THE FIGURE REEMERGING: JACKSON POLLOCK'S CUT-OUTS, 1948-1956

by

Tetsuya Oshima

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
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ABSTRACT

THE FIGURE REEMERGING: JACKSON POLLOCK'S CUT-OUTS, 1948-1956

by

Tetsuya Oshima

Adviser: Professor Gail Levin

This dissertation is a monographic study of a series of cut-outs that Jackson Pollock (1912-56) started in 1948. My study takes its point of departure from *Cut Out*, the principal work in the Cut-Out series. *Cut Out* is generally thought to be a work from around 1948-50. However, in 1999, T. J. Clark pointed out that *Cut Out* is shown in a different form from the present one in a photograph of Pollock's studio taken soon after the artist's death in 1956. According to my research, Pollock's widow, Lee Krasner, completed the work in its present form two years after the artist's death. I reinterpret *Cut Out* by going back to the state in which Pollock himself ultimately left it. This reinterpretation leads to the restructuring of the entire Cut-Out series because *Cut Out* is the pivotal work in the series.

Pollock's cut-outs were strongly influenced by Henri Matisse's *Jazz* (1947), as well as his paper cut-outs. Thus they represent a significant aspect of Pollock's engagement, staring in 1942 and continuing until his final year, with the French modern master's art. Pollock's cut-outs are also remarkable within the context of American Abstract Expressionism. They forge deep relationships with

Lee Krasner's collages of 1953-55, with Willem de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions of 1946-49 and Woman series of 1950-55, and with Alfonso Ossorio's Victorias paintings of 1950. At the same time, Pollock's cut-outs present an interesting parallel to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, an intellectual current that was internationally in vogue at mid-century. Furthermore, Pollock's cut-outs closely relate to important concerns within his own work from its earliest period on, such as the masking technique, the images of the moon-woman, and the subject of "male and female." This dissertation thus opens/reframes various significant aspects of Pollock's art through the examination of his cut-outs.

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Introduction

> Me sits there with his augur's rod of ash, in borrowed sandals, by day beside a livid sea, unbeheld, in violet night walking beneath a reign of uncouth stars. I throw this ended shadow from me, manshape, ineluctable, call it back. Endless, would it be mine, form of my form?
> ——James Joyce, *Ulysses*[1]

Despite his prevailing image as the leading exponent of Abstract Expressionism——created by his famous allover poured paintings of 1947-50 (fig. 0-1)——Jackson Pollock (1912-56) was consistently concerned with the human figure. Two months before his death in 1956, Pollock stated: "I don't care for 'abstract expressionism' . . . and it's certainly not 'nonobjective,' and not 'nonrepresentational' either. I'm very representational some of the time, and a little all of the time. But when you're painting out of your unconscious, figures are bound to emerge."[2] Apparently, the allover poured paintings are an exception to this statement. In those paintings, as Michael Fried discussed, Pollock realized a new kind of non-figurative painting by freeing line, with the technique of pouring, from the conventional job of drawing figures or shapes, whether representational

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[1] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 1934), 49.

[2] Selden Rodman, "Jackson Pollock," in *Conversations with Artists* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1957), 82.

or abstract, and by filling a picture plane with independent lines.[3] However, as is generally known, Pollock soon recovered figures in a series of black paintings, called black pourings, on which he worked right after the allover poured paintings, from 1951 through 1952 (fig. 0-2). In those subsequent paintings, while he continued to employ the pouring technique in a little transformed form, he gave up the allover style, and figurative images, which recall those he had drawn in his early period, reappeared.[4]

However, Pollock had already returned to the figure in the period during which he was executing the allover poured paintings. In 1948, the year after he began to work on the allover poured paintings, Pollock undertook a special series of paintings done with the technique of cutting out (hence referred to in this dissertation as the "Cut-Out series"). In some of these works, a part (or parts) of the picture plane, on which paint was poured (as in the allover poured paintings of 1947-50), was cut out in a humanoid shape with a knife or similar tool. In others

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[3] See Michael Fried, "Jackson Pollock," *Artforum*, vol. 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 14-16. Also, taking up two works in Pollock's allover poured paintings of 1947, Bryan Robertson stated in 1960: "In *Cathedral* and *Full Fathom Five* the absence of literal imagery allows the lines to be freed from the necessity to delineate and they exist independently of form. They act only as an enlivening structure on the picture plane." Bryan Robertson, *Jackson Pollock* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1960), 35-36.

[4] In a letter of 1951, Pollock wrote about this change in his work as follows: "I've had a period of drawing on canvas in black——with some of my early images coming thru——think the non-objectivists will find them disturbing——and the kids who think it simple to splash a Pollock out." Jackson Pollock to Alfonso Ossorio and Ted Dragon, 7 June 1951, in *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works*, ed. Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 4:261, doc. 99.

of these works, the humanoid-shaped piece (or the humanoid-shaped pieces), cut off in that way, was glued on a different picture plane.

In Pollock's oeuvre, the following six works can be classified as falling within the Cut-Out series: *Untitled* (*Cut Out*) (c. 1948-50 [or Jackson Pollock with Lee Krasner, c. 1948-56/58],[5] fig. 0-3); *Untitled* (*Cut-Out Figure*) (1948, fig. 0-4); *Untitled* (*Rhythmical Dance*) (1948, fig. 0-5); *Untitled* (catalogue raisonné number 1033, c. 1948, hereafter *JPCR1033*, fig. 0-6); *Untitled* (*Shadows: Number 2, 1948*) (1948, fig. 0-7); and *Out of the Web: Number 7, 1949* (1949, fig. 0-8).[6] The Cut-Out series has remained relatively unexamined to date in Pollock's oeuvre for multiple reasons. For one, the series is not large in number. For another, Pollock worked on it in the shadow of the allover poured paintings during roughly the same period. Finally, in the artist's catalogue raisonné, the works in the Cut-Out series are, with the exception of *Out of the Web*, treated not as paintings but as collages. Thus they appear in the last (fourth) volume separately from the

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[5] For details, see chapter 1 of this dissertation.

[6] In addition to these six works, there existed at least one more cut-out work. It was destroyed by Larry Rivers' children by accident a few years after Pollock had gifted it to John Bernard Myers. According to Myers, "It was a figure about eighteen inches high, cut out of wood, on each side of which canvas was glued. Both sides were gaily painted and the figure seemed to dance as it hung from a string and turned." John Bernard Myers, *Tracking the Marvelous: A Life in the New York Art World* (New York: Random House, 1983), 105. See also another explanation by Myers of the work in: *Tracking the Marvelous*, exh. cat. (New York: Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, 1981), 27. Although the editors of Pollock's catalogue raisonné knew about this destroyed work (see the file for *Cut Out*, Jackson Pollock Catalogue Raisonné Archives, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, N.Y.), it is not noted in the catalogue raisonné.

allover poured paintings and the black pourings. Also, it is noteworthy that Pollock himself did not call the public's attention to his cut-outs very much. He exhibited only two of the six works in the Cut-Out series, *Shadows* and *Out of the Web*, during his lifetime.[7] After he had created *Cut-Out Figure*, *Rhythmical Dance*, and *JPCR1033*, he sold them not through his gallery, but directly to private collectors. And as for *Cut Out*, Pollock did not exhibit or sell it during his lifetime. These facts perhaps show Pollock's unconfident attitude toward his cut-outs, which were very experimentally done. However, in any case, the Cut-Out series occupies a very significant position in the development of Pollock's art. As I previously stated, preceding the black pourings in which Pollock openly recovered the figure, the Cut-Out series shows the reemergence of the figure in the midst of the very period during which Pollock was working on the non-figurative allover poured paintings. The Cut-Out series is thus evidence of the degree to which the human figure remained a central issue throughout Pollock's career.

My study of Pollock's Cut-Out series begins with *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3). *Cut Out* is significant because it nearly always has been referred to as pivotal in various scholars' studies on Pollock's cut-outs. It is generally thought that this work was completed in its present state by Pollock himself around 1950.

[7] *Shadows* was exhibited at Pollock's one-person show held at the Betty Parsons Gallery from January 24 to February 12, 1949. *Out of the Web* was exhibited twice during Pollock's lifetime. The first occasion was Pollock's one-person show held at the Betty Parsons Gallery from November 11 to December 10, 1949; and the second was the "15 Years of Jackson Pollock" show held at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1955.

However, as I will argue in the first chapter of this dissertation, Pollock actually could not have completed *Cut Out* before his fatal car accident in 1956, though he was still working on it at the time of his death. Pollock's widow, Lee Krasner, completed the unfinished part of the work on the basis of her own ideas after his death. The part in which Krasner intervened was a very important one. Thus, *Cut Out* needs to be fundamentally reinterpreted. Through *Cut Out*, I will elicit many important issues regarding the whole series.

My study of the Cut-Out series is also motivated by some of the ideas raised by Pollock's exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1998-99. An important aspect of the issue of the figure in Pollock's art was (re-)introduced by Pepe Karmel, who co-organized the exhibition with Kirk Varnedoe. By visually reconstructing early states of some major allover poured paintings from 1950——such as *Number 27, 1950* (figs. 0-9 and 0-10) and *Autumn Rhythm: Number 30, 1950*——with Hans Namuth's films and still photographs of Pollock at work, Karmel demonstrated that Pollock actually painted rough human figures on their initial and/or intermediate layers.[8] In addition, by x-raying two allover poured paintings from 1947, *Full Fathom Five* and *Phosphorescence*, the chief conservator of the Museum of Modern Art, James Coddington, revealed that Pollock painted rough human figures under the surfaces of those works, too.[9]

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[8] Pepe Karmel, "Pollock at Work: The Films and Photographs of Hans Namuth," in *Jackson Pollock*, by Kirk Varnedoe with Pepe Karmel, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 87-137.

[9] James Coddington, "No Chaos Damn It," in *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*, ed. Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel (New York: The Museum of

The existence of figurative imagery in Pollock's allover poured paintings was publicly suggested by Thomas B. Hess in 1964. In that year, Hess stated the following in his article on Pollock: "There was still an assumed subject most of the time, but it disappeared beneath the interlacing drips and streamers. The 'literary' image was the secret at the heart of a labyrinth. Today, Pollock's 1947-50 abstractions look less non-objective than they did at their first appearance. The years have permitted the under image to loom from beneath the mazes of flung color."[10] However, William Rubin flatly contradicted Hess in 1967 in one of a series of four articles on Pollock that would become a classic in Pollock studies by stating:

> The drip line in itself was by no means incompatible with representation . . . nor . . . was all-overness. It was only the conjunction of the two that militated against it. Nevertheless, Thomas Hess——partly on the basis of a remark made by Pollock himself——believes that even the all-over drip pictures of 1947-50, usually held to be entirely abstract, are figurative to the extent that the first stages of the drawing represented landscape or figure elements which were then "painted out" during the application of the succeeding layers. While it is true that some drip patterns in pictures of late 1946 and early 1947 are woven over manifestly figural shapes, the poetry of the full blown all-over drip paintings seems to me metaphysically rather than literally present. In many of the paintings of 1948-50 we can make out quite clearly the first "layer" of the web (*No. 32*, 1950, for example, is a single "layer" picture [fig. 0-11]); these contain none of the patently anthropomorphic and landscape-like morphologies that reappear in the black pictures of 1951.[11]

Modern Art, 1999), 101-15.

[10] Thomas B. Hess, "Pollock: The Art of a Myth," *Artnews*, vol. 62, no. 9 (January 1964): 64.

[11] William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition, Part III,"

In 1969, Lee Krasner reported an interesting remark previously made by Pollock. She stated in an interview with B. H. Friedman:

> I saw his paintings evolve. Many of them, many of the most abstract, began with more or less recognizable imagery——heads, parts of the body, fantastic creatures. Once I asked Jackson why he didn't stop the painting [*There Were Seven in Eight*, c. 1945, fig. 0-12] when a given image was exposed. He said, 'I choose to veil the imagery'.[12]

Referring to this remark by Pollock, "I choose to veil the imagery," some scholars newly examined the latent figurativeness of Pollock's allover poured paintings in the 1970s.[13] However, Rubin stubbornly disagreed with those studies too. In his article published in 1979, he stated that Pollock's remark, "I choose to veil the imagery," was applicable only to the artist's work in the transitional period of late 1944 to mid-1947 and should not be associated with the fully developed allover poured paintings.[14] In order to buttress his argument, Rubin even elicited from Krasner the following supplementary explanation about her above-quoted statement in the interview with Friedman: "Pollock made the remark about

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Artforum, vol. 5, no. 8 (April 1967): 31, n. 31.

[12] Lee Krasner Pollock, "An Interview with Lee Krasner Pollock by B. H. Friedman," in *Jackson Pollock: Black and White*, exh. cat. (New York: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1969), 7.

[13] See, for example, C. L. Wysuph, sec. 3 in *Jackson Pollock: Psychoanalytic Drawings* (New York: Horizon Press, 1970), 19-23.

[14] William Rubin, "Pollock as Jungian Illustrator: The Limits of Psychological Criticism, Part II," *Art in America*, vol. 67, no. 8 (December 1979): 83.

'veiling' in reference to *There Were Seven in Eight*, and it doesn't necessarily apply to other paintings——certainly not to such pictures as *Autumn Rhythm*, *One*, etc."[15]

Pepe Karmel and James Coddington offered a fundamental revision of the authoritative opinion of Rubin, who had long served as director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art. Since the occasion of the 1998-99 Pollock exhibition, the issue of the figure in the art of Pollock in his mature period has been considerably easier to discuss.[16] However, Karmel's study has also drawn strong objections; for example, by Rosalind Krauss. In her article included in an anthology on Pollock that was edited by Varnedoe and Karmel and was published by the Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the 1998-99 Pollock exhibition, Krauss stated:

> Having tracked Pollock's working process by means of digitized composites built up out of Hans Namuth's complete inventory of still and cinematic photography, and having shown the occurrence of vertical, figurelike constellations at various levels of the work (both at the beginning, where Pollock is marking bare canvas, and at intermediary stages, where they are superimposed over the developing web), Karmel freely identifies these vertical bundles as a form of human figuration and characterizes the line with which Pollock executed them as a "controlled and deliberate" mode of drawing.[17]

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[15] Lee Krasner Pollock, interview by William Rubin, June 1979; quoted in Rubin, "Pollock as Jungian Illustrator, Part II," 86.

[16] See, for example, Michael FitzGerald, chap. 4 in *Picasso and American Art*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 205.

[17] Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," in *New Approaches*,

Krauss severely criticized Karmel's study as denigrating Pollock to a kind of traditional draftsman. For Krauss, Pollock was pivotal to her reinterpretations of modernism. Krauss has directed her attention to Pollock's characteristic working method of painting on the floor. Using Georges Bataille's notions of *bas matérialisme* (base materialism) and *informe* (formless), she has insisted that by changing the position of the canvas from the easel to the floor, Pollock struck out not simply at form but also at form's matrix, namely the verticality of a human being's visual perception. In so doing, according to Krauss, Pollock ventured into the terrain of "formlessness."[18] Taking this interpretation into account, it is understandable that Krauss strongly objects to Karmel, who finds figures in Pollock's allover poured paintings. However, in comparison with Karmel's positivist study based on visual evidence, Krauss's interpretation of Pollock is too theoretical. It seems to be, as Karmel keenly responds in turn, "a literary artefact derived from Georges Bataille, with no real basis in the evolution of the *visual* [italics in original] arts."[19] Further, Krauss's method, which eagerly——and, sometimes, even sophistically——applies theories of adjacent disciplines to interpretations of art, seems to make both art and the discipline of art history

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ed. Varnedoe and Karmel, 155-56.

[18] See Rosalind E. Krauss, chap. 6 in *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1993), 243-329; Rosalind E. Krauss, "Horizontality," in *Formless: A User's Guide*, by Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 93-103.

[19] Pepe Karmel, "Digital Connoisseurship: A Response to Kent Minturn," *Visual Resources*, vol. 18, no. 3 (September 2002): 203.

undeservedly subordinate to those adjacent disciplines.

Another scholar has also contradicted Karmel's study, but at a more basic level. I previously described Karmel's study as "positivist"; the second objection deals specifically with this quality. Siding with Krauss, Kent Minturn criticized Karmel's method of editing Namuth's films and still photographs.[20] Minturn insisted that Karmel had improperly manipulated his source materials *with the purpose* of finding figures in Pollock's paintings. However, in his response to Minturn's criticism, Karmel explained his editorial process in detail and clarified that he had found figures *as a consequence* of proper research.[21] Minturn's criticism thus seems an almost needless fault finding.

I would like to suggest here that it is not surprising that figurative imagery exists in (at least some of) Pollock's allover poured paintings of 1947-50. Like many other modern artists' work, Pollock's art, from its beginnings to its mature period, did not evolutionistically develop from figuration toward abstraction. A back-and-forth or conflict between figuration and abstraction was almost always present. It seems to me that those who deny the possibility of the existence of figurative imagery in Pollock's allover poured paintings are more or less fettered by the allegedly "modernist" evolutionary view of modern art that is notorious among the post-modernists. In any case, Karmel examined what he saw as

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[20] Kent Minturn, "Digitally-Enhanced Evidence: MoMA's Reconfiguration of Namuth's Pollock," *Visual Resources*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2001): 127-45.

[21] Karmel, "Digital Connoisseurship," 197-204. For Minturn's further response to Karmel, see Kent Minturn, "The Underneaths of Pollock: A Response to Pepe Karmel," *Visual Resources*, vol. 19, no. 2 (June 2003): 149-52.

human or animal figures in Pollock's allover poured paintings, referring to figures that Pollock painted and drew in various stages of his career. Karmel's study is generally convincing.

Next, I would also like to suggest that the existence of figurative imagery in Pollock's allover poured paintings does not diminish their artistic value. Even when Pollock painted figures in an allover poured painting, he unified those figures with the web of poured paint in the process of painting and ultimately created a new kind of non-figurative picture anyway.[22] On the other hand, this means that Pollock could not completely tear himself away from the figure in his search for and realization of the revolutionary allover poured paintings. This is a very interesting consideration. I think that Pollock's allover poured paintings are all the more profound as art for this unresolved conflict between figuration and abstraction, or non-figuration, under their surfaces.

At this juncture, I think it is also important to consider the following duality. In the allover poured paintings in which he painted figures, Pollock concealed those figures in the web of poured paint; on the other hand, in all the works in the Cut-Out series on which he worked during roughly the same period (figs. 0-3–0-8), Pollock overtly created figures by the particular means of cutting

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[22] Karmel also states as follows: "What is important is not the presence or absence of figuration in the paintings of these years. If any stick figures played a preliminary role in the composition of *Number 32* [fig. 0-11], they have dissolved completely into the weave of the endlessly interlacing lines that surround them, and this process of 'veiling' has completely restructured the pictorial space." Pepe Karmel, "A Sum of Destructions," in *New Approaches*, ed. Varnedoe and Karmel, 92.

out. In this respect, I believe that the Cut-Out series holds an important clue to Pollock's lifelong exploration of the figure. In this dissertation, I aim to open up yet another new dimension of the significant issue of the figure in Pollock's art by investigating the Cut-Out series, which was not treated in Karmel's study on Pollock.

Pollock's cut-outs were first treated by Bryan Robertson in his book on the artist published in 1960.[23] Robertson, who basically found a "struggle between image and non-image"[24] throughout Pollock's oeuvre, considered that in cut-outs such as *Out of the Web* (fig. 0-8) and *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3), an image was created as a non-image in that its identity in paint was removed. Robertson divided Pollock's work into the following three stages: 1) "a concern with the image" (namely, figurative works before the allover poured paintings); 2) "the abolition of the image" (namely, the allover poured paintings); and 3) an "eventual return to [the image] in a new approach" (namely, figurative works after the allover poured paintings). Robertson regarded the cut-outs, which were executed in the middle of the second stage, as "a return to an image as an isolated incident in time." At the same time, Robertson also explained that in the cut-outs, Pollock had repeated, in a different way, the abolition of the image in the allover poured paintings; for, in the cut-outs, he argued, an image is created as a non-image.

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[23] Robertson, *Jackson Pollock*, 81-82.

[24] Robertson, *Jackson Pollock*, 52.

This examination by Robertson was the starting point for our studies on Pollock's cut-outs.

Robertson's examination was deepened and developed by Michael Fried in 1965.[25] Taking up *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3), Fried interpreted the work as Pollock's significant attempt to achieve a new kind of figuration, with the special technique of cutting out, within the stylistic context of the non-figurative allover poured paintings. Fried stated as follows:

> [In *Cut Out*] [f]iguration is achieved in terms of eyesight alone, and not in terms that imply even the possibility of verification by touch. The figure is something we **don't** [boldface in original] see——it is, literally, **where** [boldface in original] we don't see——rather than something, a shape or object in the world, we do see. More than anything, it is like a kind of blind spot, a kind of defect in our visual apparatus. . . . the figure created by removing part of the painted field and backing it with canvas-board seems to lie somewhere within our own eyes, as strange as this may sound.[26]

However, Fried pointed out two important aspects of *Cut Out* that are inconsistent with the stylistic context of the allover poured paintings. The first is that the spectator's attention tends to focus on one certain visual incident on the picture surface, namely the cut-out figure. The second is that in *Cut Out*, the proportion of the cut-out part to the whole picture surface is so large that the expansive quality of and the sheer visual density of the picture surface are spoiled by the cut-out part. According to Fried, these problems in *Cut Out* were resolved in *Out*

[25] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 16-17.

[26] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 16.

of the Web (fig. 0-8). In *Out of the Web*, several relatively small figures are cut out on a picture surface. Fried explained the difference between *Cut Out* and *Out of the Web* as follows: "unlike the figure in 'Cut-Out' [*sic*], the sequence of figures in 'Out of the Web' is almost as hard to see, to bring one's attention to bear on, as a sequence of actual blind spots would be. They seem on the verge of dancing off the visual field or of dissolving into it and into each other as we try to look at them."[27] Fried regarded *Out of the Web* as one of the finest paintings that Pollock had ever made. Setting aside the issue of which is superior, *Cut Out* or *Out of the Web*, Fried's interpretation of Pollock's cut-outs as the artist's search for a new kind of figuration by a new technique within the context of the allover poured paintings is significant, and it became a basis for many of the subsequent studies on Pollock's cut-outs. My examination of this search in the second chapter of this dissertation also owes appreciably to Fried's study.

After Fried's work, we had to wait a quarter of a century for the next significant study on Pollock's cut-outs. It was done by T. J. Clark in 1990.[28] Applying his theory of modernism——which he regards as the development of "practices of negation"[29]——to the internal development of Pollock's individual art,

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[27] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 16.

[28] Timothy J. Clark, "Jackson Pollock's Abstraction," in *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal 1945-1964*, ed. Serge Guilbaut (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1990), 209 ff.

[29] See T. J. Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art" (1982), in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, ed. Francis Frascina (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 47-63. Parenthetically, Clark's theory of modernism, presented in this article, caused fierce controversy with Fried. See Michael Fried, "How Modernism

Clark interpreted Pollock's allover poured paintings as the negation of his previous figurative works, and then interpreted the cut-outs as the further negation of that negation.[30] Clark explained the emergence of the cut-outs in Pollock's work as follows:

> Abstract painting was a way out of the mess; but it was also a means of signifying what had stood in the way of the figure in the first place, and left it "unformed," "unfounded," *Something of the Past*. Pollock never seems to have made up his mind for certain, in 1947-50, whether that signifying could get done *without* [italics in original] the figure reappearing in the abstract in some readable form. The problem was, of course, to find a way to reconcile the second coming of the figure with the work against likeness being done at the same time. The figure, if it was to appear at all, would have to do so *out of* or *against* [italics in original] that work, as the strict contrary of it, as the negation of the negation.[31]

In this way, Clark illuminated the significance of the cut-outs in Pollock's work. The work that holds special relevance here is *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3). Clark explained the role of this specific piece in Pollock's Cut-Out series, again quite poetically, as follows:

Works: A Response to T. J. Clark" (1982), in *Pollock and After*, 65-79; T. J. Clark, "Arguments about Modernism: A Reply to Michael Fried" (1983), in *Pollock and After*, 81-88.

[30] Fried had stated in advance of Clark as follows: "It has been observed how Pollock's all-over style entailed the negation of figuration; and how figuration in turn entailed the negation of that style. In 'Cut-Out' [*sic*] these negations become the fundamental means by which the painting is made." Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 16.

[31] Clark, "Jackson Pollock's Abstraction," 209.

> There is *Cut Out*, the fully developed state of this idea, in which the figure appears precisely *in the negative* [italics in original], as that which is absent from the incrusted field. If there is to be a figure at all, in other words, it will be that which the activity of mark-making has excluded. The abstract will displace the figurative, cut it out, put it nowhere; and then give the weightless, placeless homunculus just enough substance for it to be body after all——a few splatters, enough of a physiognomy.[32]

Clark's study thus directed our attention afresh to Pollock's cut-outs a long time after Fried's study.

The next significant study appeared in 1993 from a former student of Clark's, Michael Leja. Leja examined Pollock's art in the context of Abstract Expressionism's relation to Modern Man discourse.[33] Leja regarded Pollock's art as an excellent visual representation of various conflicts, such as control vs. uncontrol, and order vs. disorder, both of which are central to this approach. Leja specially chose a specific work in the Cut-Out series, *Out of the Web* (fig. 0-8), as a significant point of reference. In *Out of the Web*, Leja found the coexistence of uncontrol and control in Pollock's handling of paint and, what is more, found the coincidence of rupture and unity in his treatment of the picture surface and in his composition. In the cut-outs as a whole, further uncovering the dialectics of presence and absence, interior and exterior and so on, Leja read a story of the containment and release of human beings. In reference to *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3), he

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[32] Clark, "Jackson Pollock's Abstraction," 212.

[33] Michael Leja, "Pollock & Metaphor," chap. 5 in *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 275-327.

stated as follows:

> The figure, once an indistinguishable part of this thicket, has materialized in the very process of being extracted from it. In the delineation and removal of the figure, process becomes metaphor and introduces a narrative element into the work; it becomes the story of a figure engendered in and freed from material bonds——a story, roughly, of birth and some form of deliverance. As part of this narrative the linear network comes to signify containment undermined, as though the figure were literally extricated from bondage. . . .
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> . . . Some of the markings, such as the green bands across the figure's ankles, reinscribe the figure in the linear network of the overlaid field and sustain the image of bondage. Restored to the field, the figure's gesture . . . reinforces the suggestion of containment. . . . More important, the work produces relations of figure and field——the figure detached, alienated from the field, yet ensnared by it——that generate other resonances with Modern Man discourse.[34]

Leja's study represents a great leap in the study of Pollock's cut-outs, especially in regard to interpreting their content in earnest.

