



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Richard Tuttle

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Richard Tuttle
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.tuttle16
<b>Date:</b>	2016 November 14-17
<b>Creator:</b>	Tuttle, Richard, 1941- McElhinney, James Lancel, 1952-
<b>Extent:</b>	3 Items (sound files (4 hrs., 4 min.); digital, wav) 59 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Richard Tuttle, 2016 November 14-17, 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.

### Available Formats

Transcript is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Richard Tuttle (1941- ) is a postminimalist artist and author in New York, N.Y. James McElhinney (1952- ) is a painter and educator of New York, N.Y.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview with Richard Tuttle conducted 2016 November 14 and 17, by James McElhinney, for the Archives of American Art, at Tuttle's home in New York, New York.

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## Scope and Contents

Tuttle recalls early memories at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; his mother's influence; family background from Pennsylvania, and Celtic ancestry; discussion of Calvinism; philosophies of art schools; discussion of Japanese language, literature and philosophy; designing book covers for Graham Greene; joining the air force and being honorably discharged; friendship with Agnes Martin; observations about the landscapes and

geology of New Mexico and the Lascaux caves; thoughts on Humboldt and other German philosophers, Husserl, Philipp Otto Runge, and others; Travel in Peru, and his recent exhibitions in Lima, Peru; discussion of religion, art, senses; discussion of philosophy: Epicurus, Lucretius. Tuttle speaks of his childhood; he describes his siblings and his brother serving in the Vietnam War; discussion of creativity, education and difficulty with teachers, and being a creative child; influence of his grandparents; influence of religion and German background; teachers and relationship to his childhood schools; discussion of the 2016 elections and comparison to Republican Rome and Julius Caesar; engagement in theater, and writing at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut; influence of Sam Wagstaff; Interest in Allan Kaprow; comparing Picasso and Matisse; discussion of the cultural history of Hartford; visiting New York City in high school and college and the encouragement of his high school teacher; early artworks and creation of Paper Cubes; briefly attending Cooper Union; working in the library at the Cooper Hewitt Museum; discussion of Beat poetry and Abstract Expressionism; discussion of Betty Parsons and speaking about the "invisible" in art; thoughts about color and eidos in respect to Gauguin; working at Parsons; the importance of Ad Reinhardt's work; discussion of Romanticism. Tuttle also recalls Betty Parsons, Agnes Martin, Mark Rothko, Sam Wagstaff, A. Everett Austin, Herbert Vogel, Allen Ginsberg and others.

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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:

Artists -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews  
Installations (Art)  
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews  
Printmakers -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews  
Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York -- Interviews

### Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings