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### A GALLERY TALK WITH ARTIST DENNIS FLAVIN LECTURE FINDING AID & TRANSCRIPT

<b>Speaker:</b>	Dennis Flavin
<b>Date:</b>	4/20/2013
<b>Runtime:</b>	41:07
<b>Camera Operator:</b>	Bob Quinn
<b>Identification:</b>	VX07; Video Exhibit #07
<b>Citation:</b>	Flavin, Dennis. "A Gallery Talk with Artist Dennis Flavin." CAM Video Lecture Series, 4/20/2013. VX07, Cape Ann Museum Library & Archives, Gloucester, MA.
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<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Finding Aid:</b>	Description: Karla Kaneb, 5/19/2020. Transcript: Heidi McGrath; Deborah Bishop, 4/15/2021.

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#### Video Description

Hear directly from the artist with this gallery talk by Dennis Flavin that features his works in the exhibition *Dennis Flavin – Uncommon Vision*, which was on display at the Cape Ann Museum from April 6 through May 26, 2013. Flavin first visited Gloucester in 1970 on an art scholarship and has since then been a resident for more than 35 years, during which time he became a well-known local figure at Halibut Point Restaurant and Bar. Concurrent with working at the

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restaurant, Flavin continued to paint in his individualistic and colorful style that is neither completely abstract nor completely representational, but in his own words, “never boring.” He speaks enthusiastically about the creative process behind the works that are on display and imparts his own unique approach to channeling his creative energy.

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### Subject list

Dennis Flavin	Abstract impressionism
The Fort (neighborhood)	Joe Solomon, “Cigar Joe”
John Terelak	

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### Transcription

Courtney Richardson 00:07

Welcome to the Cape Ann Museum. My name is Courtney Richardson. I'm Director of Education and Public Programs. This is easily one of my favorite types of programs because we don't often get to have an artist standing with us telling us about their inspiration and their process and their work. So, I'm just happy that Dennis is here. So, Dennis Flavin, everybody.

Dennis Flavin 00:34

Thanks for everybody coming to this beautiful museum and to see some of my work. We'll buzz around this whole room and see if this gentleman with his camera can keep up with me. But, I don't know if he can. But everybody's here I'm sure for different reason. And you've seen the work already, probably, hanging. I'm going to jump around probably as my mind starts to float, but anyways, this painting was done a long time ago. And all my paintings, if you look at them, eventually you'll see that even though when I went to school I learned to do the basics of drawing and painting, as soon as I got out I started, even realistically, but there's always going abstract somewhere in my painting. Somewhere, even when I did figure drawings or paintings when I was in school, I would always do the abstract shapes around her or the quick drawing to always do the big shapes first. Even this, which I haven't seen a long time actually, you can see I painted the person, which is a really good friend of mine, so you know who she is. You can see the background. But as you can see, I went nuts on the floor number one. And I don't know why, but that's what I did. And I painted the background in very, very simply. I just washed it in and I only, you know... So when I think about myself now as a painter, I say to

myself, am I abstract painter or what? Actually, I really don't know what I am because I just paint from my heart; just paint how I feel. And luckily I don't have to really worry about it too much. In this painting I worked a lot harder and I love this girl. And she was here the other day. This is how my artwork goes, and she hadn't seen it in like 20 years. And somebody in the room was in here looking at my work. I said, "This girl, right here, is the girl in that painting." And the lady said, "Is she really?" And I said, "She really is. Yeah," I said, "Tracy go stand over there." So she went just like this. Everybody looked at that, "Wow."

02:41

So then I started asking Tracy, who don't see that often, "Okay, Tracy, we know when this painting was done. We know what this painting is. It's my living room in my house I had Rockport before, but where did we do it because we didn't paint it there?" "Well we must have painted it there." So we didn't paint it in the living room, this big painting, because Peggy would never let us. That's my wife who's over there. Second of all, where'd the chair come from, and where did we sit and what studios are we doing in it? She didn't even know the answer either. I don't have it either. So we don't know exactly, where I actually ended up finishing it but I did the drawings in the room of this house we had. It was very interesting because we had the opening and this lady says to me you don't know me, but I bought this house from you in Rockport. And I said, "Oh, really nice to meet you." She goes, "Yeah, that looks just like my living room." I said, "It is your living room!" So somehow I brought this floor into this type of table across here. Usually a lot of my paintings are connecting lines. There'll be something that connects almost everything and you'll see it in that one in here. So we can move? Can we jump around a little bit?

