



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Dennis Pinette

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Dennis Pinette
<b>Date:</b>	2005 Aug. 30-Sept. 1
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.pinett05
<b>Creator:</b>	Pinette, Dennis, 1951- (Interviewee) Larsen, Susan C. (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	46 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Dennis Pinette, 2005 Aug. 30-Sept. 1, Transcript</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

This interview is part of the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, started in 1958 to document the history of the visual arts in the United States, primarily through interviews with artists, historians, dealers, critics and administrators.

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## Biographical / Historical

Dennis Pinette (1951- ) is a painter from Belfast, Me. Interviewer Susan C. Larsen is an art historian, from St. George, Me.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Dennis Pinette conducted 2005 Aug. 30 and Sept. 1, by Susan C. Larsen, art historian, for the Archives of American Art, at the artist's home and studio, in Belfast, Me.

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## Scope and Contents

Pinette discusses his childhood in Williamstown, Mass., and Morristown, N.J., and his early fascination with industrial scenes and railroad sightings; his family and artistic bloodline from his maternal grandparents, Harold and Frances McMennamin; his education at Mount Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown; his first influential art teacher, John D. Maziarz; his secondary education at Hartford Art School where he studied with Rudolph Zallinger; his first job out of college for a picture framer in West Hartford, Conn., while at the same time continuing to paint at night; his marriage to Megan Pinette (née Smith) in 1975, and how they first met; the couple's easel-backed picture frame

business in Westerly, R.I., in the early 1980s, which they gave up to move to Maine and paint; their move to Belfast, Me., in the summer of 1983, when they bought the house in which they still live; the Artfellows art cooperative, started in Belfast in 1980; his shift back to realism from abstraction in the early 1980s; his wanderings in and around industrial parks in Maine, including the Maine Yankee Nuclear Power Plant in Wiscasset, to find inspiration for his canvases; his total refusal of the idea that his paintings have social or political messages to convey; his continuing fascination with the visceral quality of industrial scenes; his artistic influences, including American artists of the early twentieth century, such as Edward Hopper, John Sloan, William Glackens, Charles Sheeler, and Charles Burchfield, as well as later American artists such as Agnes Martin and Jackson Pollock; the influence and inspiration of Maine's varied landscape; his preferences for working, especially plein-air painting during the spring and fall; and his most recent series of works, which focus on fire and on water. Pinette also recalls Vito Acconci, Sol LeWitt, Bruce Brown, Stewart Henderson, Richard Norton, Yvonne Jacquette, Alex Katz, Linden Frederick, Stephen Pasterhoff, Neil Welliver, Dudley Zopp, and others.

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## General

Originally recorded on 2 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 2 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 20 min.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Painting -- Technique
- Painting, Abstract

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Occupations:

- Painters -- Maine -- Interviews