

The Museum of Modern Art

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JACKSON POLLOCK: DRAWING INTO PAINTING FIRST MAJOR POLLOCK EXHIBITION IN EUROPE IN OVER TWENTY YEARS

JACKSON POLLOCK: DRAWING INTO PAINTING, an exhibition of 69 drawings, two prints and 9 paintings by one of the most influential and acclaimed American artists of the twentieth century, will open at _____ and remain on view there until _____.

The exhibition, which has been organized under the auspices of The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, is circulating to five European cities (Oxford, Dusseldorf, Lisbon, Paris and Amsterdam).

The first major exhibition of Pollock's work to be seen in Europe since the comprehensive 1958 exhibition which was also organized by the International Program of The Museum of Modern Art, JACKSON POLLOCK: DRAWING INTO PAINTING underscores the relationship and the distinctions between drawing and painting in Pollock's work and the ways in which he broke down the traditional barriers between them. Ranging from a number of the artist's early drawings of the 1930s to drawings done in the 1950s -- Pollock died in 1956 -- the exhibition emphasizes the close connection between Pollock's innovative approach to the problems and processes of drawing and the great "drip" paintings of 1946-1950, perhaps his most characteristic and certainly his best known works. The selection of

paintings in the exhibition, including Number 8, 1949, Number 18, 1951, Number 26, 1951, Brown and Silver II, and Numbers, 1952, among others, further establishes this connection.

Lenders to the exhibition include leading museums and private collections in both the United States and Europe. Among the American lenders is the artist's widow, the painter Lee Krasner. European museums who have contributed to the show include the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; the Graphische Sammlung, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart; The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; the Kunstmuseum Berne, Walter Hadorn Collection; and the Galerie A. Schmela, Dusseldorf, West Germany.

JACKSON POLLOCK: DRAWING INTO PAINTING has been directed by Bernice Rose, Curator of Drawing at The Museum of Modern Art, who also wrote the catalogue which accompanies the exhibition, a revision of an earlier study Jackson Pollock: Works on Paper, published in 1969 by The Museum of Modern Art with The Drawing Society.

Born in Cody, Wyoming in 1912, Pollock lived in the West, principally Arizona and California, till the age of seventeen. From 1929 to 1931 he studies at the Art Students League in New York under Thomas Benton, one of a group of American painters who in violent reaction against modern innovations of European art were committed to the subject matter of "the American scene" and painted in a style combining realism with energetic rhythms and expressive distortions. Beginning about 1935 Pollock was

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inspired by the expressionist violence of the Mexican painters Orozco and Siquieros. A few years later, his attitude toward painting was revolutionized by the work of European moderns especially Picasso. The earliest works in the present exhibition are a number of drawings done in the late 1930s and early 1940s, which demonstrate Pollock's relationship to Picasso's style of the same period and also his departures from it. By 1943 when he had his first one-man show in New York, Pollock's work showed the influence not only of Picasso but also of the international surrealist movement with which he had come into direct contact through such artists as Ernst, Masson, and Matta, who resided in New York during the war years. Pollock and a number of his American contemporaries soon adapted to their own purposes surrealist devices like "Automatic writing" in which they found a stimulus to a freer means of expression. It was these expressive means rather than associated ideas or literary references which became the essential content of the work of art among the young American artists who later became known as "Abstract Expressionists." As Ms. Rose observes: "Pollock joined the romantic motivations and attitudes underlying Surrealism and the automatic techniques for implementing their expression to abstraction, using the structures of abstraction as a basic premise...It is in the transference of the freedom of automatic drawing to automatic painting that Pollock's style is created."

Beginning in 1946, and continuing in the next few years, Pollock shed remaining surrealist and psychological symbolism and began to work in a purely abstract mode. It was at this time that Pollock accomplished, in

Ms. Rose's words, "the translation of drawing into painting by the fusion of draftsmanship, paint, and color in a technique radically graphic in execution, achieving for the first time a homogeneous style. Pollock's expressive line of dripped and poured paint was the same time object, means and color." In the "drip" paintings, Pollock employed enamel and aluminum paints which he poured directly from a stick or can or spattered onto the canvas with a syringe rather than applied conventionally with the brush. Ms. Rose notes that "after 1947 the only distinction that can be made between Pollock's painting and drawing, if there is in fact a real one, is related to the degree to which line describes figures. Because drawing apparently meant figurative delineation to Pollock, the more painterly the work, the less figurative; the most painterly works, whether on paper or canvas, are nonobjective."

Pollock himself, in a note cited by Ms. Rose in her catalogue text, reflected on the relation of drawing -- line -- and the "drip" paintings in his work: "Most of the paint I use is liquid, flowing...the brushes are used more as sticks and do not touch the surface...I'm able to be more free... and move about...with greater ease...it seems to be possible to control the flow of paint to a greater extent...I deny the accident...I have a general notion of what I'm about and what the results will be...I approach painting in the same sense one approaches drawing, that is, it's direct..."

JACKSON POLLOCK: DRAWING INTO PAINTING follows the important exhibitions of the artist's work which have been organized by The Museum of Modern Art both in New York and abroad. In the winter of 1956-57 the

Museum presented a major showing of Pollock's work in an exhibition directed by Sam Hunter. This was followed by the exhibition, organized by the Museum's International Program and directed by the late Frank O'Hara, which was first seen in the IV Bienal of Sao Paulo and later circulated to a number of leading European museums. This latter exhibition, along with the NEW AMERICAN PAINTING directed by Dorothy Miller under the auspices of the International Program, established the artistic validity and public reputation of American "Abstract Expressionism" in Europe. (It is worth noting in this context that as late as 1958 no European museum owned a Pollock.) In 1967 the Museum organized the largest, most comprehensive retrospective of Pollock's art. Directed by William S. Lieberman, it was followed in 1968 by a circulating exhibition Jackson Pollock: Works on Paper, organized by Bernice Rose.

The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, a group of art patrons and collectors from the United States and 22 other countries, is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to facilitate international understanding through the exchange of exhibitions in all the visual arts and through other educational projects. Another major exhibition that is touring Europe this year under the auspices of the International Council is AMERICAN ART FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.

The Chairman of The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art is Prinz Franz von Bayern. Mrs. Alfred Stern of New York is President. Waldo Rasmussen is Director of the International Program.