03:54

Sure.

(Lots of background chatter of various people during moving process.)

Thanks. Hi, everybody know Mr. Quinn, this guy that is taking up all the room? Yes.

This is good.

Courtney 04:37

Come on in everyone.

Dennis 04:42

First, plus, is this thing going? Yeah, I want to thank the Museum for having my work here in the first place. Beautiful place. Okay, well this painting was owned by a friend of mine, that's another artist. I worked on this a long time ago. I know I did this down the Fort. And I can

remember doing a lot of this painting. It wasn't actually painted for a friend of mine but it reminds me of a guy called Cigar Joe. Joe Solomon was a famous painter here, is a really, really good friend of mine. He died in '99. But John Terelak walked into my studio were I was working, it was like half done, and he goes, "I'm gonna buy that." I go, "You kidding me?" He goes, "No, I want to buy it. So he bought it for almost nothing. I asked him for more money but he wouldn't give it to me. But, some of the things in this one, are kind of connected to that one, or all of them, because there's lines in here and the lines somehow I did, do my drawings too. They kind of flow along: everything is connected by a line somewhere in this piece. And I was looking at it the other day, because I haven't seen this in a long time either, and I know somebody's head's like, this head doesn't have a body. And there's a lot of strange things in this thing that, you know, I can't actually remember doing but you see this weird bottom? It's got the same type of weird bottom as that one over there even though it's completely different. This is done, some with the palette knife, and you know, is that abstract, is not abstract? I don't know. The word abstract doesn't really; I don't really go by abstract. I just go by just painting. And I feel the way I paint, I just paint. I don't know. Sometimes I have that emotion of paint. You could start off today and then I don't feel like it. So I'm working on something different. But when I got it roaring, and I really get the vibes in my body, I think I'm really going to let it rip. And I can fill up my palette and I can just paint. And that's why I love painting things like this or that. Because I, just in cases like that, I just look at the, I just look at the canvas. I start working on it, next thing I know it just starts flowing out of my body and I have the best time. I blast some music, and just let it rip. Mix, mix big, big mounds of certain paints.

I've always been like a colorist and I've always said that, when I was younger, to myself, just give me a shape, any shape that's interesting, and I can make it look good just with color. I just love color. And maybe that's why I've gone to less realistic painting, more into shapes and colors. It's not like I really plan it. Like I don't, I didn't draw that, or plan it. I just stretch the canvas and then said, okay, what am I gonna do? When I first went, started painting mostly out of my head, I put a big canvas at the end of my studio and I said, "Okay, it's time you have to do this, tried stuff. It's inside you, you got to change. I want to change. I got to do this!" So I walked up and put a big line on it and I stood way back like this and I said, "Holy crap, now I what am I gonna do with this big thing!" So I started making big shapes. And I got another canvas, made big shapes. I put them upstairs and then start doing other ones. And then I took the ones upstairs that were first done and then I, and then I painted over those. I paint over a lot of canvases, I shouldn't do. And then it got even simpler and I got freer with my color. Like in this case, I can remember putting the shapes under paintings of the different colors into different shapes. Under-painting, under-painting with different colors and different thicknesses and then just one day, in one room, where it was on an easel and I said, "I you know what, I'm just gonna

take some black and lay in some simple lines.” So I just started firing these lines and the whole thing (makes running sound). Sounds like a movie. And I just sit back I said, “That’s it, I’m done.” And that’s how I finished. I call it The Races, one of the newer ones in here, I think.

08:43

This is me, of course. I did a lot of self-portraits when I was younger. I used to do them all the time. You don't have to move. I did a lot of drawings myself when I was in college, I did a lot of drawings afterwards. I have a lot of black and white pencil drawings myself. I have a few oils, some I gave away.

