

**University of Texas at Dallas
Arts & Humanities
Fall 2018**

**Contemporary Art History
AHST 3318-501
(87353)**

**Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
W 7:00-9:45 pm
ATC 1.305
terranova@utdallas.edu**

**From Drip to Dance:
Abstract Expressionism and the
Rise of the Happening**

08/29/18

WWII

1939 - 1945

About 62 million people die as a result of WWII

Europe

Left in ruins

Many countries remain politically divided

Many artists had immigrated to the U.S.

United States

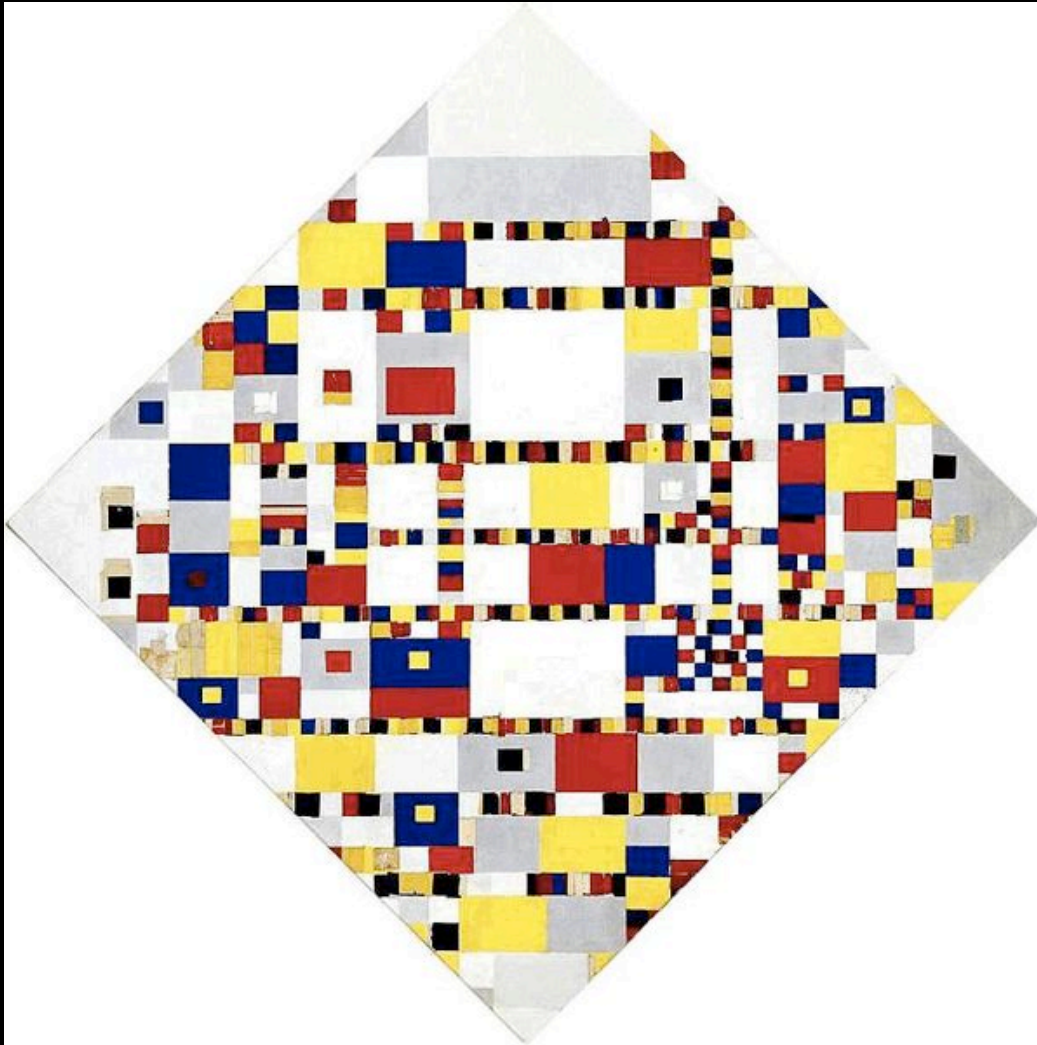
Housing and construction boom spawned by the return of GIs

Country invigorated by new found strength and prominence

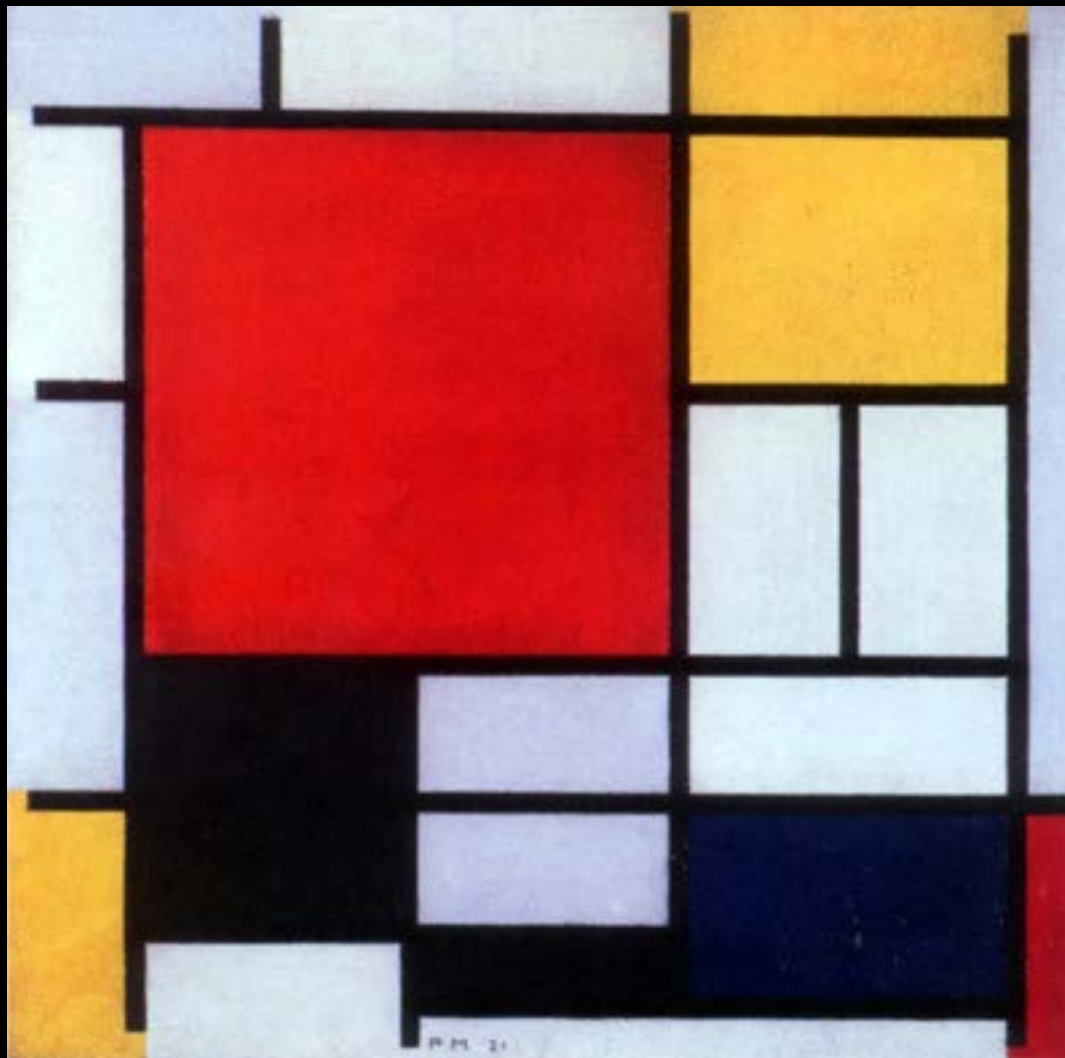
Sense of artistic community blossoms in NY

"The main premises of Western painting have at last migrated to the United States, along with the center of gravity of industrial production and political power." - Clement Greenberg in *The Decline of Cubism*

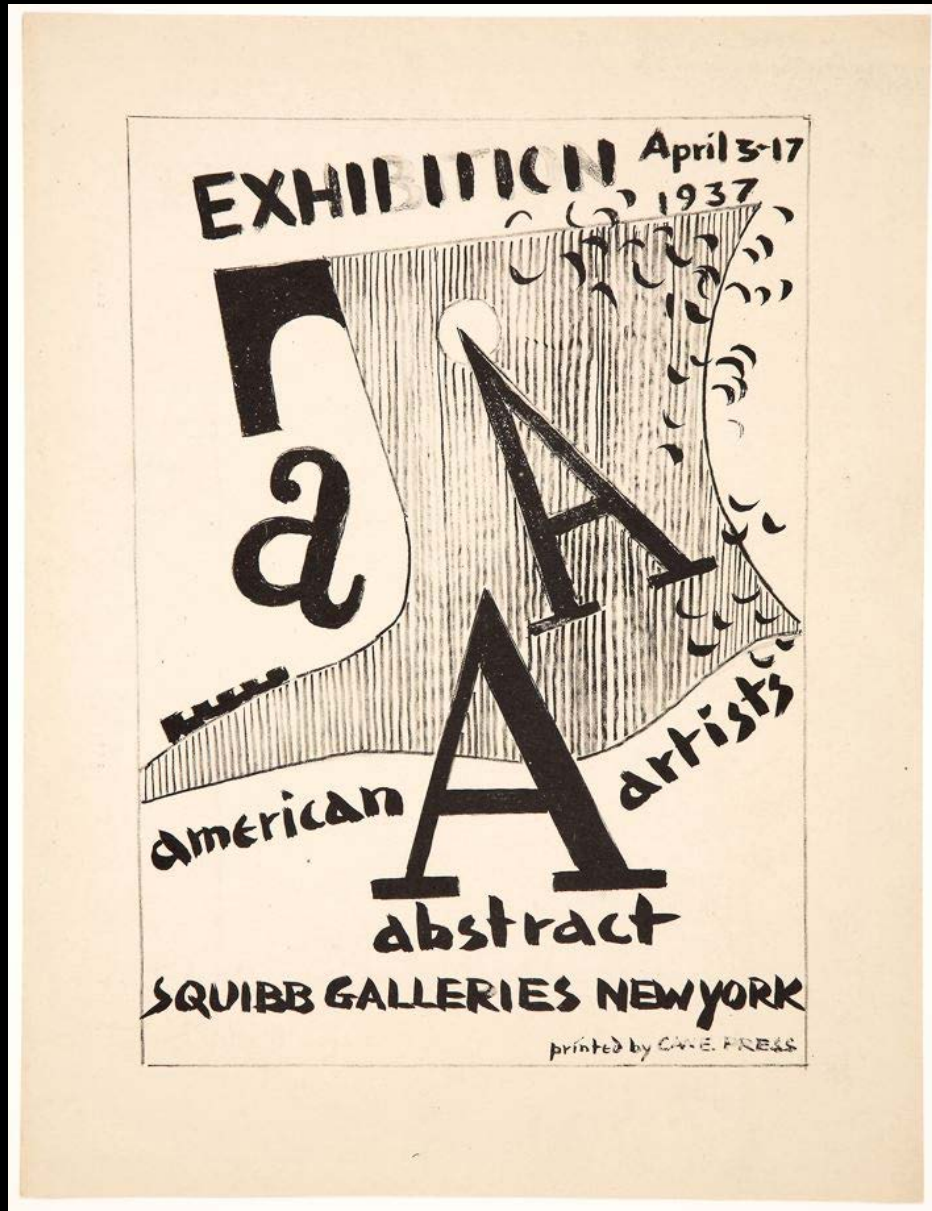




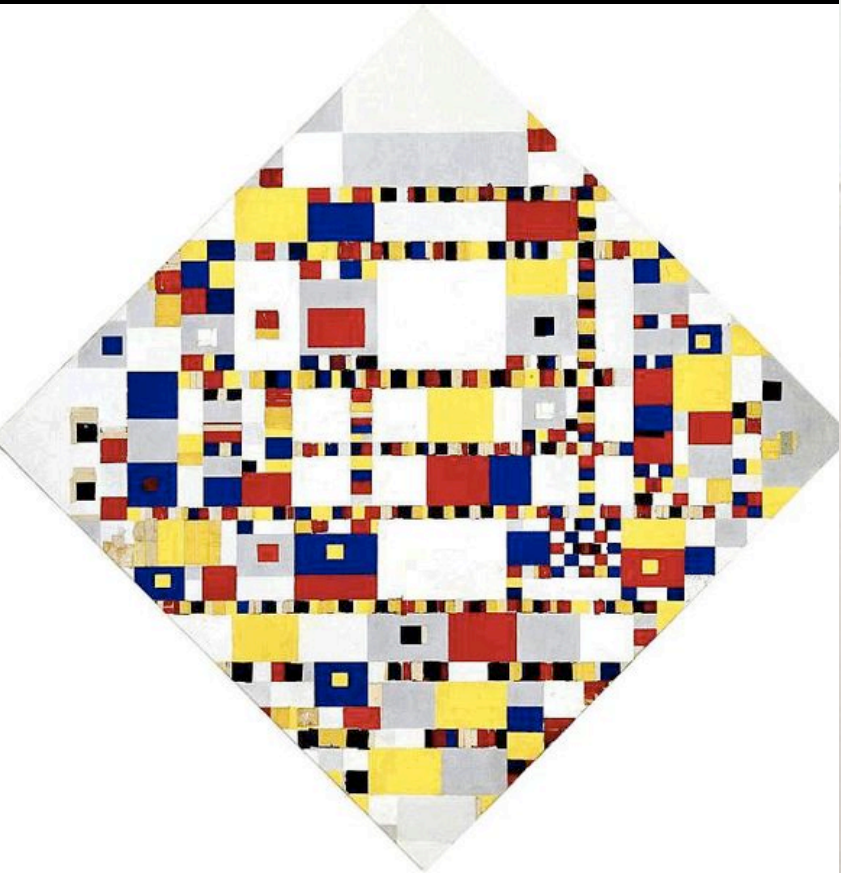
Piet Mondrian, Victory
Boogie Woogie, 1943-44



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Red, Yellow, Blue, and Black* 1921
Painting and the GRID



The American Abstract Artists Portfolio, Title Page: Exhibition April 3-17, 1937, Squibb Galleries, New York



Piet Mondrian, Victory
Boogie Woogie, 1943-44





Peggy Guggenheim, Art of this Century Gallery



1 "Life's Round Table on Modern Art," *Life*, 11 Oct. 1948, 57.
Life Magazine, © Time Warner, Inc.

