it sometimes like a painting, and I say, "This looks better with this, so let's do this."

CM-U: Yeah, that's right. No, that's right.

Rudolf Stingel: Now these are, of course, fragile.

CM-U: Have you noticed any change in them?

Rudolf Stingel: They're yellowing some.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: Not all of them. Not these. But we had in Chicago, we had another one that – where the footprints yellowed. I don't know why one more, one less...

CM-U: I would imagine – that would be my guess, too. Right? I guess it has to do with the material inside, the actual nature of the material.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, I don't know. Or even in the brand of lacquer thinner, you know – I don't know what.

CM-U: Right. So if that happens, then, these could conceivably be white with kind of an ochre or more yellowish...

Rudolf Stingel: That's what that one looked like, that, yeah.

CM-U: That's what I thought. And you live with that?

Rudolf Stingel: It's okay, yeah.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: It's amazing because it was done at the same time that this was done. And this looks...

- CM-U: This looks fabulous.
- M. Skopek: I notice some of these have a little bit of pink or black from a marker that was on the side or something?
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. This is probably the material itself that was marked on the side with...
- M. Skopek: Yeah, there's like – there's a little red, right at that one spot, and there's a magic marker [sounds like]...
- Rudolf Stingel: And stuff that's lying on the studio floor, you know, you pick up on your boots and...
- M. Skopek: Right.
- CM-U: They are remarkably clean, really. I mean, really, they are, to think that they've been on the studio floor and your – given the process.
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Well, there is a plastic, you know. I put plastic down, and then on top of that. Because otherwise you wouldn't be able to lift it. These parts, where you melt it down completely...
- CM-U: Yeah? You wouldn't be able to get it off the floor, right?
- Rudolf Stingel: No, this sticks to the floor.
- CM-U: Right.
- Rudolf Stingel: This is really melted Styrofoam (TM). It becomes liquid, and just sits there. And then if you let it dry overnight, then you can't get it off from the plastic. You wouldn't be able to do it from this floor, you know.
- CM-U: Right. Are you ever tempted to just pour the solvent on?
- Rudolf Stingel: I did, yeah.
- CM-U: You did?
- Rudolf Stingel: Sometimes _____ [phrase inaudible].
- CM-U: In some places? Like...

Rudolf Stingel: When I got impatient, yeah, I did that. So I just poured it straight on there, just...

CM-U: Yeah. I'm getting the sense of that.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, not here. Yeah, maybe. I don't know. I've forgotten.

CM-U: Yeah.

M. Skopek: There's a splash...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Well, splash, because then I have – well, let's say I wanted to work on this area, but I come in from here. I put down a piece of cardboard where I walk on some other to get there, you know.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: So I keep my tray with the – sometimes that, you know [artist seems to be implying through his gestures that his tray sometimes spills onto the work].

M. Skopek: Right.

CM-U: That makes sense.

[00:41:34]

CM-U: And now how are they attached...

Rudolf Stingel: The same way they are attached to the – I just, you see...

CM-U: I was just going to ask you that.

Rudolf Stingel: That will be maybe another problem one day. But then you just...

CM-U: Because it may weaken in that spot?

Rudolf Stingel: My strategy was, just find a way where you don't really see it. So, like where it undercuts...

M. Skopek: So, you know, this is different from the pink ones.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, the pink one, you couldn't hide it.

M. Skopek: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: That's why I chose to go straight ahead. This, you can, so why not do it that way? And you just do very minimal...

M. Skopek: But the damages – I mean, it looks like someone has scratched the surface here. I mean, that's – at what point does that become...

CM-U: Oh, this.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Well, this, I see that for the first time now.

M. Skopek: Might be...

Rudolf Stingel: This is one of the people...

M. Skopek: ...might be new here. But...

CM-U: Oh, this is _____ [phrase inaudible].

M. Skopek: ...could have been some of fingerprint [sounds like]...

Rudolf Stingel: No, this is just – I don't know. I, I couldn't tell you if this was already there or if people did it [sounds like].

M. Skopek: Yeah. But does that bug...

Rudolf Stingel: ...bug [sounds like] people who come to see this show?

CM-U: Um-hum.

M. Skopek: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Because this was not there.

CM-U: And, you know...

Rudolf Stingel: But I don't want to create a...

M. Skopek: Yeah. No...

CM-U: ...a deal about it. I know. But still. Now – go on.

M. Skopek: No. No. Well...

Rudolf Stingel: _____ [phrase inaudible]

M. Skopek: ...what problem does this become an issue that is...

Rudolf Stingel: This is the problem. All – I mean, most of my works – and people are – I don't know why they want – well, I know why. Because I let them do it in one room, so they come and say they want to touch everything. And I don't know what to do about that. They will end up putting them in – I don't know. If I stay alive as an artist, you know, in terms of – in Plexiglas or whatever...