This one I did in Lanesville and I don't know why I did it. But of course I did it. And here you can see I started making my furniture almost like cartoons I think. And when I first started doing this painting, I'll never forget the first thing I did, was I put two blue dots for my eyeballs. That's the first thing I did in the whole painting and then I painted everything else around it. I know sounds crazy, but I did do it. My favorite part of the painting, which I hate to say, is my sock and this ashtray I still have. And I didn't put any paint on it. This is just canvas, which I didn't remember for a long time. But that wall and this wall is the same wall. As you can see I completely change the colors of the walls and furniture and everything in it. This is a linoleum cut. There's linoleum cut in there and this is the same, it's the same, the exact same studio. This is the wall I was sitting against. But even that, the furniture dances in that a little bit. The front desk, and I don't make it mean to make it dance; really my stuff is not really realistic in the first place. I don't think.

Unknown

It looks like a typical bathroom or bedroom with the drawers out and everything does.

Dennis

And the back, when I saw this, I haven't seen it for a long time, James owns it. So when I sat and I looked at the books in the back there I said, “Man, I can't believe I had enough.” I was didn't fool around a lot. I just did enough to do, paint in those weird colors and all those millions of books. And they look like books.

This is a Joe Solomon painting that I have; a good friend of mine; great friend of mine. Anyways, different periods. This is, is a story. Well, this is a great, great, great, great friend of mine.

11:16

Yeah, as you can see, she has a problem with drugs. Everybody has some problem, but she had some serious problems. So it was tough situation. Anyways, I ended up getting her into a rehab. So I went to rehab to visit her all the time. One day I went in there, and I was so shocked at the situation, I came back and I did a drawing what I had seen about her. And meanwhile, I had learned a lot about heroin. Everybody knows what heroin is, but I didn't know the finer points about heroin. So she helped me, because she was a friend of mine. And taught me a lot of things. So I did a quick drawing and I think pastel or inks. And I came home and I just put this canvas up. I just painted the thing. I think I did it in one day. I just painted it and what. I did it for myself. Well this is what she looked like more or less. She was kinda screaming, she was kind of straightening out. She almost always wear this crazy black thing with dots on it and of course there's a needle, and the spoon. And she always told me her stomach was always empty. 'Cause it always felt empty because she'd eat, but didn't, you know, didn't really eat a lot. And then the lemon juice to quench her thirst. A lot of people shoot heroin don't drink a lot either. And she smoked camels, ate candy. This is called, this little package of heroin and that's called Power 95. It was a one of the strongest heroins back then. Then you can see this too is also, even this done a long time ago, I think, is also abstract in its own way. This is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>; everything's Friday 13th. These are AIDS hands reaching to grab her feet and this money going out the window. But as you can see even this, this floor is a floor goes right through the table. In this shape is not really the shape of a table. Even though it does look like a table and this table was all out of my head anyways, it's not like I had a table, but I don't know, it's just something I have. I've never shown that to anybody. It's always been up in my loft, in my studio.

Unknown

You have a name for it?

Dennis

Called My Friend.

Unknown13:28

The hands holding out to her, what's the significance of?

Dennis13:32

Those hands trying to grab her pull her in because she has AIDS, A I D S; fighting to pull her in. Then these are fantastic underwear, I think. I like those a lot. I don't know if she had those on but I like those a lot.

Unknown13:49

Dennis, did she see it?

Dennis13:51

Yes. She's seen it.

Unknown13:54

Has she recovered?

Dennis13:55

Yep. 100% Okay, that was like 30 years ago. Hundred percent recovered. Great job. Doing great.

Unknown

Is she the same woman out there?

Dennis

Yep. That's Serenity on that side.

Unknown14:09

What does she think about being in a museum?

Dennis14:12

I asked her. She's proud of it. It doesn't make any difference. Anyway why wouldn't you be? She's my good buddy.