"A *Life* Roundtable on Modern Art," October 11, 1948
"late bohemian enterprise"

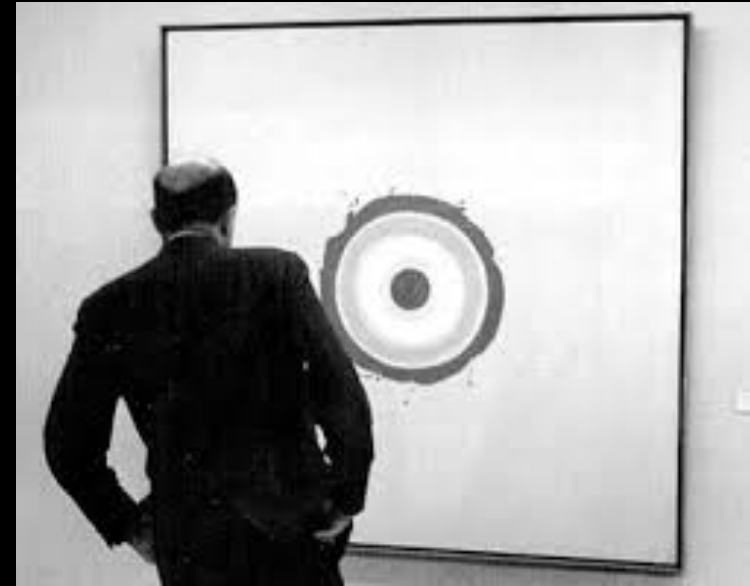


August 8, 1949 issue of Life Magazine

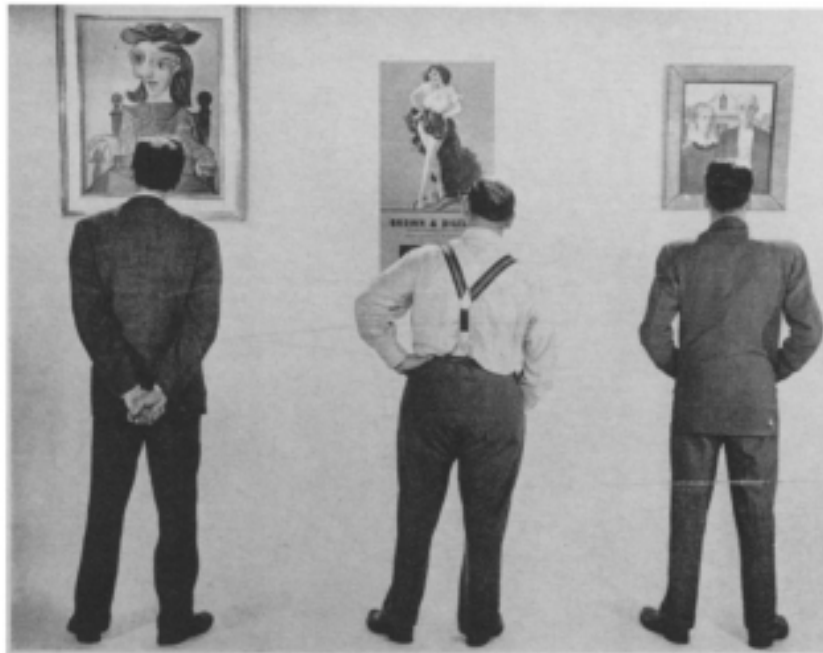
- "The most powerful painter in contemporary America and the only one who promises to be a major one is a Gothic, morbid, and extreme disciple of Picasso's Cubism and Miró's post-Cubism, tintured also with Kandinsky and surrealist inspiration. His name is Jackson Pollock." - Clement Greenberg in 1947

Jackson Pollock, Cathedral, 1947

“Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (1939) Clement Greenberg



- “Where there is avant-garde, generally we also find a rear-guard.”
- “...Kitsch: popular, commercial art and literature with their chromeotypes, magazine covers, illustrations, ads, slick and pulp fiction, comics, Tin Pan Alley music, tap dancing, Hollywood movies, etc. etc.”



IN CLOTHES CHARACTERISTIC OF THEIR CULTURAL STATION, A HIGH-BROW (LEFT), LOW-BROW (MIDDLE) AND MIDDLE-BROW (RIGHT) LOOK AT THE PICTURES THEY PREFER

HIGH-BROW, LOW-BROW, MIDDLE-BROW

These are three basic categories of a new U.S. social structure, and the high-brows have the whip hand

The three famous gentlemen shown above are looking at things they like. One, a tall man in a heavy tweed suit, likes paintings by Picasso. The next, a man in slouchy jeans, enjoys colorful art. The third, Slim Grant, a well-repudiated actor, likes dancing. The first is a high-brow, the second a low-brow, the third a middle-brow. According to Editor Russell Lytess in an article in *Harper's Magazine*, the whole U.S. social structure can now be divided into these three types. Gone are the days, he says, when class distinction was determined by wealth, birth or political conviction. Instead he points out that your prestige now belongs only to scientists, writers, critics, commentators and thinkers of global thoughts. We have a society of the intellectual elite, run by the high-brows.

he considers outcasts. However he feels an affinity with low-brows and even envies their uncritical enjoyment of the things they like.

The low-brow doesn't mind the high-brow culture as long as the high-brow leaves him alone. His attitude toward the arts is strictly live and let live. He doesn't mind a momentary of an overconfident chair if the chair is comfortable. He likes a movie if he enjoys it, and if he doesn't he says so, whether it is *Alfredo or Henry F.* He has no fashionable pretensions. If other people like the ballet it's all right with him as long as he doesn't have to go. Galleries, on such, leaves him cold. He remains unimpressed because they try to sell it to him.

The high-brow would like to get out of the middle-brow, but the middle-brow understands him. Lytess divides middle-brows into two groups, upper and lower. The upper middle-brow, he says, is the cultural degenerate who reads Tolstoy and goes to foreign films and never talks cinema. "Despite," by his pretended culture he seems determined to counter high-brow opinions. But these are safe from the lower middle-brow who, lulled by an impressive list of titles, appears only as high as book clubs and magazines edited by upper middle-brows. He lives in a world of workers and workers. He is a representative of housing prices and gives barbers a quarter. He secretly thinks he has good taste but does not dare talk about it.

To help readers find their places Lytess, an upper middle-brow, has worked with LIFE to prepare a guidance chart (pp. 100-101). And for a spirited defense of the high-brow to Lytess's own high-brow, *Washington Post*, turn to page 102.



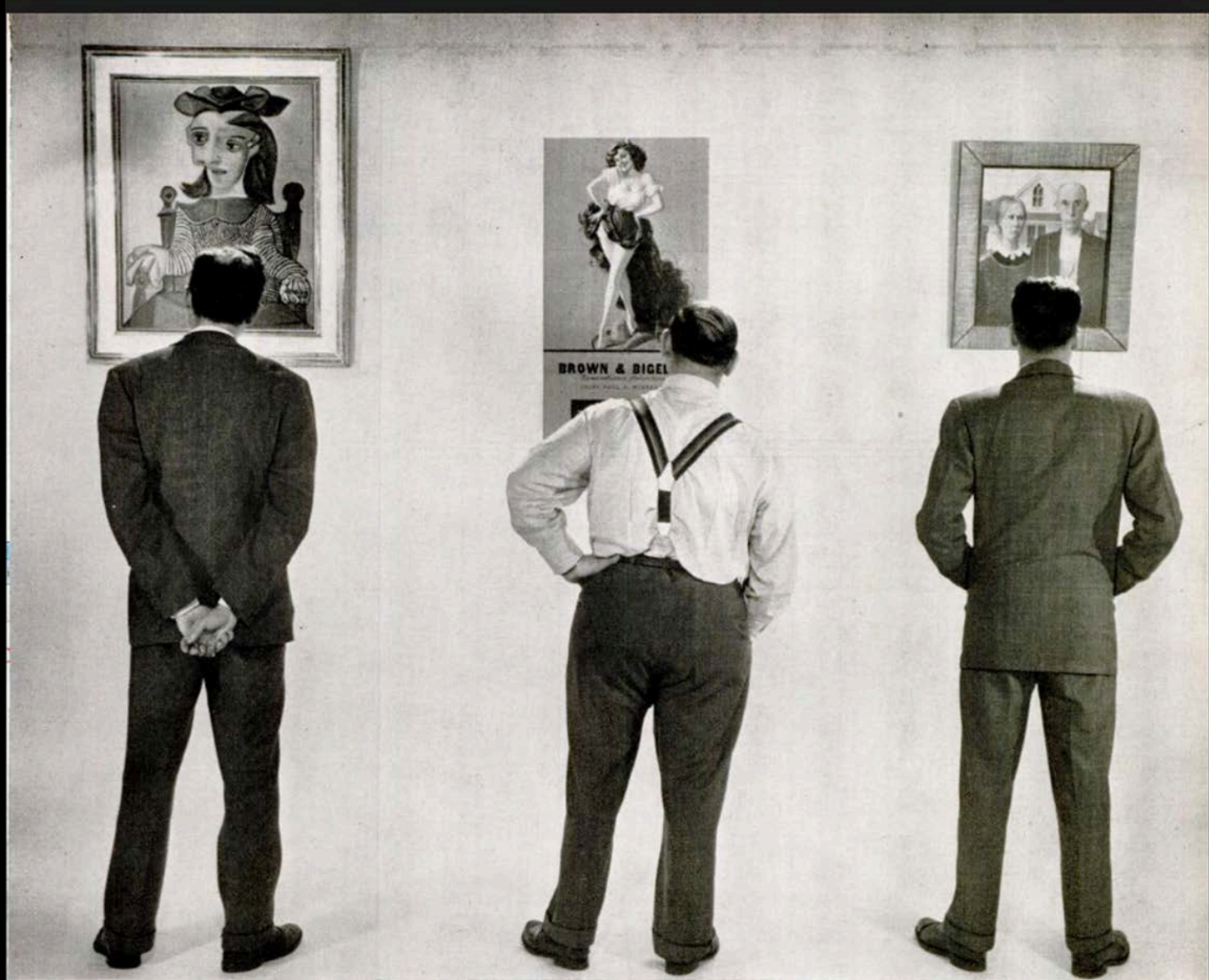
RUSSELL LYTESS is editor of the middle-brow *Harper's*.

With tongue in cheek Lytess goes on to describe this new order. Your true high-brow, he says, is a slouchy sophisticated found on liberal arts faculties in college towns and often in big cities. If he pays any attention to his physical surroundings, he furnishes his rooms with "signed" pieces of modern furniture and decorates them with original sketches or little-known works by great masters. He would not own a color television. He eats whiskey and drinks "an adequate little red wine" which he buys for \$90 a gallon. He sits or writes for a "scholarly" little magazine" and is basically a critic rather than an actor. A cultural snob of the worst sort, he cherishes also one trend in thought and art and lights to keep these pure, uncommercial and within his own limited circle—especially out of the hands of the hated middle-brows, whom

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE 100

1. The layman should guard against his own natural inclination to condemn a picture just because he is unable to identify its subject matter in his ordinary experience. [Layperson should disabuse himself of immediate rejection of difficult work.]
2. He should, however, be equally on guard against the assumption that a painting that is recognizable is no good. [How to deal with non-objective painting.]
3. He should look devotedly at the picture rather than at himself. If it conveys nothing to him then he should remember that the fault may be in him, not in the artist. [Painting is autonomous.]
4. Even though he does not in general like non-representational painting, this open-minded attitude will very much increase the layman's enjoyment of artistic works, ancient or modern. [Learn to appreciate art, regardless. Be open minded.]





4 "High-Brow, Low-Brow, Middle-Brow," *Life*, 11 Apr. 1949, 99. *Life Magazine*, © Time Warner, Inc.



IN CLOTHES CHARACTERISTIC OF THEIR CULTURAL STATIONS, A HIGH-BROW (LEFT), LOW-BROW AND MIDDLE-BROW (RIGHT) LOOK AT THE PICTURES THEY PREFER

HIGH-BROW, LOW-BROW, MIDDLE-BROW

EVERYDAY TASTES FROM HIGH-BROW TO

	CLOTHES	FURNITURE	USEFUL OBJECTS	ENTERTAINMENT	SALADS
HIGH-BROW 	 TOWN Fuzzy Harris tweed suit, no hat COUNTRY Fuzzy Harris tweed suit, no hat	 Eames chair, Kurt Verson lamp	 Decanter and salt tray from chemical supply company	 Ballet	 Greens, olive oil, wine vinegar, ground salt, ground pepper, garlic, unwashed salad bowl
UPPER MIDDLE-BROW 	 TOWN Brooks suit, regimental tie, felt hat COUNTRY Quiet tweed jacket, knitted tie	 Empire chair, converted sculpture lamp	 Silver cigarette box with wedding ushers' signatures	 Theater	 Same as high-brow but with tomatoes, avocado, Roquefort cheese added
LOWER MIDDLE-BROW 	 TOWN Splashy necktie, double-breasted suit COUNTRY Sport shirt, colored socks	 Grand Rapids Chippendale chair, bridge lamp	 His and Hers towels	 Musical extravaganza films	 Quartered iceberg lettuce and store dressing
LOW-BROW  <i>ten-ford</i>	 TOWN Lover jacket, woven shoes COUNTRY Old Army clothes	 Mail order overstuffed chair, fringed lamp	 Balsam-stuffed pillow	 Western movies	 Coleslaw

LOW-BROW ARE CLASSIFIED ON CHART

DRINKS	READING	SCULPTURE	RECORDS	GAMES	CAUSES
 A glass of "adequate little" red wine	 "Little magazines," criticism of criticism, avant garde literature	 Calder	 Bach and before, lives and after	 Go	 Art
 A very dry Martini with lemon peel	 Solid nonfiction, the better novels, quality magazines	 Maillol	 Symphonies, concertos, operas	 The Game	 Planned parenthood
 Bourbon and ginger ale	 Book club selections, mass circulation magazines	 Front yard sculpture	 Light opera, popular favorites	 Bridge	 P. T. A.
 Beer	 Pulp, comic books	 Parlor sculpture	 Jukebox	 Crops	 The Lodge

EVERYDAY TASTES FROM HIGH-BROW TO

	CLOTHES	FURNITURE	USEFUL OBJECTS	ENTERTAINMENT	SALADS
HIGH-BROW 	 TOWN Fuzzy Harris tweed suit, no hat COUNTRY Fuzzy Harris tweed suit, no hat	 Eames chair, Kurt Versen lamp	 Decanter and ash tray from chemical supply company	 Ballet	 Greens, olive oil, wine vinegar, ground salt, ground pepper, garlic, unwashed salad bowl
UPPER MIDDLE-BROW 	 TOWN Brooks suit, regimental tie, felt hat COUNTRY Quiet tweed jacket, knitted tie	 Empire chair, converted sculpture lamp	 Silver cigarette box with wedding ushers' signatures	 Theater	 Same as high-brow but with tomatoes, avocado, Roquefort cheese added
LOWER MIDDLE-BROW 	 TOWN Splashy necktie, double-breasted suit COUNTRY Sport shirt, colored slacks	 Grand Rapids Chippendale chair, bridge lamp	 His and Hers towels	 Musical extravaganza films	 Quartered iceberg lettuce and store dressing
LOW-BROW  <i>Tom Perch</i>	 TOWN Loafer jacket, worn shoes COUNTRY Old Army clothes	 Mail order overstuffed chair, fringed lamp	 Baham-stuffed pillow	 Western movies	 Coleslaw

his own. And his one remaining criterion is a kind of personal honesty, a kind of integrity—the quality that Mr. Frankfurter referred to in the word “genuine.” This can be reflected in his pictures; but it may or may not lead him out to the light, and it may or may not be “comprehensible” to anyone else. Dr. Schapiro summed it up as follows:

“The creation of modern art makes certain demands upon the individual who creates it. It gives to individual experiences an enormous value beyond that of previous art. It requires, therefore, a constant searching of oneself, an attentiveness to all that one has done and a perpetual self-renewal. In the great artist the results of this highly individual attitude can be set up beside the great work of the past.