CM-U: Hmm.

Rudolf Stingel: ...probably. It's just too bad...

CM-U: It is too bad, because it changes the reflectance, of course, among other things.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. But I don't know.

CM-U: I mean...

Rudolf Stingel: Or they have a guard here.

CM-U: Right. Or a platform.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. But the worst thing they can do – they did it in Chicago – was that kind of, you know, a rope.

CM-U: Oh, they're terrible because people fall into them, and then they really damage it.

Rudolf Stingel: Oh, but it just looks terrible...

CM-U: It looks terrible.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, when they have this kind of...

M. Skopek: What about a platform to keep people away? Would that be...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, that's what – at the Guggenheim, I think, they have a platform. Where you look at it [sounds like].

- M. Skopek: And that's better, you think? Aesthetically, or...
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. I don't know.
- CM-U: There are always – there are always – it's just a problem. It's always an issue.
- Rudolf Stingel: Yes.
- CM-U: And the thing is, I mean, I'm getting a sense from you that that's – even though we are regarding this as a paint layer, you know, you wouldn't want us to try to somehow hide those letters.
- Rudolf Stingel: No, no.
- CM-U: Because it would be very precise, very precise work, and...
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. No, no. Don't.
- CM-U: Hmm. They are really not that apparent until they are pointed out to you, and then they...
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.
- CM-U: ...then they're there.
- Rudolf Stingel: Well, now, there is so much going on this...
- CM-U: Right.
- Rudolf Stingel: You know, if it was on this one...
- CM-U: Right. It would be a disaster. I think we should post a guard specifically – we do have a guard in this room, but...
- M. Skopek: But we just need to...
- CM-U: Right.
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, but sometimes they're just not able to...
- CM-U: I know.

M. Skopek: Especially this weekend was...

CM-U: Packed.

M. Skopek: Yeah.

CM-U: I know.

M. Skopek: Nine hundred.

CM-U: Wow. Well, it's a popular exhibition. What about...

Rudolf Stingel: No, no, that's because of downstairs.

CM-U: Yeah, but I came up here. I was here yesterday.

Rudolf Stingel: I know.

CM-U: I'm here to tell you...

Rudolf Stingel: I was here, too, so I saw the queue around the block and...

CM-U: Yeah. And thought, "Oh wow!"

[both voices speaking at the same time; cannot distinguish their words]

Rudolf Stingel: ...the last day of the show.

CM-U: I saw the crowd. It's true.

[00:45:27]

Rudolf Stingel: So this is...

CM-U: So this is one you mounted.

Rudolf Stingel: ...this is the most critical body of work that I did in terms of – from your point of view, here. I did basically everything you are not supposed to do on these paintings. Yeah.

CM-U: Like?

- Rudolf Stingel: I – the process of this is – now it is stretched on a stretcher bar. But it was stretched first on a piece of wood...
- CM-U: Uh-huh.
- Rudolf Stingel: ...you know, solid wood.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- Rudolf Stingel: I squeezed out I don't know how many cartridges of silicone – neutral silicone. Something that I can't find in this country here.
- CM-U: Hmm.
- Rudolf Stingel: There is – silicone has usually ammonia in it.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- Rudolf Stingel: But there is also a silicon that does not have that, that they use – at least in Europe, they use it for bathroom stuff, or something, because of health issues. It doesn't have it. It doesn't smell like ammonia.
- CM-U: Hmm.
- Rudolf Stingel: And that does not – because it doesn't have ammonia, it does not affect the Styrofoam (TM). Because ammonia gets the same thing as, you know, all these solvents – they would just – eat it away.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- Rudolf Stingel: So I put the same thing – like with the paints, I did with silicone here, the whole thing, silicone. Then I had this one centimeter – or, no, I don't know; two centimeters of – it's almost – I forgot now. No, one and half centimeters.
- CM-U: Yeah. It looks like a centimeter.
- Rudolf Stingel: One and a half centimeters, of Styrofoam (TM). Sheets of Styrofoam (TM). I covered the whole thing. White. Flat. Glued it onto it basically, with that. Put it on the floor.
- CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: And then I did the same thing with the boots. I just trampled it away.

CM-U: Ah-ha.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. So I melted it away. So this is all melted Styrofoam (TM). But...

CM-U: So you had to pull some of it off, too? And just from the trampling.

Rudolf Stingel: [Nods his head]

CM-U: Hmm.

Rudolf Stingel: Oh, I don't know. At some point, you know, maybe I pulled a piece off, because it was not really...