Anyways, this one, which, which is some period, I don't know because I didn't date them. But Peggy, my wife, whose here somewhere, got mad at me, but, I got to a point where I said, "Man, I'm going to try doing something that most artists can't even do. I'm going to start getting some big canvases and I'm in this one room I have in my barn and I'm gonna paint like you've never seen." And I would mix my oils in pine containers, positive pine containers. And I just started, set up the canvases; I just started painting like two or three of these things and put it here. They took up so much room. It was a lot of work and a ton of paint. And the paint ended up covering my whole floor, which I knew was there but I didn't care. I said, "Other artists can't do this, I can do this." Like, it was so much fun. It was on the ceiling. It was on the walls. Then it got on my clothes and then I got a couple meat cutting coats from a friend of mine, but I didn't like them and I threw those away. Then I just worked on this stuff, and sweated. This probably has five coats of paint on it. Probably weighs 50 pounds. But I call it

Dreamlike. And it's one of my, like I think it's soft and it's really nice. I know they look different. But if you look at my paintings, there's not a lot of them here; but if you look at my paintings, they're all the same type of color scheme, I think, kind of. I don't know, but I still paint, just love paint. And I just love, I just finished a pastel yesterday, I like that too. I like all the mediums. They're nice. They're fun to work with. Come back here.

16:02

This guys gonna run out of tape.

Unknown chatter16:07

Dennis16:15

So, sometimes I'm really rockin'. When I finish a painting that was a lot of work, sometimes I just have some fun. So if I have a small canvas around hanging around, and I say, "You know what, I got a couple hours. I'm gonna see what I can do for fun." These are a couple of my fun paintings. There was four of them. Two of them are gone. Come on in. This one painting here; people don't know what the thing is on his head. They think its hair; they think it's a hat. I, when I did it, I thought was a hat. You can think whatever you want. I made the shoulders square. And I painted this probably, I don't know how long it took me, not long, and I just enjoyed painting it and I stuck it up my loft. People see it every once in a while you know, say, "Hey, it's kind of interesting painting." I call it The Smoking Lady. It is a lady, some people don't know its a lady, but doesn't make any difference. But then that you can see the shapes they're all there is a red shape, a face, shape here, shape up top. And you can see there's a lot of paint underneath it, there's must be an old painting underneath it.

17:30

And same with that guy over there. There's the glasses, whipped them up. I don't know. I just felt like doing something. I don't know where his forehead came from. He's supposed to have a light forehead. I don't know where that came from. That's just a bunch of muck on there but, it can't, it works. And the shape of his t-shirt; he looks beat. So I guess, I think it worked out in the end.

17:52

And this painting behind you that everybody really likes, a lot of people really like. This started as a very complicated painting because they think I'm, I am a complicated person; I try not to put too much into my paintings. But this was completely lined out with leaves and some type of strange odd birds. And it came down to, like some other type of props like that. And then I said, "This is a stinking nuts and that's just way too much." So I came over here and I

wiped out some one day. And then I wait though some another color. And then I came in another day. So, man, this is terrible. So I left the leaves that come out of here, I decided to have them come up from here; so they kind of in the middle of coming up. And I said, these just can't sit there and I can't paint the blue; I can't paint the red around. So I just took a bunch of different greens and blues I had and I made this odd shape around these leaves, which I painted. So it was gonna be called The Birds or something when I first, when I first started. I don't know. It was easy to name neither, but there's nothing left. So I figured I'd put a little nest in there and just write "egg." That's the only thing left from the original painting. And the red, when I looked at it, I just started thinking about the colors and making them simple on the outside and you know, red, blue and green really, and the leaves are just you know, things I just kind of just painted in there as I was moving along. But, it's a vibrant painting. And I first when I did I put up my loft. I said "Nobody's gonna like this painting." But then somebody found it and brought it down. Everybody likes it. Got me.