The four studies mentioned above are the main references on Pollock's cut-outs. However, none is a monographic study, and thus there remains great room for further research. Moreover, there is a crucial problem in all of those four prior studies; that is to say, they were done without knowledge of the fact that after Pollock's death, a different person greatly intervened in *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3), which is the pivotal work in the Cut-Out series. In this respect, all of these previous studies need to be modified to a greater or lesser degree. Actually, in his book published in 1999, Clark pointed out the possibility that Lee Krasner had

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[34] Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism*, 297, 299-300.

intervened in *Cut Out* after Pollock's death.[35] However, curiously, Clark substantially repeated his previous interpretation of the work in the 1999 book. It seems that by the time he published an article on Pollock's cut-outs in the same year, Leja also had known that someone intervened in Pollock's *Cut Out*. However, clouding the issue, Leja explained in the 1999 article that *Cut Out* had been formed in its present state "[b]y the time of Pollock's death in 1956."[36] (Leja does not clearly indicate by whom this was done.) He ambiguously stated, "Pollock may have intended this solution to be the definitive conclusion to his extended experimentation with this painting,"[37] and by so doing, ultimately repeated his previous interpretation of Pollock's *Cut Out*, which he presented in his 1993 book. In light of all of the above confusion, there is a great need for further study of Pollock's cut-outs.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. In chapter 1, "The Complications of *Cut Out*," I will question Pollock's single authorship of *Cut Out* in its present form, or its genuineness as Pollock's piece. I will prove that Lee Krasner completed the work in 1958 through my examination of some photographs

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[35] T. J. Clark, "The Unhappy Consciousness," chap. 6 in *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 351. This matter will be closely examined in chapter 1 of this dissertation.

[36] Michael Leja, "Pollock Reframed and Refigured," *Tate* (London), no. 17 (Spring 1999): 36.

[37] Leja, "Pollock Reframed and Refigured," 36.

taken during different stages of Pollock's making of *Cut Out* and archival documents regarding the work's conservation after the artist's death. Through this process, I will clarify the necessity of fundamentally reinterpreting this pivotal work in Pollock's Cut-Out series.

In chapter 2, "The Influence of Matisse," I will reinterpret Pollock's *Cut Out* and the entire Cut-Out series by examining their relationship to Henri Matisse's paper cut-outs, including the artist's *Jazz* of 1947. In the process, I will especially propose an explanation of what Pollock originally intended to do in *Cut Out*. Through this, I will show that with *Cut Out,* Pollock was secretly aiming at a significant new development in his later years. Hopefully, this will lead to a new view of Pollock's final period, which has generally been regarded as one of decline.

In chapter 3, "Interactions with Contemporary Artists," I will examine the relationships between Pollock's cut-outs and related work by three Abstract Expressionist colleagues of Pollock: specifically, Lee Krasner's collages of 1953-55; Willem de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions of 1946-49 and Woman series of 1950-55; and Alfonso Ossorio's Victorias paintings of 1950. This chapter will thus shed light on an uninvestigated aspect of Abstract Expressionism.

In chapter 4, "Existentialism," I will examine the relationship between Pollock's cut-outs and existentialism, which has not been undertaken to date in Pollock studies. Jean-Paul Sartre's major work *L'étre et le néant* (*Being and Nothingness*, 1943) and Alberto Giacometti's exhibition held at the Pierre Matisse

Gallery in New York at the beginning of 1948 will be keys to my consideration of Pollock's quest of the human figure in the cut-outs.

In chapter 5, "The Cut-Outs and the Artist's Career," I will show that Pollock's Cut-Out series is also deeply related to important concerns within his own work before he created the allover poured paintings, such as the masking technique, the images of the moon-woman, and the subject of "male and female." This dissertation will thus probe the multiple levels of historical and aesthetic significance in Pollock's cut-outs.

Chapter 1

The Complications of *Cut Out*[1]

It was because of the sun.
——Albert Camus, *The Stranger*[2]

Cut Out (fig. 0-3) was exhibited for the first time at Pollock's posthumous one-person show held at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1958,[3] and it was purchased by the Martha Jackson Gallery on that occasion.[4] It was then acquired by the Ohara Museum of Art (Kurashiki, Japan), through the agency of the Minami Gallery (Tokyo) in 1966.[5] *Cut Out* has since remained in the collection of the

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[1] This chapter is based on the following article which I published in Japanese in 2003: Tetsuya Oshima, "Jackson Pollock's *Cut Out*: An Examination Concerning Its Date and Author," *Art/Criticism* (Tokyo), no. 0 (2003): 70-117.

[2] Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 130.

[3] Pollock left this work untitled. The title "*Cut Out*" generally came to be used after his death. This title first appeared in the catalogue to this show. See *Jackson Pollock*, exh. cat. (New York: Sidney Janis Gallery, 1958), no pagination, pl. 18.

[4] File for *Cut Out*, Jackson Pollock Catalogue Raisonné Archives, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, N.Y.

[5] Shinichiro Fujita and Hitoshi Morita, eds., *Catalog of the Ohara Museum of Art Collection, 1920-1990* (Kurashiki, Japan: Ohara Museum of Art, 1991), 138. For a detailed account of the course of the museum's purchase of the work, see Shinichiro Fujita, *Passages du musée Ohara*, ed. Tomoko Matsuoka (Okayama, Japan: Sanyo Shimbun-sha, 2000), 79-82.

Ohara Museum of Art. The work in its present state was formed in the following way. First, fluid paint was poured allover onto a sheet of cardboard; and also, paint was squeezed out directly from tubes onto the cardboard. Next, a humanoid shape was cut out in the middle of the painted cardboard with a knife. Finally, the painted cardboard with the humanoid-shaped void was backed with a white canvas blotted with silver, black and so on.

Cut Out has generally been recognized to date as a work that Jackson Pollock started in 1948 and finished around 1950. However, in his book published in 1999, T. J. Clark pointed out an important fact concerning the work's completion year and, what is more, concerning Pollock's authorship of the work.[6] Clark directed our attention to a photograph of Pollock's studio that was taken by Hans Namuth, according to Clark, "in 1956, a week or so after Pollock's death"[7] (fig. 1-1). Clark pointed out that in the photograph, *Cut Out*, the center of which is still empty, is superposed on another work, which is now known as *Black and White Painting II* (c. 1951, fig. 1-2). Then, without sufficient evidence, Clark presented the opinion that Lee Krasner made *Cut Out* in its present form. While Clark assumed Krasner's intervention in Pollock's making of *Cut Out*, it also seems that he regarded Krasner's role as a kind of good assistant who understood the artist's idea for the work and implemented it appropriately in his place. It

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[6] T. J. Clark, "The Unhappy Consciousness," chap. 6 in *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 351.

[7] Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 351. Pollock died on August 11, 1956.

also seems that Clark eventually recognized *Cut Out* in its present form as a work by Pollock alone in aesthetic terms. Clarks stated as follows:

> What this amounts to, I think, is that Lee Krasner made *Cut Out* in the form we have it. Whether she should have is not a question that interests me much. She made a good painting, and the 1956 photo suggests *she made it on reasonably good grounds* [italics added] ──on the basis of experiments (pinning-up and looking) which she saw were still under way. . . .
>
> *The point of the story is not art-world-ethical but aesthetic.* Cut Out *is one of Pollock's triumphs, I think* [italics added]. Critics have rightly been eloquent about it──notably Michael Fried. But it is a triumph of a hair's-breadth kind: there are no rules for putting the figurative and abstract back together again once the abstract has arrived. No available criteria, no leaning on facility. These are the circumstances in which pictures most need interpreters, even ruthless ones. And not just interpreters, collaborators. Modernism is full of novels and poems rescued from the wastepaper basket by their authors' best friends.[8]

As a result of his stance on Krasner's role in the work, in his above-quoted book, Clark modified only the date in the caption for the work as follows: "Jackson Pollock: *Cut Out*, oil on paper mounted on canvas, 77.3 x 57, (?) 1948-56."[9]

The fact that Pollock left *Cut Out* in a different form from its present one has been examined by a few scholars, including me,[10] since Clark's book of 1999. However, our understanding and interpretation of the fact is still clouded, or rather has become even more confused. In 2002, referring to the same 1956 Namuth

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[8] Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 351.

[9] Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 348.

[10] For my study, see Oshima, "Jackson Pollock's *Cut Out*" (2003).

photograph of Pollock's studio (fig. 1-1) without knowing about Clark's 1999 examination, Brydon Smith stated the following:

> the interesting revelation is the fact that Pollock seemingly had not decided on a background for this work [*Cut Out*] at the time of his death and that it was only mounted later on its existing, loosely painted canvas backing, which may very well have been a background that Pollock had previously tried and liked.[11]

By assuming that the backing given to *Cut Out* after Pollock's death was one that the artist had tried and liked, Smith did not bring Pollock's authorship of *Cut Out* in the present form into question——though he implied the necessity of discussing the issue by going on to state: "*At the very least* [italics added] the date of circa 1948-1950 for *Cut-Out* [*sic*] should be revised."[12] In any case, like Clark, Smith eventually modified only the date of *Cut Out* in the caption for the work as follows: "Jackson Pollock, *Cut-Out* [*sic*], c. 1948-1956."[13] On the other hand, based on Clark's 1999 examination, Brandon Taylor stated in 2004 as follows: "*Cut Out* turns out not to have been completed by Pollock at all. Studio photos show it unfinished in 1950, and still not resolved by the time of Pollock's death in 1956. Almost certainly Pollock's widow Lee Krasner finished it by finding a piece

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[11] Brydon Smith, "Jackson Pollock (1912-1956): Abstracting over the Figure," *National Gallery of Canada Review* (Ottawa), vol. 3 (2002): 34-35. Parenthetically, this article was actually published in 2003, while my 2003 article was being printed.

[12] Smith, "Jackson Pollock," 35.

[13] Smith, "Jackson Pollock," 31.

of canvas-board on which to glue the stencil-like shape."[14] However, in regarding Krasner's intervention in Pollock's *Cut Out* as a "*benevolent* [italics added] act of 'completion,'"[15] Taylor did not modify either the date or the author of *Cut Out* after all, writing curiously in the caption for the work as follows: "**Jackson Pollock** [boldface in original] *Cut Out* 1948-50 . . . the stencil we see here was not stabilized on a background until after Pollock's death. We know, however, that we [*sic*; correctly, Pollock?] was looking for an effect of something like this kind."[16]

It seems to me that Clark and the others mentioned above do not understand—or misunderstand—the aesthetic significance of *Cut Out*'s backing portion. Contrary to them, I believe that Pollock's authorship of *Cut Out* in the present form—or conversely, the genuineness of the present *Cut Out* as Pollock's piece—must be greatly questioned from the very viewpoint that Clark properly made so much of, namely the aesthetic viewpoint. In this chapter, based on the photograph by Namuth of Pollock's studio that Clark indicated in 1999 (fig. 1-1), and also referring to many other photographs and documents involved with the making and conservation of *Cut Out*, I will present two different opinions on the date and author(s) of the work. In the process, a sequence of important issues concerned with the work, which have been overlooked so far, will also be brought

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[14] Brandon Taylor, *Collage: The Making of Modern Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 113.

[15] Taylor, *Collage*, 113.

[16] Taylor, *Collage*, 109, fig. 108.

to light.

Cut Out (fig. 0-3) is neither dated nor signed by Pollock. At first, probably based on Lee Krasner's opinion, it was dated to 1949 when it was first exhibited in 1958.[17] Then, the date of 1949 was changed to circa 1948-50 in the artist's catalogue raisonné, which was edited by Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw and was published in 1978.[18] The editors' main grounds for changing the work's completion year (extending it to around 1950) is a photograph of Pollock working in his studio that was taken by Rudolph Burckhardt in 1950 (fig. 1-3).[19] In the photograph, *Cut Out*, which has not yet been given any backing and the middle of which is still void (fig. 1-4), hangs on the wall of the studio.[20] On the other hand, the work's starting year can be determined as 1948 owing to the work's relationship to another cut-out of Pollock's, *Cut-Out Figure* (fig. 0-4). In *Cut-Out Figure*, the humanoid-shaped piece that was cut away in

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[17] *Jackson Pollock* (1958), no pagination, pl. 18.

[18] Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw, eds., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 4:104.

[19] On Burckhardt's taking this photograph, see Deborah Solomon, *Jackson Pollock: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 205-6.

[20] In the catalogue raisonné, the editors remarked on the completion year of *Cut Out* as follows: "The cut-out portion of this work, without its present backing, can be seen in a photograph of Pollock's studio taken in 1950, indicating that this work was not completed until that year, or later." O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:104.

the process of making *Cut Out* was used to create a new work. *Cut-Out Figure* was dated 1948 by Pollock. Mainly for these reasons, the date of *Cut Out* was newly determined as circa 1948-50 in the artist's catalogue raisonné. There was no modification to this date in the supplement to the catalogue raisonné, which was published in 1995,[21] and the date was adopted also in the catalogue of Pollock's large retrospective exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1998-99.[22]

However, when we examine another photograph of Pollock's studio taken by Hans Namuth, supposedly in 1951 (fig. 1-5), *Cut Out* can be seen hanging on the wall of the studio still without any backing, as in the 1950 Burckhardt photograph (fig. 1-3). This photograph by Namuth appears in a book titled *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock*, a collection of Namuth's photographs of Pollock and the artist's studio, which was published in 1978.[23] The date of the photograph is not given in the book. However, along with the unbacked *Cut Out*, the photograph shows two black pourings that Pollock made in 1951, *Number 23, 1951 / Frogman* (far left) and *Number 16, 1951* (far right). In the photograph, although both are virtually completed, they are not signed. Those two black

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[21] Francis Valentine O'Connor, ed., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works*, supplement no. 1 (New York: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 1995).

[22] Kirk Varnedoe with Pepe Karmel, *Jackson Pollock*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 252, pl. 148.

[23] Hans Namuth, *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock* (Paris: Macula / Pierre Brochet, 1978), 86.

pourings were exhibited in Pollock's one-person show held at the Betty Parsons Gallery in the end of 1951 and were signed by that time.[24] Thus, it is certain that the photograph by Namuth was taken in 1951.

The photograph of greater importance regarding *Cut Out* is that 1956 Namuth photograph that T. J. Clark took up in 1999 (fig. 1-1). Although Clark did not specify where he had found the photograph or where he had obtained the information that it was taken "in 1956, a week or so after Pollock's death,"[25] the photograph appears in Namuth's *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock* together with the 1951 photograph examined above (fig. 1-5).[26] There, the following caption is attached to the 1956 photograph: "The studio of East Hampton / a week after the death of Pollock, in August 1956."[27] This seems to be the source of Clark's information. In any case, according to this caption, the photograph was taken soon after Pollock died. Here one grave problem surfaces. That is to say, as Clark pointed out, *Cut Out*, which has not yet had its present backing of a white canvas annexed, is shown in the photograph. There, the work, the middle of which is left cut out in a humanoid shape, is superposed on *Black and White Painting II* hung upside-down on the wall. What shows in the humanoid-shaped

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[24] See an installation shot of the show: O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:266, fig. 70.

[25] Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 351.

[26] Namuth, *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock*, 92.

[27] The original French text: "L'atelier de East Hampton / une semaine après la mort de Pollock, en août 1956." Namuth, *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock*, 92.

part of *Cut Out* is not any formal backing but a part of a different, independent——already signed——work, namely *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-2).

In some of the color transparencies of Pollock's studio, taken by Namuth, in the Hans Namuth Collection of the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona in Tucson, *Cut Out* is shown in the same state as that shown in the 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-6). The Center for Creative Photography broadly dated those transparencies to "ca. 1950's." However, they seem to have been taken soon after Pollock's death in 1956, probably on the same occasion as the one on which the 1956 Namuth photograph was taken. In the archives of Hans Namuth Ltd. in New York, there is a draft for a letter from Namuth to Leo Castelli in a file titled "Jackson Pollock Archives." The following description appears in the draft: "13 Kodochromes [*sic*; underline in original] of Pollock's studio shortly after his death, photographed with stereo camera; good condition." According to Peter Namuth of Hans Namuth Ltd., those Kodachromes are now conserved at the Center for Creative Photography.[28] Thus, the above-mentioned transparencies, in which *Cut Out* is shown, are probably among those "13 Kod[a]chromes of Pollock's studio shortly after his death." When we see those color transparencies, we are able to more clearly know the state of *Cut Out* superposed on *Black and White Painting II*.

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[28] Peter Namuth, e-mail to author, 11 September 2001.

How can we construct a meaningful sequence of the above various facts? We would need to start with considering the credibility of the caption attached to the 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-1) in *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock*: "The studio of East Hampton / a week after the death of Pollock, in August 1956." According to Jean Clay of Editions Macula, which published *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock*, Hans Namuth himself gave Clay the information necessary for making the caption when they worked together on the layout of the book in 1977.[29] Parenthetically, after its first publication in 1978, a new edition of *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock* was published by the same publisher in 1982 in an enlarged form that contained some new articles. Yet no alteration regarding that caption was made in the new edition.[30]

The 1956 Namuth photograph also appears in Pollock's studio in East Hampton, New York. The studio became open to the public in 1988. Reproductions of many photographs related to Pollock have been on display on the inner walls of the studio since then. The 1956 Namuth photograph is included among them; the following caption is attached to its reproduction:

> The studio *one week after Pollock's death in August 1956* [italics added], showing the full range of his work.
> From the left: Naked Man with Knife, c. 1938-41 covering Composition with Ritual Scene [*sic*; correctly, Composition with Donkey Head] of

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[29] Jean Clay, facsimile to author, 28 July 2001.

[30] Hans Namuth, *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock* (Paris: Macula, 1978/1982), no pagination.

> the same period.
> *On the wall is Black and White Painting II, c. 1951, covered by Cut Out, c. 1948-50* [italics added]. To the right, stacked: Number 32, 1950, Number 16, 1951, There Were Seven in Eight, c. 1945, The Key, 1946, and Pasiphaë, 1943. (Hans Namuth)

This caption was made by Meg Perlman, the first director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center in East Hampton. It is strange that Perlman did not raise any questions regarding the date and author of *Cut Out*, even though she composed the caption for the 1956 Namuth photograph as quoted above. Did she not notice that the version of *Cut Out* shown in the photograph does not have its present backing? Or, did she not understand the implications of that fact? In any case, according to Perlman, the caption was made on the basis of the one in *L'Atelier de Jackson Pollock* and was reviewed by Namuth himself before the studio was officially opened to the pubic in 1988.[31]

There might ultimately exist the possibility that Namuth incorrectly memorized the date of the 1956 photograph. However, this possibility is very unlikely in light of the following two circumstances. First, when Namuth took the photograph, he also took some photographs of Krasner, who was in Pollock's studio probably in order to observe Namuth's shooting.[32] Krasner had been away from the United States on a trip to Europe since July 12, 1956, and she was still in

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[31] Meg Perlman, letter to author, 25 July 2001.

[32] The negative of the photograph under examination and the negatives of those photographs of Krasner are kept together in a file in a box titled "Jackson Pollock: Negs + Contacts + Related Papers" at Hans Namuth Ltd. According to Peter Namuth, those photographs were all taken on the same occasion.

Europe at the time of Pollock's death on August 11 of the same year. It was on August 13 that she came back home. Therefore, if the photograph under examination was not taken after Pollock's death, the time it was taken must go back more than one month from the date that Namuth reported, namely around August 18, 1956 ("a week after the death of Pollock"). Second, Pollock's funeral took place on August 15, 1956. When Namuth visited the funeral parlor a few days before Pollock's funeral, he hoped to photograph Pollock's body. However, the undertaker did not allow Namuth to do so without Krasner's permission. Krasner was not yet back at the time and therefore Namuth could not satisfy his "deepest wish . . . to take one last picture" of Pollock after all.[33] Namuth experienced this unforgettable incident soon after Pollock's death. Taking the above two circumstances into account, it would be highly unlikely that Namuth wrongly dated that photograph.

In the Jeffrey Potter Collection of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, there is a photograph of Krasner standing in Pollock's studio that was taken by Harry Bowden in 1949 (fig. 1-7). In this photograph, the cardboard stencil portion of *Cut Out* is superposed not on *Black and White Painting II* as in the 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-1), but on a different untitled work by Pollock from around 1948-49 (catalogue raisonné number 785; hereafter *JPCR785*).

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[33] Hans Namuth, "Photographing Pollock——A Memoir," in *Pollock Painting*, ed. Barbara Rose (New York: Agrinde Publications, 1980), no pagination. See also B. H. Friedman, *Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visible* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 248.

Although *JPCR785* has not been located to date and was probably destroyed by Pollock himself, it can be seen more clearly in a different photograph taken by Arnold Newman in the same year, 1949 (fig. 1-8). When we examine the Newman photograph, we are able to discern that in *JPCR785* a figure, which is very similar to the one seen in *Cut Out* in negative form (fig. 1-4), is depicted by pouring bright paint on a dark background. Judging from the Bowden photograph and the Newman photograph, the figures in *JPCR785* and *Cut Out* are roughly same the size. Thus, as Michael Leja points out,[34] probably the pouring for the figure in *JPCR785* was mainly done through the stencil-like cardboard portion of *Cut Out*. In the 1949 Bowden photograph, *JPCR785,* which has such a close relationship with *Cut Out,* is inverted and placed under *Cut Out*.

As we have already seen, the cardboard stencil portion of *Cut Out* is superposed on the inverted *Black and White Painting II* in the 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-1).[35] In *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-2), Pollock has painted a form that resembles a human head. There, a left profile is overlapped on the right half of the round frontal face in a Picassoid manner. Although no

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[34] Michael Leja, "Pollock & Metaphor," chap. 5 in *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 298.

[35] Strictly speaking, it is not possible to definitely assert that Pollock himself put the cardboard portion of *Cut Out* on *Black and White Painting II* in that way, since it was one week after his death that the photograph was taken. However, it is almost unthinkable that soon after Pollock's death a different person entered his studio, performed the very strange act of superposing a Pollock work (*Cut Out*) upon another Pollock work hung on the wall (*Black and White Painting II*), and left them in that altered state until the time Namuth took that photograph.

other figurative forms, besides the head, are clearly recognizable in *Black and White Painting II*, E. A. Carmean found in the work a crucified figure that bears a relationship to Picasso's *The Crucifixion* of 1930 (fig. 1-9).[36] Catherine Millet likewise found a crucified figure in *Black and White Painting II* in connection with an untitled work by Pollock from around 1939-40 (catalogue raisonné number 940, fig. 1-10), which is sometimes called *Crucifixion*.[37] In any case, when Pollock superposed the cardboard stencil portion of *Cut Out* on *Black and White Painting II*, he intentionally made visible some important elements in the head form painted in the latter, such as an eye and a mouth, so that one can still, though barely, recognize that it is a human head.

We can infer the following from the 1949 Bowden photograph (fig. 1-7) and the 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-1). After Pollock had cut out the middle of the cardboard for *Cut Out* in a humanoid shape, he intended to back the cardboard with some different picture——specifically, a figurative one suggesting a human body——in order to fill the humanoid-shaped void in the cardboard. In other words, the 1949 Bowden photograph and the 1956 Namuth photograph show Pollock's experiments with a backing for *Cut Out*. Of course we can guess that

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[36] E. A. Carmean, "Les peintures noires de Jackson Pollock et le projet d'église de Tony Smith," in *Jackson Pollock*, exh. cat. (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, 1982), 72 ff; E. A. Carmean, Jr., "The Church Project: Pollock's Passion Themes," *Art in America*, vol. 70, no. 6 (Summer 1982): 110-22. Cf. Rosalind Krauss, "Contra Carmean: The Abstract Pollock," *Art in America*, vol. 70, no. 6 (Summer 1982): 123-31, 155.

[37] Catherine Millet, "Jackson Pollock: de l'autre côté de la figure," *Art Press* (Paris), no. 16 (March 1978): 8-9.

Pollock made additional experiments of this kind. However, as to the present backing given to *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3), no evidence has been discovered to date that Pollock himself tried it. In addition, the present backing is, unlike *JPCR785* (fig. 1-8) and *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-2), not figurative but completely abstract. On the other hand, it is highly probable that Pollock used the untitled work from around 1948-49, the catalogue raisonné number of which is 783 (hereafter *JPCR783*, fig. 1-11), for an experiment as a backing for *Cut Out*. As in *JPCR785*, a figure, which is very similar to the one seen in *Cut Out* in negative form, is drawn in *JPCR783* by pouring, this time with black paint on a white background. The figure in *JPCR783* is also almost the same size as that of *Cut Out*. Therefore, probably the pouring in *JPCR783* was also done through the stencil-like cardboard portion of *Cut Out*. *JPCR783* thus exists in a companion relationship to *JPCR785*. It seems that Pollock used *JPCR783* as an alternative to *JPCR785* for an experimental backing for *Cut Out*.

In any case, from at least the 1949 Bowden photograph (fig. 1-7) and the 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-1), we know that *Cut Out* had to be backed with something——and, probably with some picture that depicted a human figure——in order to be completed. According to Lee Krasner, “Jackson never destroyed his work the way I [Krasner] do. If he had things that didn’t come off, he’d put them aside for later consideration.”[38] And, again according to Krasner, “Generally, he wouldn’t give up a canvas. He would just stay with it until it was resolved for

[38] Grace Glueck, “Scenes from a Marriage: Krasner and Pollock,” *Artnews*, vol. 80, no. 10 (December 1981): 61.

him."[39] *Cut Out* would be a good example of such a case. After having started on the work in 1948, Pollock most likely pondered how he should treat the void created in its middle. Thus, Pollock experimentally put *JPCR785* under the unfinished *Cut Out* by the time the 1949 Bowden photograph was taken. However, it seems that Pollock was not satisfied with this experiment; for in both the 1950 Burckhardt photograph (fig. 1-3) and in the 1951 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-5), *JPCR785* was not present under the unfinished *Cut Out*, and the latter was hung by itself on the wall of the studio. The unfinished *Cut Out* itself also had been removed from the wall by the time Pollock's studio was wholly renovated in 1953. Then, by the time the 1956 Namuth photograph was taken,[40] Pollock had once more hung the unfinished *Cut Out* on the wall of the studio, this time superposed on *Black and White Painting II*. What these facts mean is that for Pollock, the issue of a backing to fill the void in *Cut Out* both physically and visually was not simply arbitrary. It was concerned with the essence of the artwork. However, in the course of the experiment seen in the 1956 Namuth photograph, Pollock was killed in a car accident. We cannot know whether Pollock would have made yet another experiment with a backing for *Cut Out* if he

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[39] Lee Krasner, "Jackson Pollock at Work: An Interview with Lee Krasner," interview by Barbara Rose, *Partisan Review*, vol. 47, no. 1 (1980): 89-90.

[40] In a photograph taken by Tony Vaccaro in 1953 in Pollock's studio after renovation, *Portrait and a Dream* (1953), instead of *Cut Out*, hangs in the place where the latter hangs in the 1956 Namuth photograph. See Carol C. Mancusi-Ungaro, "Jackson Pollock: Response as Dialogue," in *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*, ed. Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 150, fig. 9.

had continued to live, or whether he had settled on *Black and White Painting II* for *Cut Out*. In any case, Pollock's long quest for *Cut Out* ended without coming to fruition.