CM-U: Yeah. Right. Right. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. And then you stand it up, and then it drains – it runs down.

CM-U: Ahh.

Rudolf Stingel: And then you put it down again, and then – it's much more non-traditional. It's not traditional painting, in terms of you look at what you do.

CM-U: Right. Right. And then back down again.

Rudolf Stingel: And get it back down, and then you – but all in one take.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: You cannot go back.

CM-U: Yeah. And it looks like you cut it at some point as well.

Rudolf Stingel: This? No.

CM-U: That.

Rudolf Stingel: Oh, yeah, yeah. This I did, yeah.

CM-U: This is the board, I take it.

Rudolf Stingel: So this is the board with the seam of the board...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ...the two boards there.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Not the boards.

CM-U: Oh, no?

Rudolf Stingel: No, no, no. It's the Styrofoam (TM). The Styrofoam (TM)s came one meter by two and a half, and there were two of them. You know, to cover, the whole thing. So what you have here is like it, that's the silicone that's squeezed up between the two.

CM-U: Ah, yeah.

[00:48:37]

Rudolf Stingel: Now nothing wants to stick to silicone, not even Styrofoam (TM). Okay?

(laughter)

M. Skopek: Right. I'm going to say there's lots of _____ [phrase inaudible]

Rudolf Stingel: That's the...

CM-U: That's the trick.

Rudolf Stingel: ...the big problem here. Yeah. So this is actually a work that needs to be maintained.

CM-U: Hmm.

Rudolf Stingel: You know. I don't want to say it comes with a Hoover, because that's not _____ [phrase inaudible], like the [Anselm] Kiefer. But, you know, I don't know. No, here, they clean well. Am I – these are still my paintings, so I can, you know – these things tend to come off sometimes. But you need to put the same kind of silicone in the back and glue it on.

CM-U: So any of these kind of flat areas that are flaking or lifting, they need to be in plane flat?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. That's what I do before – when I – these...

CM-U: Like in here?

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. Things like this. Now it's okay. This is okay. Nobody could go wrong [sounds like]...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ...here. See

CM-U: Ah, yeah. I'm dying to do that. Oh yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: So here, what you do is, you just squeeze it...

M. Skopek: _____ [word inaudible].

Rudolf Stingel: ...the silicone behind...

M. Skopek: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: ...and you just press it again for a second, and then it's good [sounds like]. Once you do it once, you know, that...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ..._____ [phrase inaudible].

CM-U: It holds pretty quickly.

Rudolf Stingel: It holds. This is still from – this, I didn't – I did not – we didn't fix this. Not quite.

CM-U: You might want to come around this way, Shawn, to take a look at that.

Voice: _____ [phrase inaudible].

Rudolf Stingel: Because I have...

- CM-U: Yeah. Then you can really see it over here.
- Rudolf Stingel: I had one of these silicones shipped over from Europe in order to take care of this painting, but we didn't because it looked okay, and I...
- CM-U: Who owns this painting?
- Rudolf Stingel: I do.
- CM-U: You do? Okay. Well, that's very helpful to know.
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, this is something that really needs attention.
- CM-U: And then – but it's on canvas, right?
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, it's on canvas.
- CM-U: So the canvas was around, wrapped around the boards before you started this whole thing?
- Rudolf Stingel: The canvas was stretched on the board.
- CM-U: Okay.
- Rudolf Stingel: The particle board, yeah. Then after, when it was finished, I took it off that, and I put it onto a stretcher.
- CM-U: Okay.
- Rudolf Stingel: Because you couldn't walk on the stretcher. You would have crossbars and hollow spaces.
- CM-U: Right. I understand.
- M. Skopek: But it's important to you that it's on a stretcher, that it's not on a board?
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. But also for – it doesn't really look any different, board or stretcher. It's just it's easier to handle.
- CM-U: Much lighter.
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. And it is a painting, again, that needs to be stretched.

M. Skopek: Right. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Now these, uh, some of them got really yellow.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: What got yellow is not the Styrofoam (TM) or anything, but the silicone. See, this surface, if you touch it.

CM-U: This has silicone on it itself?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. The whole thing is...

CM-U: I could see that when you...

Rudolf Stingel: It's like, you know, if you touch this, it is like rubber.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: You know, it's like _____ [word inaudible].

CM-U: Well, that's probably going to happen.

Rudolf Stingel: Well not with this one, I don't know. Not all of them.

CM-U: Huh.

Rudolf Stingel: I did them in the same – I did them all in Berlin. I was working in Berlin for six months for, hmm, 2003. And I used two different brands of silicone. One, the paintings we had in Chicago are completely yellow. Or they yellowed, you know. It's okay. I mean, it's not that I don't like it...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: I like it.