“This attitude further involves a freedom of the individual, an openness to experience—qualities that we consider important, not only in art, but in the broader field of life itself. We value these qualities in human relationships, in science, in ethical behavior; and it is through the arts to some extent that they become evident to us.”

Yet this tremendous, individualistic struggle, which makes modern art so difficult for the layman, is really one of the great assets of our civilization. For it is at bottom the struggle for freedom. As several at the Table pointed out, the temptation in authoritarian societies is to settle the problem of modern art by fiat. Both Hitler and Stalin have actually done so—and in both cases the artists were ordered to return to representational painting. Said Georges Duthuit: “Several governments have made a policy of throwing modern art out the window. Our layman does not seem to disagree entirely with this. He says merely that there is some justice in objecting to modern art. But if there is some justice in the objection, is there maybe some justice in the totalitarian point of view as well? In Europe today, for artists and writers, the question is literally one of life and death. This is a time when our layman must get to the bottom of what he means.”

Said Mr. Janson: “I feel that the modern artist, in insisting upon the highly individual experiences that have been emphasized today, is fulfilling a very valuable function. He is preserving something that is in great danger—namely, our ability to remain individuals.”

Maybe obscurity is a high price to pay for freedom, culturally speaking. Yet it has been, and may for some time continue to be, an inescapable cultural by-product of the great process of freedom which is so critical in our time. This does not mean, on the other hand, that the artist need have no standards. He must have them: he should be free—but not irresponsible. Such, perhaps, is the ultimate answer to be derived from the deliberations of these distinguished men. And in the light of it the layman, who might otherwise be disposed to throw all modern art in the ashcan, may think twice—and may on second thought reconsider.

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instantly applied with the fingertips... anywhere... any time... in any climate... any weather.

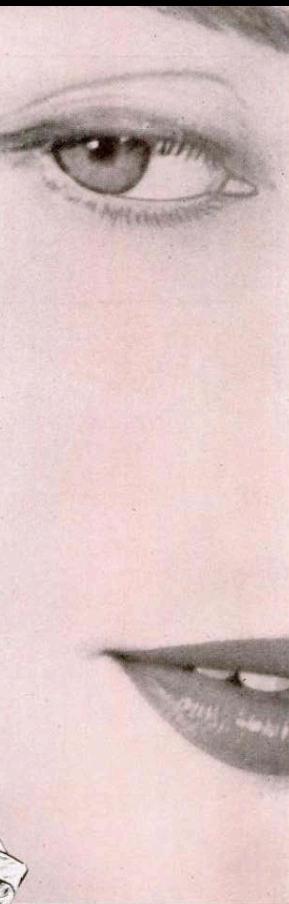
easily smoothed on any skin... easy to retouch or refresh... easy to carry. No dryness, no shine, no streaks.

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“This tremendous, individualistic struggle, which makes modern art so difficult for the layman, is really one of the great assets of our civilization.”
LIFE Oct 11, 1948

We should think about what this means to an avant-garde. What happens to an avant-garde when its resistance, its critique of the bourgeoisie through its marked negative dialectic (its difficult form), is co-opted, packaged, and made readily consumable?

In 1948, William Baziotés, David Hare, Robert Motherwell and Mark Rothko founded the Subjects of the Artist School, which held artists' discussions in a loft at 35 East Eighth Street, Manhattan which came to be known as Studio 35.

THE SUBJECTS OF THE ARTIST:

a new art school

35 East 8th Street, New York 3, New York.

Catalogue for 1948-49

ARTISTS: William Baziotés, David Hare, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko.

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THEORY OF THE SCHOOL: The artists who have formed this school believe that receiving instruction in regularly scheduled courses from a single teacher is not necessarily the best spirit in which to advance creative work. Those who are in a learning stage benefit most by associating with working artists and developing with them variations on the artistic process (through actually drawing, painting, and sculpting). If the 'student' so prefers, he can choose one artist on the faculty and work exclusively with him. But it is the school's belief that more is to be gained by exposure to the different subjects of all four artists—to what modern artists paint about, as well as how they paint. It will be possible to work with a single artist only in evening sessions, since the afternoon sessions are the responsibility of the faculty as a whole.

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CURRICULUM: There are no formal courses. Each afternoon and evening session will be conducted by one of the four artists as a spontaneous investigation into the subjects of the modern artist—what his subjects are, how they are arrived at, methods of inspiration and transformation, moral attitudes, possibilities for further explorations, what is being done now and what might be done, and so on. The afternoon sessions are from 1:30 to 4:30, and the evening sessions from 7:30 to 10:30. There is no instruction on Fridays, when the school will be at the disposal of the students for independent work. The school is closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and certain holidays.

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STUDENTS: Those attending the classes will not be treated as 'students' in the conventional manner, but as collaborators with the artists in the investigation of the artistic process, its modern conditions, possibilities, and extreme nature, through discussions and practise.

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REQUIREMENTS: There are no technical requirements; beginners and those who paint for themselves are welcome; the school is for anyone who wishes to reach beyond conventional modes of expression.

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REGULATIONS: Smoking will be regulated according to the fire laws; anyone who does not fit in the school will be asked to withdraw (with refund of unused tuition).

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TERMS: (each of ten weeks)

11 October - 17 December, 1948

3 January - 11 March, 1949

21 March - 27 May, 1949

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FEEES: (payable in advance by term or year)	Term	Year
One evening a week	45.	125.
Two evenings a week	80.	225.
Four evenings a week	150.	400.
Five afternoons a week	150.	400.

In regard to any further particulars, please write or telephone the Secretary of the school.

May 20th, 1950

OPEN LETTER TO ROLAND L. REDMOND
President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dear Sir:

The undersigned painters reject the monster national exhibition to be held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art next December, and will not submit work to its jury.

The organization of the exhibition and the choice of jurors by Francis Henry Taylor and Robert Deverly Hale, the Metropolitan's Director and the Associate Curator of American Art, does not warrant any hope that a just proportion of advanced art will be included.

We draw to the attention of these gentlemen the historical fact that, for roughly a hundred years, only advanced art has made any consequential contribution to civilization.

Mr. Taylor on more than one occasion has publicly declared his contempt for modern painting; Mr. Hale, in accepting a jury notoriously hostile to advanced art, takes his place beside Mr. Taylor.

We believe that all the advanced artists of America will join us in our stand.

Jimmy Ernst	Ad Reinhardt
Adolph Gottlieb	Jackson Pollock
Robert Motherwell	Mark Rothko
William Basileas	Bradley Walker Tomlin
Hans Hofmann	Willem de Kooning
Barnett Newman	Kedde Sterne
Clyfford Still	James Brooks
Richard Pousette-Dort	Walden Lee
Theodore Stamos	Fritz Kuitman

The following sculptors support this stand.

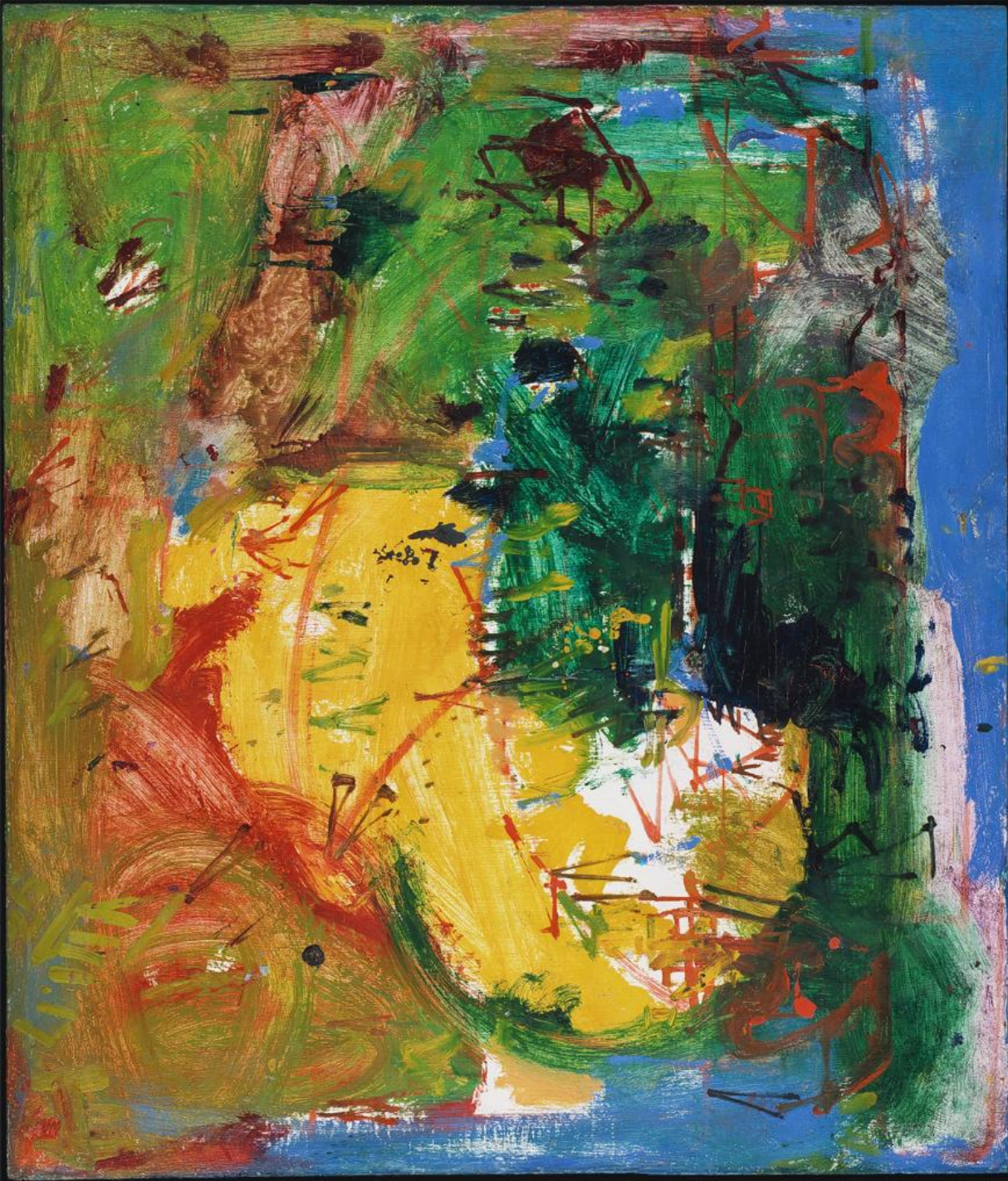
Herbert Ferber	Seymour Lipton
David Smith	Peter Gripppe
Ibram Lassaw	Theodore Keesak
Mary Gallery	David Hare
Day Schnebel	Louise Bourgeois

The Irascibles, also known as the Irascible 18. The moniker was given to a group of 18 American artists who signed their names to an open letter protesting the Metropolitan Museum of Art's juried exhibition *American Painting Today-1950*, claiming that the selected jury was "notoriously hostile to advanced art" and had demonstrated a clear bias against "modern painting." The letter was published on the front page of the *New York Times* on May 22, 1950 and sparked a subsequent barrage of media attention.



The Irascibles were photographed and appeared in the January 15, 1951 issue of *LIFE* magazine.

Theodoros Stamos, Jimmy Ernst, Barnett Newman, James Brooks, Mark Rothko, Richard Pousette-Dart, William Baziotis, Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still, Robert Motherwell, Bradley Walker Tomlin, Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Ad Reinhardt, Hedda Sterne



Hans Hofmann, Landscape, 1942



In his search for the real (as he titled his book, “The Search for the Real and Other Essays” [1948]) Hofmann produced a new type of landscape, one that is composed, not of trees and land, but of the tension between its space, form, color and planes.