19:34

And these two are small paintings I did. They're pretty simple. That one, people talk about having bolts in it. It does look like bolts. And I was in this period and was starting to do like eyes. And I would just put eyes in paintings. If you look around you see these eyes. But then they make up, just the ones. Who wants to look at just an eye? So then make them round, make 'em square, make the eyeball square, make it bigger. And I just put them in there for something, just for me to view at. And I left some in that one. And I just worked my way around it. And the colors are this, this probably is the best color; most important color I put in here, which I really realize as its hanging here. Because this red dot here is all down here. But this brings the whole thing together. Because when you paint, whenever I put a color in one area of my paintings, of any painting, that color usually shows up someplace else. Because that's where your eye works. Your eye doesn't want to focus on one color or one paint. If you take this color out you always look at the red. If you take if you take this and show the red now you look at the whole painting. That's how it is. That's how I do almost all my paintings. I mean, this is strange color over here. Same way in my pastels. I'll put that color; I'll take a little of that color and put up here. Not the same shape, the same size, but it'll be in here. It'll be there somewhere, somehow, either under something or over something. And sometimes I go back and draw on my paintings. Be, that's something I've always done. And I do it, I do some etchings I do, some pastels and sometimes I just get it. Then I just put paint on a canvas and then I look at a few days and take some blacks or dark browns and I just paint into it wherever I feel. And then go back and take those shapes and make those simpler and then I make them more interesting. Then I change the background. Then I change the shapes. Then I change the whole thing. And you know my wife comes in says, "You know, you've got five good

paintings on that one canvas you keep painting over it. You know, leave it alone.” I said, “I can’t, I can’t do because I just noticed that things I just paint out.” “Stop using black all time”. So, I cut back on my black. And you see I do pretty good with black. If you look around, I think I am.

Anyway, is there any questions? I think that's covered everything, hopefully. I don't know if you have any questions or not.

Unknown

What, what's the music you listen to Dennis?

Dennis

Listen all types of music, but I went for that classical stuff for a while. I bought like 12 classical albums and I put them all away. Yeah, that was that didn't work. A lot of Pink Floyd but not the really crazy metal Pink Floyd. I listen to a lot of...I mean, I feel a little Broken Social Scene, a lot of music, a lot of piano, you know, some jazz. You know, nothing, not, not like the rock runs tour as a college because I just I don't get into it anymore, I guess I don't know. But I do have music going all the time. I have to have music.

Unknown

You drink with it?

Dennis

Drink with music?

No, I drink water

Why? You think I'd do a better job? Mr. Quinn

This painting, it doesn't really show what it really is. The lighting's not quite as good on this painting. This painting lights up a lot more. It's a lot more interesting. I never varnished my paintings until a friend of mine varnished a couple. Which is. that when it's actually shiny it does bring the colors out. But I've always loved playing it straight. I don't know why. But sometimes if you mix a lot of medium in your paints they stay more shinier. Mix a lot of turpentine with them; the pigment kind of dies out a little bit. All my paintings have layers of colors on it because I can't put one color on this section. All of a sudden I say, “Oh man, I love that color.” Why, I can't just leave it there. So I got to paint over a color here. So I say, “Where should it be?” So I place or break up another color, the same color over here is. The paintings, I can't, I don't plan anything ahead of time. Guy told me once when I was younger, “You have to know what your paintings will look like when you're done.” I don't even know what a paintings gonna be when I start. If I knew what was gonna be, there was gonna be like when it's done, it would

be too boring for me to do in the first place. So I don't even think like that. I get in front of a canvas, I have an idea, I get the colors on it. I work on four or five, six things at the same time. I keep my palette out all the time. My brushes out all the time. My etchings out all the time and inks out all time. My pastels out all the time. Because I have a job, when I go home I want everything in front of me so I could paint for two hours or three hours or four hours. Or I can paint for 15 minutes. And I'll go with whatever I feel like doing it at that time. I'm always buying new colors or researching different inks, oils. Pastels I just got from England. There's all different types of things you can do with different mediums, different finishes.

