

2/2: “I am Nature:” Hofmann (and other precursors), Pollock, Krasner

OUTLINE

key decade: 1940

I. Transformers

- A) John Graham (b. Ivan Dabrowsky, Kiev, 1881) to NY 1920
System and Dialectics of Art published 1937
- B) Arshile Gorky (b. Vosdanig Adoian, Armenia, 1904) to NY 1925
Breton, “pope” of Surrealism, deemed Gorky to be the first Surrealist to go back to nature, “treating her as a cryptogram, [revealing] the very rhythm of life...”
- C) Hans Hofmann (b. Saxony Germany 1880, d. 1966) to NY 1932
 - 1. Not interested in Surrealism
 - 2. Acted as bridge to European modernism (Cubism + Expressionism)
 - 3. Important teacher, especially in the years 1938-45 when he influenced Pollock and the critic Clement Greenberg

II. Jackson Pollock (b. Cody, WY 1912, died a probable suicide 1956)

- A. Avowed influences (Mexicans, Benton, Native American sand painters); unavowed influences (John Graham, jazz, Matta, Herbert Matter, critic Clement Greenberg)
- B. Formal achievements, process
 - 1. 1930s: Primitivism
 - 2. 1943 synthesis of Cubist grid and Expressionist gesture
 - 3. 1947 “breakthrough” drip style (met Greenberg 1942, close friends by ‘46)

III. Codification of the Pollock Myth: Hans Namuth’s Jackson Pollock, 1951 (film)

IV. Lenore (“Lee”) Krasner (b. NY 1908, d. 1984)

- A. Krasner’s challenge
 - 1. The gender politics of Abstract Expressionism (Pollock to Hofmann “*I am Nature*”)
 - 2. The gender politics of postwar society: the little woman
 - 3. The gender politics of art: the oxymoron of a “female master”
- B. The influence of Pollock, the influence of Krasner

Q: how much did *world war* contribute to the emergence of an American avant-garde?

See verso for images

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LECTURE NOTES

Caroline A. Jones

IMAGES SHOWN (selected)

Graham Iron Horse, 1927

Graham, Self-Portrait as a Harlequin 1944

Gorky The Artist and His Mother, 1926-36

Gorky, Organization 1936

Gorky, Garden in Sochi, 1940-41

Gorky, Water of the Flowery Mill, 1944

Hofmann, Apples 1932

Hofmann Idolatress, 1944

Hofmann The Wind 1944

Hofmann Cathedral 1959

Pollock Bird 1938-41

Pollock Moon Woman 1942

Pollock Guardians of the Secret 1943

Pollock Mural 1943

Pollock Alchemy 1947

Pollock, No. 1, 1948

Pollock, Lavender Mist, 1950

Matter/Pollock? Untitled, ca. 50s?

Krasner Composition 1949

Krasner Three in Two 1956

http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/artmuseum/exhibitions/archive/pollock-matters/index.html

if you are interested in the Herbert Matter /Jackson Pollock controversy

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