Hans Hofmann, The Gate, 1959-60



Arshile Gorky, Artist
and His Mother #1,
1926-36



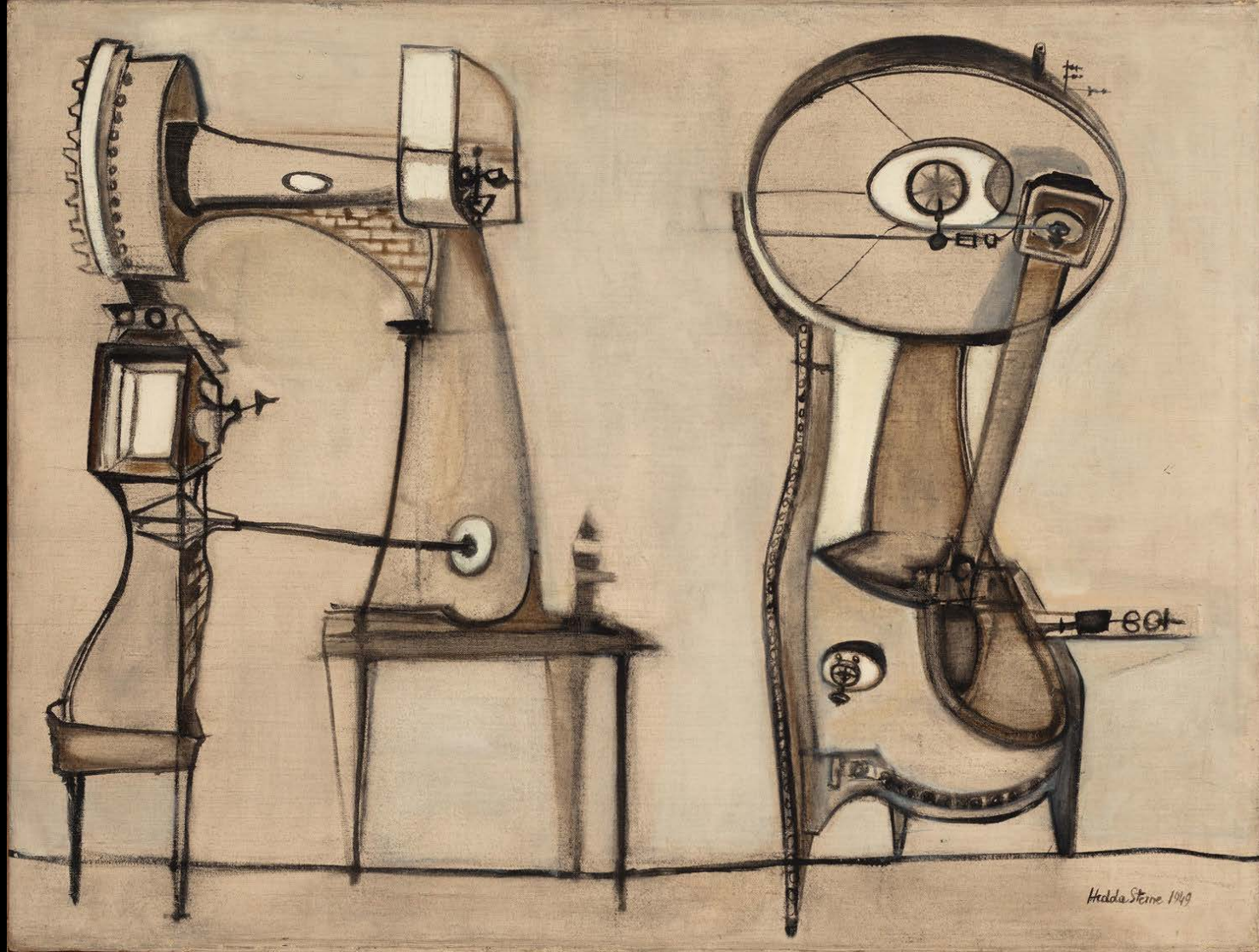


Arshile Gorky, *The Liver is the Cock's Comb*, 1944



Corner of Hedda Sterne's studio





Hedda Sterne,
Machine, 1949,
oil on canvas

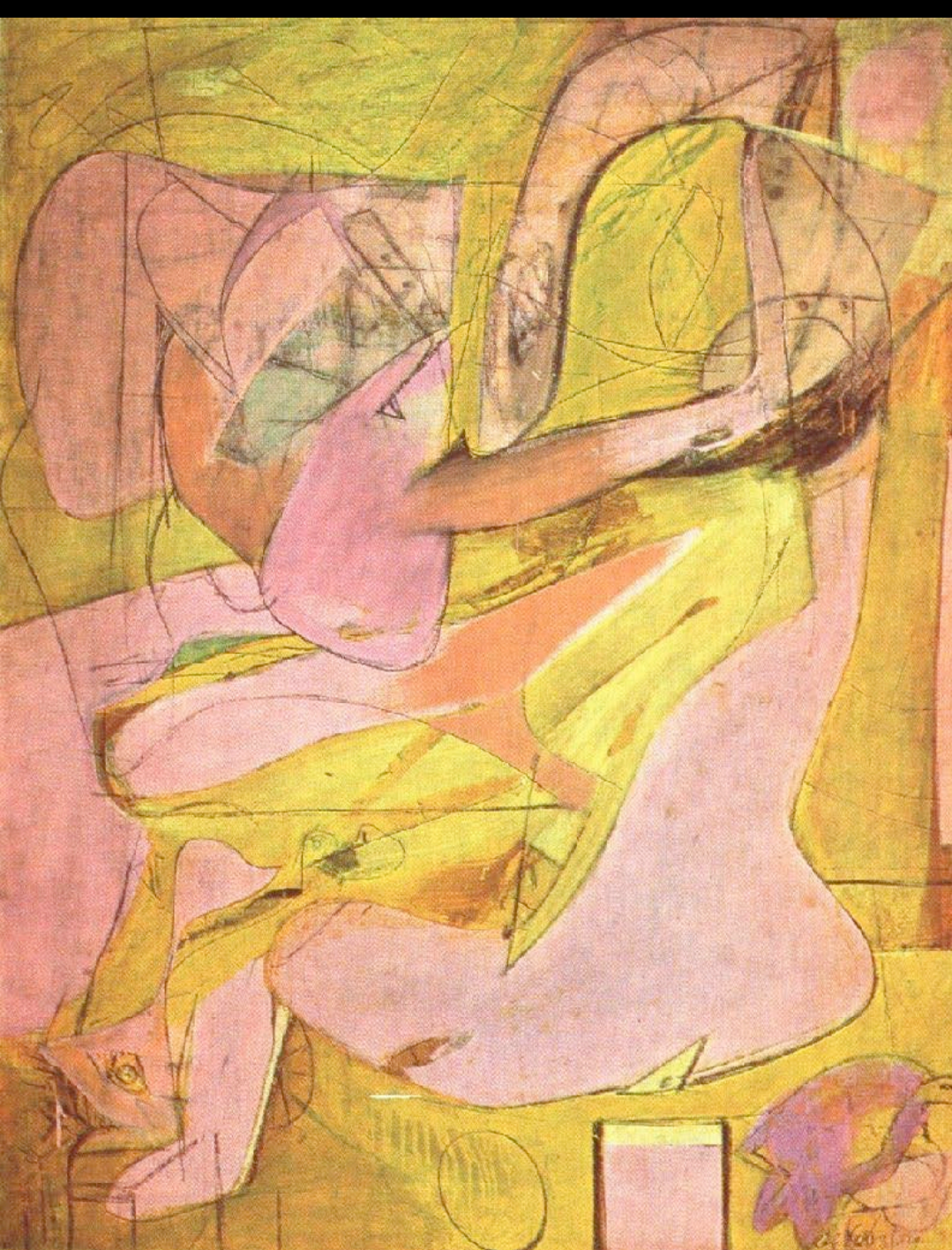
By 1945, Hedda Sterne's work began to reflect her immediate surroundings, inspired by her feeling that "the United States was more surrealist, more extraordinary, than anything imagined by the Surrealists." Between the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hedda Sterne began to focus on the anthropomorphic qualities of machinery, from rural farm equipment in Vermont, to massive contraction cranes in New York. As she would later recall: "I had a feeling that machines are unconscious self-portraits of people's psyches: the grasping, the wanting, the aggression that's in a machine."



Hedda Sterne, Machine 5, 1950



Elaine and Willem de Kooning



Willem de Kooning, Pink Angels,
c. 1945 oil and charcoal on
canvas, 52 x 40 inches

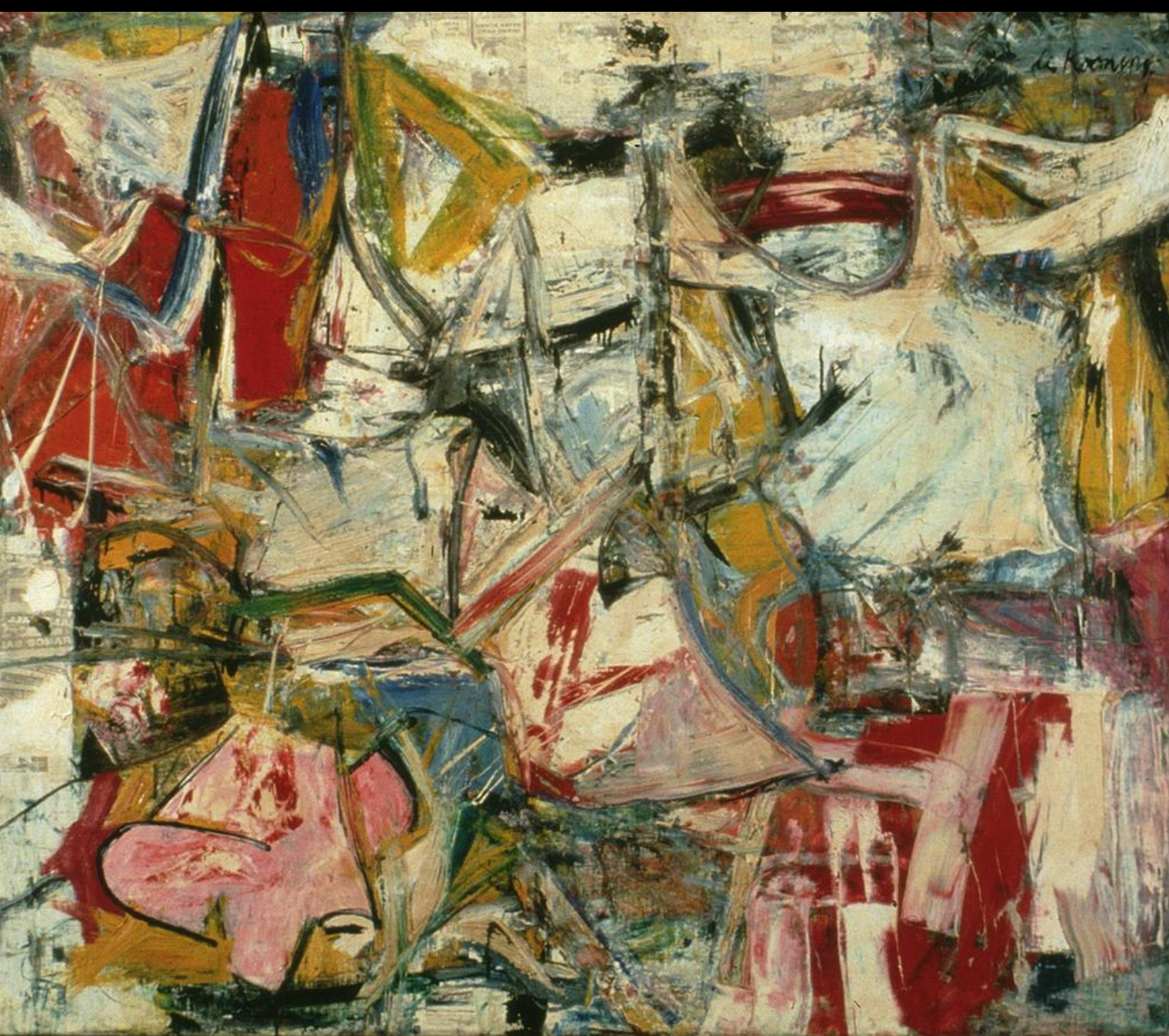


Willem de Kooning, *Woman I*, 1950-52
1952. Oil and metallic paint on canvas,
6' 3 7/8" x 58"

"Beauty becomes petulant to me. I like
the grotesque. It's more joyous."

De Kooning once summarized the
history of female representations as
"the idol, the Venus, the nude."

In 1953, The Museum of Modern Art
acquired a new painting, De Kooning's
Woman 1, which prompted its
collection committee to state: "The
Committee found the picture quite
frightening, but felt that it had intense
vitality and liked the quality of
the color."



Willem de Kooning,
Gotham News,
1955



In *Gotham News*, an abstract urban landscape, he dragged charcoal through wet paint, “churning up the surface to create a heated atmosphere that pulsates with an intense metropolitan heat.” The title *Gotham News* gives us a reference point for interpretation. “Gotham” refers to the city in the Batman comics, which in turn referred to New York, where de Kooning lived. “News” perhaps refers to the newsprint seen on the lower left and the top center of the canvas. The artist had been using newspaper to help the paint to dry, and in that process some of the print came off. He liked the effect and left it.



Elaine de Kooning, Man in a Whirl, 1957

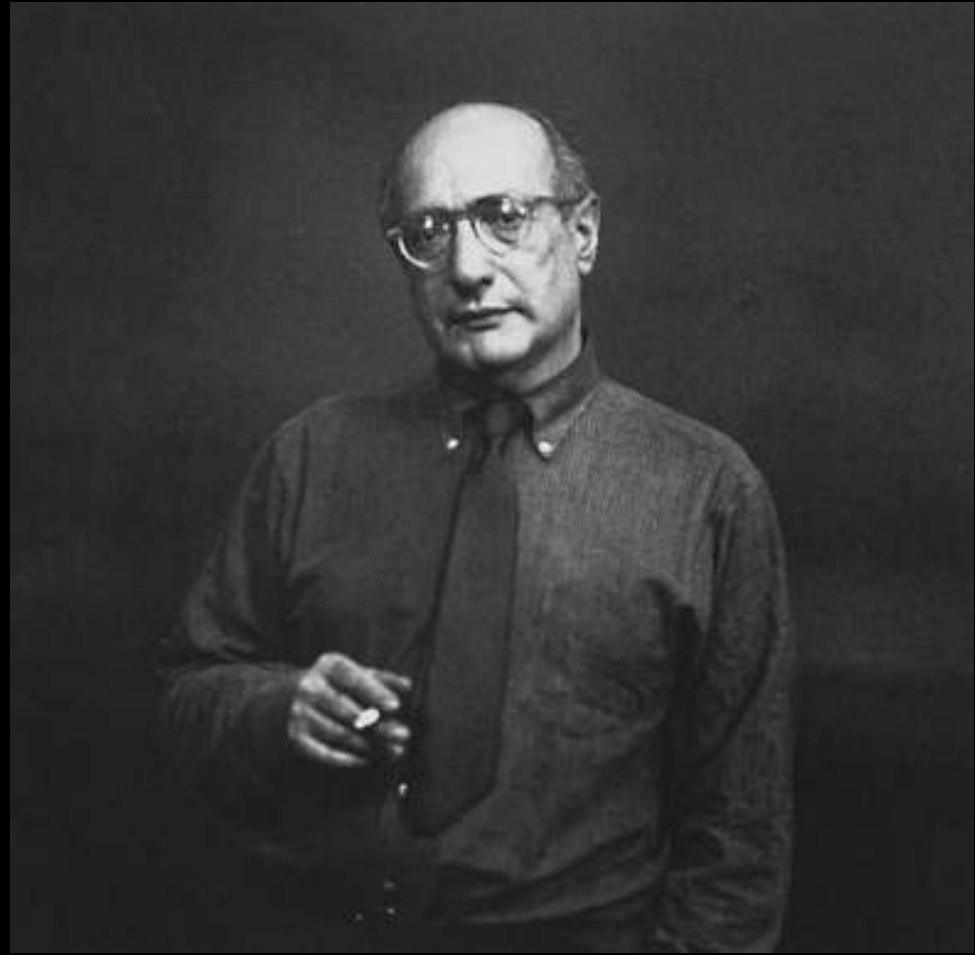


Elaine de Kooning, Untitled # 16, 1948



Mark Rothko, Number 18, 1949

" I think of my pictures as dramas, the presentation of this drama in the familiar world was never possible, unless everyday acts belonged to a ritual accepted as referring to a transcendent realm. Even the archaic artist who had an uncanny virtuosity, found it necessary to create a group of intermediaries, monsters, hybrids, gods and demi-gods. The difference is that, since the archaic artist was living in a more practical society than ours, the urgency of transcendent experience was understood and given an official status.... with us the disguise must be complete. The familiar identity of things has to be pulverized in order to destroy the finite associations with our society increasingly enshrouds every aspect of our environment. Without monsters and gods, art cannot enact our dramas: art's most profound moments express this frustration." Mark Rothko, 1947





