

Art History

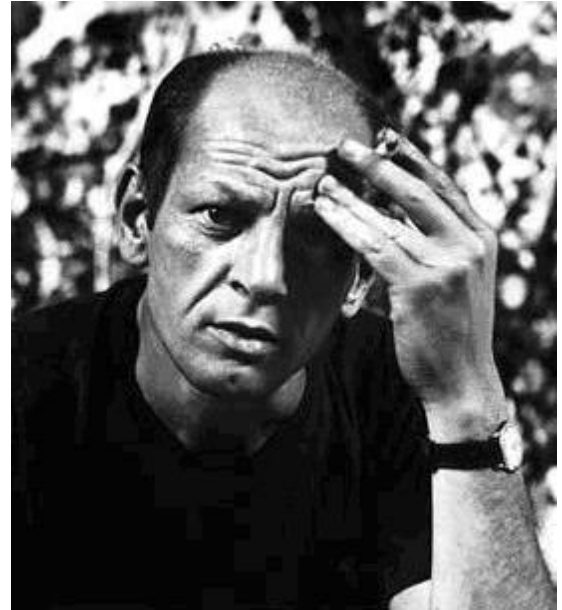
Jackson Pollock

Name: _____
Section: _____
Score: ____/5

Directions: Read the following article about Jackson Pollock and the influence he had on the developments of Abstract art.

Jackson Pollock was an American painter, and is possibly the leading force behind the abstract expressionist movement in the art world. He studied in 1929, at the Students' League in New York, where he studied under regionalist painter, Thomas Hart Benton. Early on in his career, during the 1930s, he worked in the Regionalist style, and he was also influenced by Mexican muralist painter Diego Rivera, and by much of the work in Surrealism, the art forms which were popular during this period. His main work from 1938 to 1942, was a Federal Art Piece which he was contracted to do, shortly after he finished his schooling at the Students' League.

By the mid 1940s, the art form which Jackson Pollock was most known for, was work he did in the abstract style. And, by 1947, he was doing the 'drip and splash' style, which many believe he introduced to the art world during this time period. Rather than fixing his canvas to an easel, most of his canvases were either set on the floor, or laid out against a wall. From there, he used a style where he would allow the paint to drip from the paint can. Instead of using the traditional paint brush, he would add depth to his images using knives, trowels, or sticks. This form of painting, known as "action painting," had similar ties to the Surreal movement, in that it had a direct relation to the artist's emotions, expression, and mood, and showcased their feeling behind the pieces they designed.



In addition to the 'drip and splash' style, the all over method of painting, is also one which is tied to Jackson Pollock, and many of the art work which he created. This art form avoids any clear and distinct points of emphasis, or any identifiable parts within the canvas being used to create the piece. The designs and images which were created using this style of painting, really had no relation to the size of the canvas which he was working in; the lack of dimensions, and disregard for size of the drawings, were some unique features which this form of art captured. Many of the pieces which Jackson Pollock created following this style, required him to trim or crop the canvas, in order for the image to fit in, and to work with the overall features of the art. These distinct changes, and new design features all played a role into the new art forms which were starting to show up in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

During this period, Jackson Pollock continued to introduce figurative and quasi-figurative pieces, of black and white works. He also continued to work on paintings with the new, all over style which he introduced a few years earlier, with many of his art pieces that abandoned the idea of dimensions and barriers, when painting on the canvas. By many, he was seen as a new artist, and was praised for the work which he created. On the other end, he was also ridiculed by many older style artists, who did not yet embrace these new art forms, as no other artists were yet working on similar pieces or styles or art. He was even featured in a 1956 feature of Time Magazine, in which he was coined as "Jack the Dripper,": for the unique style and form which he was introducing, with each new art piece he created.

In 1960s, only a decade after being ridiculed, Jackson Pollock was viewed as one of the most important figures in the art world, and one of the innovators of the latest styles that were beginning to emerge. In fact, he was

considered to be the most important figure in the art world, to the most important art movement in the US during the century. Like many other famous figures, the issues which Jackson Pollock suffered from in his personal life, such as his strife with alcoholism, added to his "superstar" status. And, his premature death, which took place when he was killed in a car crash, also added to this status, and added to the legendary status, which he is still known for in the art world today.

Many claim that it was Jackson Pollock who created a path for this art form, and the artists who followed him. By breaking the mold in 1947, with his 'drip and splash' style, he showed the art world, and critics, what could possibly come in the future, and the new styles that were possible, with an open mind to the creative process.

It was also noted that Jackson Pollock was influenced by Native American sand paintings, which were created by trickling lines of colored sand, on to a horizontal surface. The work he began doing in 1947, was influenced by the Surrealist style and the idea of 'psychic automatism' which was a direct expression of the unconscious.

During the course of his career, Jackson Pollock created a number of pieces, which have shown the unique styles he followed. An early piece which he created, titled the Moon Woman Cuts the Circle, shows a passionate intensity, which he showcased his own personal style, and this followed on with many pieces he created during his career. Lavender Mist which was one of his last pieces, took on a different approach than this early abstract piece, yet he still worked to showcase the intensity with color, texture, and the lack of concern for the thoughts critics had, about the quality of his work.

Not only was he a famous painter and artist during his own time, Jackson Pollock also led a number of movements, which followed him, even after his death. To this day he is known as a leader in the most important art movements during his lifetime, and possibly during the 20th century in American art forms. The risks and the creative approaches he took, led future artists to create with passion, as opposed to trying to follow set boundaries or guidelines, which have been laid out by the art world, and different forms of art.

"Jackson Pollock." Jackson Pollock. Jackson-pollock.org, n.d. Web. 05 Jan. 2015. <<http://www.jackson-pollock.org/>>.

Thought Questions:

1. How was his painting style so unconventional?
2. What is unique about the subject and composition of Pollock's pieces?
3. How was Pollock's art criticized?
4. What factors led to Pollock's "legendary status"?
5. What influences did Pollock have on the art community?