There is yet another interesting photograph of Pollock's studio (fig. 1-12). The photograph is now kept in the Jeffrey Potter Collection of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, and the following caption is attached to it: "Soon after Jackson's death, Lee surveys his remaining work in the East Hampton studio. Their dog Gyp is with her in this 1956 photograph by Maurice Berezov." In this photograph taken by Berezov soon after Pollock's death, the unfinished *Cut Out*, which should be superposed on the upside-down *Black and White Painting II*, is not visible, and only *Black and White Painting II* hangs on the wall. It is not clear which photograph was taken earlier, the 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-1) or the 1956 Berezov photograph. However, it would be logical to assume that the latter was taken later; that is to say, that when Berezov took the photograph sometime after Pollock's death, the unfinished *Cut Out* was already detached from *Black and White Painting II* and had been moved.

Cut Out had been completed in its present state (fig. 0-3) by the time it was exhibited for the first time at Pollock's posthumous one-person show held at the Sidney Janis Gallery from November 3 to 29, 1958.[41] As the reproduction of *Cut Out* in the catalogue of the show demonstrates, it had already been given its

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[41] *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-2) was also exhibited at this show for the first time.

present backing of a white canvas.[42] When and by whom was *Cut Out* completed?

The present *Cut Out* consists of cardboard and canvas backing, and it is mounted on masonite. When I inspected *Cut Out* with the assistance of the Ohara Museum of Art in 2001, I discovered the following handwritten inscription on the back of the masonite: "Jackson Pollock 1949 / Lee Krasner Pollock 10-58" (fig. 1-13). Judging from the handwriting, the inscription seems to have been written by Lee Krasner. According to Pollock's catalogue raisonné, "Lee Krasner Pollock, in the years immediately following her husband's death, authenticated the unsigned and undated works that remained in the estate (mostly early paintings and nearly all the drawings) by signing on the back both her husband's name and her own and by giving her best judgment as to the date of each."[43] Thus, we can guess that the above-mentioned inscription on the back of *Cut Out* is one of that kind. Similar inscriptions were located on the backs of many other Pollock works in the process of compiling the artist's catalogue raisonné. For example, each of a series of seven works, *Red Painting 1 – Red Painting 7* (all c. 1950) has the following inscription on its back: "Jackson Pollock 1950 / Lee Krasner Pollock 10-58."[44] And *Red Painting 3 – Red Painting 6* were exhibited at the 1958 Janis show together with *Cut Out*.[45] Thus, the inscription on the back of *Cut Out* must

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[42] *Jackson Pollock* (1958), no pagination, pl. 18.

[43] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:viii.

[44] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 2:122.

have been written by Krasner when she authenticated the work in October 1958. She probably did this for its first showing at the Pollock exhibition, which was supposed to be held at the Janis Gallery in November of that year. Setting aside for now other problems, such as Krasner's misdating of the work, we can know from the above facts that at some point in October 1958, *Cut Out* was already completed in its present state and, what is more, was already mounted on masonite.

An undated two-page letter, which seems to be a bill, from a frame shop in New York, Kulicke Frames, to Mrs. Jackson Pollock, or Lee Krasner, may help to further clarify the circumstances of *Cut Out*'s completion. The letter is kept in the Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution (figs. 1-14 and 1-15). Jobs such as restoration and relining, which the frame shop did for dozens of works, are enumerated in the document, and the following descriptions are found there:

> KULICKE FRAMES, INC. 508 EAST 73RD STREET NEW YORK 21, NEW YORK TEL: TRAFALGAR 9-2010
>
> MRS. JACKSON POLLOCK
> 147 EAST 72 STREET
> NEW YORK CITY
> . . . .
>
> ORDER #546 INVOICE #436 10/21/58
> 3 – OIL ON PAPER RELINE, RESOTRE [*sic*], CLEAN & VARNISH 174.00

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[45] See an installation shot of the show: Jackson Pollock Papers, circa 1914-1975, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 3046, frame 125.

2 SMALL OILS, RELINE, RESTORE, @ 58.00
CLEAN & VARNISH @38.00 76.00
1 SMALL OIL, RELINE, RESTORE, CLEAN
& VARNISH 32.00
1 REMOVE OLD RELINING JOB AND REPLACE WITH
NEW CANVAS 80.00
4 RED CALIGRAPHY ON CANVAS
RELINE, CLEAN & VARNISH @ 32.00 128.00
3 RED BLUE & GREEN PAINTING,
RELINE, CLEAN & VARNISH @ 38.00 114.00
1 CUT OUT PAINTING RESOTE [*sic*] *& BACK PIECE MOUNTED* [italics added] 65.00[46]

According to Robert M. Kulicke, who was the president and product designer of Kulicke Frames, all the orders listed in the document were ones that Krasner gave to Kulicke Frames; all the works shown in the document were Pollock's;[47] and "10/21/58" in the line beginning "ORDER #546" indicates that those works shown in the section were delivered on October 21, 1958, to the Sidney Janis Gallery,[48]

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[46] Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3047, frame 189.

[47] It seems that "POLYPTIC [*sic*]" in "ORDER #593" is *Black and White Polyptych* (c. 1950); "'WHITE & BLACK' 13 x 18″" in "ORDER #639" is *White on Black II* (c. 1948, 13 x 18 inches); "1 – 15 x 20½," "2 – 8½ x 11½," and "1 – 8 3/4 x 12½" in "5 POLLOCK OILS" in "ORDER #592" are *Silver and Black II* (c. 1950, 20½ x 15 inches), *Silver and Black Diptych* (c. 1950, size of each panel: 11½ x 8¼ inches), and *Silver and Black I* (1950, 12½ x 8¾ inches) respectively; "4 RED CALIGRAPHY ON CANVAS" in "ORDER #546" are *Red Painting 3 – Red Painting 6* (all c. 1950); "3 RED BLUE & GREEN PAINTING" are *Red Vertical Composition 5* (c. 1950), *Blue Vertical Composition 6* (c. 1950), and *Vertical Composition 1* (c. 1950) respectively; "1 OIL ON MASONITE (OVAL)" in "ORDER #498" is *Circle* (c. 1938-41). Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3047, frames 189-90.

[48] A document that seems to be a draft for the document under examination is also kept in the Archives of American Art. The word "JANIS" is typed in the line beginning "ORDER #546" in the document. (Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3047, frame 191.) According to Kulicke, this "JANIS" means

which was designated to receive the works after Kulicke Frames had finished the job.[49] On the other hand, again according to Kulicke, it is unclear what the work, described there as "1 CUT OUT PAINTING," refers to specifically; and it is also unclear what the task of "RESOTE [*sic*; RESTORE] & BACK PIECE MOUNTED" for "1 CUT OUT PAINTING" definitively means.[50]

Can we identify "1 CUT OUT PAINTING" from other pieces of information and evidence? From the description "CUT OUT PAINTING," we may suppose that "1 CUT OUT PAINTING" is a work from Pollock's Cut-Out series, which consists of the following six works: *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3); *Cut-Out Figure* (1948, fig. 0-4); *Rhythmical Dance* (1948, fig. 0-5); *JPCR1033* (c. 1948, fig. 0-6); *Shadows* (1948, fig. 0-7); and *Out of the Web* (1949, fig. 0-8). On the other hand, according to Kulicke, the entire job necessitated by "ORDER #546" probably required at least a month, and maybe two months.[51] It was on October 21, 1958, that the works listed in "ORDER #546" were delivered to the Janis Gallery. Thus, we may estimate that Krasner gave the order to Kulicke Frames around August 1958. *Cut-Out Figure*, *Rhythmical Dance*, nor *JPCR1033* were ever owned by Krasner or handled by the Janis Gallery. All were purchased by private collectors during Pollock's lifetime.[52] As for *Shadows*, although it had

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that the Janis Gallery is the destination for those works.

[49] Robert M. Kulicke, interview by author, New York, 11 October 2001.

[50] Kulicke, interview by author, 11 October 2001.

[51] Kulicke, interview by author, 11 October 2001.

[52] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:105-6; Files for *Cut-Out*

never been in Krasner's possession since it was purchased by a private collector during Pollock's lifetime, it was handled by the Janis Gallery in 1958; specifically, it seems that it was sold by the Janis Gallery to Mrs. Ira Haupt on February 13 of that year.[53] However, that was about half a year before the time Krasner supposedly gave "ORDER #546" to Kulicke Frames. After that, *Shadows* was exhibited at a group exhibition held at the Janis Gallery in 1961; at that time, the owner of the work was the same.[54] On the other hand, *Out of the Web* was gifted to Krasner by Pollock sometime during his lifetime,[55] and she owned it until the first half of the 1960s. However, *Out of the Web* was exhibited at a Pollock show that went the rounds of seven cities in Europe between March 1, 1958, and February 15, 1959.[56] Lastly, *Cut Out*, which Pollock could not complete in his lifetime, remained with Krasner after his death as part of his estate. Krasner consigned the works from Pollock's estate to the Janis Gallery in 1957;[57] *Cut Out*

Figure, *Rhythmical Dance*, and *JPCR1033*, Jackson Pollock Catalogue Raisonné Archives, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center.

[53] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:108; File for *Shadows*, Jackson Pollock Catalogue Raisonné Archives, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center.

[54] *10 American Painters*, exh. cat. (New York: Sidney Janis Gallery, 1961), no pagination.

[55] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 2:73.

[56] The places and periods of the show are as follows: Rome, March 1-30, 1958; Basel, April 19 – May 26, 1958; Amsterdam, June 6 – July 7, 1958; Hamburg, July 19 – August 21, 1958; Berlin, September 3 – October 5, 1958; London, November 5 – December 14, 1958; Paris, January 16 – February 15, 1959. *Out of the Web* was exhibited at all of the above cities. O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 2:xv, 73.

was thus put up for sale on the occasion of its first public showing at the Pollock exhibition held at the Janis Gallery on November 3-29, 1958. There is no other work in Pollock's Cut-Out series except *Cut Out* that Krasner could have taken into Kulicke Frames as part of "ORDER #546" around August 1958 and that needed to be delivered to the Janis Gallery in October 1958. Thus, it seems that "1 CUT OUT PAINTING," seen in the document under examination, is none other than *Cut Out*.

Next, what does the job of "RESOTE [*sic*; RESTORE] & BACK PIECE MOUNTED" for "1 CUT OUT PAINTING," namely *Cut Out*, really mean? This description is very much abbreviated, and hence ambiguous. Therefore, it would be difficult to interpret it definitively. Nevertheless, let's start with "BACK PIECE." As already explained, the present *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3) consists of cardboard and canvas backing, and this body part of *Cut Out* was mounted on masonite by some point in October 1958. According to Robert M. Kulicke, both the canvas backing and the masonite can be called "BACK PIECE" in terms of this structure. Therefore, in his opinion, it is impossible to know from the information "BACK PIECE MOUNTED" what "BACK PIECE" really means: the canvas backing or the masonite.[58] However, when we look at the description of "ORDER #593" in the document under examination, we find the following two job descriptions: "MOUNTED ON MASONITE AND RESTORED" and "STRAINER

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[57] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:vii.

[58] Kulicke, interview by author, 11 October 2001.

GLUED TO BACK OF MASONITE AND BLACK SHADOW SPACE."[59] There, the word "masonite" is specifically given. In addition to these, descriptions such as "OIL ON MASONITE" are found in parts of "ORDER #497," "ORDER #498," and "ORDER #509" in the same document.[60] On the other hand, the notation "BACK PIECE" is used only for *Cut Out*.[61] Thus, although we have to take into account the possibility that there is not necessarily consistency in how the material of masonite was described in the document, we can conclude that "BACK PIECE" is not the masonite on which *Cut Out* is mounted, but something else which was difficult to give a concrete name——namely, the canvas backing. (In fact, it is a "picture" rather than a "canvas" because it is primed and painted with silver, black and so on.) If "BACK PIECE" means the canvas backing, then "BACK PIECE MOUNTED" would mean, by extension, the job of mounting the canvas backing on something, namely the masonite. In this case, whatever the actual process used by Kulicke Frames, it seems that the job of attaching the canvas backing to the cardboard was included in the job of "RESOTE [*sic*; RESTORE]." In fact, according to Kulicke, if the cardboard portion of *Cut Out*, the canvas backing for it,

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[59] Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3047, frame 189.

[60] Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3047, frame 190.

[61] A document, which seems to have been made by Kulicke Frames and which has the handwritten inscription "46 drawings to be framed——5/21 (2 on 1 sheet counted as 2) / + w/c / Jackson Pollock Painting 5/21/59," is also kept at the Archives of American Art. Jobs such as cleaning and varnishing for (probably Pollock's) thirty-three works are described in the document. There, while eleven descriptions "MOUNT ON MASONITE" are found, no description "BACK PIECE" exists. Lee Krasner Papers, 1905-1984, Archives of American Art, reel 3780, frames 60-61. See also frames 62-63.

and the masonite on which the body of *Cut Out* was supposed to be mounted, separately existed at his workshop, the process of their handling was probably as follows: first, mounting the canvas backing onto the masonite; then, mounting the cardboard onto the canvas backing already mounted on the masonite.[62] In any case, if "BACK PIECE" means the canvas backing as reasoned above, we can conclude that *Cut Out*'s present backing was formally attached to the work at Kulicke Frames in 1958.

Lastly, what about the issue of who completed *Cut Out* in its present state? The point of this question is not who physically completed it in actuality, but who made the decision to complete it in that way. As I have already mentioned, Krasner consigned Pollock's works, left as his estate, to the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1957. A draft for an agreement that was supposed to be made between Krasner and the Janis Gallery regarding Pollock's estate in June 1957 is kept at the Archives of American Art. In this draft, the following clauses are written:

> IT IS HEREBY AGREED between LEE POLLOCK, as Executrix of the Estate of Jackson Pollock, and SIDNEY JANIS GALLERY as follows:
>
> 1. Until further notice by either party to the other the Gallery shall represent the Estate in connection with the sale of the art of Jackson Pollock owned by the Estate. No sale shall be made, however, without *prior approval of the Estate* [italics added] as to purchaser, price and terms, nor shall any prices be quoted which have not received *the approval of the Executrix* [italics added].
>
> 2. The Gallery shall, *subject to the direction of the Estate*

[62] Kulicke, interview by author, 11 October 2001.

> [italics added], do any and all acts and things necessary or advisable to promote the value of the work of Jackson Pollock, to cause such work to be exhibited under suitable auspices and conditions and to handle shipping, storage, framing, photography, insurance and other routine functions relating to the conservation of said work and the marketing thereof.[63]

It is not clear whether or not a final agreement containing the same terms as this draft was made.[64] Letters that show an exchange among Krasner, her lawyer Gerald Dickler, and the Janis Gallery about altering some details, such as the words "framing, photography" in the second clause quoted above, are also kept in the Archives of American Art.[65] However, even if some details were altered, probably no major changes were made. Taking into account Krasner's initiative in handling Pollock's works as shown especially in the second clause, we may conclude, in the specific case of *Cut Out*, that Krasner made a decision to complete it in its present state.

Here, in conjunction with that, we would also need to consider, for example, the case of *Panel with Four Designs* (c. 1934-38, fig. 1-16). This work was separated into four parts as four individual works by someone sometime after Pollock's death and before the 1958 Janis show at which *Cut Out* was first

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[63] Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3047, frame 106. After Pollock's death, Krasner became Pollock's executrix according to Pollock's will made in 1951. For Pollock's will, see O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:259-60, doc. 96.

[64] The formal agreement is possibly kept in the Janis Gallery's archives. However, it has been impossible to research the archives since the gallery closed in 1999.

[65] Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3047, frames 205-7.

exhibited.[66] Those four works were also exhibited at the show for the first time,[67] and they came to be publicly known as *Panel A*, *Panel B*, *Panel C*, and *Panel D* by 1961.[68] The editors of Pollock's catalogue raisonné seemingly think that the Janis Gallery separated *Panel with Four Designs* into those four individual works. However, at least in the case of *Cut Out*, I would like to make a point of the fact that Krasner herself requested Kulicke Frames to do the job of "RESOTE [*sic*; RESTORE] & BACK PIECE MOUNTED" for the work, and that she authenticated the work completed in the present state.[69]

As a result of the sequence of examinations above, I come to the following conclusion. *Cut Out*, which Jackson Pollock started in 1948 and left unfinished in 1956 because of his unexpected death, was completed by Lee Krasner in its present form in 1958. Thus, here I offer the following two proposals for the modification of the date and author of *Cut Out,* which has been recognized to date as Jackson Pollock's piece of around 1948-50.

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[66] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:30.

[67] *Jackson Pollock* (1958), no pagination, pl. 3.

[68] *Jackson Pollock*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, 1961), no pagination; *Jackson Pollock*, exh. cat. (Zürich: Kunsthaus Zürich, 1961), 44. These four works were restored to a single unit later. See O'Connor, *Catalogue Raisonné*, supplement no. 1, 76.

[69] It seems that Krasner, in any event, did authenticate *Panel A – Panel D*, too. According to documents in the files for *Panel A – Panel D* in the Jackson Pollock Catalogue Raisonné Archives of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, each of those four works has the following inscription on its back: "Jackson Pollock c. 1936 / Lee Krasner Pollock 10-58."

The first is that by regarding *Cut Out* as a collaboration between Pollock and Krasner, we should change its author to "Jackson Pollock with Lee Krasner" and should change its date to "c. 1948-56/58." However, as long as I consider the inscription written by Krasner on the back of *Cut Out* for the authentication of the work, "*Jackson Pollock 1949* [italics added] / Lee Krasner Pollock 10-58" (fig. 1-13), it seems to me that Krasner herself did not consider her intervention in the work to be aesthetically significant. If she considered it so, she probably would have revealed, if not in the above inscription, at least somewhere else, that she completed the work in Pollock's place after his death.

The second alternative is that by tenaciously respecting Pollock's authorship of *Cut Out*, we retain its author as "Jackson Pollock," but change its date to "c. 1948-56," as T. J. Clark did. However, in this case, it would become necessary to remove the present backing from the work; for, the backing portion of *Cut Out*, in which Krasner intervened, was an aesthetically very significant part of the artwork. In 1949, *JPCR785* and in 1956, *Black and White Painting II* were tentatively used by Pollock for a backing for *Cut Out* (figs. 1-7 and 1-1). Both *JPCR785* (fig. 1-8) and *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-2) are figurative pictures that suggest a human body. On the other hand, the present backing is completely abstract (fig. 0-3). Also, no evidence has been discovered so far that Pollock himself ever tried it as a backing for *Cut Out*. Of course, it is not improbable that at some point in time Krasner saw Pollock trying the present backing, or that she once heard from him his intention to attach it. According to Krasner, she had seen Pollock working on some cut-outs, though it is unclear

whether or not *Cut Out* was included among them.[70] Also, again according to Krasner, while she had never been told by Pollock about techniques or ideas in painting,[71] in Pollock's making of the black pourings she was sometimes asked by him for opinions about where a support should be cut and about which side of a support should be the bottom.[72] Nevertheless, in any event, it was *Black and White Painting II* that Pollock himself finally tried as a backing for *Cut Out*. (Here, it is also important to remember that Krasner was away from Pollock, because of her trip to Europe, for one month until the time of his death.) For all of the above reasons, if we are going to claim Pollock's single authorship of *Cut Out*, its present backing comes to have no satisfactory aesthetic justification.

Here, a certain letter is worth considering in relation to the issue of the author(s) of *Cut Out*. When Pollock made his will in 1951, he accompanied the will with a letter of request. The letter is addressed to Lee Krasner, who was nominated as his executrix; and Sande (Sanford) McCoy, Clement Greenberg, and Alfonso Ossorio, who were nominated as substitute executors. In the letter, Pollock enumerated various requests with regard to his paintings in his possession

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[70] Krasner, "Jackson Pollock at Work," 89. However, in this interview by Barbara Rose, Krasner went on to state that she had no idea why Pollock cut out parts of the picture planes in his cut-outs.

[71] Glueck, "Scenes from a Marriage," 61. See also Lee Krasner, "Pollock," interview by Bernar Venet, *Art Press* (Paris), no. 16 (March 1978): 10.

[72] Lee Krasner Pollock, "An Interview with Lee Krasner Pollock by B. H. Friedman," in *Jackson Pollock: Black and White*, exh. cat. (New York: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1969), 10. However, in this interview, Krasner went on to state that the final decisions were always made by Pollock himself.

at the time of his death. The following passage appears in the letter:

> Clement and Alfonso——I would like you to dispose of my paintings rather than distribute them to my brothers. Give them the proceeds of the sale. Try to maintain the paintings *as intact as possible* [italics added].
>
> The idea of maintaining the paintings intact also applies to Lee and Sande if the paintings are disposed of by them.[73]

As for the force of Pollock's request, "Try to maintain the paintings as intact as possible," regarding the individual case of *Cut Out*, there might be various opinions. For example, there might be a very positive opinion from an ethical viewpoint; on the other hand, there might be a negative opinion from a legal viewpoint. In any case, I believe that it is not from an ethical or a legal viewpoint, but from an aesthetic one, that we should view this issue. (To use T. J. Clark's expression, "[t]he point of the story is not art-world-ethical but aesthetic."[74]) When we consider Pollock's above request from an aesthetic viewpoint, how can we think that there is no problem with the fact that *Cut Out*'s present backing was attached to the work after Pollock's death?[75] For Pollock,

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[73] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:260, doc. 97.

[74] Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 351.

[75] Likewise, from an aesthetic viewpoint, B. H. Friedman makes issue of the case of *Vertical Composition 1*, *Black and White Triptych* (*Vertical Compositions 2, 3, 4*), *Red Vertical Composition 5*, and *Blue Vertical Composition 6* (all c. 1950) and the case of *Red Painting 1 – Red Painting 7* (all c. 1950). The works in the former group were originally painted as six compositions on one long strip of canvas. However, they were separated into four parts by someone after Pollock's death. The works in the latter group were originally painted as seven

the backing to give *Cut Out* was not mere physical reinforcement by any means, but a very significant aesthetic element in the artwork. Incidentally, Francis V. O'Connor related the following interesting episode regarding Pollock's stretching of *One: Number 31, 1950* and *Autumn Rhythm*:

> For their first showing, at the Betty Parsons Gallery, he [Pollock] had mounted them so that the sheets of canvas were visible out to their edges and the painted complex floated within a spatial framework. He was seeking mural commissions at this time, and this would have been a way to emphasize their "wall" quality. Later he cropped the edge of the complex when attaching it to heavy stretchers, though the extra canvas still remains folded back behind the stretchers. His widow [Lee Krasner] argued reasonably that since this was the way he left them, this is the way they ought to be seen.[76]

What did Krasner think of the case of *Cut Out*, then?

The canvas backing now attached to *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3) has yet another problem worthy of note. I previously stated that the backing is a "picture" rather than a "canvas." In fact, there are some great affinities between the "picture" and a group of Pollock's three paintings: *Silver and Black I* (1950, fig. 1-17), *Silver and Black II* (c. 1950, fig. 1-18), and *Silver and Black Diptych* (c. 1950, fig. 1-19). The first likeness is an internal similarity regarding the form and style of those four pictures. In his mature period, Pollock often employed raw canvas.

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compositions on one long strip of canvas. However, they were also separated into seven parts by someone after Pollock's death. See B. H. Friedman, "A Reasoned Catalogue Is Almost a Life," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 53, no. 7 (March 1979): 102; O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 2:120, 122.

[76] Francis V. O'Connor, "What Would You Ask Michelangelo?: Pollock," ed. Paul Gardner, *Artnews*, vol. 85, no. 9 (November 1986): 97.

However, both in the picture that is now used as a backing in *Cut Out* and in the above three silver-and-black pictures, primed canvas was used as support. Furthermore, in all the pictures, mainly silver and black paints were applied,[77] and abstract but non-allover images were created. The second likeness is an external affinity regarding the handling of those four pictures. In the previously examined letter from Kulicke Frames to Lee Krasner, works which seem to be *Silver and Black I*, *Silver and Black II*, and *Silver and Black Diptych* are found together with *Cut Out*.[78] Then, *Cut Out*, *Silver and Black I*, and *Silver and Black II* were together exhibited for the first time at that Pollock show held at the Sidney Janis Gallery in November 1958.[79] For the above reasons, it seems that the present backing for *Cut Out* is a Pollock work that was very close to his three silver-and-black paintings made in 1950——*Silver and Black I*, *Silver and Black II*, and *Silver and Black Diptych*——and the existence of which has not been recognized to date. If the present backing is, as I propose, removed from *Cut Out*, then that will perhaps lead to the recognition of a Pollock work that was buried in history; that should be dated to 1950; and that should be named, let's say, *Silver and Black III*.

In any event, Pollock's *Cut Out* needs to be fundamentally reinterpreted

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[77] The pale brown parts on the picture, which is now used as a backing in *Cut Out*, are not painted with the color. Those parts are the exposed raw surface of the canvas-support.

[78] See footnote 47 in this chapter.

[79] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 2:124. See also an installation shot of the show: Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3046, frame 127.

for two reasons: it has turned out that Krasner altered the work after the artist's death, and furthermore that the very part in which she intervened represents an aesthetically significant area concerned with the essence of the work. In order to treat *Cut Out* as Pollock's own piece, I think that the state in which Pollock himself left the work, namely the state seen in that 1956 Namuth photograph (fig. 1-1), has to be respected——as Krasner insisted with regard to *One* and *Autumn Rhythm*. In the following chapters, returning to that state, I will newly examine *Cut Out* and the whole Cut-Out series from various angles.

Chapter 2

The Influence of Matisse[1]

> Uttering a cry, he fell, with his frail little legs crumpled beneath him. Suddenly, for the first time that whole morning, he experienced a feeling of physical well-being.
>
> ——Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis*[2]

Henri Matisse published the illustrated book *Jazz* in Paris in 1947.[3] It consists of twenty color plates and a text written by Matisse himself. The project of *Jazz* dates back to 1940. In that year, Tériade (Efstratios Eleftheriades) of Editions Verve suggested to Matisse the idea of creating a book on "the colour of Matisse" with illustrations reproduced from maquettes made of paper cut-outs.[4]

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[1] This chapter is a revised and enlarged version of the following article which I published in Japanese in 2003: Tetsuya Oshima, "Jackson Pollock's Cut-Out Series: Attempts at Assimilating Matisse and Picasso," *Kajima Bijutsu Kenkyu* (Tokyo, 2003): 29-39.

[2] Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis*, trans. A. L. Lloyd (New York: Vanguard Press, 1946), 32.

[3] Henri Matisse, *Jazz* (Paris: Verve, 1947). The edition consisted of two-hundred-and-fifty copies and a further twenty copies not for sale. One hundred albums, containing plates only, were also printed.