Framing, I don't know anything about and I have a lot to learn. And it's something I never really bothered with because I really don't show my work a lot. I just do my paintings so when they dry, just store them upstairs in these racks I have. But when I finish a pastel which I was worked on for a long time, I consider a long time, and I put a lot of pastel on it. Matter of fact I thought I was killing myself. Because I was breathing in, these floors so much color and so much pigment because they're so soft they fall on the floor, that I had to stop to then get the vacuum cleaner and mop and everything. Because I think I was starting to goof up my sleeping and everything, I'm not sure. But, when you finish the pastel it's really, you think as good, has a lot of work on it you have to frame it. Because you can put it in a drawer put a piece of paper on it and put it in the drawer, that's fine. But now if you want to take it out once to show it to somebody, you take it out once you put something on top of it. There goes some pastel. Show another one, there goes some more pastel; no matter how much fixative. So you either got it put it behind glass the right way, after the fixers on it, or it's not going to be the same pastel. So you can keep it, but won't be the same. And you try and check out fixatives. For the history of pastels nobody's really known how to really fix a pastel, because they just don't. It's just a tricky thing. And if you really go way back, they said they used to lay pastels on the floor and put like cardboard or some kind of paper on them and then the artist would walk on it and push the pastel as much as you could in the paper. Actually pick up the drawing and shake a little bit, take the excess off. That's how they get the pastels to stay in there. But that's just another art form of what you have to do. Hi, Martha.

Yes. Well I think I heard you say...

Dennis26:48

Wow, I feel like a teacher for a second.

unknown26:54

I'll try to keep that part down.

I think I heard you say that, you're a complex person but you like to keep that out of your work.

Dennis27:02

I try.

Unknown27:05

So I was wondering since you're not very

Dennis27:10

I know why. I would even do it.

What do you mean?

Dennis

Because I have some controls like, at least getting my inside feelings and I can let my energy come through. But there's color and stuff like that that has to work as a team in my brain. If I didn't, I would paint over my paints so much that I would I would get frustrated and I wouldn't even know where I started.

Unknown27:37

I see you're saying you want to get some distance.

Dennis

Like I love this and I walk in the studio and I now I don't have those emotions. I gotta do something. I gotta put on music or take a walk, or jump out, jump around. Or don't do anything, or work on an etching, etchings. Or what you could you draw those for him and it's more of a time consuming thing. But the oils, it's not worth mixing oil on palette unless you can do this, you know what you're going in. When I mix paints I don't make little dobs like this. I mean, I'm talking about squeezing things like this. You know, I mean, I have tons of paint, I squeeze them all on. And I buy rags. And I buy brushes all the time. And I buy canvas. And you have these materials available when you go to school, go to art school. The most important thing is to learn your tools. Now when you get out, then you can take them and change them the way you want. Especially when you get older. The older I get the even more I experiment. The more at ease in my paintings, and the more fun I have. I don't have to look back and say, "Wow, I did that 20 years ago. I can't do it anymore." Well I don't want to do that anymore. You know, I mean, musicians change. Everybody changes. If I stay the way it did before I'd be bored stiff by now. I be painting the same stinken' thing all the time. You know, I mean, people say, "Well why don't

you paint like that?" Because I don't want to paint like that. Luckily, I can paint whatever I want to paint. And I've always done that. And that I can't change that at all.

Unknown29:08

Do you like Jackson Pollock? I mean, like some of your work looks like...

29:13

I like Jackson Pollock and I like his whole lifestyle. Most people don't like Jackson Pollock. I know a guy that met him was a he was an artist. He said, because he grew up in New York, he's the guy died '99, he said, "I met him once. He's just a big drunk." Well, yeah, maybe a big drunk. But the guy that was close to saying that, the guy, who was painting really straight type of still life and stuff like that, of course, he didn't like Jackson Pollock because Jackson Pollock was far ahead of his time in what he did. If you look Jackson Pollock's work, I don't study it. I don't want to paint like that. I don't care. I know you might think some may look like it, but I'm not dripping anything with a stick. He did, he did live some, some artist's type life you know. I could never be happy living like by myself, you know to be an artist, live in a loft and all that kinds stuff. Always wanted to have, get married, have house, have some children, you know. I wanted to do both. So that's why I have a job and I paint almost around it. But hopefully, the future will be much more painting and less work. That's my future I'm looking for; if I can stay alive. You know, that's the hardest part.

Unknown30:24

Have you gotten away from Terelak like a great deal in your mind? He is your teacher. Did you study with Terelak?