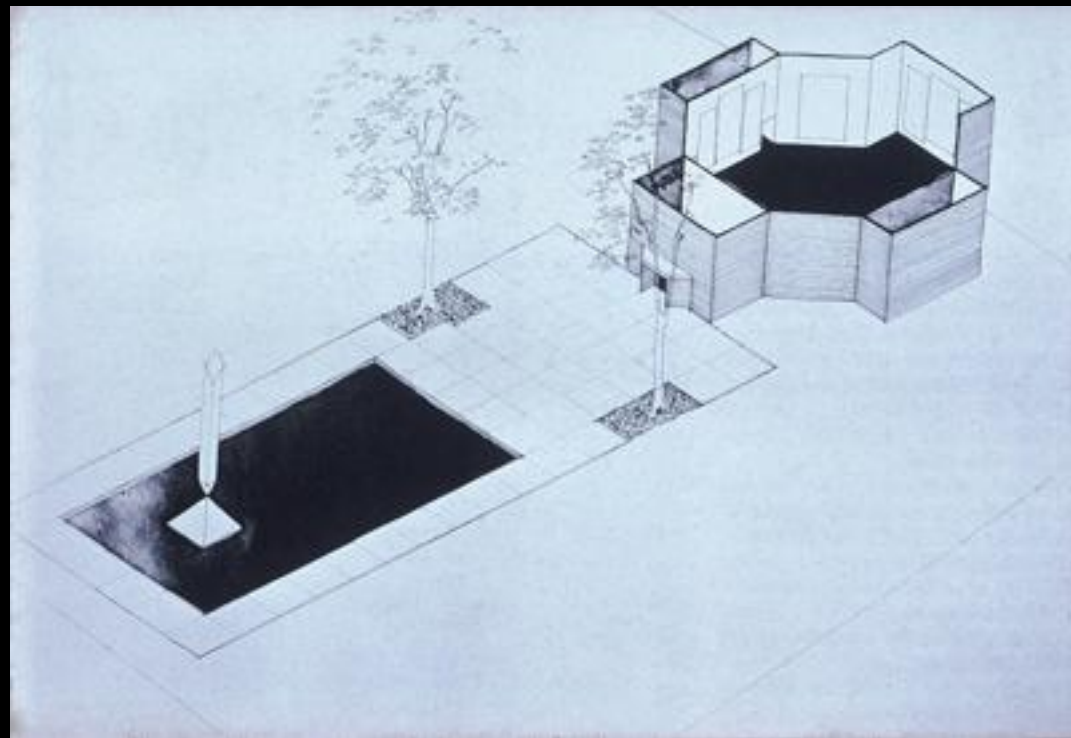
Mark Rothko, Untitled, 1949

“The Romantics Were Prompted to seek exotic subjects and travel to far-of places. They failed to realize that, though the transcendental must involve the strange and unfamiliar, not everything strange or unfamiliar is transcendental...They have no direct association with any visible experience, but in them one recognizes the principle and passion of organisms. The presentation of this drama in the familiar world was never possible, unless everyday acts belonged to a ritual accepted as referring to a transcendent realm.”

Mark Rothko, “The Romantics Were Prompted,” (1947-49)

In November 1958, Rothko gave an address to the Pratt Institute. In a tenor unusual for him, he discussed art as a trade and offered "[the] recipe of a work of art—its ingredients—how to make it—the formula. I measure these ingredients very carefully when I paint a picture. It is always the form that follows these elements and the picture results from the proportions of these elements."

- There must be a clear preoccupation with death—intimations of mortality... Tragic art, romantic art, etc., deals with the knowledge of death.
- Sensuality. Our basis of being concrete about the world. It is a lustful relationship to things that exist.
- Tension. Either conflict or curbed desire.
- Irony, This is a modern ingredient—the self-effacement and examination by which a man for an instant can go on to something else.
- Wit and play... for the human element.
- The ephemeral and chance... for the human element.
- Hope. 10% to make the tragic concept more endurable.



Mark Rothko, Rothko Chapel, Menil Collection, Houston, TX, 1971

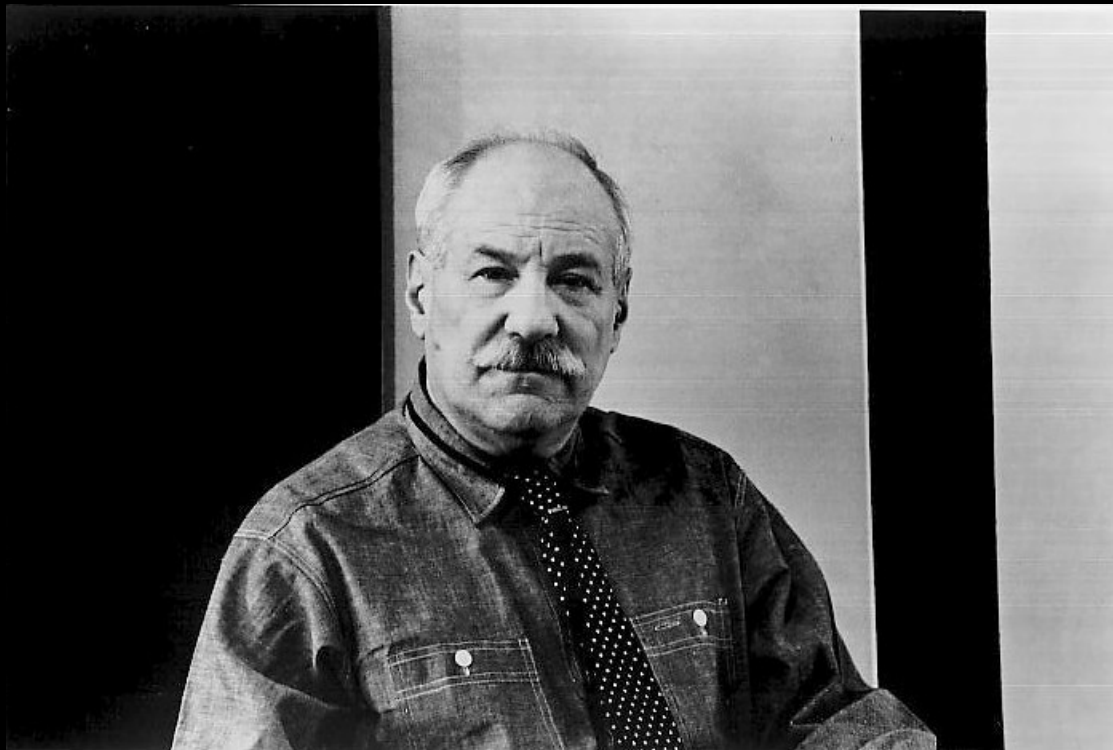
“If we are living in a time without a legend that can be called sublime, how can we be creating sublime art?... It’s no different, really, from meeting another person. One has a reaction to the person physically. Also, there’s a **metaphysical** thing ... and if a meeting of people is meaningful, it affects both their lives.” Barnett Newman



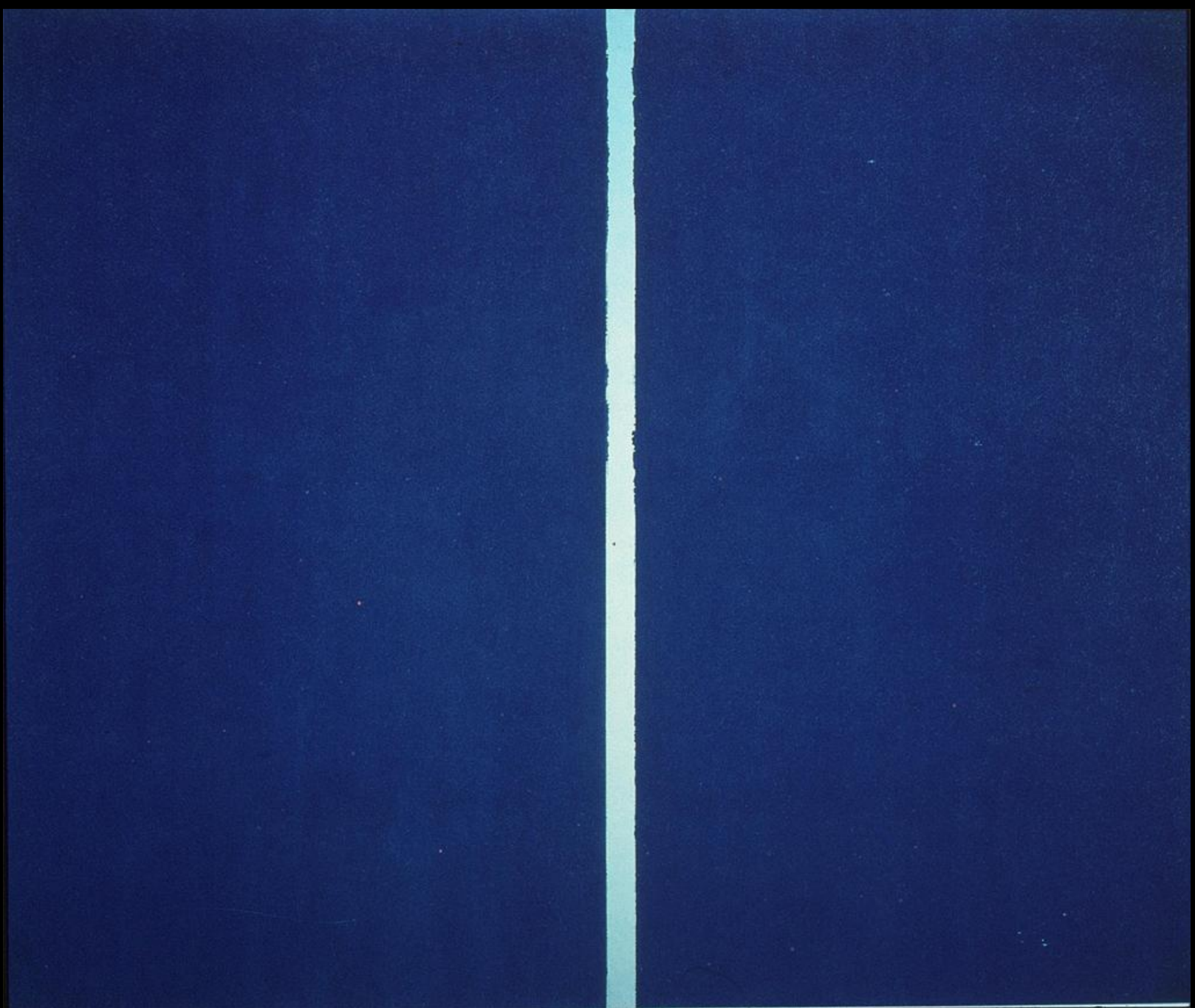
Barnett Newman, Vir Heroicus Sublimus, 1950
Oil on canvas, 7' 11 3/8" x 17' 9 1/4"

“The present painter is concerned not with his own feelings or with the mystery of his own personality but with the penetration into the world mystery. His imagination is therefore attempting to dig into metaphysical secrets. To that extend his art is concerned with the sublime. It is a religious art which through symbols will catch the basic truth of life which is its sense of tragedy.”