[4] "I dream of a book on 'the colour of Matisse' which would contain all the new thoughts that you have expressed about colour and be illustrated by large plates (of a much larger format than *Verve*), in the manner of *Chromatic Symphony* and *Dance*. It would be fascinating if you were to describe the entire possible

After twists and turns, Matisse completed those maquettes between 1943 and 1944 (fig. 2-1). "The first step in Matisse's composition was," Katrin Wiethege explains, "to cut out shapes from monochrome sheets of paper which his assistants had prepared using gouache from the company Linel. This was followed by the actual composition and arrangement of the cut-out shapes on stretched canvases which had the same dimensions as the book. . . . The pieces were moved around until the composition was immutable, with all elements correctly positioned."[5] After lithography and wood engraving had been tried, the plates were ultimately printed with the stencil technique called *pochoir*, employing the same gouaches as the ones used for the maquettes. Matisse wrote the text in 1946, though it was no longer on "the colour of Matisse" but concerned his random thoughts on various topics, such as the bouquet and the airplane, in which he was interested in the course of his life as a painter. The text was reproduced in his own beautiful handwriting. In this way, *Jazz* was completed in 1947. The illustrated book

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development of colour with the greatest freedom, because the coloured collages can be reproduced absolutely faithfully. Does the idea interest you? Could you think about it when you have time? My reaction to these troubled times encourages me to work on great and unchanging things. Ask Madame Lydia if she wants to help me in the preparation of this monument to your work. I need allies!" Letter from Tériade to Henri Matisse, 20 August 1940; quoted and translated in Anne Coron, "Jazz," in *Matisse: A Second Life*, by Hanne Finsen et al., trans. James Mayor with Christine Schultz-Touge, exh. cat., English ver. (Paris: Hazan, 2005), 198. On this letter, see also Nicolas Surlapierre, "Henri Matisse: *Jazz* de Henri Matisse," in *Musée Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis: Les collections Henri Matisse, Auguste Herbin, Abstraction géométrique, Tériade, éditeur d'art*, by Emmanuelle et Laurent Beaudoin et al. (Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France: Musée Matisse, Musée Départemental, 2002), 277.

[5] Katrin Wiethege, "Matisse: The Paper Cut-Outs," in *Jazz*, by Henri Matisse (Munich, London, and New York: Prestel, 2001), 12-13.

was enthusiastically received at home and abroad and became one of the artist's major works.

After its publication in France in 1947, Matisse's *Jazz* was exhibited in the United States during 1948 on the following three occasions. The first was the "Henri Matisse——*Jazz*, Tériade editor" show held at a bookshop on Fifty-Sixth Street in Manhattan, Pierre Berès, Inc., from January 20 to February 3.[6] The second was the "Henri Matisse: Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture, Organized in Collaboration with the Artist" show held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from April 3 to May 9 (fig. 2-2).[7] Finally, the third was the "Matisse: Jazz——Gift of the Artist" show held at the Museum of Modern Art from October 1 to 31.[8] It seems that Pollock saw Matisse's *Jazz* on at least one of these three occasions and was inspired by the illustrated book in making his own cut-outs. For instance, the human figure created in negative form in *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4) very much recalls the flat human figures seen in the *Jazz* illustrations *The Clown* (fig. 2-3) and *The Swimmer in the Tank* (fig. 2-4).

Pollock began to work on his cut-outs in the very year, 1948, that Matisse's *Jazz* was publicly exhibited in the United States for the first time. But

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[6] Jack Cowart et al., *Henri Matisse Paper Cut-Outs*, exh. cat. (St. Louis: The St. Louis Art Museum; Detroit: The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1977), 286.

[7] *Henri Matisse: Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture, Organized in Collaboration with the Artist*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1948), 50.

[8] John Elderfield, *Matisse in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1978), 14.

at what point in time in 1948 was that? It is not possible to know exactly; however, an undated letter from Florence Knoll Bassett, who was the first owner of one of Pollock's cut-outs, *JPCR1033* (c. 1948, fig. 0-6), to Francis V. O'Connor, who is the co-editor of the artist's catalogue raisonné, sheds light on the question. In the letter, Bassett explains to O'Connor the course of her purchase of the work:

> I purchased the painting during the summer in 1949. (I believe it was 49, but am not positive) We had lunch with the Pollocks. Herbert + Mercedes Matter were there + pointed out the painting hanging in their kitchen-living space. *I believe Jackson had just finished it* [italics added]. Mercedes + Herbert felt it was an interesting advance in his work. I liked it immediately + asked Lee Krasner Pollock if it was for sale.[9]

In the letter, Bassett says that it was during the summer of 1949 that she purchased *JPCR1033*. However, as she noted, she was not positive about the year. Bassett went on to write the following in the same letter:

> Jackson was his usual glowering self + didn't react to the sale in any noticeable way. As I remember him he was always withdrawn + said very little. He wasn't unfriendly. In fact we were allowed to watch him work in the barn. (Studio) As I recall the drip technicque [*sic*] was still a fairly new development + he was still pretty excited about it.

In 1949, Pollock's dripping/pouring technique was already well established.[10]

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[9] File for *JPCR1033*, Jackson Pollock Catalogue Raisonné Archives, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, N.Y.

[10] In Pollock's catalogue raisonné, the editors wrote about the difference between Pollock's work in 1948 and that in 1949 as follows: "In contrast to 1948,

Thus, Bassett's remark, "the drip technicque [*sic*] was still a fairly new development + he was still pretty excited about it" is more true of Pollock in 1948 than in 1949. If Bassett's memories of Pollock's dripping/pouring technique and of his attitude toward the technique are correct, then we can presume that it was actually not during the summer of 1949 but during the summer of 1948 that she purchased *JPCR1033*. And, according to Bassett, "Jackson had just finished it" at the time.

Next, it is relevant to consider a work created in 1948, *Triad* (fig. 2-5), in Pollock's oeuvre. Although *Triad* is not a work in the Cut-Out series, it is also useful in examining at what point in time in 1948 the series was begun. In this work, white paint was poured on a sheet of black paper, creating three rough human figures. Judging from the condition of the contours of those figures, the white paint was probably poured through a stencil made with the cut-out technique.[11] A reproduction of this work appears as an illustration for an advertisement for a real estate company in the September 1948 issue of *Partisan Review*.[12] The following explanation by the company regarding *Triad* is given in

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when Pollock experimented with the full range of pictorial potentialities inherent in his pouring technique, this year's [1949's] paintings are more relaxed and self-assured. The stylistic and iconographic tensions of his earlier phases are replaced by a more lyric, carefree approach which continues on an even larger scale through 1950." Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw, eds., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 2:41.

[11] See Michael Leja, "Pollock & Metaphor," chap. 5 in *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 296.

[12] *Partisan Review*, vol. 15, no. 9 (September 1948): back of the front

the advertisement: "WE ASKED Jackson Pollock to draw this picture to help tell PR [*Partisan Review*] readers what County Homes is doing about housing. This is the second of a series by contemporary artists, all of whom find it unusual to illustrate a real estate advertisement."[13] And, on the last page of the issue, the following instruction by the publisher regarding classified advertisements was written: "Date of issue: first of each month. Advertisements must be in and paid for by the 2nd of the month preceding publication."[14] Thus, *Triad*, which is closely related to the Cut-Out series in terms of the use of the cut-out technique, was probably finished by the end of July 1948.

In light of the above circumstances, it seems that Pollock started on the Cut-Out series by the summer of 1948. If so, either the showing of Matisse's *Jazz* at Pierre Berès, Inc., from January 20 to February 3, 1948, or that at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from April 3 to May 9, 1948, may have been a direct trigger for Pollock's Cut-Out series. Pollock had a one-person show at the Betty Parsons Gallery, very near to Pierre Berès, Inc., from January 5 to 23, 1948. He also exhibited a work in the "Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors, and Drawings," held at the Whitney Museum of American Art, from January 31 to March 21, 1948. It is very possible that Pollock saw Matisse's *Jazz* at Pierre Berès, Inc. when he visited New York from East Hampton

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cover.

[13] Ibid. Parenthetically, the first of that series was done by Adolph Gottlieb. It appeared in the July 1948 issue of the same magazine.

[14] Ibid., 1056.

on the occasions of his above-mentioned two exhibitions. Possibly Pollock saw the Matisse exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, too. His wife, Lee Krasner, had consistently nurtured a deep interest in Matisse's art since her formative years; and according to Krasner, she and Pollock rarely disagreed with each other about going to exhibitions together.[15] Matisse's Philadelphia exhibition was in the spotlight at the time. For example, in its April 1948 issue, *Artnews* featured Matisse in connection with the exhibition. Also, a review of the exhibition, accompanied by a photograph of Matisse at work and eight illustrations of his works including four plates in *Jazz*, appeared in the 5 April 1948 issue of *Time*.[16] Thus, it is not improbable that by Krasner's suggestion they took the trouble to go to Philadelphia together to see the significant Matisse exhibition.[17] Or, at least, Pollock must have seen *The Clown* (fig. 2-3) in *Jazz* through its large color reproduction, which appeared on the front cover of the above-mentioned April 1948 issue of *Artnews*.[18] In addition, this issue contains

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[15] Lee Krasner, "Interview with Lee Krasner by Barbara Rose, 1972," Lee Krasner Papers, 1905-1984, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 3774, frame 349.

[16] "Beauty & the Beast," *Time* (5 April 1948): 52-57. The four plates in *Jazz* reproduced there are *The Burial of Pierrot*, *The Sword Swallower*, *The Clown* (fig. 2-3), and *Icarus*.

[17] A relationship between Pollock and Krasner in connection with Matisse's art will be closely examined in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[18] The following caption is attached to the reproduction of *The Clown*: "Cover: *The Clown*, with its audacious colors and forms, is one of the cut-outs which, in the past year, Matisse has been creating with paint and paper. It is an illustration to his latest book, *Jazz*, in which he sums up his philosophy of life, and thus can symbolize his whole career which is now visible in the Philadelphia

the following advertisement by Pierre Berès, Inc. for *Jazz*: "JAZZ / by / HENRI / MATISSE / Calligraphic text and / 20 large gouache / compositions / Publisher: Tériade / Sole distributor: / PIERRE BERÈS INC. / 6 West 56 Street / New York, N.Y. / CIrcle 5-9153."[19] This seems to imply that *Jazz* was still on view at Pierre Berès, Inc. around April 1948. As shown, there were many opportunities for Pollock to see Matisse's *Jazz* before he undertook the Cut-Out series in 1948.

The relationship of Pollock's cut-outs to Matisse's *Jazz* was briefly examined by Jeremy Lewison in 1999. Lewison stated the following:

> There is a striking similarity between *Untitled (Cut-Out)* [*sic*], *Untitled (Cut-Out Figure)* and the frontispiece of *Jazz* [*The Clown*], where *a white figure with cut-off arms is set against a black ground* [italics added]. The first of the two Pollocks shows *the figure as a white cut-out* [italics added], a piercing of the canvas, echoing an illusion set up by Matisse's image; in the second work Pollock applied the figure he had sliced out of the first to *a black ground* [italics added], again echoing Matisse.[20]

Museum's great Matisse retrospective. *Jazz* was published this year by Tériade, Paris, and is here used through the courtesy of Pierre Berès, Inc., New York, N. Y., sole American distributor." *Artnews*, vol. 47, no. 2 (April 1948): 5.

[19] Ibid., 59.

[20] Jeremy Lewison, *Interpreting Pollock* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1999), 67. See also Volkmar Essers, "Jackson Pollock――»Malen ist Selbstentdeckung.«," in *Jackson Pollock――Werke aus dem Museum of Modern Art, New York, und europäischen Sammlungen*, exh. cat. (Heidelberg: Kehrer; Düsseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1999), 54. Incidentally, as early as 1977, Teruo Fujieda referred to the relationship of the human figures in yet another cut-out of Pollock's, *Shadows* (1948, fig. 0-7) to those in Matisse's paper cut-outs in general as follows: "*Shadows* is done on canvas with paint. It is directly connected to *Cut Out* and so on. Shadows of three twisting people appear on an allover picture. They are shaped with hard edges which somewhat recall

Lewison thus connected Pollock's *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3) and *Cut-Out Figure* (fig. 0-4) with Matisse's *The Clown* (fig. 2-3) in the context of the opposition of a white figure against a black ground, implying the influence of the latter on the former. However, setting aside the problem that he deals with *Cut Out* in its present form (in which Krasner intervened), Lewison fails to enter into the essential issue on a deeper level. That is to say, it was not in such a specific and superficial concern as the opposition of a white figure against a black ground in *The Clown*, but in the aesthetic of Matisse's paper cut-outs behind the whole of *Jazz* that Pollock was interested. In an interview with André Verdet, Matisse responds to the question of how he came to the idea for the illustrated book as follows: "By drawing with scissors on sheets of paper colored in advance, one movement linking line with color, contour with surface. It simply occurred to me to unite them and Tériade made a book out of it."[21] An examination of the influence of Matisse's *Jazz* on Pollock's cut-outs has to be done from this viewpoint, namely the viewpoint of "unification of line and color" realized in Matisse's paper cut-outs.

Matisse's human figures by cut-out paper or colored paper (but Matisse's are light and Pollock's are dark); and those shadows are thus contrastive to the allover picture." Teruo Fujieda, "Notes on Pollock 18: Cut-Out Paintings," *Bijutsu Techo* (Tokyo), no. 427 (December 1977): 192-93.

[21] Henri Matisse, "Interview with André Verdet, 1952," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. and trans. Jack Flam, rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 216. The original French text: "En dessinant aux ciseaux dans des feuilles de papiers colorées à l'avance, d'un même geste pour associer la ligne à la couleur, le contour à la surface. L'idée m'est simplement venue de les réunir et Tériade en a fait un volume." Henri Matisse, "Entretiens avec Henri Matisse," interview by André Verdet, in *Prestiges de Matisse*, by André Verdet (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1952), 71.

Another way of looking at Matisse's unification of line and color is through the unification of drawing and painting. In 1940, when painting was still his principal medium, and when he had hardly yet explored the possibilities of his paper cut-outs, Matisse revealed to Pierre Bonnard his dissatisfaction with the relationship between drawing and painting in his work:

> Your letter this morning finds me feeling depressed, deeply disheartened. . . . For I find myself paralyzed by I don't know what convention that prevents me from expressing myself as I would like in painting. *My drawing and my painting are separated* [italics added].
>
> My drawing suits me well, for it conveys what I distinctively feel. But my painting is bridled by the new conventions of flat color with which I must express myself completely. . . . After much experimentation, I have arrived at a manner of drawing that has the spontaneity that gives full vent to what I feel, but that technique is exclusively my own, as artist and viewer. But a drawing by a colorist is not a painting. It needs to be given an equivalent in color. That is what I cannot seem to manage.[22]

It was the paper cut-out that afforded Matisse a good solution to this "eternal

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[22] Letter from Henri Matisse to Pierre Bonnard, 13 January 1940; quoted and translated by Jack Flam in: Henri Matisse, "On Drawing and Color," in *Matisse: A Retrospective*, ed. Jack Flam (New York: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1988), 329. The original French text: "Votre lettre m'a trouvé ce matin aplati, complètement découragé. . . . Car je suis paralysé par je ne sais quoi de conventionnel qui m'empêche de m'exprimer comme je le voudrais en peinture. Mon dessin et ma peinture se séparent. J'ai le dessin qui me convient car il rend ce que je sens de particulier. Mais j'ai une peinture bridée par des conventions nouvelles d'aplats par lesquels je dois m'exprimer entièrement. . . . J'ai trouvé un dessin qui, après des travaux d'approche, a la spontanéité qui me décharge entièrement de ce que je sens, mais ce moyen est exclusivement pour moi, artiste et spectateur. Mais un dessin de coloriste n'est pas une peinture. Il faudrait lui donner un équivalent en couleur. C'est ce à quoi je n'arrive pas." Henri Matisse, *Écrits et propos sur l'art*, ed. Dominique Fourcade (Paris: Hermann, 1972), 182-83.

conflict of drawing and color."[23] By cutting with scissors into paper colored in advance, Matisse now became able to "draw directly in color."[24] In addition, for him, scissors could "acquire more feeling for line than pencil or charcoal."[25] In 1951, Matisse stated the following about his paper cut-outs:

> *In my case, to paint and to draw are one* [italics added]. I choose my quantity of colored surface and I make it conform to my feeling of the drawing. . . .
>
> "Vermilion doesn't do everything . . ." said Othon F[riesz] with bitterness. *Neither must color simply "clothe" the form: it must constitute it* [italics added].
>
> . . . The cutout is what I have now found to be the simplest and most direct way to express myself.[26]

After a long career in painting, Matisse invented a new method for a new kind of figuration, unifying drawing with painting in that way. That was, to borrow the

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[23] Letter from Henri Matisse to André Rouveyre, 6 October 1941, in Matisse, *Écrits et propos sur l'art*, 188. The original French text: "éternel conflit du dessin et de la couleur."

[24] Henri Matisse, "Propos rapportés par André Lejard," interview by André Lejard (1951), in Matisse, *Écrits et propos sur l'art*, 243. The original French text: "dessine directement dans la couleur."

[25] Matisse, "Interview with André Verdet," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. and trans. Flam, 212. The original French text: "acquérir plus de sensibilité de tracé que le crayon ou le [fusain]." Matisse, "Entretiens avec Henri Matisse," 51.

[26] Henri Matisse, "Testimonial, 1951," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. and trans. Flam, 208. The original French text: "Dans mon cas, peindre et dessiner ne font qu'un. Je choisis ma quantité de surface colorée et je la rends conforme à mon sentiment du dessin. . . . ––«Le vermillon ne fait pas tout. . .» disait Othon F… avec aigreur. Il ne faut pas non plus que la couleur «habille» simplement la forme : elle doit la constituer. . . . Le découpage est ce que j'ai trouvé aujourd'hui de plus simple, de plus direct pour m'exprimer." Henri Matisse, "Témoignages: Henri Matisse," *XXe Siècle* (Paris), no. 2 (January 1952): 66.

expression that Tériade used with regard to *Jazz*, "a historic moment in modern art."[27]

Jazz occupies an important position in Matisse's transition from painting to paper cut-out. Started in 1943 and completed in 1947, *Jazz* was Matisse's first major project in the medium of paper cut-out. In fact, Matisse came to realize the significance and possibilities of his paper cut-outs by working on the illustrated book. In 1947, after *Jazz* had been published, Matisse confided to André Rouveyre his dissatisfaction with the final effect of the illustrations:

> In spite of all the trouble that I have had for it [*Jazz*], morally I have never been able to stand it, I don't manage to stand it.
>
> It is absolutely a *failure* [italics in original]. And why, when I make these cut-outs, when I see them on the wall, are they nice to me and without the character of a jigsaw puzzle that I find with them in *Jazz*? I think that what absolutely spoils them is the transposition which removes from them the sensitivity without which what I make is nothing.[28]

Although, not long after that, Matisse would come to considerably appreciate the

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[27] E. Tériade, postscript to *Jazz*, by Henri Matisse (Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1960), 46.

[28] The original French text: "Malgré toute la peine que je me suis donné pour lui, je n'ai jamais pu, je n'arrive pas à l'encaisser moralement. C'est absolument un *raté* [italics in original]. Et pourquoi ces découpés lorsque je les fais, que je les vois au mur me sont-ils sympathiques et sans le caractère de puzzle que je leur trouve dans *Jazz*. Je crois que ce qui gâte absolument est la transposition qui leur enlève la sensibilité sans laquelle ce que je fais n'est rien." Letter from Henri Matisse to André Rouveyre, 25 December 1947, in Matisse, *Écrits et propos sur l'art*, 240.

illustrations in *Jazz*,[29] the above-quoted words of dissatisfaction show that he found in the paper cut-out maquettes for those illustrations an original beauty that did not exist in the printed book (figs. 2-1 and 2-3). From around 1949 onward, paper cut-outs would become Matisse's strongest medium in place of painting.

On the other hand, Pollock was working mainly on the allover poured paintings between 1947, the year Matisse's *Jazz* was published, and 1950. Just as the unification of drawing and painting was a great concern of Matisse, it was also important to Pollock in that period. In his allover poured paintings of 1947-50 (fig. 0-1), Pollock also unified drawing with painting in his own way by the pouring technique. As William Rubin stated: "in Pollock at a certain point, the criss-crossings, convergences and puddlings of the linear skeins fuse into a 'painterly' fabric. . . . in forcing drawing into painting Pollock atomized it into a new form of painting."[30]

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[29] Two months after he had told Rouveyre his dissatisfaction with the final effect of *Jazz*'s illustrations, Matisse expressed the following: "Although the result does not have the charm of the operation of cutting-out, the fact remains that the same colors are connected with the same energetic and harmonious relations. These relations are new, drawing is also there, and what the book gives is the main thing for those who did not see the originals." The original French text: "Bien que le résultat n'ait pas le charme de l'opération de découpage, il n'en reste pas moins que les mêmes couleurs sont assemblées avec les mêmes rapports énergiques et harmonieux. Ces rapports sont nouveaux, le dessin s'y trouve aussi, et pour qui n'a pas vu les originaux ce que donne le livre est le principal." Letter from Henri Matisse to André Rouveyre, 22 February 1948, in Matisse, *Écrits et propos sur l'art*, 241.

[30] William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition, Part I," *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 6 (February 1967): 21. Also, Bernice Rose states as follows: "The salient characteristic that emerged at this time . . . was the translation of drawing into painting—the radical fusion of draftsmanship with paint and color to create a technique that was linear in execution, painterly in effect. Pollock's

However, there is a great difference between the aims of Matisse and those of Pollock. Matisse obtained a new kind of figuration with his paper cut-outs that unified drawing with painting; whereas Pollock attained, as it were, non-figuration in his allover poured paintings, similarly unifying drawing with painting, but in another way. Michael Fried examines the characteristic of Pollock's line in the allover poured paintings as follows:

> an examination of "Number One" [*Number 1A, 1948*, fig. 0-1], or of any of Pollock's finest paintings of these years, reveals that his all-over line does not give rise to positive and negative areas: we are not made to feel that one part of the canvas demands to be read as figure, whether abstract or representational, against another part of the canvas read as ground. There is no inside or outside to Pollock's line or to the space through which it moves. And this is tantamount to claiming that line, in Pollock's all-over drip paintings of 1947-50, has been freed at last from the job of describing contours and bounding shapes. It has been purged of its figurative character.[31]

In 1947, unifying drawing with painting, Pollock thus realized a new, non-figurative painting with his allover style and pouring technique.

In 1948, Pollock recovered a kind of figuration in the Cut-Out series. In *Cut Out*, after he applied paint allover on a sheet of cardboard mainly by the pouring technique, he cut the middle of the cardboard in a humanoid shape with a

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expressive line of dripped and poured paint was at the same time object, means, and color. Gesture became the equivalent of color, giving each line 'color'——even within a limited palette of grays, blacks, and whites." Bernice Rose, *Jackson Pollock: Drawing into Painting*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art; New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 7.

[31] Michael Fried, "Jackson Pollock," *Artforum*, vol. 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 15.

knife (fig. 1-4). He used the humanoid-shaped piece, which had been cut away from the cardboard for *Cut Out*, for the making of *Cut-Out Figure* (fig. 0-4). In this work, the cut-out piece was glued on a sheet of black paper. Then, Pollock poured white paint on the black paper, avoiding the glued humanoid-shaped piece. The positive-negative structural relationship seen in *Cut-Out Figure* and *Cut Out* is also seen in *JPCR1033* (fig. 0-6) and *Rhythmical Dance* (fig. 0-5). In *Rhythmical Dance*, Pollock cut off two humanoid shapes with a knife after he had applied paint allover on a sheet of paper mainly by the pouring technique. Then, he mounted the cut-away paper on a slightly larger sheet of black paper. The two humanoid-shaped pieces that were cut away from the paper in *Rhythmical Dance* were used for the making of *JPCR1033*. In this work, the cut-out pieces were glued on a sheet of black paper. Then, Pollock poured white paint on the black paper, traversing the glued humanoid-shaped pieces. As for *Shadows* (fig. 0-7), its structure has not been clear to date because of its inaccessibility.[32] My reading of a color reproduction of the work indicates that three or four humanoid shapes were cut off from a colorful abstract picture, and then the cut-away picture was backed with a piece of canvas painted in black.[33] Finally, Pollock poured

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[32] The editors of Pollock's catalogue raisonné remarked on *Shadows*: "The records of the Parsons Gallery describe it variously as 'Black cutout figure mounted on panel' and 'Black figures cut-out, mounted on board' leaving ambiguous whether the black figures are cut from mounted canvas or pasted to a painting on board." O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:108.

[33] Milton Resnick described two works exhibited in one of Pollock's shows held in 1949 as follows: "On one painting was a piece of wood. Another painting he made a hole in. He cut a hole. Then he patched it with a black piece of canvas so it looked like a hole." Milton Resnick, "Resnick Interviews," interviews by

black paint allover on the picture backed with the black canvas.[34] In *Out of the Web* (fig. 0-8), after Pollock applied paint allover on fiberboard mainly by the pouring technique, he chiseled several semi-figurative shapes away from the picture surface.

Fried interprets Pollock's cut-outs as an attempt to "achieve figuration within the stylistic context of his all-over, optical style."[35] Taking up *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3), Fried explains the attempt as follows:

> in "Cut-Out" [*sic*] Pollock achieved figuration by negating part of the painted field——by taking something away from it——rather than by adding something. . . . Here Pollock actually cut away the figure or shape, which happens to be roughly humanoid in outline, from a piece of canvas [*sic*; correctly, cardboard] on which an all-over painted field had previously been dripped, and then backed this piece with canvas-board. The result is that the figure is not seen as an object in the world, or shape on a flat surface——in fact it is not seen as the presence of anything——but rather as the absence, over a particular area, of the visual field.[36]

Geoffrey Dorfman, in *Out of the Picture: Milton Resnick and the New York School*, ed. Geoffrey Dorfman (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 2003), 59. The former painting seems to be *The Wooden Horse: Number 10A, 1948* (1948). In *The Wooden Horse*, a wooden hobbyhorse head is collaged on canvas. This work was exhibited in Pollock's one-person show held at the Betty Parsons Gallery from January 24 to February 12, 1949. *Shadows* was also exhibited in the same show. Is the latter painting, which Resnick mentioned, *Shadows*?

[34] See also Michael Leja's and T. J. Clark's descriptions of the work. Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism*, 303; T. J. Clark, "The Unhappy Consciousness," chap. 6 in *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 346.

[35] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 16.

[36] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 16.

Setting aside for now the issue that Fried also deals with *Cut Out* in its present form, the major aesthetic concern that is common to both Matisse's paper cut-outs and Pollock's cut-outs is a quest for a new kind of figuration by a new means. That is to say, Pollock absorbed the aesthetic of Matisse's paper cut-outs through *Jazz* in 1948 and made good use of it in his own work.