30:31

Terelak? No, he was one of my teachers. I was in college, he brought me up here. He in my own paint, like he would take me painting in Vermont. And he was a, he's a really great friend of mine. I mean, he's a great friend of mine. I've known him for a long time. And he would say I will paint in Vermont. I'd say this stinks. We're looking at these mountains and trees. You know, he wanted to paint sugar shack and I'd say, "John I can't paint that crap." So he goes, "Just try it." So okay, so he's painting he doing his style, which is really good. And then here's mine: color, color, color, color, color, color, color, color. You can't tell it's a tree. I bring it back and look at the thing. What is that? Its just colors because I can't just go out and paint those kind of trees. It just, I just have to paint like what I feel, what I see. I can't, I just can't do it. Portraits I could do. If I set a person down and I want to paint some beautiful girl or some friendly, some something really nice. I could, I think. If someone had character, a guy, you know, tons and tons

of wrinkles. Really that, that'd be really fun to do that, you know, I'd love to do that. But I'm sure if I started with the person's head, it's might change to a completely different thing. But it will be a person, but I don't know what's going to be around him.

Unknown31:47

What is your most recent painting?

Dennis31:49

In here, man? Oh, Some Hot Day. Yeah. The little one that's pointing this way, that's over there huh? That was really fast, quick painting. What was my first? The bureau, now, bureau's old. You can tell, like I said, my paintings are more realistic back then but they're still abstract at the same time in their own way. I'm just trying to find shapes and I keep saying big shapes but as you can see these aren't big shapes. But, they're shapes. And for some reason to me, I love painting those more than I like painting. I just love putting the colors. I, you know, if I looked at some flowers. I can't just paint that. I can't stare at the flower and paint every one. I could paint every little thing. This is this, and if I look at red flowers, well, half are gonna turn out green anyways. People say, "why the green?" I said, "Because if I stared enough I see some green in it." I can't, can't help myself. I, my eyes; I don't know what it is. But my colors change and my colors are really different; my palettes, different. I put lot of colors on my palette; I mix a lot of colors. Most people don't do that. They have the same palette. I don't have the same anything.

Unknown33:08

Can you talk about the painting on the left?

Dennis33:11

This one on the left? Now it's funny that you say that because I think, at this time I got a vase of flowers. I think. And I'm sure they died before I painted them because I usually don't paint them when I get them. But as you can see, it is flowers because I know that these leaves are sticking up and almost look like sunflower. But it's not. And I just started painting the flowers, threw the flowers out because if I look at them they wouldn't come out like I want. It would drive me nuts because then you go half flower, half Dennis. It doesn't work like that, because it has to be Dennis. If you put the flower in there too much, it goofs up Dennis. So Dennis has to be free; the my side of painting has to be free and open. And I know it's a simple thing. There's no really base on it which is strange because it would be floating. But this in, this in, this little off color of yellow here kind of holds it down; because if there's nothing to hold it down or to keep your eyeball there, the object would be floating. This, had this painting is probably three or four deep.

Unknown34:19

So that's not a face on the right?

34:22

No, if you can see, you can see it. That's like asking Bob Dylan what do your songs mean; he goes wherever you think. But people see all different things in my paintings. People, some people like the colors. When we had the opening even today, like Cynthia said this is really my favorite painting you know. And other people say, another person said The Kaleidoscope, the abstract over there, was her favorite painting. You know, I really like to hear that everybody likes different, different paintings in this place. It's very interesting to me, really is interesting; because it's so nice. When I can paint my studio what I want to paint and not worry because somebody's gonna like something that I do, as long as I keep bright and you keep them clean, you know, you keep them fun to look at. My paintings never get boring. If you know, if you had one, you could look at and see a thousand things. That should never get boring. You know? Like, click on one thing all the time.

Unknown35:21

Some of these are signed very prominently.

Dennis

I know Isn't that weird? Yeah. I don't know. That's terrible. I would never put that big green Flavin on there! And if you look at that one its dark and it only says "Flave".

35:36

And you know something else? See that big one in there? I just noticed it's not even signed. Yeah.

Unknown

Just coming in here. I noticed that this one signed and there's one over there...