CM-U: It's just different.

Rudolf Stingel: It's just different. Yeah. This stayed the way it was from day one. It did not – the silicone did not change. I think this silicone – of course, it comes from my hometown...

CM-U: It comes from where?

Rudolf Stingel: From my town in Italy.

CM-U: Oh, that's why. That's why. Of course that's why.

Rudolf Stingel: The other one was a German, Berlin, junky. You know, that of course changed. It's true.

(laughter)

CM-U: It's true. I believe it. I suppose, as conservators, we would be tempted to consolidate that area with something other than silicone. It would be an adhesive that we would think would be compatible with the material that might hold better. But that would be disturbing for you.

Rudolf Stingel: No, no, no. I don't care what you use, but I don't think you are going to find anything that sticks to silicone.

CM-U: Oh. Other than silicone itself?

Rudolf Stingel: The silicone, the quality of silicone is that nothing adheres to it.

CM-U: Unless it was something that ate into it, that bit into it, which then would allow us [sounds like]...

Rudolf Stingel: Well, which is another silicone, though.

CM-U: Or something else of that base [sounds like]. Whatever. I mean, I'm just saying...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, but the problem here is not – you have two problems. One is the silicone here. Another one is the Styrofoam (TM). You cannot use anything that has a solvent in it.

CM-U: Ohhh.

Rudolf Stingel: You know. Any glues. Traditional glues.

CM-U: That's right.

Rudolf Stingel: If they are strong, they would just make a hole there.

CM-U: Right. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: So you – the safest thing is to get the silicone. And whenever I fix up the painting, nothing happens again. Once it is re – you know, taken care of, then...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Because this is still from the original thing. There's too much tension in the – in big areas like this. There is just being too much tension that it will just give.

CM-U: That's right.

Rudolf Stingel: You know, break.

CM-U: I mean, that's right. That's exactly...

Rudolf Stingel: But something like this has to be done (touches area of flaking).

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: But I don't know. But this is nothing, you know. Sometimes these really look bad. Not sometimes. I mean, I have to say, well, this is only the second or third time that I showed this.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: Most of them are still – I didn't do many. I did, uh, six, eighteen...

CM-U: Hmm.

Rudolf Stingel: ...paintings like this. And they are still in their original crates. So – from '93.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: So when I open them now, they of course look bad. But then I take care of it and it's...

CM-U: Um-hum. It's very interesting because that's exactly the kind of physical stresses that are leading to that separation. That's exactly what happens in the paint film where you have a very thin layer as opposed to a thicker layer, and

the stresses are different, and the canvas can't withstand it, and so you have flaking. I mean, they are different materials that you're using; but the mechanics are the same thing.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. This is just a very critical material because of its – because you have to get something that has no solvent, you know, to...

CM-U: Right. Hmm. Good. A challenge.

Rudolf Stingel: Hmm.

[00:55:21]

Rudolf Stingel: Well, so this material [referring to *Untitled*, 1991] is still a secret to me. It was never – I was never told what it is. I mean, I begged them to tell me what kind of material it is. They wouldn't tell me. It's a very odd story. I went, when I wanted to do this, it's – the resin. I'm talking about the resin.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: They told me it's a polycarbonate. The family is, the _____ [word inaudible] family, that's what it is. My problem was a different one. I tried to use this, but I did hear you freeze paint. That it falls down, and – you know, in a jar – if you get a jar of water, and you pour paint in it...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: I tried to freeze it while it's falling, basically. None of the resins that I knew cured fast enough to do this. It was all fell to the bottom, and then it cured, so...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: So I got to this company, these two crazy guys in Italy in the suburbs of Milan, that had this mysterious company that they wouldn't let me in, you know. Not past the office. "What do you do?" "Well, we do things we know do..."

(laughter)

Rudolf Stingel: So they said, “We do rubber stuff,” you know. They did latex. So I, in my mind, much less was that they did the whole – who knows what kind of, you know, erotic, yeah, I don’t know what.

(laughter)

Rudolf Stingel: But it was not that. And they used this to make – they did rubber gloves, basically.

CM-U: Huh.

Rudolf Stingel: But to do – the process of doing rubber gloves is that they cast a hand out of a certain material that then gets immersed in latex or poly-whatever it’s called. And then it creates that film. You know, they dip it in, dip it out, and then again. They used this material to make their...

CM-U: Their molds, likely?

Rudolf Stingel: ...the molds where you put...

CM-U: Yeah. So it’s that fast drying.

Rudolf Stingel: Like they – I don’t know. They were just so full of...