Barnett Newman, “The Plasmic Image,” 1945



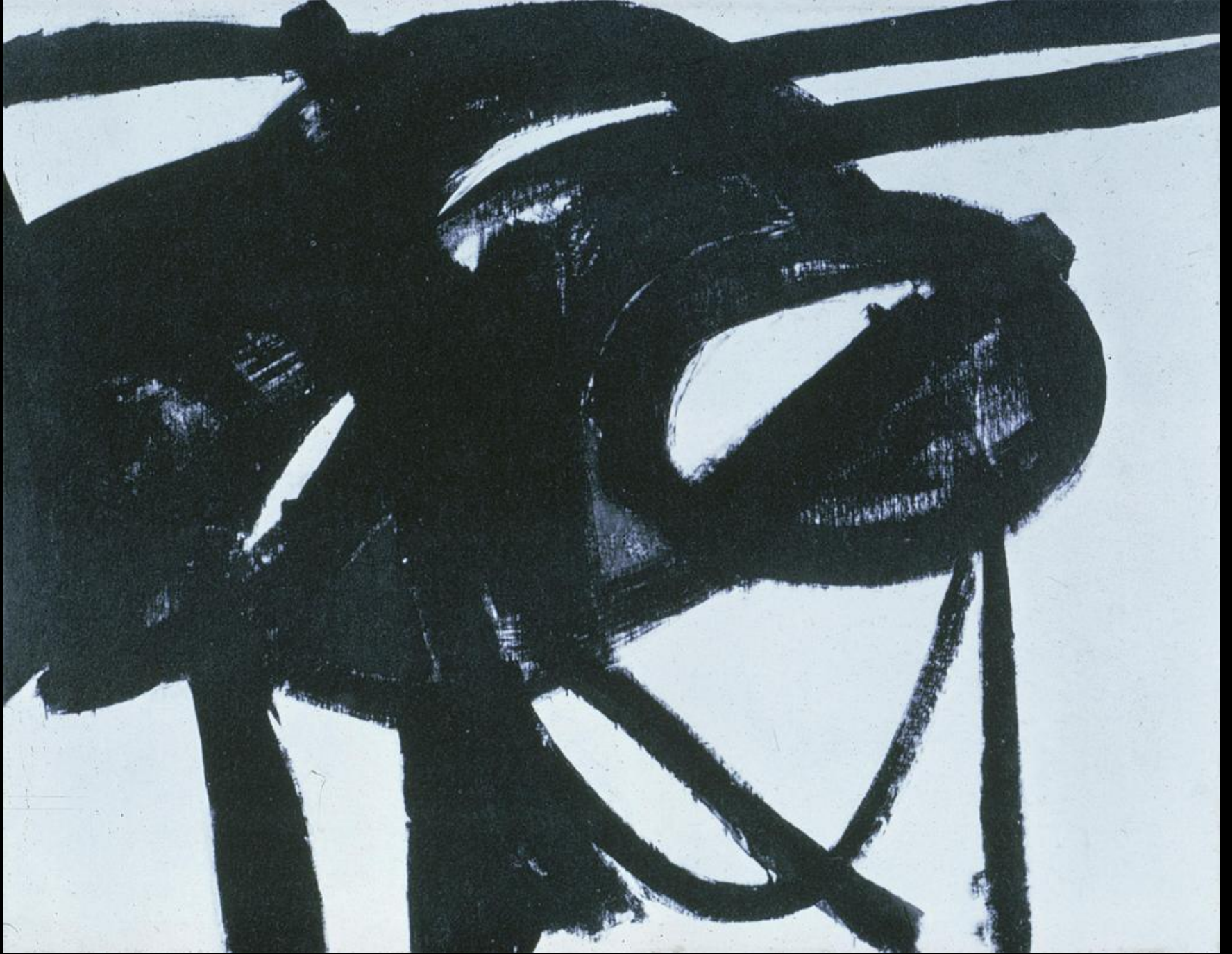




Barnett Newman, Onement IV, 1953



Franz Kline, Rice Paper Abstract, 1949



Franz Kline, Chief, 1950



Franz Kline, Mahoning, 1956



Philip Guston, The Young Mother, 1944



Philip Guston, Painting,
1954



Philip Guston, City Limits, 1969



Jackson Pollock, Going West, 1934-35



Arts of the West, 1932. Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975).
Tempera with oil glaze, 96 x 156 in.



Beginning in 1947, this application of paint would grow into his famous drip paintings, a technique also known as the allover technique. It is certain that he saw a variant of the drip technique at the New York workshop of the Mexican muralist, David Alfaro Siqueiros, where Pollock worked in 1936.

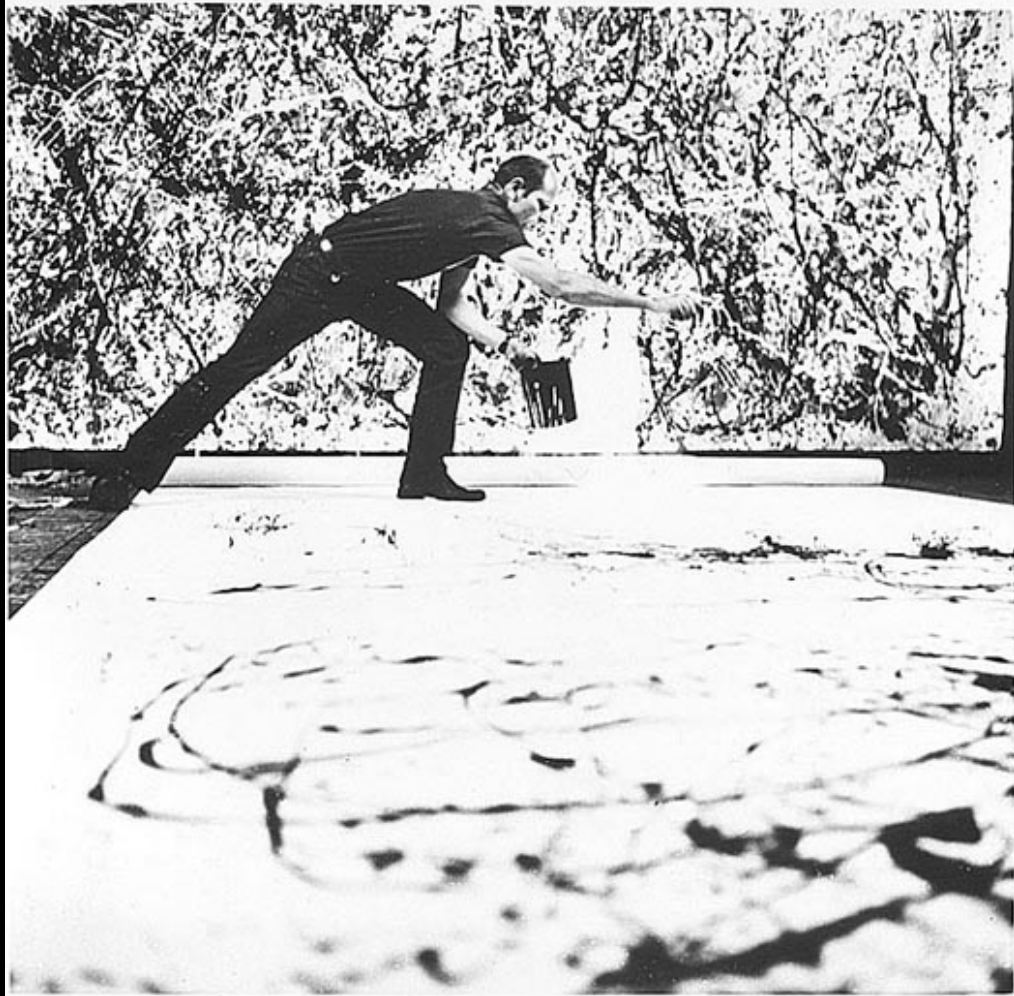
David Alfaro Siqueiros, Portrait of Eugene Jolas, 1936



