

Jackson Pollock 1912 - 1956

Paris art Studies Winter 2009

Jackson
Pollock 1912 - 1956

1912 – Born in Cody, Wyoming youngest of 5 sons son of LeRoy (Roy) Pollock farmer and land surveyor and Stella May McLure. Family moves to California.

1913 – Family moves again to Phoenix, Arizona.

1917 – Roy buys a hotel, the Diamond Inn, in Jamesville CA.

1920 – Roy leaves home though he maintains contact with family.

1921 – Stella abandons hotel for small farm near Chico. The older boys attend high school in Chico, the youngest, including Jackson live with her.

1922 – His older brother Charles moves to Los Angeles where he enrolls at the Otis art institute. Sends back home copies of the Dial, a monthly cultural review that will provide Jackson with his first exposure to art.

1923 – Roy finds surveying job in Phoenix. Family moves briefly back with him.

1924 – Stella and her 3 youngest sons move to Riverside, California.

1926 – Charles moves to New York City where he registers as a student of the “regionalist” painter Thomas Hart Benton

at the Art Students League. Jackson graduates from Elementary school and enrolls in manual Training School in Riverside.

1927 – Jackson works with his brother Sande with surveying team at Grand Canyon in the summer. Has his first drink.

In the fall joins Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) but is expelled for fighting while drunk.

1928 – Family moves to Los Angeles without Roy. Jackson enrolls at Manual Arts High School in the art department. His teacher FJV Schawnkovsky introduces him to the writings of Krishnamurti and the theosophist Rudolf Steiner.

1929 – Expelled for disciplinary problems but later re-admitted to high school.

1930 – Second expulsion. Finally joins his brothers Charles and Frank in New York City. Enrolls in Art Students League under Benton.

1931 – Hitchhikes with friend back to Los Angeles where he visits museums and galleries. Works briefly as lumberjack.

Enrolls in Benton’s mural class and is privately tutored by artist. Charles marries Elizabeth England.

1932 – Summer trip to LA where he is introduced to Mexican muralist painter David Alfaro Siqueiros living there in exile.

Moves in with Charles and Elizabeth in a 2-room apartment on Carmine Street in Greenwich Village.

1933 – Enrolls in and quits two painting and sculpture classes. Moves into new apartment with Charles and then tries to live in room of his own on 58th St. Roy Pollock dies of heart disease.

1934 – Starts visiting Bentons regularly in Martha’s Vineyard. Cross country trip in 1926 Model T with Charles. Moves to cold water flat above lumber yard on Houston St. where he is joined by his brother Sande. They work as cleaners in City and Country School on 12th St. where Charles teaches.

1935 – Enlists with WPA Federal Art Project. Paints Orozco-style mural on his studio wall. Joins with Sande (who had worked with Siqueiros in LA) the mural division of WPA. Moves with Sande to 8th St. apartment vacated by Charles and Elizabeth who have moved to Washington to work at Resettlement Administration.

1936 – Cubism and Abstract Art exhibition at MoMA.

Jackson and Sande participate in art workshop run by Siqueiros. They experiment with enamel paint and unconventional methods of applying paint including dripping, pouring and airbrushing. Sande marries Arloie Conaway who moves in with brothers in 8th St. apartment. Brothers along with Philip Goldstein (later P. Guston) visit Dartmouth in NH to see Orozco's mural the Epic of American Civilization.

Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism exhibition on view at MoMA. First meeting with Lenore (Lee) Krasner.

1937 – Encouraged by Sande begins psychiatric treatment for alcoholism with Jungian analyst.

1938 – Contract with WPA terminated due to "continued absence." Committed to New York Hospital division in White Plains as "voluntary patient." Reassigned to easel division of WPA.

1939 – Begins analysis with Dr Henderson a another Jungian analyst who encourages him to bring his drawings as interpretative tools to sessions. Sees Picasso's Guernica at Valentine gallery and then major Picasso retrospective at MoMA.

1940 – Watches Orozco at work on mural at MoMA. Period of depression and hard drinking with little painting. Change of therapist after Dr Henderson moves to California.

1941 – Indian Art of the United States exhibition at MoMA. Pollock observes Navajo artists execute sand paintings at show. Declared unfit for military service. Arrival of Peggy Guggenheim in NYC with her art collection from Europe.

1942 – Exhibits Birth at McMillen Inc. in influential exhibition entitled American and French Paintings that includes works by Picasso, Matisse, Derain and American artists like Stuart Davis, Walter Kuhn and Lee Krasner. Impressed by Birth Lee contacts him again. This the beginning of a long term relationship. From now on Lee will encourage and support Pollock and effectively promote his art. Critic James Sweeney visits Pollock's studio and recommends his art to Peggy Guggenheim. Sande and his wife leave the 8th St apartment, Lee moves in with Jackson. Opening of Guggenheim's gallery, Art of this Century on 57th St. Pollock ends his therapy with Dr Laszlo. Shows The Flame in Artists for Victory exhibition at the Met.

1943 – Exhibits Collage at Art of this Century and shows again in gallery's Spring Salon for Young Artists after his painting Stenographic Figure is remarked on by Piet Mondrian. On the recommendation of Marcel Duchamp, her director James Putzel and Sweeney, Peggy offers Jackson a one-man show in November, the first for an American artist at her gallery. He signs a contract offering him \$150 a month as an advance on sales. He can now paint full time. Peggy further commissions a mural for the front hall of her house on 61st street.

1944 – MoMA buys *The She-Wolf* from his show for \$ 650. The Pollocks rent a studio for the summer in Provincetown. In NYC Pollock makes prints at Stainley William Hayter’s Atelier 17. *The She-Wolf* is published in Sidney Janis’s *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America*.