CM-U: Whatever. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: They liked me, but they stopped the whole, you know, thing, just to do this thing for me. But I was never allowed to know the formula. That was their trick. So I don’t know what – I know what the orange paint is. That is acrylic DayGlo that I put in there.

CM-U: So their mold, each piece, they’ve molded each piece...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: ...and then...

Rudolf Stingel: There is a mold for each piece, you know...

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: ...and they are then assembled. There is a threaded rod inside.

CM-U: Right. Right.

Rudolf Stingel: You know. And then while they were pouring their clear materials in there, I would add...

CM-U: That's what I wondered.

Rudolf Stingel: ...some paint. And then they did it themselves later. We did a lot.

CM-U: Fabulous.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: Really fabulous.

Rudolf Stingel: And then I left all these, you know, these are from the mold [sounds like]. But I couldn't – I mean, if this – it is still, sometimes it's sort of sticky. I don't know what...

CM-U: That's definitely going to outlive all of us. This one, I think...

Rudolf Stingel: Probably, yeah. I did gigantic, very big sheets like that.

CM-U: Oh, really?

Rudolf Stingel: Like _____ [phrase inaudible], yeah. Yeah.

CM-U: It's really interesting the way it takes the color, isn't it? And the way it just sits. And yet you have this wonderful feeling of it flowing and then just, as you said, just stopping.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, I – how do you call the, the kids that are playing with their – marbles. Marbles, huh?

CM-U: Um-hum.

M. Skopek: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Aren't they made like that, too?

CM-U: I don't know.

Rudolf Stingel: I mean, _____ [word inaudible], I grew up with this kind of...

CM-U: Yeah. Yeah.

M. Skopek: Yeah, that's...

CM-U: The glass marbles, yeah, like that.

Rudolf Stingel: ...that had this paint in them...

CM-U: Cat's eye, and all that.

Rudolf Stingel: ...that's what it, but...

CM-U: Wonderful.

Rudolf Stingel: Then there is the seventies. Jimi Hendrix and...

(laughter)

CM-U: That's wonderful. Really wonderful.

[00:59:36]

(The group walks into a room with a mirrored floor.)

Rudolf Stingel: I'm surprised that this holds up so well.

CM-U: This looks beautiful.

M. Skopek: It does.

CM-U: Is this the material that you've known and used as the flooring?

Rudolf Stingel: I did it – this is the second time I did it.

CM-U: Really impressive.

Rudolf Stingel: It is laminate. It's thicker than usual. It's expensive. But it's, you know, I don't know, synthetic, yeah. It's not _____ [phrase inaudible].

CM-U: I'm also impressed by the joins. I mean, it's just so flat.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, they had to build a subfloor there, and then they...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: ...glued it onto it.

CM-U: I am truly baffled by the process. [referring to a painting on the wall]

Rudolf Stingel: Of that?

CM-U: Yeah. Um-hum. I tried yesterday for a long time.

Rudolf Stingel: What, to find out how...

CM-U: To figure it out. Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, it's the same thing. I used the same material, like with the silver paintings, the tulle.

CM-U: Yeah? First you have the primed canvas. Then the gold you put on.

Rudolf Stingel: No, no.

CM-U: No?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Primed canvas, and then gold.

CM-U: Gold, okay.

Rudolf Stingel: That just the...

CM-U: That's the standard stuff. Okay, then.

Rudolf Stingel: And then I have these screens that I made out of – with the same material, tulle – that at the beginning, I did them – I had them cut with a plotter the way you do, you know, lettering on the shop windows and things like that, you know. And you cover certain areas. And certain areas are not.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: In this case, this is covered, and this is not covered.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: And then I treat it. And then I glue it onto the tulle. To the screen. I stretch the screen on the wall. I glue it on. So...

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: And make a template, basically. Like a very basic silk screen.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Now these are – then, we got a little smarter about all that, and we found somebody who does silk screen screens; and we did it with the same technique basically, with the emulsion. But so I have the screen that did – where certain areas are blocked out, and certain are not. So I have the gold canvas. I put the screen on. And I put white oil paint over the whole thing, covering everything.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: Very thick, again. You know, like – the principle is the same as the silver painting. Then I sprayed gold enamel over it, the same brand like the silver. And I pull it off. That's what it is.

CM-U: Got it. Okay. Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: So, on some areas, you know, there is...

CM-U: The little – the white paint...

Rudolf Stingel: The white paint goes underneath that, you know.

M. Skopek: Do you ever go back in and edit it with a palette knife? Like cut out, scrape out...

Rudolf Stingel: No. It's pretty much like a silk screen print...

CM-U: Um-hum. Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: ...with oil paint and, in a much more painterly way. Again, then, I tried to cover the whole thing evenly with gold, but I'm not able to because I don't see what I'm doing. And then by pulling it off, some things happen sometimes, you know. There's creases and things.