Here, a specific plate in Matisse's *Jazz*, entitled *Forms* (fig. 2-6), is worthy of special attention. One blue and one pale gray abstracted female figure, with arms placed around the backs of their heads, are juxtaposed in this plate. The shapes and sizes of the two figures are roughly the same. The blue figure on the right side is placed on a background of the same color as that of the pale gray figure on the left side; and the pale gray figure on the left side is shaped by a foreground of the same color as that of the blue figure on the right side. In short, those two figures are rendered in a positive-negative relationship. I previously pointed out the similarity in shape between the human figures in Matisse's *The Clown* (fig. 2-3) and *The Swimmer in the Tank* (fig. 2-4) from *Jazz* and the human figure in Pollock's *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4). However, more importantly, Pollock probably directed more attention to the positive-negative relationships in *Jazz*'s illustrations, as exemplified by *Forms*, than to the shape of any specific figure.[37] As Fried pointed out, in the allover poured paintings, Pollock achieved the non-figurative style by avoiding giving rise to positive and negative areas on the

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[37] As will be closely examined in chapter 5 of this dissertation, I believe that the shape of the human figure in Pollock's *Cut Out* comes more from his own repertory of images than from the influence of Matisse.

picture plane; whereas, in the cut-outs, Pollock, inspired by Matisse's *Jazz*, made active use of a positive-negative relationship between forms in his quest for a new kind of figuration. Jack Cowart examines Matisse's use of a positive-negative relationship in the artist's paper cut-outs as follows: "If the two [positive and negative] mate elements are kept in the same composition and merely pulled away from each other, the intervening space becomes capable of strong visual activity. . . . Matisse's instinctive sense of the interval and positive-negative is well known, and his cut-outs show a strong exploitation of the tensions created by their use. A shifting sense of what should be read as foreground and background contributes further to the vibrant compositions with their sure balance of unequals." [38] Unlike Matisse, Pollock did not set up positive-negative relationships within one cut-out. Instead, he created two pairs of cut-outs, *Cut-Out Figure – Cut Out* (figs. 0-4 and 1-4) and *JPCR1033 – Rhythmical Dance* (figs. 0-6 and 0-5), applying a positive-negative relationship between one work and the other in each pair. In so doing, Pollock generated a strong structural dynamism between a cut-out and its companion cut-out, and ultimately, in the Cut-Out series as a whole.

Before advancing my examination to the next stage, I would here like to explain another similarity between Matisse's paper cut-outs and Pollock's cut-outs. It is the sculptural quality of the work. Matisse plainly stated: "My cut-outs, I

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[38] Jack Cowart, introduction to *Paper Cut-Outs*, by Cowart et al., 18.

would hope, retain the sovereignty of the line that characterizes my drawing. My hand's great experience has had free play in handling the tool [scissors]. But not all the benefits of this new technique ought to be ascribed to my old drawing habits. My paper cut-outs also owe something to a technical procedure that comes from statuary."[39] Furthermore, Matisse described his paper cut-out technique, in relation to the clay-kneading procedure of sculptors, in the following manner: "I choose my quantity of colored surface and I make it conform to my feeling of the drawing, as the sculptor molds clay by modifying the ball which he first made and afterwards elicits his feeling from it."[40] The sculptural quality of Matisse's paper cut-out technique must be related to the fact that he often, especially in the early period of his career, worked on sculpture and was very familiar with the medium.[41]

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[39] Henri Matisse, "The Paper Cut-Outs," interview by André Verdet, in *Matisse: A Retrospective*, ed. Flam, 380. The original French text: "Mes contours taillés gardent, je l'espère, la souveraineté de la ligne qui caractérise mon dessin au trait. La longue expérience de ma main a joué à fond dans le maniement de l'outil. Mais il ne faut pas reporter tout le bénéfice de cette nouvelle technique à ma vieille habitude du dessin au trait. Mes papiers découpés relèvent aussi quelque peu d'un procédé technique qui vient de la statuaire." Henri Matisse, "Les papiers découpés," interview by André Verdet, in *Entretiens, notes et écrits sur la peinture: Braque, Léger, Matisse, Picasso*, by André Verdet (Paris: Galilée, 1978), 130-31.

[40] Matisse, "Testimonial," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. and trans. Flam, 208. The original French text: "Je choisis ma quantité de surface colorée et je la rends conforme à mon sentiment du dessin comme le sculpteur pétrit la glaise en modifiant la boule qu'il a faite tout d'abord, l'étirant d'après son sentiment." Matisse, "Témoignages," 66.

[41] Gilles Néret wrote about Matisse's paper cut-out technique as follows: "Only a Matisse who had already mastered both sculpture and painting could be so daring as to apply the technique of the sculptor to the substance of painting, and carve a block of pure colour." Gilles Néret, *Henri Matisse: Cut-Outs* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen, 1994), 12.

In his paper cut-outs, Matisse cut directly into color with scissors. The tactile character of Matisse's paper cut-out technique seems to have much to do with the art of sculpture, which requires a strong, direct contact with materials. (Matisse also stated in the text of *Jazz*: "*Drawing with scissors* [italics in original] / Cutting directly into vivid color reminds me of the direct carving of sculptors."[42]) We have already seen how Matisse's paper cut-outs unified drawing and painting. Matisse's paper cut-outs should also be thought of as a fine synthesis of drawing, painting, and even sculpture, as John Hallmark Neff stated: "Matisse never really gave up 'sculpture' or 'painting'; rather, he merely ceased to make sculptures or paintings, consolidating his interest in both into the paper cut-outs, which synthesized the intrinsic characteristics of each."[43]

At the beginning of his career, Pollock was also involved in sculpture, but more deeply than Matisse. In his days at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, Pollock took classes in clay modeling. Also, he zealously pursued stone carving at the home of his schoolfriend, Manuel Tolegian.[44] Furthermore, after coming to New York in the late summer or the early fall of 1930, Pollock seems to

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[42] Henri Matisse, "Jazz, 1947," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. and trans. Flam, 172. The original French text: "Dessiner avec des ciseaux [underline in original] / Découper à vif dans la couleur me rappelle la taille directe des sculpteurs." Henri Matisse, *Jazz* (Paris: Verve, 1947), 73-74.

[43] John Hallmark Neff, "Matisse, His Cut-Outs and the Ultimate Method," in *Paper Cut-Outs*, by Cowart et al., 24. In section 3 of this article (pp. 26-28), Neff examines the sculptural quality of Matisse's paper cut-outs concretely.

[44] See Deborah Solomon, *Jackson Pollock: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 40-41.

have studied sculpture for a few weeks with the stone-carver Ahron Ben-Shmuel in advance of his registration in Thomas Hart Benton's class at the Art Students League in the end of September of that year.[45] Then, in 1933, while Benton was away from the Art Students League because of a mural commission offered by the State of Indiana, Pollock studied sculpture again with Ben-Shmuel at Greenwich House, and also with Robert Laurent at the Art Students League.[46] In letters that Pollock sent to his family in those days, his strong passion for sculpture is often evident. For example, Pollock wrote in a letter of 1932: "Mural painting is forging to the front——by the time I get up there there out [*sic*; correctly, ought?] to be plenty of it——Sculptoring [*sic*] I think tho is my medium. I'll never be satisfied until I'm able to mould a mountain of stone, with the aid of a jack hammer, to fit my will."[47] Pollock also stated in a letter of 1933 as follows: "I think I wrote that I am devoting all my time to sculpture now——cutting in stone during the day and modeling at night——it holds my interest deeply——I like it better than painting——drawing tho is the essence of all."[48]

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[45] Francis V. O'Connor, "The Genesis of Jackson Pollock: 1912 to 1943" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1965), 56, n. 1. Cf. O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:119.

[46] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:119-20; Solomon, *Biography*, 63-64.

[47] Jackson Pollock to LeRoy Pollock, February 1932, in O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:212, doc. 12. Cf. Matisse's following statement on sculpture: "I myself have done sculpture as the complement of my studies. I did sculpture when I was tired of painting. For a change of medium. But I sculpted as a painter. I did not sculpt like a sculptor." Henri Matisse, "Interview with Georges Charbonnier, 1950," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. and trans. Flam, 193.

Pollock, unlike Matisse, never mastered sculpture.[49] However, when Pollock later cut into supports with edged tools in his cut-outs, especially with a chisel in *Out of the Web* (fig. 0-8), that act was not unfamiliar to him in any way (though we would not be able to go so far as to consider Pollock's cut-outs to be a synthesis of drawing, painting, and sculpture). Incidentally, in an interview, Lee Krasner described Pollock's sustained interest in sculpture as follows: "One of the reasons for our move to Springs [in 1945] was that Jackson wanted to do sculpture. You know, it was his original interest in high school and art school. He often said, 'One of these days I'll get back to sculpture.' There was a large junk pile of iron in the backyard he expected to use."[50] In fact, after a long hiatus, Pollock made several sculptures between 1949 and 1951; and especially during the winter of 1949/50, he zealously worked on clay modeling.[51] On the other hand, he undertook the Cut-Out series in 1948; and especially in 1949, he made *Out of the Web* by chipping the surface of fiberboard with a chisel. (*Out of the Web* seems to

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[48] Jackson Pollock to Stella May McClure, Sanford LeRoy Pollock, and Marvin Jay Pollock, 25 March 1933, in O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:216-17, doc. 19.

[49] As for Pollock's interest in Matisse's sculpture, Harry Jackson told the following story: "Jack had four volumes of *Cahiers d'art* at that time [October 11, 1948], which contained many reproductions of Matisse's art. So he analyzed Matisse's works, and expressed his deep artistic respect and gratitude for the entire body of the French master's art including his sculpture." Harry Jackson, "Pollock from 1948 through 1950: An Interview with Harry Jackson," interview by Tetsuya Oshima, *Art/Criticism* (Tokyo), no. 3 (2007): 22.

[50] Lee Krasner, "Who Was Jackson Pollock?," interview by Francine du Plessix and Cleve Gray, *Art in America*, vol. 55, no. 3 (May-June 1967): 51.

[51] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:120.

have been completed by July of that year.[52]) Pollock's cut-outs thus occupy an interesting position in light of his career in sculpture.

Seen in another way, Pollock's cut-outs can also be regarded as collages, for the piece cut off from the painted cardboard of *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4) is glued on the surface of *Cut-Out Figure* (fig. 0-4); likewise, the pieces cut off from the painted paper of *Rhythmical Dance* (fig. 0-5) are glued on the surface of *JPCR1033* (fig. 0-6). In actuality, all the cut-outs, with the exception of *Out of the Web* (fig. 0-8), are classified as "collage" in the Pollock catalogue raisonné.[53]

As far as is currently known, Pollock made some thirty collages, including works that employed a collage technique in a minor manner, in his entire career. Pollock's use of the collage technique dates back to 1942. In an untitled work from 1942, the catalogue raisonné number of which is 957 (hereafter *JPCR957*, fig. 2-7), a piece of cut out and painted cardboard is pasted on the left side of a hinged black cardboard. On its right side, there is a handwritten inscription: "Greetings / 1943– / Lee / Jackson." As this inscription indicates, this work was made as a

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[52] This work has the following inscription on its back: "Jackson Pollock 7/1949." O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 2:72. Regarding Pollock's process of making this work, see Ellen G. Landau, *Jackson Pollock* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 208.

[53] The editors remarked on their classifying Pollock's cut-outs as collage as follows: "Numbers 1030–1034 [*Cut Out*, *Cut-Out Figure*, *Rhythmical Dance*, *JPCR1033*, and *Shadows*] constitute a group of works which display a variant on the traditional collage technique Pollock used. Instead of assembling various elements, here he has cut elements from a finished painting and mounted those 'cut-outs' as central motifs in other works." O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:104.

greeting card. Therefore, it does not seem to have been made as a serious artwork. Pollock made a few more collages of this greeting-card type in 1942.[54]

Pollock probably fully consciously worked on the medium of collage for the first time when he created works for the "Exhibition of Collage," to be held at Art of This Century in April-May 1943. Peggy Guggenheim was planning an international collage exhibition, which would be the first in the United States, and which was supposed to include many European modern masters such as Picasso, Braque, and Schwitters. Guggenheim was then interested in the three young American artists Pollock, Robert Motherwell, and William Baziotes, and she planned to include these three artists' collages in the exhibition. Motherwell recounted the course of events after that point as follows: "she [Guggenheim] suggested to me that we all make some collages, and if they were any good (she reserved the right of judgment) she'd put them in the show. It was to have been the first chance for all three of us to show in a major gallery with major artists. The idea both excited and intimidated us. One day, Pollock suggested to me . . . in a reticent way that since neither of us had ever made a collage that we try to do them together."[55] Pollock and Motherwell thus made collages together in the former's studio. Motherwell recalled Pollock's making of a collage at the time as follows: "I remember his burning one of his with a match, not destroying it, but rather that

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[54] *Tondo* (c. 1942) and *Hinged Collage* (c. 1942).

[55] Robert Motherwell, "Concerning the Beginnings of the New York School: 1939-1943," interview by Sidney Simon, *Art International*, vol. 11, no. 6 (Summer 1967): 22.

the burns were part of its design."[56] (From Motherwell's description——"one of his"——Pollock seems to have made not one, but several collages at the time.) Also, based on Motherwell's recollection on another occasion, Herta Wescher describes Pollock's manner of making a collage as follows: "Pollock became more and more tense and vehement as he tore up papers, pasted them down, even burned their edges, splashed paint over everything, quite literally in something like a state of trance."[57] Since the collages that Pollock made at that time have not been identified to date——perhaps he destroyed them[58]——it is impossible to know every detail of their appearance. As far as I can guess from Motherwell's recollections, Pollock's working method for those collages seems to have been influenced by the theory of automatism in Surrealism. This is understandable when we take into account that Motherwell told Pollock in detail about Surrealism and especially

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[56] Letter from Robert Motherwell to [James T.] Valliere, 31 August 1964, Jackson Pollock Papers, circa 1914-1975, Archives of American Art, reel 3048, frame 724.

[57] Herta Wescher, *Collage*, trans. Robert E. Wolf (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), 299-300. See also Motherwell, "Concerning the Beginnings of the New York School," 22.

[58] Regarding the collage exhibited at the "Exhibition of Collage," Motherwell believes that Pollock destroyed it after the show had ended. (Letter from Motherwell to Valliere, 31 August 1964, Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3048, frame 725.) On the other hand, Susan Davidson points out the following three extant collages created in 1943 as "likely candidates" for the one exhibited at the "Exhibition of Collage": *Untitled* (catalogue raisonné number 1023, c. 1943), *Untitled* (catalogue raisonné number 1025, c. 1943), and *The Mask* (c. 1943). Susan Davidson, "The Gesture of Intimate Scale: Jackson Pollock Paintings on Paper," in *No Limits, Just Edges: Jackson Pollock Paintings on Paper*, by Susan Davidson, David Anfam, and Margaret Holben Ellis (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2005), 14, 20, n. 19; Susan Davidson, "Spotlight: Jackson Pollock's *The Mask*," *Guggenheim* (Summer 2005): 25.

about the theory of automatism, around the end of 1942.[59] Pollock also sometimes wrote automatic poems together with Motherwell, Baziotes, and their three wives in 1942. Surrealism was thus a fresh source of creativity for Pollock in those days. (As to painting, between 1942 and 1943, Pollock made many works which show the strong influence of Surrealism, such as *Stenographic Figure* [c. 1942] and *Composition with Pouring II* [1943].) In addition, Pollock's introduction of an automatist method to his making of collages to submit to Peggy Guggenheim could be related to the fact that the art dealer was deeply involved with the Surrealist movement. In any case, Pollock's first serious collages seem to have been created in a strong Surrealist ambience.

Unlike the above-examined unidentified 1943 collages, the extant collages from the same year, such as the untitled works (the catalogue raisonné numbers of which are 1023 and 1024 [hereafter *JPCR1023* and *JPCR1024* respectively, figs. 2-8 and 2-9]), were made much more deliberately. In *JPCR1023*, Pollock pasted a piece of white paper on a support of pale brown paper;[60] and a piece of

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[59] "I [Motherwell] remember that Baziotes called up Pollock and we made a date to go and spend a whole afternoon with him. I talked, I guess, for four or five hours explaining the whole Surrealist thing in general and the theory of automatism in particular, which nowadays we would call a technique of free association. I showed Pollock how Klee and Masson made their things, etc. And Pollock, to my astonishment, listened intently; in fact, he invited me to come back another afternoon, which I did. This would be the winter of 1942." Motherwell, "Concerning the Beginnings of the New York School," 21. Cf. Landau, *Jackson Pollock*, 89.

[60] Although the color of the support was originally green, it has faded to pale brown. Francis Valentine O'Connor, ed., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works*, supplement no. 1 (New York: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 1995), 85.

reddish-brown paper was further layered on them. The upper-right part of the upper collage element is cut away in an arc. Through this cut-away part, a part of the lower collage element shows. On each of those two collage elements and on the support, Pollock drew and/or painted various figures with black. In this work, Pollock seems to have been interested in the optical effect that the physical layering of three different picture surfaces in a single work creates.[61] In *JPCR1024* (fig. 2-9), Pollock pasted a sheet of pale purple paper in an irregular shape on a support of white paper. This collage element has cockles, folds, and tears here and there――its upper-right corner was torn off roughly――thus this collage element has a stronger materiality as paper than the support. However, in order to smoothly connect the surface of the collage element with that of the support visually, Pollock drew and painted intentionally astride the boundary between the two. In this work, while utilizing the materiality of the collage element, Pollock thus made its existence less obtrusive and paid attention to a unity of the work as a whole.

Prompted by his participation in the "Exhibition of Collage" in April-May 1943, Pollock made several collages in that year, as we saw above. However, immediately after, Pollock's production of collages stagnated. In fact, he did not make any collages in 1944. Between 1945 and 1946 he made three collages; however, in 1947, he again abstained. Probably Pollock did not discover great

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[61] This collage is worthy of attention in that it foreshadows Pollock's working method for *Cut Out* (figs. 1-6 and 1-7).

possibilities in the medium of collage.[62]

In 1948, Pollock undertook the Cut-Out series in the context of the above course of events. Among the six works in the series, *Cut-Out Figure* (1948, fig. 0-4) and *JPCR1033* (c. 1948, fig. 0-6) can be genuinely regarded as collage. However, probably Pollock's primary concern in the Cut-Out series as a whole was not pasting or gluing something on a picture surface, as in the cases of *Cut-Out Figure* and *JPCR1033*, but in cutting out a picture surface in the shape of something, as seen especially in *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4). In evidence of that contention, after starting *Cut Out* in 1948, Pollock exceptionally continued to work on it until his last year. Furthermore, in 1949 he specially created *Out of the Web* (fig. 0-8) by chiseling, which is a variant on the technique of cutting out with a knife. The act of cutting out a picture surface in the shape of something inevitably brings into being a piece (or pieces) cut off from it. *Cut-Out Figure* and *JPCR1033* were thus created as, so to speak, by-products. This is so even though, when Pollock was going to cut out the cardboard for *Cut Out* and the paper for *Rhythmical Dance*, he probably almost simultaneously intended to make use of the cut-off pieces for other works, namely *Cut-Out Figure* and *JPCR1033*. In this way, the Cut-Out series was primarily undertaken, not as collage, but quite literally as cut-out.

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[62] Motherwell wrote about Pollock's attitude toward the medium of collage when they made collages for the "Exhibition of Collage" of 1943 as follows: "my impression was, at least then, that neither Jackson nor Baziotes found the medium especially appealing." Letter from Motherwell to Valliere, 31 August 1964, Pollock Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3048, frame 725.

Nevertheless, a certain work in the Cut-Out series is very interesting in terms of collage. It is not *Cut-Out Figure* or *JPCR1033*, but *Cut Out*. In *Rhythmical Dance* (1948, fig. 0-5), after cutting out two figures from painted paper, Pollock merely mounted the cut-away paper on a slightly larger sheet of simple black paper. There must have existed the same option for him to do so in *Cut Out*. However, Pollock did not choose this option. Unlike in *Rhythmical Dance*, Pollock cut out a single large figure in *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4). The void created there was so big that it had great potential to be further exploited. Thus, Pollock tried superimposing the cut-away cardboard of *Cut Out* on *JPCR785* (fig. 1-8), as seen in the photograph taken by Harry Bowden in 1949 (fig. 1-7). Then, after removing *JPCR785* from under the cut-away cardboard, he again experimentally superimposed it on *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-2), as seen in the photograph taken by Hans Namuth in 1956 (fig. 1-1). I examined in the previous chapter that these experiments mean that Pollock intended to back the cut-away cardboard of *Cut Out* with some different picture of his own. Looked at from a different angle, this means that Pollock intended to *glue* a different picture of his own on the cut-away cardboard *from behind*. Here we see Pollock's attempt at introducing a unique collage technique to *Cut Out*.

The figure in *JPCR785* (fig. 1-8) was largely created by pouring paint through the stencil-like cardboard of *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4). That is to say, *JPCR785* and the cardboard portion of *Cut Out* exist in a kind of positive-negative relationship to each other. Pollock created *Cut-Out Figure* (fig. 0-4) and *Cut Out* in a positive-negative relationship, as we previously saw; on the other hand, he

also tried combining a negative image with a positive one within *Cut Out* itself (fig. 1-7). However, if *JPCR785* is placed under the cut-away cardboard of *Cut Out*, inevitably the shape of the positive image of the former almost fits to the shape of the negative image of the latter. As a result, the appearance of the work as a whole seems clogged and badly static. Thus, Pollock turned *JPCR785* upside-down. However, in this case, the figure depicted in *JPCR785* became almost unrecognizable as such; and therefore his idea of combining a negative image with a positive one did not work well. For these reasons, Pollock may have abandoned using *JPCR785* for *Cut Out,* ultimately choosing *Black and White Painting II*, which had been created independently of *Cut Out*.

Pollock's experiment of placing *Black and White Painting II* under the cut-away portion of *Cut Out* is of further interest in terms of collage (fig. 1-6). The cardboard portion of *Cut Out* is painted in the manner of the allover poured paintings of 1947-50. On the other hand, *Black and White Painting II* comes from the group of black pourings on which Pollock worked after the allover poured paintings, between 1951 and 1952. In the black pourings, Pollock basically limited his palette to black only and diluted the paint more than in the allover poured paintings. He poured the diluted paint on the unprimed canvas. The paint soaked into the canvas to a considerable degree. As a result, Pollock's pouring technique turned to what can be called "staining" as well as "pouring." In the black pourings, Pollock created semi-figurative images with a unique, dematerialized effect brought about by the pouring/staining technique. In *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-2), Pollock painted an image that suggests a crucified

figure in that manner. The above facts tell us that in the experiment under examination, Pollock was trying to combine one picture (namely, the cardboard portion of *Cut Out*) with another picture painted in a different technique and in a different style (namely, *Black and White Painting II*). This method reminds me of some collages of Picasso's, especially *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass* (1912, fig. 2-10). *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass* is one of Picasso's first *papiers collés*. In this work, Picasso pasted, on a ground of wallpaper, a charcoal drawing that depicts a wine glass in the style of Analytic Cubism, together with a newspaper clipping,[63] a fragment of sheet music, and four pieces of cut paper to represent a guitar. Pollock probably knew this specific collage by Picasso because a reproduction of it appears in Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s famous book on Picasso, *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art*,[64] which Pollock owned.[65] I propose that Pollock

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[63] The newspaper clipping contains the following headline: "LA BATAILLE S'EST ENGAGÉ[E]" ("THE BATTLE HAS BEGUN"), which refers to the First Balkan War that was then taking place. Jack Flam proposed the following interesting interpretation of these words which Picasso introduced onto the picture surface of this collage: "by using only part of the headline (which in its entirety told the reader that 'LA BATAILLE S'EST ENGAGÉE FURIEUSE sur les Lignes de Tchataldja'), Picasso also comments on what is happening *inside* [italics in original] the picture. That 'battle' is the one between the different styles and sign systems that make up the collage. These are set against each other in a fashion that emphasizes their conflicting claims to validity, in what constitutes a critical appraisal of the possibilities of pictorial representation in late 1912." Jack Flam, *Matisse and Picasso: The Story of Their Rivalry and Friendship* (n.p.: Westview Press, 2003), 92.

[64] Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946), 84. In this book, Barr wrote on *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass* as follows: "The collage *Guitar and Wine Glass* reproduced above combines the symbols or metaphors of four still-life objects——a newspaper and sheet music represented by actual paper fragments; a guitar, by four pieces of paper, one of which is wood-grained; and a glass, by a charcoal drawing,

was inspired by Picasso's pasting of a drawing of a glass (which was done in an old style) on the surface of the work (which was being done in a new style) in his attempt to incorporate *Black and White Painting II* into *Cut Out*.

Pollock's experiment in combining *Cut Out* with *Black and White Painting II* has yet another important aspect (fig. 1-6). We have already seen that, inspired by Matisse's *Jazz* and paper cut-outs, Pollock was attempting to realize a new kind of figuration in his cut-outs. What is more, Pollock seems to have been trying to create another new kind of figuration in *Cut Out* by superposing its cut-away portion on *Black and White Painting II*. In the case of *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4) and *JPCR785* (fig. 1-8), there was practically no option, except for the following two, in placing the former on the latter, because they are almost the same size. The first option was to simply superimpose the former precisely on the latter. The second option was to invert the latter and superimpose the former precisely on the inverted latter. Pollock chose the second option (fig. 1-7). However, he abandoned using *JPCR785* for *Cut Out* after all. On the other hand, *Black and White Painting II* is larger than *Cut Out*. Therefore, in the case of placing *Cut Out* on *Black and White Painting II*, there were various options. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, probably after careful thought, Pollock ultimately placed the former on the latter so that some important elements, such as an eye and a mouth, in the head form painted in the latter, would show through the

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analytical in style and probably somewhat earlier in date." Ibid.

[65] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:189.

former. I would like to call this act "optical stenciling." (A particular account of it will be given later.)

Here, Matisse's *Jazz* comes into the picture again. That is to say, *Jazz* was printed by the stencil technique. We know, through other works by Pollock that are closely related to the Cut-Out series, that he was very interested in stenciling around 1948. As we have already seen, he used a stenciling-like technique in *Triad* (1948, fig. 2-5), *JPCR783* (c. 1948-49, fig. 1-11), and *JPCR785* (c. 1948-49, fig. 1-8). It seems that in response to Matisse's *Jazz*, Pollock insightfully directed his attention not only to the technique of paper cut-out but also to the technique of stenciling,[66] and that he ingeniously adapted the latter technique into such works of his as mentioned above, and further into *Cut Out*.