Dennis

And I don't like signing paintings. I worked on a pastel yesterday. I worked on a pastel probably off and on for a couple months. And I'll bet a month. And it took me about 45 minutes to figure out to sign if. So I signed it and I go, "That's Bad, that's bad." I tried to hide it in the bottom corner. And so then I put another color over that one so you can see, you can't see it. So that's it. Thing's stinking done. I'm done with that thing. I'm going back into my oils again.

Unknown

I want to know when you decided to become an artist or knew you were going to be one.

Dennis

Long time ago

Unknown

As a child or something like that?

Dennis36:23

Probably when I was in high school, I think maybe a little earlier in high school. But my grandfather did a little bit. But I know I always liked it. And I always, the weirdest thing was I'd always take something and change it. You know I was in art school I take something and change it. They'd say, "How'd you come up with that?" I said, "I don't know what, just came up with it." But I always wanted to be a painter; always wanted to be an artist. Always wanted to have a family. I always said marry somebody now from same time I was one. And I always have, like two or three kids. So far I've done everything. And I'm married 40 years and have my restaurant for 30. And now my paintings coming into my, more into my head, my brain, my life and everything. You know this is big for me, this show is big for me. There are a lot of people, and I love people looking at it. You guys, you come to my studio if you like to see it. Because I don't have many guests, many visitors. I'll say, "You want to see a painting?" I climb up the ladder, take the painting down, throw it on the bed. I put it on a floor and, you know, it's dark, you can't see it. There's no frame. It's completely different from this beautiful museum. I mean, it's absolutely beautiful. Paintings here look absolutely great. The whole room, whole museum is beautiful. People came to see the show and they said, "I can't believe this museum's here." And then other people came, "I came here 20 years ago, but it's same place?" I go, "Yeah, it's the same place."

37:42

I said Harold Bell and all the people that worked here, helped build a new wing. And as you can see the museum's changed a lot. And they're going to close a little bit to do some more lighting work, because I like that the contemporary arts are here. Which is very exciting, especially for the whole town. You send anybody here; we send a lot of people from the restaurant. Nobody ever says, "I didn't like the museum," I mean, everybody likes it. It's very homey. Like, I went to the Gardner museum last year, and I couldn't stand it. I went there all the time. I went there all the time when I was in college. Used to go there and draw and it was a nice old museum, right?

Then they put that big glass addition on it and you walk in there; there's no artwork, and there's offices upstairs and there's noise and Isabella would have had a heart attack. I do not like that museum anymore. Yeah, I like this much better.

Unknown38:35

My dad built this, this wing here. Harold Dexter, and Austin Falk, the mason, they built this wing; home grown boys.

Unknown38:50

Is that a Homer in the next room?

Dennis

This place is solid too.

Unknown

The big painting, the next room on the left.

Dennis38:56

Homer, no, people think its Homer. I don't know what it is. This guy, it looks like a turtleneck to me. Doesn't that guy look like a turtleneck? Look how ugly that neck is. I mean, it's got big veins red, blue.

Unknown

Dennis, I want to ask you a question. Did you have trouble choosing, selecting pieces for the show?

Dennis

Yes

Unknown39:21

Did you participate in the hanging?

Dennis

No. The museum. I thought I was; framing was tough enough. And I didn't even have them framed the way I wanted because I'm learning everyday about framing. You look at little rooms over there; some of these old paintings that they have. These artists made their own beautiful frames and they are just fantastic. My paintings; it was very hard to pick out which paintings

were going to be hung in here. And I really didn't know what to do, so I had help. And now we have them framed and then Martha told me to bring them up. We brought him up here. Very funny, U-Haul truck, came up, stacked them in there. And I said, "Oh man, we're gonna go frame with Matt," My friend Matt, wherever he is, who helped me. Without him I'd be dead. Right over there, Matt Swift. And we came up to do it, the next thing I know Martha's here with a couple of guys that work here, and they're so professional, and they just looked at them. And Matt had already mapped them out saying which ones go on which walls, and we made a couple of adjustments. And there's no arguments, no fights or nothing.

40:28

I was so happy to be here, I didn't care if they hang them upside down.

Unknown40:37

Well, it's a nice showing.

Dennis

Thanks; thanks very much. Thanks for coming.