[01:03:21]

CM-U: It has a three dimensionality from the gold background, you know...

Rudolf Stingel: No, it gets the three dimensionality because of the...

CM-U: White. The white?

Rudolf Stingel: Because this is flat, and then this is the white oil paint.

CM-U: Yes. Yeah. So you have that feeling of it.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, like it's flocked. Flocked, uh, wallpaper-like.

CM-U: Right. Like a brocade.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: Well, which what I'm – it's beautiful. And this is the one where you chose not to prime the tacking edges, but to leave just the linen.

Rudolf Stingel: Yes. I had it stretched on the raw linen. I mean, I shipped the stretchers to Angel, who does everything for us.

CM-U: Yes, I know that.

Rudolf Stingel: Somewhere in the Bronx.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: And he stretches the raw linen on it, and then he...

CM-U: Primes.

Rudolf Stingel: ...primes just...

CM-U: The picture plane. Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

CM-U: It's beautiful that way. I mean, I guess the white border, the white tacking edge...

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, it becomes very precious.

CM-U: I'm sorry?

Rudolf Stingel: It becomes very precious like this.

CM-U: It becomes very precious with the canvas exposed, or with...

Rudolf Stingel: With the canvas exposed.

CM-U: Yeah. So you see the fabric, so you have a sense of the fabric.

Rudolf Stingel: There is some, I don't know the tradition of – old master paintings are like this, you know? Because they primed the canvas once they had it stretched onto whatever they used.

M. Skopek: Yeah. It's also precious, because it's so neat, that just the surface is primed and the sides are _____ [phrase inaudible].

Rudolf Stingel: And you see the priming material working out [sounds like] _____ [phrase inaudible].

CM-U: And it definitely affects the sense of the weight of it, too. Yeah?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah.

[01:05:02]

CM-U: Okay. Shall we go into the next room?

Rudolf Stingel: Here.

CM-U: All right.

Rudolf Stingel: This is not sprayed with anything. Just, uh, first, I paint the painting black. Thick, but smooth. And I paint this kind of fading, you know. I make these areas a little lighter underneath there.

- CM-U: So there are two coats of paint, in fact?
- Rudolf Stingel: No, it's one coat of paint; but it's like paint in wet paint, you know. I make it like, certain – like lighter, certain areas...
- CM-U: Okay.
- M. Skopek: So you mix in white down in here?
- Rudolf Stingel: Hum?
- M. Skopek: You're mixing white in the _____ [phrase inaudible]...
- Rudolf Stingel: Like gray in...
- M. Skopek: Yeah.
- Rudolf Stingel: ...you know, and then I smooth it, and I manipulate it. It's like real painting. You do like a shine [sounds like] or something. Then you let it dry, and you come with the screen – same screen as the other ones.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- Rudolf Stingel: Same tulle screen. And you just cover the whole thing with thick oil paint, black, and you pull it off.
- CM-U: So these lines we see are the registers of the screen?
- Rudolf Stingel: No, these are, again, the same – these are too big for the tulle, so I had to seam it again.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- Rudolf Stingel: This is the seam where the tulle has been – before I applied the template for this, you know.
- CM-U: Right. Now what were you saying, it was different with this technique about the coloration, or the – that you had to do it day by day. You couldn't do it all at once, and that was affecting the appearance.
- Rudolf Stingel: No, that's this one (points to self-portraits). These.

CM-U: I'm sorry?

Rudolf Stingel: These.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Now this is a one-day...

CM-U: This is the process that we started with, really, then?

Rudolf Stingel: Right. Yes.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Except that you have to wait until the background and the first layer dries. Well, the black.

CM-U: Right.

[01:06:57]

Rudolf Stingel: No, here, on these paintings, sometimes you see a – well, if you look at the one over there, you see next to my forehead...

CM-U: Yeah, yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: ...there are some parts of it darker...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: ...it's not. It's almost the same color. It's just, it dried differently. It's matte because we went over something that was already painted. If you create a layer of paint, you create a layer that absorbs material differently than the primer. So it doesn't have the same thing. And for some reason, black is the color that shows all this.

CM-U: Yeah, it does. It does.

Rudolf Stingel: But it depends when, uh, you know – here you see, well, this is the...

CM-U: Yeah.

