

# Pollocks revolutionary transgressions

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Pollock's Revolutionary Transgressions Jackson Pollock is considered to be one of the most important American artists of the 20th century. His paintings belong to the abstract expressionist movement. His painting techniques, however, are known for its uniqueness and eccentricity, contributing to several innovations in visual art. The most important of these was his development of the so-called drip technique wherein a canvas spread out on the floor is painted through pouring and dripping of synthetic resins or household paints instead of using brushes. This was excellently depicted in two films made out of Pollock's life: *Painters Painting; Jackson Pollock* by Teresa Griffins (2001) and the Academy Award winning film, *Pollock* by Ed Harris (2001). This innovation is widely credited as the precursor of the modern action painting. The painter was very active in his painting, making observers appreciate the energy involved in the visual pieces as well as the idea of the oneness and physical interaction between the artist and his art. Harold Rosenberg, the art critique who coined action painting, remarked that Pollock's work led to a movement wherein the canvas began to appear as an arena in which to act rather than as a space in which to reproduce, redesign, analyze or express an object (Kleiner & Gardner 420). This is the reason why Pollock is credited to have influenced several modern abstract painters. One of those that benefited from Pollock's innovation was Willem de Kooning, who explained that the painter broke the ice in abstract expressionism (Hess 7). Like Pollock, de Kooning became known for painting through gestures and actions. De Kooning's style, however, is different from that of Pollock's since he is considered to be more conservative in his techniques and in his materials. For instance, he primarily used oil in his

artworks and did not experiment on resins like Pollock. Pollock's influence can best be identified when one examines de Kooning's masterpieces in the context of the fact that they were created through a deliberate modification of artistic procedures.

Another important painter that considers Pollock as an inspiration and major influence is Helen Frankenthaler. She was deeply impressed by Pollock's work, particularly during an exhibition of the painter's work in 1951 and actually visited the painter in Long Island several times (Buser 78).

Frankenthaler has developed her own cubist style but Pollock's influence is clear in her approach. Like Pollock, as one could see from the way he worked in Ed Harris' film, she also painted with her canvas on the floor, pouring paint and moving it around with her own implements like sponges or her hands.

There are also artists who have been influenced by Pollock through abstract expressionism but started to breakaway especially with the way images in artworks are not recognizable. Jasper Johns is one of such artists. He successfully developed his own style that saw a transition from abstract expressionism to Pop Art.

Pollock's work sometimes divides critics and, certainly, other artists. For example, there is the case of the anti-expressionist painters such as Frank Stella who developed their own technique in reaction to the abstract expressionism championed by Pollock. Stella, in his paintings, focused on pictures as objects. This is the reason why his pieces did not have the Pollock's destruction of the conventional art borderlines. In opposition to the unrecognizable images of Pollock, Stella created nonrelational paintings and installations. As opposed to the physically charged technique displayed by

Pollock as seen on film, Stella preferred strict lines and borders, true to his minimalist preference. Nonetheless, Stella like Pollock works directly with his medium and does not believe in creating from sketches.

#### Works Cited

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