Jackson Pollock, Guardians of the Secret, 1943



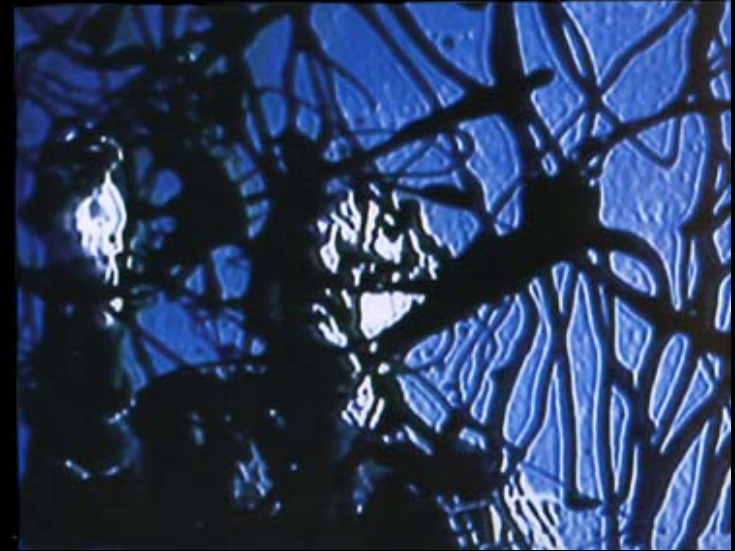
Jackson Pollock, Cathedral, 1947



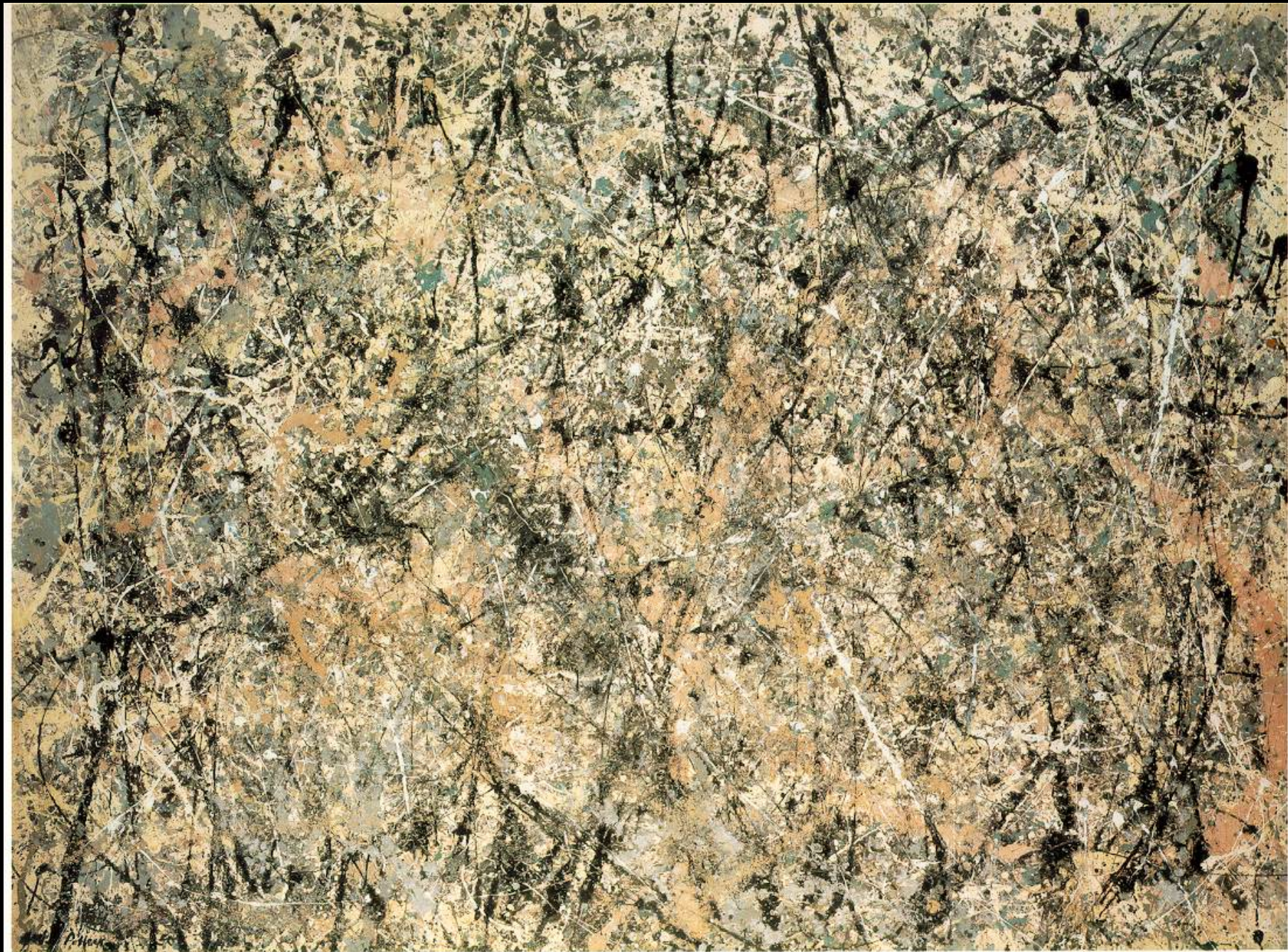




Hans Namuth, Photographs of Pollock for *Life*, 1950



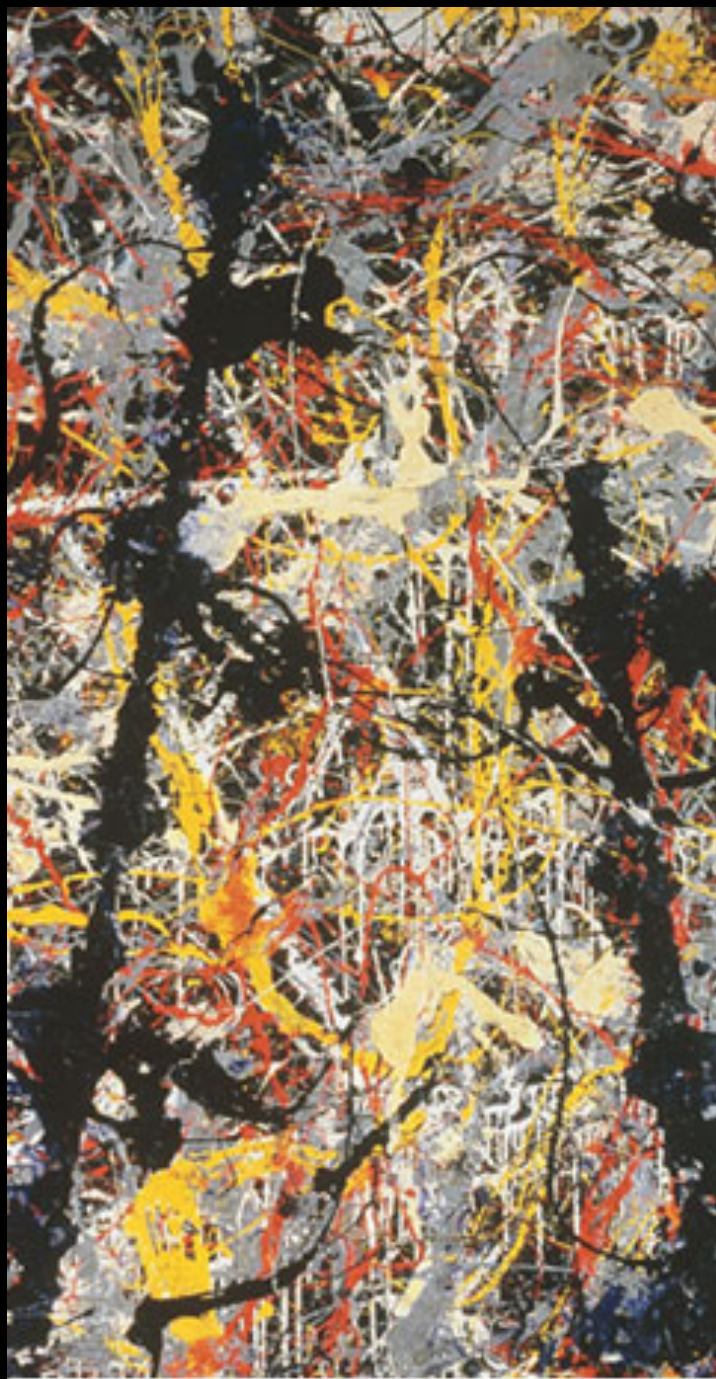
Jackson Pollock painting through glass

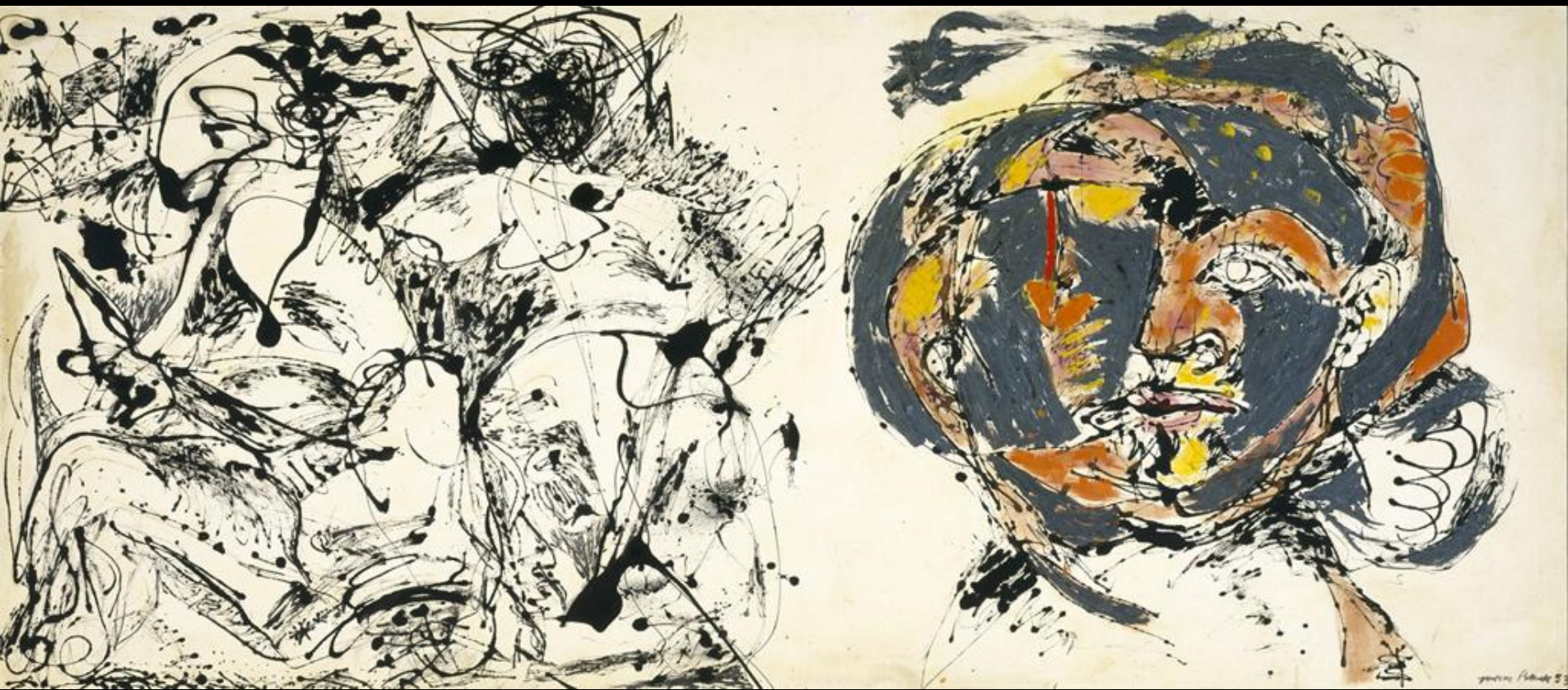


Jackson Pollock, Lavender Mist, 1950



Jackson Pollock, Blue Poles, 1952
6' 11" x 15' 11"





Jackson Pollock, Portrait of a Dream, 1953



Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner



Lee Krasner, Blue and Black, 1951-53



Lee Krasner, Celebration, 1959-60



Lee Krasner,
Imperative, 1976



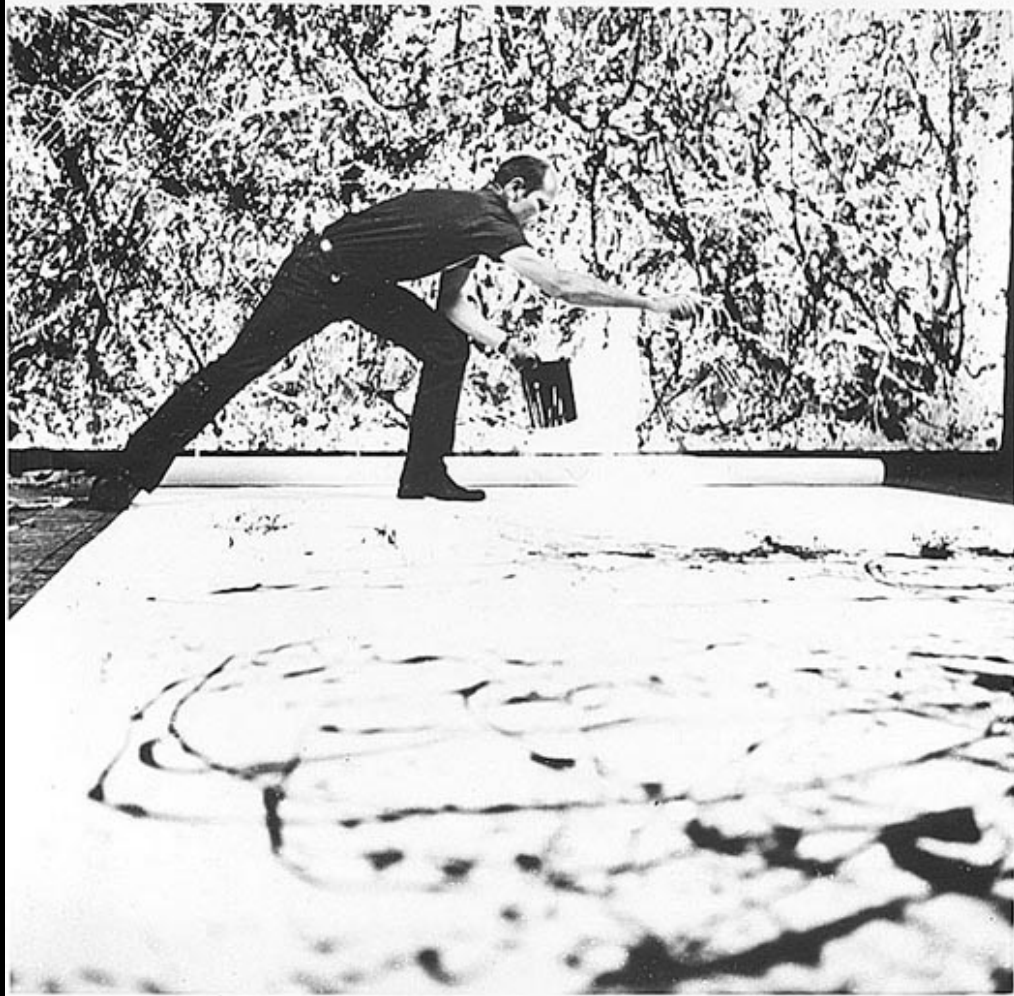
Jackson Pollock Painting with
Model, Vogue, 1951

FREE ENTERPRISE PAINTING



Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell and Bradley Walker Tomlin at the Rockefeller Guest House, 1949

During the height of the Cold War in the 1950s, the CIA secretly promoted AbEx-ism as a means of discrediting the socialist realism of the Soviet Union. The Agency's scheme was really two-fold: 1.) to shift the center of the art world away from Europe to the US, 2.) and to create a national art that would extol unfettered liberty (without challenging the political status quo in the US of course). The CIA organized a group, the CCF [Congress for Cultural Freedom], which brought action painting to the attention to Nelson Rockefeller, whose family ran MoMA.



On August 11, 1956,
Jackson Pollock was killed.
He was involved in a one
car auto accident. He was
driving drunk and had
overturned his convertible.



Vermont
Thursday, Aug 16

Dear Lee - I wish I could find some way to tell you how I feel about Jackson. I do remember my last conversation with you, and that, then, I made some effort to tell you. Unfortunately I had never found the occasion nor really knew a way in which to sufficiently indicate to him. Whatever it may have meant to him, it would have meant a lot to me to say so; especially now that I realize I can never do it.

What I am trying to say that, particularly in recent months, and in addition to his stature as a great artist, his specific life and struggle had become poignant and important in meaning to me, and came a great deal in my thoughts; and that the great loss that I feel is not an abstract thing at all,

I had talked to Tony, and I knew that both he and Barney were going to be with you on Wednesday. I wish I had been there, too, for my own sake.

Please see us soon, and our deepest love to you.
Mark

Condolence Letter from Mark Rothko

Jackson Pollock 1912-1956

“The Legacy of Jackson Pollock” (1958)

Allan Kaprow

- “He [Pollock] created some magnificent paintings. But he also destroyed painting.”
- “I am convinced that to grasp a Pollock’s impact properly, we must be acrobats, constantly shuttling between an identification with the hands and body that flung the paint and stood ‘in’ the canvas and submission to the objective markings, allowing them to entangle and assault us. This instability is indeed far from the idea of a ‘complete’ painting. The artist, the spectator, and the outer world are much too interchangeably involved here.”
- “Then Form. To follow it, it is necessary to get rid of the usual idea of “Form,” i.e., a beginning, middle and end, or any variant of this principle – such as fragmentation. We do not enter a painting of Pollock’s in any one place (or hundred places). Anywhere is everywhere, and we dip in and out when and where we can.”

