

Jackson Pollock

Known as the commanding figure of the Abstract Expressionist movement in America, Jackson Pollock developed his abstract style of "drip" (or action) painting in 1947. Interestingly, his early paintings were influenced by more traditional styles of figurative work. During his teens, he was a student of Thomas Hart Benton, who kindled his interest in Regionalism during the 1930 s. Later on he was inspired by Rivera, Orozco and Siquieros, the Mexican Muralist painters, as well as certain aspects of Surrealism. By the time he was 35 years old, he was painting in a completely abstract manner.

His style of painting avoided any identifiable parts within the whole canvas and therefore abandoned the traditional idea of composition in terms of relations among parts. The design of his paintings had no relation to the size or shape of the canvas and the finished work was often docked or trimmed to suit the image. These uniquely combined characteristics and his inventive style were direct influences for the new American painting that developed in the late 1940 s and early 1950 s. Though strongly supported by advanced critics, he was also subject to much abuse and sarcasm. Pollock s premature death in a car accident only contributed to his legendary status. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, held a major retrospective of his work in 1999, and the film biography Pollock was released in 2000.

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