Michael Fried stated: "[in *Cut Out*] the figure is not seen as an object in the world, or shape on a flat surface——in fact it is not seen as the presence of anything——but rather as the absence, over a particular area, of the visual field."[67] Although Fried made this interpretation regarding *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3) without

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[66] Pollock was probably aware, at some time or another, that Matisse's *Jazz* was printed by the stencil technique. For example, Pierre Berès, Inc. printed the following explanation of the working method of *Jazz* in the press release for the "Henri Matisse——*Jazz*, Tériade editor" exhibition held there from January 20 to February 3, 1948: "Matisse has painted the gouache colors on different sheets, then cut out the designs and patterns with scissors. The cut out shapes were then placed one next to the other until the desired composition was created. These plates and the text of Matisse (written by him with a reed) were reproduced by the process known as 'au pochoir à la poupée', an advanced type of stencil reproduction, using the very colors employed by Matisse himself." Pierre Berès, Inc., "Jazz by Henri Matisse," press release, 1948, Artists File, New York Public Library, New York, microfiche M360, frame E5.

[67] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 16.

knowledge of the fact that the present backing of white canvas was given to it by a different person after Pollock's death, I believe that Fried's view is still valid to some degree. However, when we examine the state in which Pollock himself ultimately left *Cut Out* (fig. 1-6), we reach another new interpretation. That is to say, in *Cut Out*, Pollock was not content to simply create an "absence" by cutting out the middle of the painted cardboard. By further superimposing the stencil-like cut-away cardboard upon a chosen place in *Black and White Painting II*, Pollock intended to make a certain part of the underlying picture emerge newly into the shape of that absence in the stencil-like cardboard. In so doing, Pollock was trying, not physically and directly but optically and indirectly, to create a further sense of figuration. This is what I mean by the term "optical stenciling."

In addition, *Black and White Painting II* itself was involved with yet another new kind of figuration (fig. 1-2). In some of the black pourings, Pollock not only gave a dematerialized effect to the image with the pouring/staining technique but also painted uniquely between figuration and, as it were, non-figuration, beyond the dimension of the conflict between figurativeness and abstractness. Fried elaborated upon about the characteristic of the image created in such black pourings as follows: "in a few pictures made at this time the limits of the configuration assumed by the thinned enamel *defy* [italics in original] being read as drawn——that is, as having been circumscribed by a cursive, draftsmanlike gesture——with the result that the paintings are experienced in exclusively visual terms."[68] And Fried stated: "in a series of remarkable paintings made by staining

thinned-down black paint into unsized canvas in 1951, Pollock seems to have been on the verge of an entirely new and different kind of painting, combining figuration with opticality in a new pictorial synthesis of virtually limitless potential."[69] There would be differences of opinion as to whether *Black and White Painting II* was successful as a black pouring from Fried's viewpoint. Nevertheless, this picture bears at least that peculiar, dematerialized effect. I believe that because this effect is visually smooth, Pollock's optical stenciling works better. In *Cut Out*, Pollock was making a highly sophisticated attempt to combine various kinds of figuration created by such techniques as cut-out, optical stenciling, and staining.

In Fried's opinion, the "entirely new and different kind of painting," to which Pollock's black pourings pointed, was not accomplished by Pollock himself after all——that task was taken over by Morris Louis[70]——because apparently Pollock did not grasp the significance of what he was doing in those paintings. Fried called this miss "part of the sadness of his last years."[71] It was, in fact, another part of the sadness that Pollock passed away without completing *Cut Out*, which was full of various ambitious and creative ideas.

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[68] Michael Fried, "The Achievement of Morris Louis," *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 6 (February 1967): 36.

[69] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 17.

[70] See Fried, "The Achievement of Morris Louis," 34-40.

[71] Fried, "Jackson Pollock," 17.

In the last period of his life, Pollock's productivity sharply declined. He made only fifteen paintings between 1953 and 1955,[72] and did no paintings in 1956, his final year.[73] Ruth Kligman, who was Pollock's lover and spent his last several weeks with him, recounted the following distressful episode:

> Jackson didn't work. Each day was similar to the next, talking about getting started and never getting to it. His conflict consumed his energy. One morning Jackson woke very early, went into the studio, and came right out again. He couldn't work. He looked at me very seriously and with a straight face said, "You know I'm a painter and must get to work very soon now."[74]

In this situation, a certain unfinished work hung, or would be hung before long, on the wall of Pollock's studio. It was *Cut Out*. Because it hung in a noticeable place (fig. 1-1), Pollock probably paid continuous attention to it.[75] These facts

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[72] According to B. H. Friedman, the ten paintings exhibited at Pollock's one-person show held at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1954, were "all completed between the end of 1952 and the beginning of 1954 and all dated 1953." B. H. Friedman, *Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visible* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 205.

[73] *Search*, made in 1955, is generally regarded as Pollock's last painting. However, in 1999 Ruth Kligman publicly alleged a painting in her possession, entitled *Red, Black & Silver*, as "the final painting of [Pollock's] life" which "was completed just weeks before [his] end." Although it has not yet been settled whether the painting is a true Pollock, the painting shows vigorous pouring like that of Pollock's best period. If *Red, Black & Silver* is truly Pollock's final painting, it is quite interesting with regard to his potential in the last year of his life. See Ruth Kligman, *Love Affair: A Memoir of Jackson Pollock* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1974; reprint, with a new introduction, New York: Cooper Square Press, 1999), front cover, 10, back cover.

[74] Ruth Kligman, *Love Affair: A Memoir of Jackson Pollock* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1974), 127.

seem to indicate that in the anguish of unproductivity in his final years, Pollock was secretly aiming for a new significant development with *Cut Out*.

Pollock also told Kligman the following pregnant words: "You know, there are only three painters: Picasso, Matisse, and Pollock." "At first," Kligman goes on to say, "I though[t] he was joking, but no, he said it over and over. 'You know there are only three painters: Pollock, Matisse, and Picasso,' and then he would laugh."[76] These words are very interesting. As is well known, Pollock named Picasso and Miró as "the two artists I [Pollock] admire most"[77] in 1944. However, in 1956 he named Matisse instead of Miró. In fact, Matisse's art was Pollock's great concern not only in *Cut Out* and the Cut-Out series, but also in his late work as a whole. For example, *Easter and the Totem* from 1953 (fig. 2-11) is clearly based on Matisse's *Bathers by a River* (1909-10, 1913, 1916; fig. 2-12) in terms of composition; namely, the repetition of black-and-white vertical bands. What is more, *Easter and the Totem* seems based on such paintings by Matisse as *The Moroccans* (1915-16) and *Piano Lesson* (1916, fig. 2-13) in terms of color; namely, the use of pink and green. A large retrospective exhibition of Matisse was held at the Museum of Modern Art from November 13, 1951, to January 13, 1952, in which *Bathers by a River*, *The Moroccans*, and *Piano Lesson* were all

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[75] Eleven plates in *Jazz* were exhibited at "The Prints of Henri Matisse" show held at the Museum of Modern Art from June 26 to October 7, 1956. If Pollock again saw Matisse's *Jazz* at this show, it could have redirected his attention to *Cut Out*.

[76] Kligman, *Love Affair* (1974), 127.

[77] Jackson Pollock, "Jackson Pollock," *Arts & Architecture*, vol. 61, no. 2 (February 1944): 14.

shown.[78] Pollock must have seen those paintings in this Matisse exhibition.[79] In addition, Clement Greenberg published a book on Matisse in 1953. (A color reproduction of *Bathers by a River* appears in this book,[80] which Pollock owned.[81]) The interest in Matisse by this eminent art critic, with whom Pollock had a close relationship, must have encouraged Pollock's engagement with the art of the French master.[82]

As for Matisse's influence on Pollock's late work, generally only *Easter and the Totem* of 1953 (fig. 2-11) has been pointed out to date as an example. For example, Jordan Benjamin Kantor stated, in his monographic study on Pollock's late paintings, as follows:

> Pollock's bright palette, chromatic use of black, and flat application of

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[78] *Henri Matisse*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1951), 10, 25.

[79] Pollock was probably able to see *Piano Lesson* also in 1953, the same year in which he painted *Easter and the Totem*. The painting has been in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art since 1946.

[80] Clement Greenberg, *Matisse* ([New York]: Harry N. Abrams, 1953), no pagination, pl. 18.

[81] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:190.

[82] Greenberg had consistently praised Matisse's art. For example, Greenberg described Matisse as "the greatest living painter" in his review of a 1949 Matisse exhibition. Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Henri Matisse" (1949), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 293. Regarding Greenberg's opinion of Matisse's influences on American artists including Pollock, see Clement Greenberg, "Influences of Matisse," *Art International*, vol. 17, no. 9 (15 November 1973): 28, 39.

> paint in the 1953 canvas [*Easter and the Totem*] . . . seem to refer directly to the painting of Henri Matisse. . . . (Indeed, Pollock's planar conception of vertical space and specific juxtaposition of magenta with cadmium green are typically Matissian, and may have been directly borrowed from *Piano Lesson*, which was in MoMA's collection.) While this obviously did not become a sustained strategy, such deliberate acts of quotation were an undeniably bold move for an artist as bound to the rhetoric of individuality and the autographic mark as Pollock. Perhaps it was too much for Pollock, who never again turned to the French master as an explicit point of reference.[83]

However, a careful examination reveals that Pollock was involved with Matisse's art in various ways from 1953 on. Let's examine the case of another painting of Pollock's from 1953, *Ritual* (fig. 2-14). Pollock's reference to Matisse in this work may be difficult to recognize at first. However, it is easier to see when we examine the work in relationship to Pollock's earlier painting, *Two* (c. 1945, fig. 2-15). In *Two*, a pair of standing human figures, which seem to be copulating male and female Native Americans,[84] are depicted on a gray background divided vertically by some black lines and a black band. The composition and coloration strongly remind me of the figures on the right half of Matisse's *Bathers by a River* (fig. 2-16). The upper half of the right figure in Pollock's *Two* is superposed on a black vertical band; thus, it has a striking similarity with the far right figure in Matisse's *Bathers by a River*. *Ritual* also depicts a pair of standing human

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[83] Jordan Benjamin Kantor, "Jackson Pollock's Late Paintings, 1951-55" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2003), 156-57. See also Éric de Chassey, *La violence décorative: Matisse dans l'art américain* ([Nîmes]: Jacqueline Chambon, 1998), 179-81.

[84] See W. Jackson Rushing, *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde: A History of Cultural Primitivism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 185.

figures, which seem to be dancing male and female Native Americans. Although *Ritual*'s picture plane is somewhat slantingly divided in order to give it a dynamic effect, the basic composition of the work was probably derived, by way of *Two*, from Matisse's *Bathers by a River*. On the other hand, seen from the viewpoint of a slanting division of the picture plane, *Ritual* recalls Matisse's *Piano Lesson* (fig. 2-13). In addition, the pink and green used in *Ritual* seem, as in *Easter and the Totem*, related to those colors used in *Piano Lesson* (and *The Moroccans*). In this respect, another 1953 painting of Pollock's, *Unformed Figure* (fig. 2-17) could also be seen as Matissean to a greater or lesser degree. In this painting, pink and green are used more conspicuously. Parenthetically, a Fauvist palette is employed in yet another 1953 painting of Pollock's, *Sleeping Effort* (fig. 2-18).[85]

As we saw above, the Matisse exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1951-52 seems to have been an important factor in intensifying and diversifying Matisse's influence on Pollock. Here, two other works by Matisse, shown together with *Bathers by a River* and *Piano Lesson* at the exhibition, are worthy of note. They are *The Thousand and One Nights* (1950, fig. 2-19) and *The Beasts of the Sea* . . . (1950, fig. 2-20).[86] Both of these are paper cut-outs. We have already seen the influence of Matisse's paper cut-outs on Pollock's cut-outs of 1948-56. We can also find the influence of Matisse's paper cut-outs,

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[85] After the 1951-52 Matisse show at the Museum of Modern Art, a large exhibition of Fauvism ("*Les fauves*"), including some thirty works by Matisse, was also held at the same museum from October 8, 1952, to January 4, 1953.

[86] *Henri Matisse* (1951), 8, 10.

specifically *The Thousand and One Nights* and *The Beasts of the Sea . . .*, in some of the drawings that Pollock did in his last sketchbook. A painter, before he/she embarks in a new direction, often first explores in the medium of drawing. The last sketchbook probably suggests Pollock's unrealized future to some extent. This remarkable sketchbook includes two untitled and undated drawings, the catalogue raisonné numbers of which are 902 and 915 (hereafter *JPCR902* and *JPCR915* respectively). Both of them were probably done in 1956, Pollock's final year.[87] Some band-like forms are drawn in the right half of *JPCR902* (fig. 2-21). They resemble the kelp-like shapes seen in *The Thousand and One Nights*'s middle panel, which suggests "a storm at sea, as in the Sinbad tales and that of the Lady with the Beautiful Tresses."[88] In addition, the upper-middle part of *JPCR902* contains a form that is similar to the fish depicted in Matisse's aquatint *Étude pour la nappe liturgique de la Chapelle de Vence II* (1949, fig. 2-23), which is sometimes called *Fish*.[89] From the presence of that form, we can

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[87] All the drawings in the last sketchbook were not specifically dated in Pollock's catalogue raisonné. (See O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 3:338.) However, a drawing in the group to which *JPCR902* and *JPCR915* belong was later dated to 1956 by Francis V. O'Connor in the following place: Francis V. O'Connor, "Jackson Pollock: Down to the Weave, A Commentary on a Selection of Key Works," in *Such Desperate Joy: Imagining Jackson Pollock*, ed. Helen A. Harrison (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2000), 191.

[88] Cowart et al., *Paper Cut-Outs*, 169.

[89] Matisse's *Étude pour la nappe liturgique de la Chapelle de Vence II* was exhibited at a Matisse show held at the Curt Valentin Gallery on Fifty-Seventh Street in Manhattan in February 1953. Also, a reproduction of this work appears in the catalogue of this show. *The Sculpture of Henri Matisse*, exh. cat. (New York: Curt Valentin Gallery, 1953), no pagination, fig. 63.

infer that *JPCR902* depicts a scene in the sea. Through that similarity, *JPCR902*'s connection with the middle panel of Matisse's *The Thousand and One Nights* becomes stronger. On the other hand, the band-like forms drawn in *JPCR915* (fig. 2-22) closely resemble some forms, which represent sea animals such as a seahorse and a moray eel,[90] in the right panel of *The Beasts of the Sea* . . . (fig. 2-20). It is certain that Pollock in his last years kept Matisse's paper cut-outs in mind. According to Conrad Marca-Relli, in those days Lee Krasner often encouraged Pollock, who had lost his productivity, by saying: "Look at Matisse. He was in bed all the time he was making those beautiful collages. Why can't you at least keep drawing?"[91] Pollock's two drawings from his final year, *JPCR902* and *JPCR915*, clearly show his interest in Matisse's paper cut-outs.

JPCR915 (c. 1956, fig. 2-22) is the last of Pollock's sketchbook drawings. Interestingly, it is left unfinished.[92] We also have another work of Pollock's left unfinished——namely *Cut Out* (fig. 1-6). It is the strong influence of Matisse's paper cut-outs that those two unfinished works share. After Pollock's death,

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[90] See Jack Cowart, "Matisse's Artistic Probe: The Collage," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 49, no. 9 (May 1975): 54.

[91] Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1989), 737. Parenthetically, a photograph of Matisse, who is working while lying in bed, appears in the 13 December 1954 issue of *Life*. *The Thousand and One Nights* and *The Beasts of the Sea* . . . are partly shown in their unfinished states in the photograph. "Last of a Master: Matisse's Final Painting," *Life*, vol. 37, no. 24 (13 December 1954): 44.

[92] "[T]he last decorated page is not realized. Brushed only with wash, the darker spot at the lower right is a stain from the previous sheet." William S. Lieberman, introduction to *Jackson Pollock: The Last Sketchbook* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1982), 14.

Krasner conjectured about his future potential as follows: "He always worked in cycles. He had periods of inactivity during which he produced nothing, and my feeling is that if that accident had not occurred, he would have started again."[93] If Pollock had been able to begin painting again, then Matisse's paper cut-outs would have become an important key for a new development in his work.

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[93] The original French text: "Il travaillait toujours par cycles. Il avait des périodes d'inactivité pendant lesquelles il ne produisait rien et mon sentiment est que si cet accident ne s'était pas produit, il aurait repris." Lee Krasner, "Pollock," interview by Bernar Venet, *Art Press* (Paris), no. 16 (March 1978): 10.

Chapter 3

Interactions with Contemporary Artists

> Pears. Piles of apples. Fruit, I have eaten your juicy pulp. I have spat out your pips on the ground. Let them germinate there, to give us fresh enjoyment!
> ––André Gide, *The Fruits of the Earth*[1]

As discussed in the second chapter, Pollock's cut-outs are closely related to the art of the French modern master Henri Matisse. On the other hand, they also have something notable in common with the American movement to which Pollock belonged, namely Abstract Expressionism. In order to examine that aspect of Pollock's cut-outs, I have selected his three colleagues: Lee Krasner (1908-84), Willem de Kooning (1904-97), and Alfonso Ossorio (1916-90), with special attention given to his creative dynamic with Krasner during the course of their marriage, his rivalry with de Kooning, and his friendship with Ossorio. In fact, each of these three Abstract Expressionists not only sustained a close personal relationship with Pollock but also did work deeply connected to his cut-outs in the context of the relationship. In this chapter, I will examine Pollock's cut-outs as well as related works by those three artists: specifically,

[1] André Gide, *The Fruits of the Earth*, trans. Dorothy Bussy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 114.

Krasner's collages of 1953-55; de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions of 1946-49 and Woman series of 1950-55; and Ossorio's Victorias paintings of 1950.

Lee Krasner

In 1941 John Graham was planning a group exhibition, "American and French Paintings," to be held at a design firm in New York, McMillen Inc., in the beginning of 1942. The exhibition was supposed to include Pollock and Krasner.[2] When Krasner learned of this, she visited Pollock in order to meet him and see his work.[3] This was the beginning of their relationship, which was to continue until Pollock's death in 1956. They would begin to live together in 1942, and they would marry in 1945.

Their relationship was very deep not only romantically, but also artistically. After they had met at the end of 1941, their work proceeded in a strong dialogue.[4] Krasner was much more familiar with modernist art than

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[2] Pollock exhibited *Birth* (c. 1938-41, fig. 3-1) and Krasner exhibited *Abstraction* (c. 1941, fig. 3-2) in the show.

[3] Pollock, in turn, visited Krasner to see her work a few weeks later.

[4] Krasner described the impact of Pollock's work on her as follows: "It was a force, a living force, the same sort of thing I responded to in Matisse, in Picasso, in Mondrian. Once more, I was hit that hard with what I saw." Lee Krasner, "Lee Krasner," interview by Cindy Nemser, in *Art Talk: Conversations with 12 Women Artists*, by Cindy Nemser (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 86.

Pollock in the early stages of his career. While Pollock was strongly influenced by Mexican and Native American art between the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s (fig. 3-1), Krasner already knew well the art of Picasso, Matisse, and Mondrian (fig. 3-2)——these artists were, in her own words, "the gods at that time for me."[5] Barbara Rose has argued Krasner's influence on Pollock in their early period as follows:

> Lee's influence on Jackson, which everyone who witnessed it describes as profound, was to turn him away from the crude and barbaric expressionist modes that reflected primitive and archaic styles and to direct his attention to the sophisticated cosmopolitan art of the School of Paris, especially the elegance of Matisse and the restraint of Mondrian.[6]

It was probably Krasner's knowledge of Matisse's art that was the most significant part of her influence on Pollock. Krasner encountered Matisse's art in 1929 at the newly opened Museum of Modern Art and was impressed by it.[7] From the mid-1930s on, Krasner's work showed the strong influence of the

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[5] Lee Krasner, "Interview with Lee Krasner by Barbara Novak, 1979," Lee Krasner Papers, 1905-1984, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 3774, frame 490.

[6] Barbara Rose, "Lee Krasner / Jackson Pollock: A Working Relationship," in *Krasner/Pollock: A Working Relationship*, exh. cat. (East Hampton, N.Y.: Guild Hall Museum; New York: Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, 1981), 8.

[7] In 1972 Krasner described Matisse's influence on her, saying: "The impact of the first Matisses I saw is still within me. It was always part of the background of my work." Lee Krasner, "Interview with Lee Krasner by Barbara Rose, 1972," Krasner Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3774, frame 348.

French master's art. Conversely, Pollock did not have an interest in Matisse before he met Krasner. In a 1972 interview, Krasner described her role in introducing Pollock to Matisse as follows:

> LEE KRASNER . . . With regard to his [Pollock's] painting I daresay that the only possible- [*sic*] influence that I might have had was to bring to Pollock an awareness of Matisse.
>
> DOLORIS HOLMES What do you mean by "an awareness of Matisse?" Are you talking about shapes? About movement of figures? Colors?
>
> LEE KRASNER No. It wouldn't have happened that way because we had little talk about art in these terms in the whole period I lived with him. But my enthusiasm and my feeling about Matisse, which I certainly would express often, could possibly have moved him a little in that direction.[8]

Pollock would thus become engaged with Matisse's art through Krasner's interest in the artist and through her own work. We already saw in the previous chapter that Pollock's cut-outs of 1948-56 were strongly motivated by Matisse's *Jazz* and paper cut-outs. In fact, Pollock was deeply concerned with Matisse's art not only in the cut-outs, but in various earlier phases of his work in various manners, as we will see below.

Shortly after the relationship between Pollock and Krasner started at the

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[8] Lee Krasner, "Interview with Lee Krasner," interview by Doloris Holmes, 1972, online transcript, Archives of American Art, http://www.aaa.si.edu/oralhist/krasne72.htm

end of 1941, Matisse's influence began to appear in Pollock's work. In 1942, Pollock painted only three works, and at least two of those reveal the influence of Matisse. The first example is *Stenographic Figure* (c. 1942, fig. 3-3). As the automatic writing inscribed on its picture surface shows, *Stenographic Figure* was strongly influenced by Surrealism. However, Robert M. Coates found the influence of, or at least a relationship with, Matisse's art in this painting. When *Stenographic Figure* was exhibited at the "Spring Salon for Young Artists," held at Art of This Century in 1943, Coates wrote about the painting in his review of the exhibition as follows: "in Jackson Pollock's abstract 'Painting' [*Stenographic Figure*], with its curious reminiscences of both Matisse and Miró, we have a real discovery."[9] Because Coates did not elaborate on *Stenographic Figure*'s relationship to Matisse at all, it is unclear in what respect(s) he found one. Referring to Coates's above-quoted comment, Ellen G. Landau reservedly pointed out "some subtle echoes" of Matisse in *Stenographic Figure*; for example, in "the change in his [Pollock's] general color scheme away from the turgid browns and reds, or too-bright yellows and oranges that had predominated in his palette for the past seven or eight years."[10] Nevertheless, Landau basically found in *Stenographic Figure* the influences of Picasso and Miró rather than

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[9] Robert M. Coates, "The Art Galleries: From Moscow to Harlem," *New Yorker*, vol. 19, no. 15 (29 May 1943): 49. This is, as far as I know, the first written source that mentions Pollock's connection with Matisse.

[10] Ellen G. Landau, *Jackson Pollock* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 105.

those of Matisse and Miró.[11] However, I clearly find Matisse's influence on the painting in the following respects. First, the large black zone in the background of Pollock's *Stenographic Figure* recalls some paintings by Matisse in the artist's Cubism-assimilating period, such as *Goldfish and Palette* (1914, fig. 3-4). There are further compositional similarities between Pollock's *Stenographic Figure* and Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette.* In both paintings, the large black zone or plane is placed just behind the chief element in the picture (namely, in Pollock's work, the head of the reclining figure; in Matisse's, the goldfish in a bowl); and in each of them, the large black zone or plane bears an important function in unifying the picture surface. Also, just as the upper-right part of Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette* is diagonally cut with a black line, so the far right part of Pollock's *Stenographic Figure* is diagonally cut with a light-blue stripe and the leg of the reclining figure. Also, a table is depicted in Pollock's *Stenographic Figure* that is very similar to the one depicted in Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette*, both in terms of shape and color. Thus, it might not be too much to say that the composition of Pollock's *Stenographic Figure* is an adaptation of that of Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette*. Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette* was exhibited at the "Art in Our Time" show held at the Museum of Modern Art from May 10 to September 30, 1939. Pollock (or Krasner) owned this show's catalogue,[12] in which a large black-and-white reproduction of the painting

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[11] See Landau, *Jackson Pollock*, 105-6.

[12] Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw, eds., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (New

appears.[13] Furthermore, Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette* was exhibited on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art between October 22 and November 9, 1940, and also between February 3 and April 5, 1942.[14] Thus, it is certain that Pollock knew Matisse's *Goldfish and Palette* before he painted *Stenographic Figure*.

The second painting by Pollock from 1942 that shows Matisse's influence is *Male and Female* (c. 1942, fig. 3-5). In this painting, two black vertical bands run almost through the picture plane, which recalls, especially, another major painting of Matisse in the artist's Cubism-assimilating period, *Bathers by a River* (1909-10, 1913, 1916; fig. 2-12). According to Clement Greenberg, *Bathers by a River* was exhibited in the lobby of the Valentine Gallery on Fifty-Seventh Street in Manhattan for an extended period during the late 1930s; and there Greenberg himself "saw it often enough to feel able to copy it by heart."[15] Pollock, who was "a regular museum and gallery goer,"[16] cannot

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Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 4:190.

[13] *Art in Our Time: 10th Anniversary Exhibition*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1939), 97, pl. 94.

[14] Cancelled Works Card File, Office of the Registrar, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. My thanks to Christel Hollevoet-Force (Provenance Research Project, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York) for bringing this file to my attention.

[15] Clement Greenberg, "The Late Thirties in New York" (1957/1960), in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 233. See also Clement Greenberg, "Influences of Matisse," *Art International*, vol. 17, no. 9 (15 November 1973): 28.

[16] Francis V. O'Connor, "The Genesis of Jackson Pollock: 1912 to 1943," *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 9 (May 1967): 23, n. 2.

have been unaware of this painting by Matisse. Incidentally, Greenberg argued that the centrifugality of Matisse's *Bathers by a River*, created by its vertical bands, had an important effect on the Abstract Expressionists.[17] As far as Pollock is concerned, Greenberg was probably referring to the allover poured paintings of 1947-50 (fig. 0-1); however, Greenberg's opinion also applies, to a greater or lesser degree, to a specific 1942 painting, *Male and Female*. Also in this painting, a centrifugal, or rather, lengthwise-spreading, effect is created with the two black vertical bands. When we compare Pollock's *Male and Female* with Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror* (1932, fig. 3-6), we can see the centrifugal quality of Pollock's *Male and Female* more clearly. Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror* is a work that has a very centripetal structure. Pollock's *Male and Female*, though strongly influenced by Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror* in color, form, and composition,[18] has realized a different structure due to Matisse.