- Rudolf Stingel: We started. This was the first painting. We started in the left upper corner, and by the time – we didn't know that that was going to happen. So by the time we learned it, you know, then it got better.
- CM-U: Yeah. You definitely did. You got the hang of that. Right.
- Rudolf Stingel: But that was the...
- CM-U: But I like the idea that you left it. I mean, normally...
- Rudolf Stingel: You can't do anything about it – you can varnish the whole thing, then it's gone.
- CM-U: No, no, no. Oh, no, no, no.
- Rudolf Stingel: Of course. But it looks pretty bad in certain light, you know. Not just this, because you have these kind of things all over the painting, you know. It depends where you're – I don't know. This is a very flattering light in here.
- CM-U: Well, I can see here...
- Rudolf Stingel: Well, there is, but you also...
- CM-U: ...an attempt to kind of...
- Rudolf Stingel: ...you have it – wherever we start a one-day thing, you know, then you have it again [sounds like]. You have it probably here, you know, where this layer – you see, you have this matte here. And if you come here, you can see it. All around the pillow...
- CM-U: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, I see it.
- Rudolf Stingel: ...all these outlines. Look at the face.
- CM-U: I know. I've been looking at the face. I wondered about that yesterday, actually.
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. Because if you go over it, it would be apparent where you had to go over it. Except this is easier. This you can do with one day, you know.
- CM-U: _____ [word inaudible]

Rudolf Stingel: But not the face, though.

M. Skopek: Do you ever add any medium to your paint, or is it just straight?

Rudolf Stingel: No. Just a little bit of turpentine. Sometimes. But really, I try not to.

CM-U: But the size of them is such, you know, the impression is, you're not – that doesn't really affect the impression.

Rudolf Stingel: No. Especially not here in this lighting. If you have them – let's say, if you have a window over there, and you don't have these over – these lights here, then you would see it much more.

CM-U: But the more raking light...

Rudolf Stingel: Much more if you just had light from one side. If we turned on the wrong lights in the studio when we walked in, it looked horrible – shock.

CM-U: Shock.

Rudolf Stingel: It was, "Turn on all the lights. Turn on the lights."

M. Skopek: (laughs)

CM-U: But in essence it's a part of the process. It's a part of just _____ [phrase inaudible].

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. I wish I could avoid it, but, you know, this is not something I am now looking for; that I think this kind of painting does not – I have a feeling that it was not meant to show that kind of process or anything. No, this is more like – yeah, more traditional.

CM-U: Okay.

Rudolf Stingel: But I accept it, and I know there is nothing I can do about it.

CM-U: It's wonderful. We're happy to have that. Really happy to have it here.

[01:10:37]

CM-U: Wonderful. And this is stored rolled, I assume? Right? Or not?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. I never...

CM-U: Did it come in rolled or not?

Rudolf Stingel: I never stored it because I did it and it came straight to you from my studio. I don't know...

CM-U: Aren't we – I guess it just then went to the exhibition.

Rudolf Stingel: No, it went – it was in the Whitney Biennial last year.

CM-U: Right. And then it went to Chicago?

Rudolf Stingel: And then it went to Chicago. But I don't know from – if it stayed somewhere for...

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: No, it probably stayed here. You can fold this one, too. Or roll it. It's probably better to roll it though.

CM-U: Yeah. We'll have to see and think about that.

Rudolf Stingel: But those, I don't know about rolling. There's a lot of paint on it.

CM-U: I know.

Rudolf Stingel: But I even used – I mean, it's oil paint. It's quite flexible, I think, so...

CM-U: What was the order of these? Was this your first one?

Rudolf Stingel: One. Two. No, one, two, three.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Becket? Well, it's like this. One, I started this one. And then stopped. Did this one, and finished that one.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Rudolf Stingel: Actually. And *Alpino* was the last one, yeah. The soldier.

CM-U: Right.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. They're fabulous. They look wonderful here, too. Are you pleased with this installation?

Rudolf Stingel: Oh, yeah, it's great. I will never have, you know, so much space and such a room for these paintings, that I know that.

CM-U: Shall we end in the other room?

Rudolf Stingel: Um-hum.

[Stingel has brief encounter with a person in the hall—conversation not transcribed]

[01:13:08]

Rudolf Stingel: What now?

CM-U: What now. Expectations? Is this what you expected? Or are there things here that you would prefer not?

Rudolf Stingel: Well, I mean the first time I ever did this kind of installation, I didn't expect anything. I didn't know that people would actually go in, good, do something to it.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Rudolf Stingel: It was just supposed to be – it was the same time I did the Styrofoam (TM) scooping.

CM-U: Ah.

Rudolf Stingel: It was just supposed to be like a beautiful silver room with some cheap material. Then, people started doing it then, except that I liked it.

CM-U: Ah.

Rudolf Stingel: I have no expectations. Whatever happens is okay.

CM-U: And you said earlier that your intent is then to perhaps mount these in some way? I mean, this is a process? A work in process? Or how do you regard it?