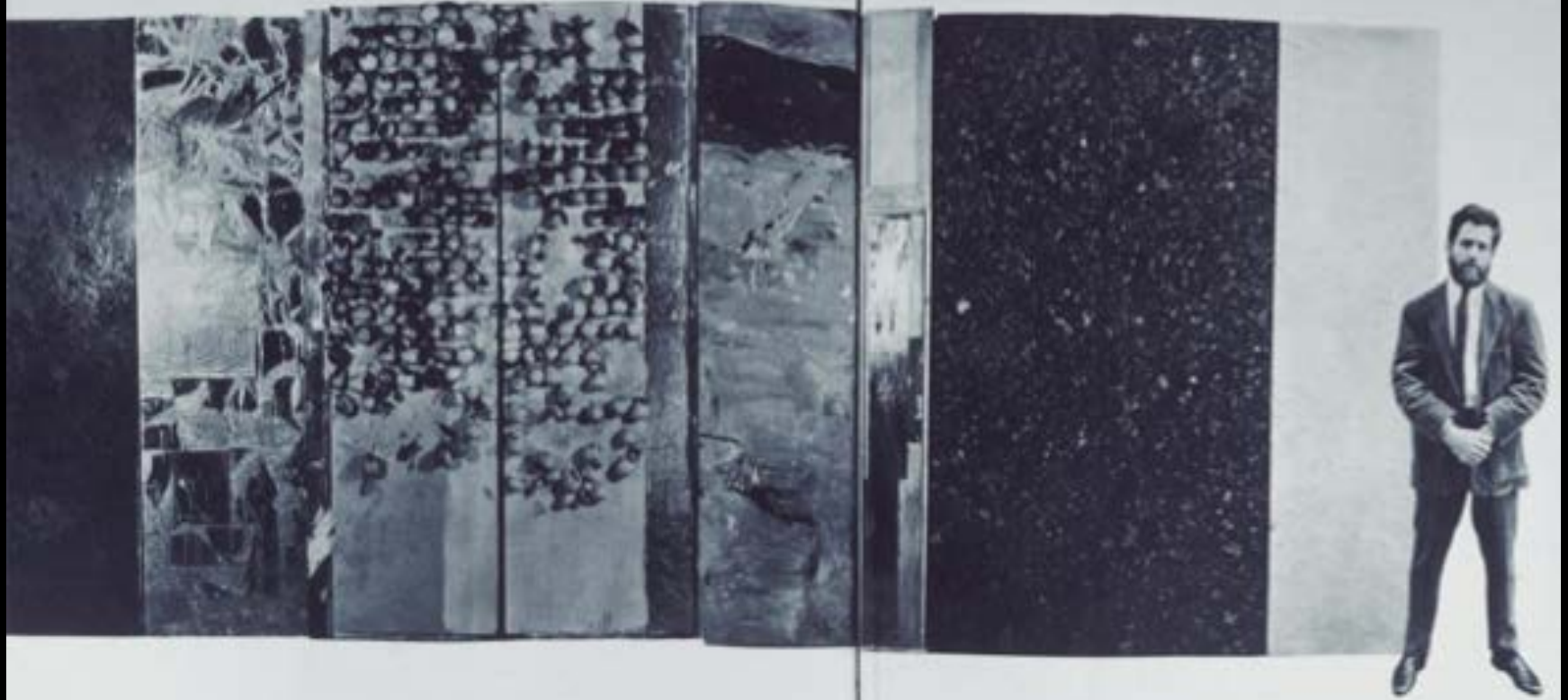


Allan Kaprow, Penny Arcade, 1956



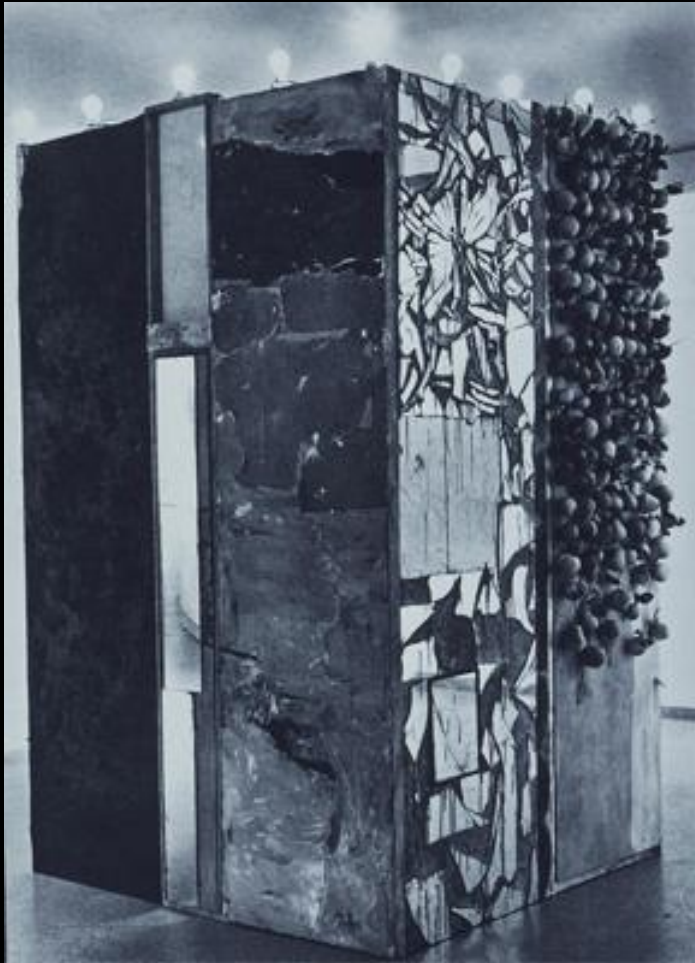
Allan Kaprow, Baby, 1956

17. JOHN BURRILL, Wall (1957-59, Bannockburn, Illinois)

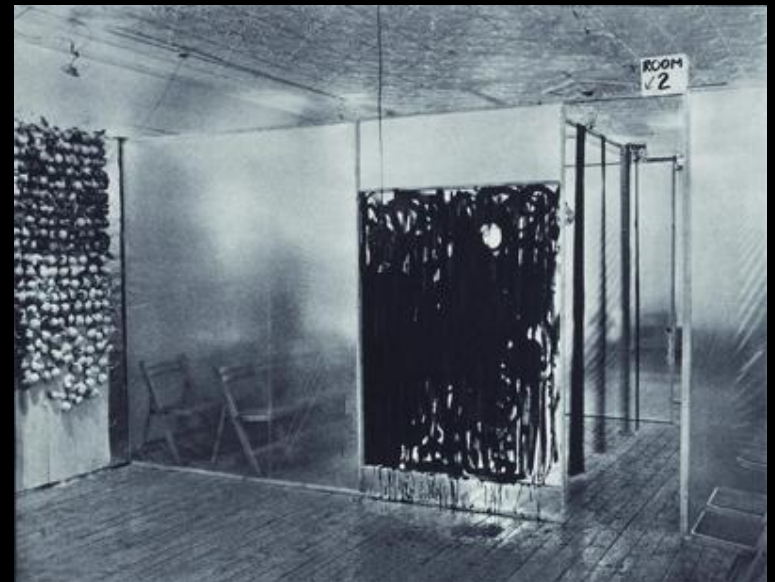
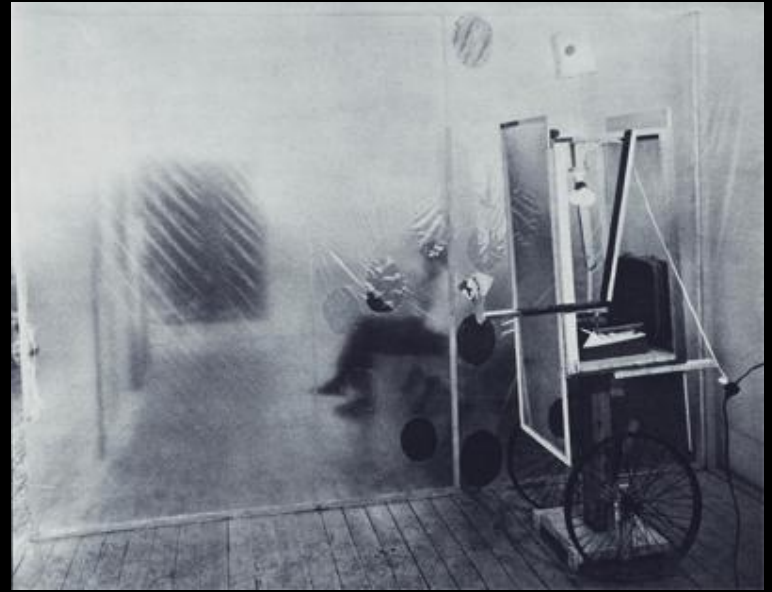


PANELS TO REARRANGE

1957-59



Allan Kaprow, Rearrangeable Panels, 1957-59



Allan Kaprow, 18 Happenings in 6 Parts, 1959

18 HAPPENINGS
IN SIX PARTS
BY ALLAN KAPROW

THE REUBEN GALLERY
61 4th AVE., N.Y.C.
OCT. 4,6,7,8,9,10--8:30 p.m.

CAST OF PARTICIPANTS

Allan Kaprow - who
speaks and plays a
musical instrument

Rosalyn Montague -
who speaks and moves

Shirley Prendergast -
who moves and plays a
musical instrument

Lucas Samaras - who
speaks, plays a game
and a musical instru-
ment

Janet Weinberger -
who moves and plays a
musical instrument

Robert Whitman - who
moves, speaks and
plays a game

Sam Francis, Red Grooms,
Dick Higgins, Lester
Johnson, Alfred Les-
lie, Jay Milder, George
Segal, Robert Thompson
- each of whom paints

The visitors - who sit
in various chairs

INSTRUCTIONS

The performance is divided into six parts. Each part contains three happenings which occur at once. The beginning and end of each will be signalled by a bell. At the end of the performance two strokes of the bell will be heard.

You have been given three cards. Be seated as they instruct you. That is, be sure to change your place for set three and for set five.

Between part one and part two there is a two minute interval. Remain seated.

Between part two and part three there is a fifteen minute interval. You may move about freely.

Between part three and part four there is a two minute interval when you will remain in your seats.

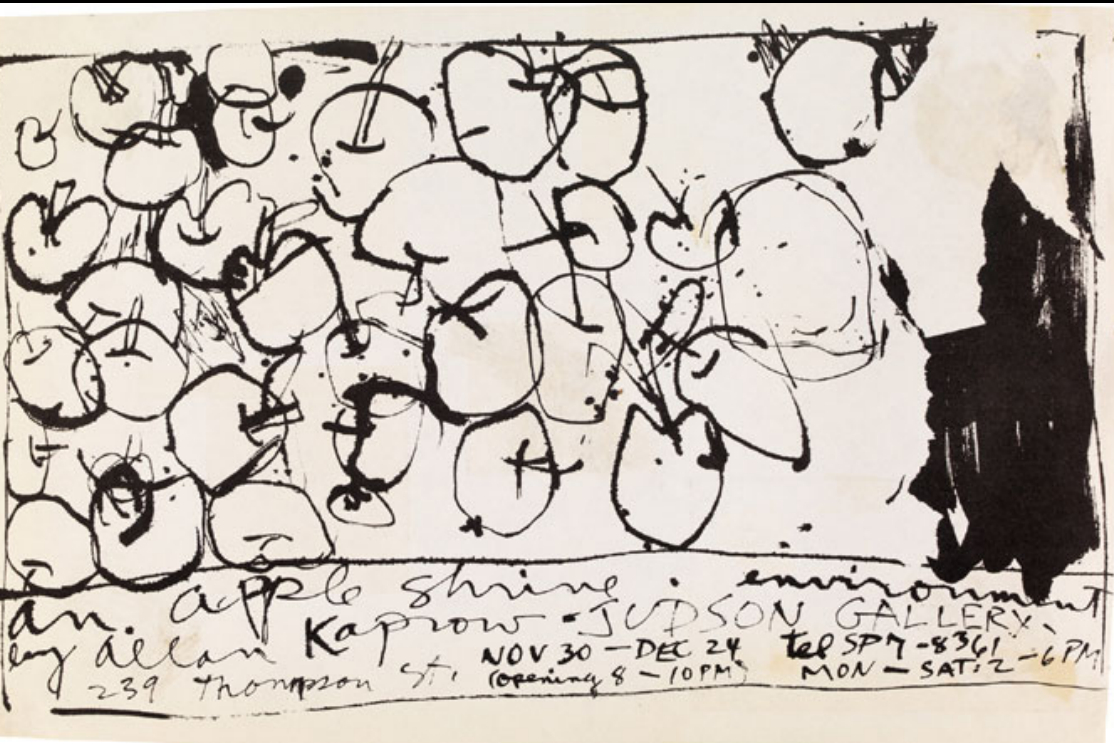
Between part four and part five there is a fifteen minute interval. You may move about.

Between part five and part six there is a two minute interval. Remain seated.

There will be no applause after each set. You may applaud after the sixth set if you wish, although there will be no "curtain call".

The visitors are please asked not to smoke at all in the loft. They are also asked not to leave the building during the longer intermissions.





Allan Kaprow, An Apple Shrine, 1960

PUSH AND PULL

-

A FURNITURE COMEDY FOR HANS HOPMANN

Instructions:

Anyone can find or make one or more rooms of any shape, size proportion and color -- Then furnish them perhaps, maybe paint some things or everything.

Everyone else can come in and, if the room(s) are furnished, they also can arrange them, accommodating themselves as they see fit.

Each day things will change.

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Allan Kaprow, Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann, 1963



Allan Kaprow, Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann, 1963



Allan Kaprow, Yard, 1961



Julian Wasser/Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Allan Kaprow (center, with beard) and participants in his
"Yard" (1967), at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York.

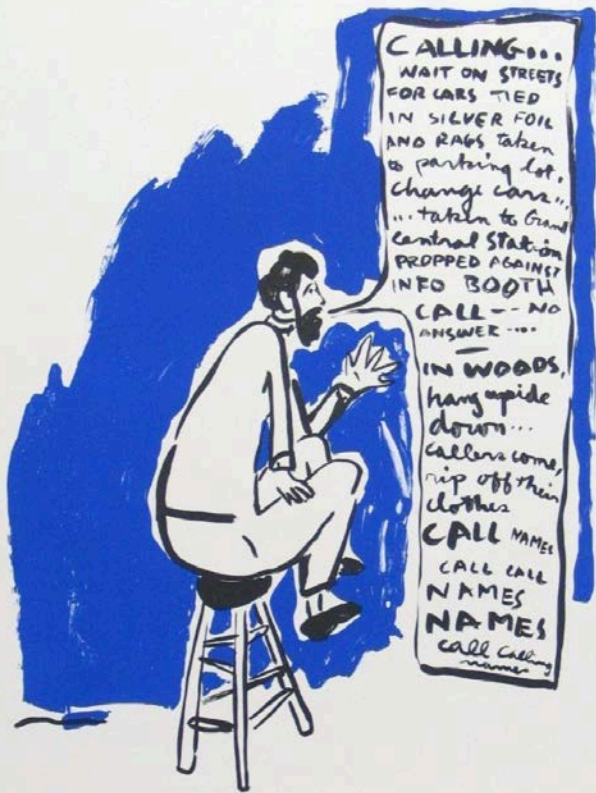


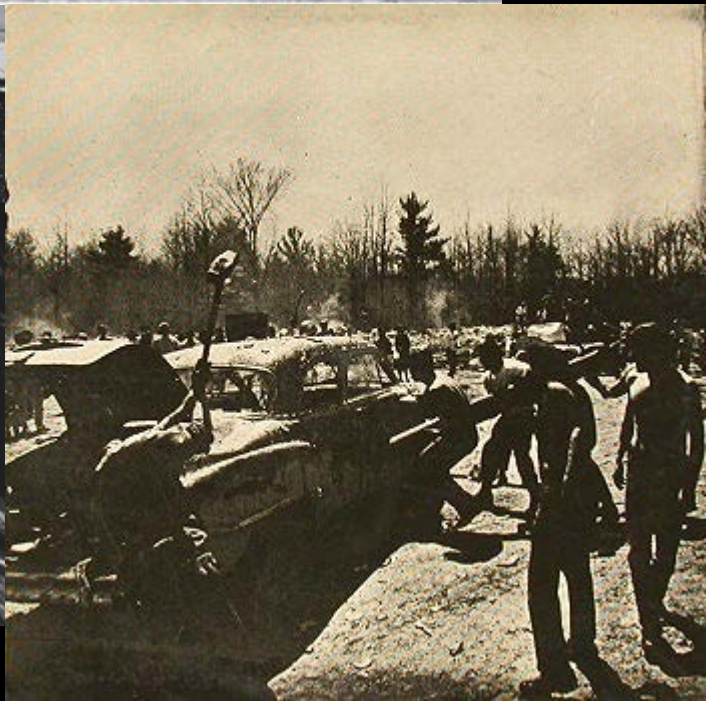
Allan Kaprow, Push and Pull: A Furniture Comedy for Hans Hofmann, 1963



Jean-Claude Wrapped for Allan Kaprow's
"Calling" (1965)



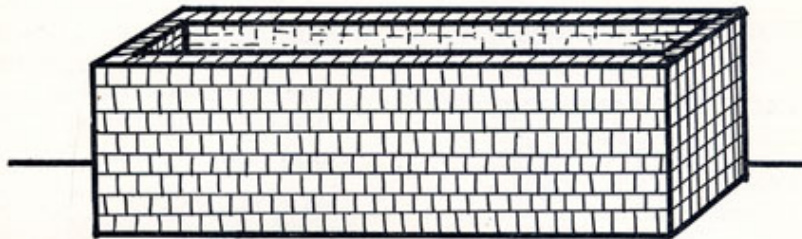




Allan Kaprow, Household, 1964

FLUIDS

A HAPPENING BY
ALLAN KAPROW



During three days, about twenty rectangular enclosures of ice blocks (measuring about 30 feet long, 10 wide and 8 high) are built throughout the city. Their walls are unbroken. They are left to melt.

Those interested in participating should attend a preliminary meeting at the Pasadena Art Museum, 46 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 11, 1967. The Happening will be thoroughly discussed by Allan Kaprow and all details worked out.





“Happenings” in the New York Scene by Allan Kaprow

Art News 60(3):36–39,58–62. 1961. Reprinted in Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

If you haven't been to the Happenings, let me give you a kaleidoscope sampling of some of their great moments. Everybody is crowded into a downtown loft, milling about, like at an opening. It's hot. There are lots of big cartons sitting all over the place. One by one they start to move, sliding and careen- ing drunkenly in every direction, lunging into one another, accompanied by loud breathing sounds over four loudspeakers....

In addition, outside New York there is the Gutai group in Osaka; reported activity in San Francisco, Chicago, Cologne, Paris, and Milan; and a history that goes back through Surrealism, Dada, Mime, the circus, carnivals, the traveling saltimbanques, all the way to medieval mystery plays and processions.

Happenings are events that, put simply, happen. Though the best of them have a decided impact—that is, we feel, “here is something important”—they appear to go nowhere and do not make any particular literary point. In contrast to the arts of the past, they have no structured beginning, middle, or end.

Happening is not a commodity but a brief event, from the standpoint of any publicity it may receive, it may become a state of mind. Who will have been there at that event? It may become like the sea monsters of the past or the flying saucers of yesterday. I shouldn't really mind, for as the new myth grows on its own, without reference to anything in particular, the artist may achieve a beautiful privacy, famed for something purely imaginary while free to explore something nobody will notice.