For Pollock, 1942 was an important year that became a great turning point in his career. The sizes of his paintings before 1942 did not extend beyond fifty inches in either width or height, whereas all of the three paintings he made in 1942 are larger than fifty inches.[19] Among those three 1942 paintings, *Stenographic Figure* (fig. 3-3) especially was exhibited at the first "Spring Salon

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[17] Greenberg, "Influences of Matisse," 28.

[18] On the influence of *Girl Before a Mirror* on *Male and Female*, see Landau, *Jackson Pollock*, 112-13.

[19] *The Moon-Woman* (1942, 69 x 43 inches); *Male and Female* (c. 1942, 73 x 49 inches); and *Stenographic Figure* (c. 1942, 40 x 56 inches).

for Young Artists" held at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century from May-June 1943. Actually, when the painting was brought to the gallery for the salon, Guggenheim first met it with disapproval. However, reportedly Mondrian, who was one of the jurors of the salon, praised it highly after long deliberation, saying to Guggenheim: "I don't know. I have a feeling that this may be the most exciting painting that I have seen in a long, long time, here or in Europe."[20] Mondrian's opinion turned Guggenheim's view of Pollock completely around, leading her to mount his first one-person show at her gallery in November of the same year.[21] Pollock's work of 1942 thus illustrates his participation at the forefront of American modern art.

The influences of Picasso and Miró on Pollock's 1942 paintings have already been examined by many scholars. In addition, we now realize that Matisse's art also had much to do with Pollock's work in 1942, which shows the beginning of a new and important stage in his career. Pollock had been involved in Picasso/Cubism since the late 1930s. Therefore, there would be reason for him to direct his attention to Matisse's paintings in the artist's Cubism-assimilating period when he first tried to absorb Matisse's art in 1942.

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[20] Deborah Solomon, *Jackson Pollock: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 132. See also Jeffrey Potter, *To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1985), 71-72.

[21] Guggenheim confessed later: "After the first spring salon it became evident that Pollock was the best painter. . . . [With his 1943 one-person show] Pollock immediately became the central point of Art of This Century. From then on, 1943, until I left America in 1947, I dedicated myself to Pollock." Peggy Guggenheim, *Confessions of an Art Addict* (Hopewell, New Jersey: Ecco Press, 1997), 105-6.

Also, we might be able to say that when Pollock attempted to free himself from Picasso's influence in 1942, he directed his attention to the work of another great modern master, Matisse, which is something very original though concerned with Picasso's Cubism. Parenthetically, Krasner's work also must have promoted Pollock's exposure to Matisse's art. In particular, she created a small but very sophisticated work entitled *Gouache No. 3* (fig. 3-7) in 1941, which was inspired, both in theme and in composition, by yet another major painting by Matisse in the artist's Cubism-assimilating period, *Piano Lesson* (1916, fig. 2-13).[22]

In contrast to his work of 1942, Pollock's work as a whole between 1943 and 1945 hardly shows Matisse's influence. However, we can find it in, at a minimum, the two works that are examined below. The first example is *Male and Female in Search of a Symbol* from 1943 (fig. 3-8). This painting shows a new and different kind of influence from Matisse's art, one based not on composition, as in 1942's *Stenographic Figure* and *Male and Female* (figs. 3-3 and 3-5), but on color. *Male and Female in Search of a Symbol* has a large, ostentatious pink background. Pink was Matisse's characteristic color, not only in his Fauvist period, but throughout his career. In some paintings by Matisse, such as *The Young Sailor II* (1906, fig. 3-9), the whole background is filled with pink.[23] Also, Matisse introduced a large plane painted with hot pink in *Piano*

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[22] See Ellen G. Landau, ed., *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 83.

[23] Matisse's *The Young Sailor II* was exhibited at a Matisse show held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1931. *Henri-Matisse: Retrospective Exhibition*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1931), 46, 70, pl. 14.

Lesson (1916, fig. 2-13).[24] When Pollock, who had basically suppressed color until 1941, began to use a more vibrant palette in 1942, he was chiefly influenced by Miró and Picasso. After that, in *Male and Female in Search of a Symbol* created in 1943, Pollock came to directly incorporate Matisse's pink into his work on a large scale. In a 1967 interview, Krasner related the following interesting episode regarding *Male and Female in Search of a Symbol*. When James Johnson Sweeney wrote, in the catalogue of Pollock's first one-person show held at Art of This Century in 1943, that Pollock's talent was "undisciplined,"[25] Pollock grew furious:

> Oh, he was angry, really mad, and he painted a picture, *Search for a Symbol* [*Male and Female in Search of a Symbol*], just to show how disciplined he was. He brought the wet painting to the gallery where he was meeting Jim Sweeney and said, "I want you to see a really disciplined painting."[26]

In order to show just "how disciplined he was," Pollock boldly employed

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[24] A large color reproduction of *Piano Lesson* appears in a book on Matisse that Krasner owned. Jean Cassou, *Paintings and Drawings of Matisse* (Paris: Braun & Cie; New York: Tudor Publishing, 1939), no pagination, pl. 7; O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:190.

[25] "Pollock's talent is volcanic. It has fire. It is unpredictable. It is undisciplined. . . . It is true that Pollock needs self-discipline. . . ." James Johnson Sweeney, introduction to *Jackson Pollock: Paintings and Drawings*, exh. cat. (New York: Art of This Century, 1943), no pagination.

[26] Lee Krasner, "Who Was Jackson Pollock?," interview by Francine du Plessix and Cleve Gray, *Art in America*, vol. 55, no. 3 (May-June 1967): 51. See also Solomon, *Biography*, 140-41.

Matissean color, in addition to Picassoid forms and a Miróesque pictorial space,[27] in *Male and Female in Search of a Symbol*. The painting was hurriedly added to the show and attracted viewers' attention.[28] The second example from Pollock's work between 1943 and 1945 that shows Matisse's influence is *Two* (c. 1945, fig. 2-15). In this painting, Matisse's compositional influence reappears. As I examined in the previous chapter, *Two*'s composition is probably based on that of the right half of Matisse's *Bathers by a River* (fig. 2-16).

In 1946, Matisse's influence, which we had seen sporadically in Pollock's work so far, appeared on a large scale. In that year, Pollock worked on the Accabonac Creek series, which consists of eight semi-abstract paintings (fig. 3-10). Pollock made the Accabonac Creek series during the first half of 1946 in East Hampton, to which he had moved from New York City with Krasner in November of the previous year. The title of the series was named by Pollock himself after the creek near their house. In a letter with a postmark of 2 June 1946 to his friend Louis Bunce, Pollock wrote about the "change of light and space" in East Hampton.[29] Did the rich nature of that place newly stimulate

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[27] In regard to the composition of this painting, Pepe Karmel points out the influence of a specific painting by Picasso, *Two Women in front of a Window* (1927). See Pepe Karmel, "A Sum of Destructions," in *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*, ed. Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 78-79.

[28] In her review of the show, Maude Riley wrote: "And among the 'untitled' is a pink one he brought in, still wet with new birth, which probably pleased and surprised him no end, when hung." Maude Riley, "Fifty-Seventh Street in Review: Explosive First Show," *Art Digest*, vol. 18, no. 4 (15 November 1943): 18.

Pollock's sense of color? Pollock consistently adopted Fauvist color schemes in the Accabonac Creek series. Éric de Chassey has argued that Pollock absorbed Matisse's Fauvism in the series in order to counter the excessively Picassian elements in the iconography of the paintings.[30] Furthermore, Pollock's Accabonac Creek series shows an important Matissean influence of a different kind. As de Chassey pointed out,[31] Pollock left the surfaces of the pictures unpainted in places and made good use of the exposed white ground as "breathing space." Breathing white ground is a significant characteristic of Matisse's Collioure landscapes painted in 1905 (fig. 3-11),[32] and in the artist's later works as well. In Pollock's Accabonac Creek series, the surfaces of the paintings, which would have been choked by the strong contours and heavy colors if the white ground were not exposed in places, are "aerated" by the effect

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[29] "Moving out here I found difficult——change of light and space,——and so damned much to be done around the place, but feel I'll be down to work soon." Jackson Pollock to Louis Bunce, undated (postmarked 2 June 1946), Louis Bunce Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3999, frame 16. Regarding this letter, see also Paul J. Karlstrom, "Jackson Pollock and Louis Bunce," *Archives of American Art Journal*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1984): 24.

[30] Éric de Chassey, *La violence décorative: Matisse dans l'art américain* ([Nîmes]: Jacqueline Chambon, 1998), 167-68. On the other hand, Gail Levin examined the influence of Kandinsky's geometric abstractions between 1924 and 1926, in terms of form, color, and title, on Pollock's Accabonac Creek series. See Gail Levin, "Kandinsky and Abstract Expressionism," in *Theme & Improvisation: Kandinsky & the American Avant-Garde, 1912-1950*, by Gail Levin and Marianne Lorenz, exh. cat. (Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Art Institute, 1992), 214-15.

[31] De Chassey, *La violence décorative*, 167.

[32] See Jack Flam, *Matisse: The Man and His Art, 1869-1918* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 134.

of the unpainted spaces.[33] Such Matissean surfaces were also realized by Krasner as early as 1938 (fig. 3-12). Matisse's aerated surfaces were, according to Krasner, the aspect of Matisse's art to which she mainly responded. In answer to a question by Emily Wasserman in a 1968 interview, "What exactly was your feeling for Matisse——what in his work did you respond to?," Krasner stated: "Mainly, I would say, it's the air-borne quality of it."[34]

From 1947 to 1950, Pollock painted the allover poured pictures that would become his signature works (fig. 0-1). In my opinion, it is difficult to find the direct influence of Matisse in those paintings. As already mentioned, Clement Greenberg discussed the influence of Matisse's large paintings, represented by *Bathers by a River* (1909-10, 1913, 1916; fig. 2-12), on the Abstract Expressionists:

> In the early and mid-1940's certain American abstract painters (who were beginning to learn from Analytical as well as Synthetic Cubism) had trouble with their corners too and also with the vertical margins of their pictures. It was a question of bringing them into the ambiguous illusion of space that the main part of the picture showed. Matisse's bigger paintings, with their centrifugality, brought the solution, in defiance of what till then had been (for Pollock as well as for Gorky) an essential part of the notion of the well-made picture. The Abstract Expressionists became able to let their paintings spread and expand, in terms of design as well as in size. Now the corners

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[33] Greenberg treated the effect of Matisse's "aerated" surfaces on American artists. See Greenberg, "Influences of Matisse," 28.

[34] Lee Krasner, "Interview with Lee Krasner by Emily Wasserman, 1968," Krasner Papers, Archives of American Art, reel 3774, frame 331. See also Ellen G. Landau, "Lee Krasner's Early Career, Part One: 'Pushing in Different Directions,'" *Arts Magazine*, vol. 56, no. 2 (October 1981): 114.

> and the margins of the picture could take care of themselves. They no longer had to be specified or pinned down.[35]

Seen from the perspective of the whole movement of Abstract Expressionism, Greenberg's above-quoted opinion may be regarded as valid to some degree. However, it does not seem to be adequate when we take Pollock alone as a subject of examination. As for the size of Pollock's allover poured paintings, one must first take into account 1) his engagement with the Mexican muralists' work in his early period; 2) his participation in 1935 in the mural division of the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration; and 3) his work in a huge format on his own painting, *Mural*, which he made for Peggy Guggenheim's commission in 1943 (fig. 3-13). Thus, it is unreasonable to attribute the size of Pollock's allover poured paintings to Matisse's large paintings. Next, let's consider the expanding quality of the design in Pollock's allover poured paintings. I would maintain that it has more to do with the liberating effect of Surrealist automatism and with Pollock's own sense of rhythm and movement derived from the art of his mentor, Thomas Hart Benton, than with the centrifugality of Matisse's large paintings such as *Bathers by a River*. Such a geometric centrifugal structure does not connect, in terms of quality, with the meandering and whirling dynamism that characterizes Pollock's allover poured paintings.

As stated above, Matisse's direct influence is difficult to find in the

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[35] Greenberg, "Influences of Matisse," 28.

allover poured paintings of 1947-50. However, we find Matisse's clear influence in the Cut-Out series started in 1948 (figs. 0-4–0-8, 1-6). As we saw in the previous chapter, Pollock was influenced by the aesthetics of Matisse's *Jazz* and his paper cut-outs. As an aside, in 1955, Krasner also created some collages influenced by Matisse's paper cut-outs, which will be closely examined later (fig. 3-14). Pollock's cut-outs predated those collages by seven years. This seems to indicate that with his cut-outs Pollock, probably for the first time, inversely influenced Krasner concerning Matisse. Krasner saw Pollock making some cut-outs in his studio, probably in 1948;[36] and moreover, according to Harry Jackson, she even helped Pollock to make some in 1948.[37] In addition, a photograph of Krasner in Pollock's studio, which was taken by Harry Bowden in 1949, shows her standing in front of Pollock's *Cut Out* in progress (fig. 1-7). Also, a photograph taken by an unknown photographer (perhaps Pollock) outside Pollock's studio in 1952 shows Greenberg, Krasner, and Helen Frankenthaler sitting in front of Pollock's *Out of the Web*, hung on the exterior wall of his studio (fig. 3-15).[38] Thus, it seems likely that Krasner had Pollock's cut-outs in

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[36] Lee Krasner, "Jackson Pollock at Work: An Interview with Lee Krasner," interview by Barbara Rose, *Partisan Review*, vol. 47, no. 1 (1980): 89.

[37] "When I first entered Jack's studio on October 11, 1948, . . . [t]here were several collages in progress of human figures cut out of canvas or stiff paper——and both Lee and I helped Pollock manipulate and occasionally glue them in place." Harry Jackson, "Pollock from 1948 through 1950: An Interview with Harry Jackson," interview by Tetsuya Oshima, *Art/Criticism* (Tokyo), no. 3 (2007): 19.

[38] Pollock gave Krasner *Out of the Web* during his lifetime, though the year is unclear. O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 2:73.

mind when she made those collages in 1955. Seeing in a different way the fact that Pollock's cut-outs predated those collages of Krasner by seven years, we also would be able to say that with his cut-outs Pollock completely personalized his interest in Matisse's art, which had been awakened by Krasner in the early 1940s. Pollock's cut-outs thus occupy a significant position in his relationship with Krasner in connection to Matisse's art.

Krasner's experience with collage dates back to the late 1930s. *Red, White, Blue, Yellow, Black* (1939, catalogue raisonné number 95, fig. 3-16) is one of Krasner's first collages. In this work, Krasner pasted pieces of colored paper on the picture surface. At that time, Krasner was studying with Hans Hofmann at his art school. Hofmann often tacked pieces of colored paper onto his students' works to improve the color schemes in them. Probably Krasner adopted this method from Hofmann to compose *Red, White, Blue, Yellow, Black.* She did a few more collage-paintings of this kind between 1938 and 1939,[39] and then, in 1939-40, she created a mosaic-like collage by pasting a lot of tiny pieces of paper on a painted paper support (fig. 3-17). In 1942 she made, with her assistants, twenty-one photomontages for a window display project of the War Services Division of the WPA Art Program (fig. 3-18).

Pollock was a member of Krasner's team for the 1942 window display project. However, Pollock's own collages from the same year, which we

[39] *Abstract Human Figure* (1938), *Seated Figure* (1938-39), and *Red, White, Blue, Yellow, Black* (1939, catalogue raisonné number 94).

examined in the previous chapter, do not reflect his experience of working on the project. Nevertheless, one of those 1942 collages, *Hinged Collage* (fig. 3-19), is interesting to consider in light of his relationship with Krasner. This collage was discovered after the publication of Pollock's catalogue raisonné in 1978. Like *JPCR957* from the same year (1942, fig. 2-7), this collage was also made as a greeting card, with a piece of cut out and painted paper pasted on black cardboard. However, unlike in *JPCR957*, *Hinged Collage* supports many smaller pieces of paper in various shapes that are further pasted onto the largest collage element. Because of this, the structure of this work as a collage is more complicated than that of *JPCR957*. Ellen G. Landau, the editor of Krasner's catalogue raisonné, considers *Hinged Collage* to have been made exclusively by Pollock.[40] Francis Valentine O'Connor, the co-editor of Pollock's catalogue raisonné, also has reached the same conclusion, though he does not seem to have thought so at first. In any case, O'Connor treats *Hinged Collage* as Pollock's solo work in the supplement to the artist's original catalogue raisonné, published in 1995.[41] However, the geometrically abstract composition of the picture is

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[40] "It is my considered judgement that Lee Krasner did not collaborate with Pollock on any of the greeting cards. The same person who did the 'Indian' drawing in the early '40s [Jackson Pollock, *Drawing with Two Signatures*, c. 1941] did the Eames greeting card [*Hinged Collage*]. The same person who did CR 957 did the Eames greeting card. It is not my intention to include the Eames greeting card in the Lee Krasner catalogue raisonné." Letter from Ellen [G. Landau] to Francis [Valentine O'Connor], undated, in the file for *Hinged Collage*, Jackson Pollock Catalogue Raisonné Archives, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, N.Y.

[41] Francis Valentine O'Connor, ed., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works*, supplement no. 1 (New

closer to Krasner's work of that period than to Pollock's. Also, the shapes of some of the smaller collage elements are closer to ones Krasner used in that period than to ones Pollock used. Therefore, *Hinged Collage* perhaps represents a collaboration between Pollock and Krasner.

After the deepening of Pollock and Krasner's relationship in 1942, Krasner's productivity badly stagnated during the succeeding three years, in contrast to that of Pollock, who made great advances as a rising avant-garde artist.[42] It seems that at that time, Krasner was even contemplating giving up her career as an artist in order to support Pollock.[43] However, after they had married in October 1945 and had moved to East Hampton in the next month, Krasner resumed her productivity in that new environment. Then, in 1947, her work began to show maturity. Krasner created a series of allover painterly abstract paintings, called Little Images, between 1947 and 1949. With those paintings, Krasner later would be recognized as one of the pioneers of Abstract Expressionism.[44]

York: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 1995), 33.

[42] In 1943 Pollock had his first one-person show at Peggy Guggenheim's prestigious Art of This Century. Then, in 1944, he got one of his works (*The She-Wolf*, 1943) entered into a museum collection (The Museum of Modern Art) for the first time. In 1945 he had a one-person show at the Arts Club of Chicago, which traveled to the San Francisco Museum of Art. In the same year he had another one-person show at Art of This Century.

[43] See Landau, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 97. Peggy Guggenheim also states: "Lee Krassner [*sic*] . . . even gave up painting at one period, as he [Pollock] required her complete devotion." Guggenheim, *Confessions of an Art Addict*, 106.

[44] Gail Levin, who is the first to have included Krasner in a major

Krasner had her first one-person show at the Betty Parsons Gallery in October-November 1951 to exhibit a new cycle of large geometric paintings. However, she was not satisfied with those paintings; she would destroy or rework almost all of them later. After the 1951 show, Krasner's productivity slowed again. She seems to have created only small ink or gouache works on paper for more than a year after the 1951 show. Under those circumstances, Krasner undertook collages sometime in 1953. She explained the course of that turn in her work as follows:

> My studio was hung with a series of black and white drawings I had done. I hated them and started to pull them off the wall and tear them and throw them on the floor and pretty soon the whole floor was covered with them. Then another morning I walked in and saw a lot of things there that began to interest me. I began picking up torn pieces of my own drawings and re-glueing them. Then I started cutting up some of my oil paintings. I got something going there and I start pulling out a lot of raw canvas and slashing it as well. That's how I started my collaging.[45]

On the other hand, it seems that Krasner's undertaking of collage in 1953 was also partly inspired by Anne Ryan. An exhibition of Ryan's collages was held at

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exhibition of Abstract Expressionism, wrote about the Little Images in 1978 as follows: "Krasner's work of the mid-forties, characterized by pure abstraction with a painterly intensity, merits a place for her among the pioneers of Abstract Expressionism." Gail Levin, "Lee Krasner," in *Abstract Expressionism: The Formative Years*, by Robert Carleton Hobbs and Gail Levin, exh. cat. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University; New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1978), 86.

[45] Krasner, "Lee Krasner," interview by Nemser, 93-94.

the Parsons Gallery in 1951, simultaneous with Krasner's exhibition at the same gallery. Ryan's collages may have stimulated Krasner, who already had experience with collage in various forms, to think anew about the possibilities of that medium.[46] In any event, Krasner worked almost exclusively on collage between 1953 and 1955 to produce some forty remarkable works. In those new collages, by pasting down pieces of roughly torn paper and pieces of fabric of coarse texture, Krasner created expressive abstract compositions that exemplify the stylistic character of Abstract Expressionism.

Many of Krasner's collages from 1953-54 are distinctive for their strong verticality (fig. 3-20). In those collages, Krasner pasted narrow strips of cut or torn paper to create vertical compositions. Bryan Robertson pointed out the connection between the verticality of those collages and that of *Promenade*, which Krasner painted around 1950 (fig. 3-21).[47] On the other hand, it seems that Matisse's *Bathers by a River* (1909-10, 1913, 1916; fig. 2-12) also influenced the verticality of Krasner's 1953-54 collages to a greater or lesser degree. In this well-known painting, Matisse characteristically used vertical planes,[48] and Krasner's interest in the painting can be confirmed by a large

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[46] On the influence of Ryan's collages on Krasner, see Robert Hobbs, *Lee Krasner* (New York, London, and Paris: Abbeville Press, 1993), 51; Brandon Taylor, *Collage: The Making of Modern Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 114.

[47] Bryan Robertson, "Krasner's Collages," in *Lee Krasner: Collages*, exh. cat. (New York: Robert Miller Gallery, 1986), no pagination. See also Landau, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 119.

[48] This painting was exhibited at Matisse's retrospective held at the

abstract work, entitled *Blue and Black* (c. 1953-54, fig. 3-22), that she made during the same period.[49] Parenthetically, in 1953, based likewise on the composition of the same Matisse painting, Pollock painted *Easter and the Totem* (fig. 2-11).

As for theme, some of Krasner's vertical collages from 1953, such as *The City* (fig. 3-23) and *City Verticals*, deal with the dynamism of the borough of Manhattan, which calls to mind Mondrian's New York paintings such as *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942-43). They also specifically recall, both in terms of theme and style, Fernand Léger's painting *The City* (1919, fig. 3-24).[50] In this painting that abstractly depicts an urban scene, Léger painted vertical flat planes that give the impression of being collaged on the picture surface. On the other hand, some of Krasner's vertical collages from the next year, such as *Forest No. 1* and *Forest No. 2* (1954, fig. 3-25), take a thick, tall forest as a theme. In contrast to the urban *City* and *City Verticals* of the previous year, those works

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Museum of Modern Art in 1951-52. *Henri Matisse*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1951), 10.

[49] On the relationship between Krasner's *Blue and Black* and another painting of Matisse, *The Moroccans* (1915-16), see Landau, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 128.

[50] This painting was owned by A. E. Gallatin between 1936 and 1952, and it was bequeathed to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1952. Robert Hobbs argued the relationship between Léger's *The City* and Krasner's *The City* as follows: "she [Krasner] . . . began to focus on urban experience, as in *The City*, an apocalyptic work filled with exploding forms. A number of twentieth-century artists—including the Italian Futurists, the American John Marin, and Mondrian—had presented the modern city positively. Krasner's city pictures, however, build on Fernand Léger's more negative view of the urban experience, as in his painting *The City* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), with its anonymous automatons. . . ." Hobbs, *Lee Krasner*, 52, 55.

seem to make reference to the nature in East Hampton.

Krasner's collages showed significant changes in 1955. In *Bald Eagle* (1955, fig. 3-26) and *Bird Talk* (1955, fig. 3-14), verticality vanished; and sharp but organic shapes conspicuously appeared. The shapes were probably inspired by Matisse's paper cut-outs, especially those Matisse made in his later years such as *Decoration Fruits* (1953, fig. 3-27). A full-page color reproduction of a detail of *Decoration Fruits* appeared as an illustration for an obituary of Matisse in the 13 December 1954 issue of *Life*.[51] Krasner probably saw the reproduction. (A photograph of Matisse, who was working while lying in bed, also appeared alongside the obituary. Her encouraging words to Pollock that I quoted in the previous chapter, "Look at Matisse. He was in bed all the time he was making those beautiful collages. Why can't you at least keep drawing?," seem to indicate that she read the obituary.) Furthermore, Krasner's 1953-54 collages (figs. 3-23 and 3-25) were generally based on the contrast of black and white; whereas she introduced Matissean vivid color, such as pink and orange, into the above two collages of 1955 to a great extent. Also, especially in *Bird Talk*, she left the peripheries of many of the pieces of colored paper slightly unpainted, by which the picture was "aerated" in a Matissean manner.

Another group of Krasner's 1955 collages shows yet another kind of Matissean influence. Krasner characteristically employed large pieces of torn black paper in *Blue Level*, *Lame Shadow*, *Milkweed* (fig. 3-28), *Shooting Gold*,

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[51] "Last of a Master: Matisse's Final Painting," *Life*, vol. 37, no. 24 (13 December 1954): 42. Matisse died in Nice on November 3, 1954.

and *Stretched Yellow*. In those, Krasner used black as a color, as Matisse did, not only in his paintings but also in his paper cut-outs.[52] In addition, Krasner was possibly conscious of Matisse's *Jazz*. In *Lame Shadow* (fig. 3-29), Ellen G. Landau found a connection with the image in a specific plate in Matisse's *Jazz*, *The Cowboy* (fig. 3-30).[53]

Since Krasner had been consistently interested in Matisse's art since her formative years, it was perhaps part of her own natural course that she absorbed the various graces of Matisse's paper cut-outs in her 1955 collages. However, it is certain that Krasner, who had been strongly influenced by Pollock since she met him, was also conscious of her husband's cut-outs, which he had started under the influence of Matisse's *Jazz* and paper cut-outs seven years earlier. In addition, Krasner's collages of 1953-55 present another remarkable aspect of her relationship with Pollock. Krasner often introduced fragments of Pollock's discarded drawings from the early 1950s into her collages of 1953-55. This has been examined by many scholars so far.[54] What I want to note here is the specific relation of Krasner's *Bald Eagle* (1955, fig. 3-26) to Pollock's *Cut Out* in

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[52] On Matisse's use of black as a color, see Henri Matisse, "Black Is a Color, 1946," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. and trans. Jack Flam, rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 165-66.

[53] Landau, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 146. According to Lydia Delectorskaya, Matisse's *The Cowboy* depicts a cowboy on a horse who is lassoing a woman. Jack Cowart et al., *Henri Matisse Paper Cut-Outs*, exh. cat. (St. Louis: The St. Louis Art Museum; Detroit: The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1977), 111.