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah, I mean this is then, comes down numbered, everything and comes to the studio, and I will think there what I am going to do to it. I did one other – one installation like this, but not as big. I made a sculpture, that – I recreated a room. Or rebuilt that room. But I lifted it up eight feet, so you can walk under it. You know like there's a steel structure and everything – you can go under and there's this chandelier there. So it's like a gazebo basically, you know you...

CM-U: Nice.

Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. But of some of the panels, in the past, I did mount them and make paintings out of them – finished paintings, so people are not supposed to touch them anymore. I don't know what I am going to do with these.

CM-U: It looks like some people have actually adhered things to it, besides.

Rudolf Stingel: Well, they do constantly, probably, and I ask them to take it off every day.

CM-U: Right.

M. Skopek: Everyday, we – they go around and take the Whitney stickers and stuff...

Rudolf Stingel: Otherwise, it would be full.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: In Chicago, it was completely three-dimensional.

CM-U: How funny.

Rudolf Stingel: And it becomes silly. It looks like a playroom. Like kindergarten, kind of, you know?

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: You take it off like this, it's more – I like it much better. It looks like more unaggressive [sounds like] like this, you know.

CM-U: I was told that the skin was so important, and that something like a hole like that is something that should – that an attempt should be made to...

Rudolf Stingel: What hole?

M. Skopek: Above the...

Rudolf Stingel: Oh. The skin wasn't _____ [phrase inaudible].

CM-U: We should do something. We should...

Rudolf Stingel: No, thing is that I didn't want people to rip out, you know, pieces and then take them home. That's it.

CM-U: Oh, I see. You mean, literally take chunks of it?

Rudolf Stingel: Well, that's what – if you let them do it, they'll do it. They'll just...

(laughter)

CM-U: It's New York, after all.

Rudolf Stingel: They'll take it. That's the thing. Uh, if something just happens, well then, what can you do? It's very hard to set limits...

CM-U: It is, it is.

Rudolf Stingel: ...to say you can do, but this you can't do anymore, you know?

M. Skopek: Well, but there we could cut a new piece and insert it?

Rudolf Stingel: You could, yes.

M. Skopek: Would that be acceptable?

Rudolf Stingel: I guess so. I've never done it, but yes, because you have the problem of here, no? Of the wall. (sticks hand into hole in wall)

- CM-U: Yeah, I know. It's another – it kind of...
- Rudolf Stingel: So it's _____ [phrase inaudible]. Just, you know, just cut it out and put the same material.
- CM-U: We could even use...
- M. Skopek: _____ [phrase inaudible]. I was saying we could just fit exactly the shape that's been poked out [sounds like].
- Rudolf Stingel: Yeah. But I wouldn't even mind if you did just the square, you know? Patching, really.
- CM-U: Hm. That would be more straightforward. Do you have more of this material in your studio?
- Rudolf Stingel: Of the raw panels?
- CM-U: Uh-huh.
- Rudolf Stingel: Uh, no, but you can order them at a hardware...
- CM-U: Oh, okay.
- Rudolf Stingel: Oh, you need it for you. Oh yeah, of course, we need it.
- CM-U: We would need it to replace...
- Rudolf Stingel: We need. We have as much...
- CM-U: You have smaller?
- Rudolf Stingel: To do this? Yes, yes, of course.
- CM-U: Oh, okay. That's probably what we should do.
- Rudolf Stingel: Of course.
- CM-U: I think, you know, particularly...
- Rudolf Stingel: We can also give you something very smart. We can give you some already (makes writing gesture).

CM-U: Oh! Very good. Very good. I like that. That's true restoration.

(laughter)

Rudolf Stingel: We could do that.

CM-U: Yeah.

Rudolf Stingel: Especially with the one in the back.

CM-U: That's a good idea, actually. Because it won't draw the attention to the...

(group walks around to examine another hole)

CM-U: Ah, yeah. Yeah, I think we need to repair these. Otherwise, it's going to encourage others to be so moved.

Rudolf Stingel: To do it, yeah.

CM-U: Yeah. So maybe we could be in touch with you, Becket, and try to do something like that.

M. Skopek: _____ [phrase inaudible].

Rudolf Stingel: Is there another full panel like this, no? There's another one, or, probably just cut.

CM-U: Just cut.

M. Skopek: It's also just encouraging people, the writing...

CM-U: Oh, writing on our wall! Right!

(laughter)

CM-U: Thank you. This has been really, really great. Is there anything else you would like to say for posterity about your technique?

Rudolf Stingel: No, no, not really. I don't know what to add, so it's good.

CM-U: Well thank you very much. It was really helpful and very interesting.

Rudolf Stingel: Thank you.

[END RECORDING]