1945 – Solo show at Arts Club in Chicago. Second show at Art of this Century. In his review of the show in *The Nation* Clement Greenberg champions Pollock as the ”strongest painter of his generation.” Guggenheim doubles his stipend against near-exclusive rights to his work. Lee and Jackson marry in October and move to a farmhouse in Springs, Long Island near Accabonac harbour. The Pollock family visits for Thanksgiving. The couple spends the winter fixing up the house.

1946
– Pollock resumes painting in make-shift studio in upstairs bedroom. Third solo show at Art of this Century. Converts his barn into a studio. Participates in at the Whitney “annual” most important contemporary American art museum exhibition.

1947
– 4th solo show at Art of this Century. Shows Peggy’s Mural at MoMA exhibition of large scale paintings. Peggy decides to return to Europe and to close Art of This Century. She persuades dealer Betty Parsons to represent Pollock. At this time he perfects the technique of working spontaneously with liquid paint. After his move to Springs, he began painting with his canvases laid out on the studio floor, and developed what was later called his "drip" technique. The drip technique required paint with a fluid viscosity so Pollock turned to then new synthetic resin-based paints, called alkyd enamels. He used hardened brushes, sticks and even basting syringes as paint applicators. Pollock's technique of pouring and dripping paint is one of the origins of the term “action painting”.

1948 – First solo show at Betty Parsons gallery. Receives \$ 6000 from Eben Demarest Trust thanks to the support of Sweeny. Begins treatment for alcoholism with Dr Heller in East Hampton.

1949 – Second show at Betty Parsons’s. Signs contract with gallery. Life Magazine publishes the article “Jackson Pollock: Is he the greatest living painter in the United States?” with photos of the artist at work on paintings on the floor. Shows with other, soon to be called, Abstract Expressionists (Baziotes, Gorky, Hoffman, de Kooning, Motherwell, Reinhardt, Rothko, Tobey…) in *The Intrasubjectives* at Samuel Kootz gallery. Third solo show at Betty Parsons.

1950 – MoMA buys *Number 1A* from Parsons show. Dr Heller dies in car accident. Pollock stops his treatment. Shows 3 paintings in USA pavilion of Venice Bienalle. Hans Namuth takes 200 photos of Pollock at work in the summer in his barn studio. 20 of Peggy’s Pollock works exhibited at museo Correr in Venice. After a session of painting on glass firmed by Namuth Pollock takes his first drink in 2 years leading to many more. Ends by overturning the table on his dinner guests. Fourth solo show at Betty Parsons.

1951 – Poses for group picture published by Life magazine

of "irascibles", artists protesting the conservative policies of Met juries of contemporary art exhibitions. Namuth's film premieres at MoMA. First solo show for Lee Krasner at Betty Parsons. Fifth solo show at Betty Parsons for Pollock.

1952 - First solo show in Paris at Studio Paul Facchetti. Included in 15 Americans at MoMA. Unhappy with sales leaves Betty Parsons for Sidney Janis gallery, first solo show in his new gallery in November. Greenberg organizes retrospective exhibition for Bennington College in Vermont that also travels to Williams College in Williamstown Mass.

1954 - Paints very few works this year. Second solo show at Sidney Janis. His mother Stella has several heart attacks.

1955 - Takes up analysis again. Krasner has solo show at Stable gallery. Because he has painted so little, his third solo show at Sidney Janis is a retrospective: 15 years of Jackson Pollock.

1956 - Pollock has painted nothing in 18 months. Lee leaves for European holiday on her own. The relationship has deteriorated over the last months because of Pollock's depression and drinking. Driving drunk on Aug. 11 at 10:15 pm he crashes his Oldsmobile convertible on a tree, less than a mile from his home in Springs. Pollock dies instantly with one of his passengers, Edith Metzger, while the other passenger, Pollock's girlfriend Ruth Kligman, survived. Lee returns immediately from Europe for his funeral. An exhibition already planned at MoMA opens as a memorial show in December.

After his death, Pollock's wife, Lee Krasner, managed his estate and ensured that Pollock's reputation remained strong in spite of changing art-world trends. They are buried in Green River Cemetery in Springs with a large boulder marking his grave and a smaller one marking hers.

Indian objects, rituals and symbols:

Soul catchers - (with animal faces and mouths) used by shamans to capture escaping or errant souls and restore them to body to re-establish harmony between body and spirit. Worn on neck as protection against evil spirits.

Rattles - used to communicate with spirits in shamanic ceremonies.

Mask - links man to his protecting spirit and his ancestors. Hawk accompanies chaman in his quest and gives him strength.

Circle - Represents the universe, whole and harmonious.

Spirit - every member of the tribe is linked to a protecting spirit - represented in totems.

Totems – also links to ancestors.

Sand dances – Dine and Pueblo peoples in Arizona. Patterns of poured colored sand re-establish disturbed universal harmonies and order.

Sea mammals – kings of the sea, their cries are the original language, they have wisdom and guiding powers.

Wolf – freedom in solitariness but also solidarity in pack of hounds

Buffalo – Sacred, spiritual animal– base of plains Indians’ food and culture.

Tortoise – earthly energy, permanence, protection, tenacity.

Spider – feminine principle, creative energy, web of dreams.

Bird – flight into higher spheres its eye penetrates far, an ally but demanding expecting you to rise higher and higher with him.

Eagle – guide to wisdom and knowledge. Its feathers only worn by chiefs who have proven themselves in worthy feats

Bear – Tranquil power, intuitive knowledge – attached to earth (winter hibernation), a solid dependable ally, and protector, used to decorate house fronts, totems and blankets.