[54] See, for example, Ellen G. Landau, *Lee Krasner: Collages, 1953-1955* (New York: Jason McCoy Inc., 1995).

that context. In *Bald Eagle*, Krasner noticeably glued pieces she cut from a Pollock work (exceptionally not on paper but on canvas), which seems to be a black pouring of 1951 or 1952. This reminds me of Pollock's last experiment in his *Cut Out*, namely his combining the cardboard stencil portion of *Cut Out* with his black pouring from around 1951, *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-6). While, as Landau argued, in *Bald Eagle* Krasner "recontextualized Pollock's aggressive physicality through deft manipulation of the appropriative strategies inherent in collage,"[55] it does not seem to me that Krasner had an interest in the new kind of figuration with which Pollock's black pourings were concerned. Nevertheless, Krasner's glueing fragments of a black pouring by Pollock on the surface of *Bald Eagle* perhaps gave Pollock inspiration concerning his experiment of combining the cardboard portion of *Cut Out* with *Black and White Painting II*.

In *Blue Level*, *Lame Shadow* (fig. 3-29), *Milkweed* (fig. 3-28), *Shooting Gold*, and *Stretched Yellow* from 1955, Krasner reused as backgrounds paintings that she had made in 1951 for her Parsons show of that year.[56] Those 1951

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[55] Ellen G. Landau, "Channeling Desire: Lee Krasner's Collages of the Early 1950s," *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Fall 1997 / Winter 1998): 27.

[56] Krasner stated about her reusing the 1951 canvases for the 1955 collages as follows: "I was collaging and I guess I felt that nothing much had happened with these canvases. It was a few years later and suddenly I got into them and started reworking. As a matter of fact it is dangerous for me to have any of my early work around because I tend to always want to go back into it at some point——so the less around the better. In this case they were around and I thought,

canvases were, by themselves, weak as paintings. However, Krasner excellently combined those canvases with a collage technique to achieve a pictorial unity that she had never previously realized. In the later works, collaged elements forcefully, but with exquisite harmony, assert their existence in the vague, transcendental pictorial spaces that she created. Those 1955 collages thus became masterpieces in Krasner's oeuvre. Further, in my opinion, as Abstract Expressionist works they do not compare unfavorably, in terms of quality, with the work of such other Abstract Expressionists as Robert Motherwell, Franz Kline, and Adolph Gottlieb——if not with the work of Pollock, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko. In this respect, Krasner should be paid more attention in studies on Abstract Expressionism.

Many of Krasner's collages of 1953-55 were exhibited at her one-person show at the Stable Gallery in 1955. Reportedly Pollock once criticized Krasner regarding her previous work (probably her Little Images), saying to his friend, Roger Wilcox: "Lee keeps copying me and I wish she'd stop."[57] However, according to Krasner, Pollock was pleased with her 1955 show, and as her husband, was very proud of it.[58] Furthermore, those collages by Krasner were,

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well, nothing has happened. I got into one of them and that worked and I kept going and I collaged almost all the paintings." Krasner, "Lee Krasner," interview by Nemser, 93.

[57] Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1989), 640.

[58] Krasner, "Lee Krasner," interview by Nemser, 95; Grace Glueck, "Scenes from a Marriage: Krasner and Pollock," *Artnews*, vol. 80, no. 10 (December 1981): 61.

exceptionally, highly praised by Clement Greenberg, who often made light of, not only Krasner's individual work, but also female artists' work in general. According to Bryan Robertson, Greenberg described Krasner's 1955 exhibition as "a major addition to the American art scene of that era."[59]

Krasner herself also seems to have been conscious of her achievement with those collages. *Bald Eagle* of 1955 (fig. 3-26) is named after the American bald eagle, the symbol of the United States of America. In the same year Krasner also made a collage with the bold title *Collage in America*. Furthermore, up until that time, Krasner usually signed works simply with her initials "L.K.";[60] however, both in *Bird Talk* (1955, fig. 3-14) and in *Shooting Gold* (1955) she signed her full name "Lee Krasner," probably for the first time (with the exception of a few works that she did for the Federal Art Project of the WPA), on the fronts of the works at the time of their completion.[61] All the

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[59] Bryan Robertson, preface to *Lee Krasner: Paintings, Drawings and Collages*, exh. cat. (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1965), 4. Cf. Andrea Gabor, "Lee Krasner," in *Einstein's Wife: Work and Marriage in the Lives of Five Great Twentieth-Century Women* (New York: Viking, 1995), 84.

[60] See Landau, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 39, 46, 73. For feminist interpretations of Krasner's signature "L.K.," see, for example, Anne M. Wagner, "Lee Krasner as L.K.," *Representations*, no. 25 (Winter 1989): 42-57. Parenthetically, in an interview, Krasner herself responded to the interviewer's question, "Did you use your initials because you didn't want it to been [*sic*] known that you were a woman?," as follows: "No. Some of my paintings are signed L.K. and some have my name. Even today I do the same thing. At that time I didn't think that my problems had to do with being a woman. Now there is a consciousness about that. I view it on a different level." Krasner, "Lee Krasner," interview by Nemser, 88.

[61] See Landau, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 145, 150.

above facts seem to demonstrate Krasner's self-confidence that with those collages she had contributed to the history of American modern art. After World War II, collage greatly developed in the United States. In 1977, a large exhibition of American collage, which "span[ned] a period of over 50 years of American achievement in the production of collages" and which "demonstrat[ed] the significant role of collage in the development of contemporary American art,"[62] was held at the Andrew Crispo Gallery in New York City. Krasner exhibited fifteen collages (eight from 1953-55) at this exhibition, together with eleven other artists such as Anne Ryan and Robert Motherwell.[63] Her *Bird Talk* was selected by William T. Conroy, Jr., a reviewer of the show, as one of the four best works exhibited.[64]

As we saw above, Krasner's collages of 1953-55 (especially, those of 1955) are significant works of Abstract Expressionism and American collage. It seems to me that in the tide of feminism Krasner's work as a whole has been given undue estimation, with more attention paid to her dramatic life with

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[62] Andrew J. Crispo, foreword to *Twelve Americans: Masters of Collage*, exh. cat. (New York: Andrew Crispo Gallery, 1977), no pagination.

[63] Another large exhibition of American collage was held at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston five years later. Krasner exhibited *Black & White Collage No. 5* of 1953 (fig. 3-20) and a collage from 1977-78 at the exhibition. Linda L. Cathcart, *The Americans: The Collage*, exh. cat. (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1982), 31, 71.

[64] William T. Conroy, Jr., "Columbian Collage: American Art of Assembly," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 52, no. 4 (December 1977): 86-87. The other three works selected by Conroy were: Arthur Dove's *Portrait of Ralph Dusenberry* (1924), Robert Motherwell's *Figure* (1945), and William Dole's *Ad Hoc* (1964).

Pollock than to her art itself. However, those collages justly deserve to be highly regarded in terms of their quality as original works of art.

Willem de Kooning

The "American and French Paintings" show, organized by John Graham in 1942, not only joined Pollock and Krasner, but also brought together Pollock and another important young artist, Willem de Kooning.[65] Pollock and de Kooning got acquainted through that group exhibition, and they developed a strong rivalry in the emergence and flourishing of their Abstract Expressionist art during the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s.

There are more stories that detail their intense rivalry than we can count. For example, Philip Pavia related the following episode: "He [Pollock] was mad at Tom Hess's book *Abstract Painting* [published in 1951], said it treated de Kooning better than him because he didn't come in until the last chapter. And during a meeting at the Club he threw it on the floor, calling it a rotten book."[66] On the other hand, de Kooning made a well-known statement in praise of Pollock's achievement, "Jackson broke the ice," at a panel held at the Club not long after Pollock's death in August 1956.[67] De Kooning also expressed his

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[65] De Kooning exhibited *Memories of a Poet* [*Man*], from around 1939, in the show.

[66] Jeffrey Potter, *To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1985), 122.

respect for Pollock, tinged with some jealousy, in a 1967 interview with James T. Valliere as follows:

> VALLIERE: He [Pollock] tried to make it known that he was *the* [italics in original] painter?
>
> DE KOONING: Oh yes. He was *it* [italics in original]. A couple of times he told me, "You know more, but I feel more." I was jealous of him——his talent. But he was a remarkable person. He'd do things that were so terrific.[68]

However, two years later, de Kooning pregnantly revised his 1956 statement, "Jackson broke the ice," by adding to it: "but I gave him the hint."[69] Below, I will examine Pollock's cut-outs and de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions (1946-49) and Woman series (1950-55) from the perspective of the strong rivalry between these two great Abstract Expressionists.

After the "American and French Paintings" show of 1942, Pollock had

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[67] According to Irving Sandler, de Kooning called Pollock an "ice-breaker" at the Club panel entitled "An Evening for Jackson Pollock" on November 30, 1956. Irving Sandler, *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the Fifties* (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, and London: Harper & Row, 1978), 44-45, n. 28. Regarding exactly what de Kooning meant with that statement, see B. H. Friedman, *Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visible* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 253.

[68] Willem de Kooning, "De Kooning on Pollock: An Interview by James T. Valliere," *Partisan Review*, vol. 34, no. 4 (Fall 1967): 604.

[69] Quoted in Marla Prather, "Catalogue: 1946-1950," in *Willem de Kooning: Paintings*, by David Sylvester, Richard Shiff, and Marla Prather, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 96.

his first one-person show at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century in 1943. Then, he had three more one-person shows between 1945 and 1947 at this gallery, which played a pivotal role in the American avant-garde art scene of the 1940s. Those shows of Pollock notably attracted Clement Greenberg's attention. This leading critic of postwar American art consistently supported Pollock, describing him as "the strongest painter of his generation and perhaps the greatest one to appear since Miró";[70] "the most original contemporary easel-painter under forty";[71] and "the most important so far of the younger generation of American painters."[72] During that period, Pollock and de Kooning were again exhibited together in various group shows.[73] However, according to the authors of de Kooning's biography, Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan, de Kooning did not know Pollock well even in 1947.[74]

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[70] Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Mondrian, Kandinsky, and Pollock; of the Annual Exhibition of the American Abstract Artists; and of the Exhibition *European Artists in America*" (1945), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 16.

[71] Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of the American Abstract Artists, Jacques Lipchitz, and Jackson Pollock" (1946), in *Collected Essays and Criticism*, 2:75.

[72] Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Jean Dubuffet and Jackson Pollock" (1947), in *Collected Essays and Criticism*, 2:124

[73] For example, "Group Exhibition," The Pinacotheca, New York, May 9-27, 1944; "Abstract and Surrealist Art in America," Mortimer Brandt Gallery, New York, November 29 – December 30, 1944; and "A Painting Prophecy——1950," David Porter Gallery, Washington, D.C., February 1945.

[74] Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan, *De Kooning: An American Master* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 243.

It was probably in 1948 that Pollock and de Kooning became clearly conscious of each other as major avant-garde artists. In January of that year, Pollock had a one-person show at the Betty Parsons Gallery, at which he first exhibited his allover poured paintings on a large scale. Those paintings created a great sensation in the art world, eliciting many negative responses. However, Greenberg regarded them highly and forcefully described Pollock as a candidate for the title of "the greatest American painter of the twentieth century" in his review of that 1948 Pollock show.[75] Then, in the fall of that year, *Life* magazine organized a large-scale round table on European and American modern art, in which Pollock's *Cathedral* (1947, fig. 3-31), one of the allover poured paintings exhibited in the artist's 1948 Parsons show, was discussed. Pollock's *Cathedral* was sarcastically criticized by many members of the round table as "a most enchanting printed silk," "a panel for a wallpaper," "a pleasant design for a necktie," and so on.[76] However, against those criticisms, Greenberg championed the work and claimed it to be "one of the best paintings recently produced in this country."[77] In response to Greenberg's above-quoted assessment of Pollock ("the greatest American painter of the twentieth century"), *Life* would publish the famous article, "Jackson Pollock: Is He the Greatest

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[75] Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Worden Day, Carl Holty, and Jackson Pollock" (1948), in *Collected Essays and Criticism*, 2:203.

[76] "A Life Round Table on Modern Art," *Life*, vol. 25, no. 15 (11 October 1948): 62.

[77] "A Life Round Table on Modern Art," 62.

Living Painter in the United States?" in the next year.[78]

Although de Kooning did not exhibit his work very often until 1948, he was well known among artists in downtown New York by the mid-1940s. De Kooning's name publicly resounded in the American art world on the occasion of his first one-person show held at the Egan Gallery in April-May 1948.[79] In his review of "this magnificent first show," Greenberg described de Kooning as "one of the four or five most important painters in the country."[80] *Painting* (1948, fig. 3-32), one of the works exhibited in that show, was purchased by the Museum of Modern Art not long after; and it was exhibited at the museum in October of that year.[81] In the aforementioned *Life* round table held around the same time, de Kooning was also discussed, together with William Baziotes, Theodoros Stamos, Adolph Gottlieb, and Pollock, as "young American extremists"; de Kooning's *Painting* was also strongly supported by James Johnson Sweeney.[82]

In his 1948 Egan show, de Kooning mainly exhibited his black-and-white

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[78] "Jackson Pollock: Is He the Greatest Living Painter in the United States?," *Life*, vol. 27, no. 6 (8 August 1949): 42-43, 45.

[79] The show was extended through June 1948. See Elaine de Kooning, "De Kooning Memories," *Vogue*, vol. 173, no. 12 (December 1983): 352.

[80] Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Willem de Kooning" (1948), in *Collected Essays and Criticism*, 2:228, 230.

[81] Barbara Hess, *Willem de Kooning, 1904-1997: Content as a Glimpse* (Köln: Taschen, 2004), 26.

[82] "A Life Round Table on Modern Art," 62.

abstractions, done between 1946 and 1948, such as *Painting* (1948, fig. 3-32) and *Black Friday* (1948, fig. 3-33).[83] De Kooning characteristically employed black enamel and zinc white in those black-and-white abstractions. His use of those cheap materials was partly connected to his poor financial state at the time: a well-known saying goes that "he did not have a nickel to return Dorothy Miller's call from The Museum of Modern Art."[84] However, probably it was more for aesthetic reasons than for economic ones that de Kooning employed mainly black and white in those works. (In fact, in cases where he needed expensive color paints, he seems to have acquired them somehow; for example, by borrowing money from friends.[85])

Paintings in black and white are not only an important aspect of de Kooning's individual oeuvre, but also are a remarkable phenomenon common to many Abstract Expressionists during the late 1940s and early 1950s. As an event to capture it, an exhibition entitled "Black or White: Paintings by European and American Artists" was given at the Samuel M. Kootz Gallery in New York in

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[83] According to Charles Egan of the Egan Gallery, the following eight were included in the ten paintings that de Kooning exhibited in the show: *Light in August* (c. 1946), *Black Friday* (1948), *Orestes* (1947), *Painting* (1948, now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art), *Mailbox* (1948), *Valentine* (1947), *Zurich* (1947), and *Painting* (once in the Goldowsky Collection). Charles F. Stuckey, "Bill de Kooning and Joe Christmas," *Art in America*, vol. 68, no. 3 (March 1980): 79, n. 7.

[84] Thomas B. Hess, *Willem de Kooning*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1968), 51.

[85] See Thomas B. Hess, "De Kooning Drawings," in *Willem de Kooning: Drawings* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1972), 33.

early 1950. There, paintings in black and white by Abstract Expressionists Robert Motherwell, Baziotes, Fritz Bultman, de Kooning, Gottlieb, Hans Hofmann, Mark Tobey, and Bradley Walker Tomlin were shown, together with paintings by Picasso, Mondrian, Miró, and others.[86] Although Franz Kline was not included in that show, his oeuvre from 1950 and after includes outstanding examples of Abstract Expressionist black-and-white paintings. In 1950, Kline began to make black-and-white abstract paintings with thick, vigorous brushstrokes that recall Japanese calligraphy. Kline exhibited those paintings in his first one-person show held at the Egan Gallery in the fall of that year. Such gestural paintings in black and white became Kline's signature style. Pollock also executed black-and-white paintings between the late 1940s and the early 1950s. Although Pollock's allover poured paintings of 1947-50 generally include colors to a greater or lesser degree, many of those pictures are structured on the basis of the opposition of black and white (figs. 0-1 and 3-31). And he did make a number of allover poured paintings in only black and white, especially in 1948. (Was that partly influenced by de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions exhibited in the artist's one-person show held at the Egan Gallery in the spring of 1948?) Also, in *Number 32, 1950* (1950, fig. 0-11), which is one of Pollock's major allover poured paintings, he limited his palette to black alone. Then, Pollock began to work on the black pourings in 1951, and he continued

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[86] Motherwell wrote a text for the catalogue of this exhibition. Robert Motherwell, "Black or White" (1950), in *The Collected Writings of Robert Motherwell*, ed. Stephanie Terenzio (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 71-72.

them through 1952 (figs. 0-2 and 1-2).

"Value contrast, the opposition and modulation of dark and light," as Greenberg wrote in his important 1955 article on Abstract Expressionism, "has been the basis of Western pictorial art, its chief means, much more important than perspective, to a convincing illusion of depth and volume; and it has also been its chief agent of structure and unity."[87] As for de Kooning, in his black-and-white abstractions he radically investigated the issue of pictorial space, which is the fundamental structure of a painting, by excluding color and focusing on extreme value contrast. By that means, de Kooning endeavored to fundamentally surpass Late-Cubist painting, by which he and his colleagues saw themselves fettered.

What is notable in the above context is that in some of his black-and-white abstractions, de Kooning reversed the customary positive-negative relationship in the spatial structure of a painting. For example, in *Painting* (1948, fig. 3-32), most of abstract shapes he created are contoured in white and painted in black; while the background is painted mostly in white. As a result, the picture assumes a peculiar effect, like a negative of a monochrome photograph. In *Black Friday* (1948, fig. 3-33), most of the created shapes are also contoured in white and painted in black; and the spaces in between, as well as the background, are painted mostly in white. In this picture, the effect of a

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[87] Clement Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting" (1955), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 3, *Affirmations and Refusals, 1950-1956*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 227.

negative of a monochrome photograph becomes more striking because of the presence of some figurative elements, such as the houses depicted in the upper left and the finger in the middle of the upper half.

It is not clear whether or not Pollock saw de Kooning's 1948 Egan show. However, it is highly probable that the following several incidents made Pollock interested in de Kooning's work and led Pollock to see the show. First, de Kooning's *Orestes* (1947), which was one of the black-and-white abstractions exhibited at that show, was reproduced, together with Pollock's *Something of the Past* (1946), in the March 1948 issue of *Tiger's Eye* in advance of the show.[88] Pollock owned a copy of the issue.[89] Second, Greenberg's important essay "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," in which Pollock was discussed together with Jean Dubuffet, Mark Tobey and others, appeared in the April 1948 issue of *Partisan Review*.[90] Strangely, although de Kooning was not discussed in the essay, the issue included full-page reproductions of the artist's four recent paintings, including *Painting* (1948, fig. 3-32).[91] Pollock owned a copy of this issue of

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[88] *Tiger's Eye*, vol. 1. no. 3 (March 1948): 101, 106. At that time *Orestes* was owned by the art editor of this magazine, John Stephan.

[89] Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw, eds., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 4:198.

[90] Clement Greenberg, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," *Partisan Review*, vol. 15, no. 4 (April 1948): 481-84.

[91] The other three paintings reproduced in the issue are *Valentine* (1947), *Zurich* (1947), and *Brown and White* (1947). *Partisan Review* (April 1948): between 448 and 449, between 480 and 481.

Partisan Review, too.[92] Third, de Kooning visited East Hampton sometime in April 1948 and met Pollock there.[93] At this time, de Kooning probably told Pollock about his upcoming or ongoing one-person show at the Egan Gallery, which was located very near to the Betty Parsons Gallery, which represented Pollock in those days.

As examined in the previous chapter, Pollock most likely undertook his Cut-Out series by the summer of 1948 under the direct influence of Matisse's *Jazz*. On the other hand, when Pollock saw de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions at the Egan Gallery in the spring of 1948 (or, at least, when he saw some of them through the aforementioned reproductions), he was probably inspired by de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions, too. De Kooning's black-and-white abstractions, such as *Painting* (1948, fig. 3-32) and *Black Friday* (1948, fig. 3-33), conspicuously dealt with the issue of a positive-negative relationship in the spatial structure of a painting. This issue also concerned Pollock in his cut-outs. Matisse's *Jazz* also shared a similar issue, as typically seen in *Forms* (fig. 2-6). When Pollock saw his rival, de Kooning, keenly examine the same kind of issue in his ambitious black-and-white abstractions, he was probably motivated afresh to embark upon his Cut-Out series.[94]

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[92] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:198.

[93] Anna Brooke, "Chronology," in *Willem de Kooning*, by Harry F. Gaugh (New York: Abbeville Press, 1983), 123.

[94] As we saw in the previous chapter, a large color reproduction of Matisse's *The Clown* in *Jazz* (fig. 2-3) appeared on the front cover of the April 1948 issue of *Artnews* that featured Matisse in connection with the artist's 1948

However, there is a decisive difference between de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions and Pollock's cut-outs in the context of modernist painting. The difference lies in the issue of contour. De Kooning was seeking a way out of Late Cubism in his black-and-white abstractions by concentrating on value contrast (figs. 3-32 and 3-33). However, he could not shake off Late-Cubist contours after all. De Kooning's line still conventionally created flattened shapes. Although he ingeniously disposed of shapes in a pictorial space in which an ordinary positive-negative relationship was reversed, the conventional figure-ground and foreground-background relationships were basically retained. Compared with the below-examined contemporaneous work of Pollock and another major Abstract Expressionist, Barnett Newman, de Kooning's black-and-white abstractions even appear to be almost obediently Late-Cubist.

In Post-Cubist painting, the issue of contour was, in fact, directly connected with the spatial structure of a painting. As Michael Fried has written, Pollock, in his allover poured paintings started in 1947 (figs. 0-1 and 3-31), "freed [line] at last from the job of describing contours and bounding shapes."[95] Ordinarily, when a shape is depicted (whether figurative or abstract or three-dimensional or flat), it is to create a figure-ground relationship and a

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retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In that issue, which Pollock must have seen, a black-and-white reproduction of de Kooning's *Painting* also appeared in a review of the artist's 1948 Egan show. R[enée] A[rb], "Spotlight on: De Kooning," *Artnews*, vol. 47, no. 2 (April 1948): 33.

[95] Michael Fried, "Jackson Pollock," *Artforum*, vol. 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 15.

foreground-background relationship on the picture plane. Given these constraints, the picture does not leave the realm that Cubism and Late Cubism had explored. In this difficult situation, by filling a picture plane allover with non-shape-depictive lines created by the pouring technique, Pollock demolished the conventional figure-ground and foreground-background relationships to achieve a new, Post-Cubist pictorial space.

On the other hand, Newman did depict something like a stripe, which he called a "zip," vertically through a picture plane (fig. 3-34). However, unlike, for example, Mondrian's line, Newman's zip was not a line to divide the picture plane into two parts. In other words, it existed "[not] as a line traversing a field but as a *field* [italics added] between two other fields."[96] And Newman's zip functions to unify the whole picture, "bring[ing] life to the other fields."[97] Newman stated the function of his zip as follows: "I feel that my zip does not divide my paintings. I feel it does the exact opposite. It does not cut the format in half or in whatever parts, but it does the exact opposite: it unites the thing. It creates a totality, and in this regard I feel very, very separate, let's say, from other mental views, the so-called stripes."[98] Whereas "composition" works to make a whole by putting parts together, a zip picture by Newman exists inherently as one

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[96] David Sylvester, "Interview with David Sylvester" (1965), in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. John P. O'Neill (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 256.

[97] Barnett Newman, "Interview with David Sylvester," 256.

[98] Barnett Newman, "Interview with Emile de Antonio" (1970), in *Barnett Newman*, ed. O'Neill, 306.

undividable whole. Newman thus created a kind of "de-compositional" painting that had overcome the traditional notion and practice of "composition."[99] What is of importance here is, as in Pollock's case, the issue of contour and that of the shape created by it. As mentioned above, Newman's zip was a *field* of color between two other fields of color. That is to say, Newman's zip is not what should be perceived as *shape*. Newman makes this distinction as follows:

> drawing is central to my whole concept. I don't mean making *drawings* [italics in original], although I have always done a lot of them. I mean the drawing that exists in my painting. . . . I know that if I have made a contribution, it is primarily in my drawing. The impressionists changed the way of seeing the world through their kind of drawing; the cubists saw the world anew in their drawing; and I hope that I have contributed a new way of seeing through drawing. *Instead of using outlines, instead of making shapes or setting off spaces, my drawing declares the space* [italics added]. Instead of working with the remnants of space, I work with the whole space.[100]

Pollock confronted the issue of contour and shape, and by ultimately freeing line from the job of describing contours and bounding shapes, he realized Post-Cubist painting. On the other hand, Newman realized Post-Cubist painting by working on painting, from the beginning, not at the level of contour or shape, but at the level of space.

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[99] On the notion of "de-compositional" in Newman's paintings, see Koji Taki, *Barnett Newman: The Artist in the World Without Myth* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), 12, 33.

[100] Barnett Newman, "'Frontiers of Space' Interview with Dorothy Gees Seckler" (1962), in *Barnett Newman*, ed. O'Neill, 251.

Sally Yard has described the pictorial space of de Kooning's *Black Friday* (1948, fig. 3-33) as follows: "There is no overall way in *Black Friday* to read black or white as near or far, as contour or shape, as illuminated or shadowed. Rather the *sense* [italics in original] of space is built incrementally, the push, drag, and fluidity of paint conjuring a terrain that must be traversed, that defies mapping."[101] However, I would argue that this explanation is more true with de Kooning's later black-and-white abstractions, such as *Untitled* (1948-49, fig. 3-35) and *Night Square* (c. 1949), rather than with *Black Friday* (and *Painting* [1948, fig. 3-32]). Both in *Black Friday* and in *Painting*, white lines work to depict clearly defined shapes, and therefore they function almost exclusively as contours for black shapes. Thus, those pictures have quite a fixed spatial structure.[102] On the other hand, in *Untitled* and *Night Square*, many white lines create black shapes by functioning as contours, whereas those white lines simultaneously show a tendency to assert themselves as independent pictorial elements on the black backgrounds. (Probably this tendency is influenced by the quality of the line from Pollock's allover poured paintings. De Kooning's employment, especially in *Untitled*, of a pouring technique like

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[101] Sally Yard, "The Angel and the *demoiselle*——Willem de Kooning's *Black Friday*," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University*, vol. 50, no. 2 (1991): 13.

[102] In *Painting*, de Kooning created some white contours and areas not by applying white paint but by scraping away paint from the surface to expose the underlying white canvas. When one notices them, one sees that the spatial structure of this painting is intricate. Nevertheless, they are not more than a minor device in the painting.

Pollock's evidences that.) Thus, in *Untitled* and *Night Square*, black and white reverse their spatial positions according to the viewer's focus. However, de Kooning did not explore this interesting direction sufficiently; he plainly took back Late-Cubist contours and shapes in other contemporaneous and subsequent paintings.

On the other hand, Pollock had already realized a new, Post-Cubist kind of painting with his allover poured pictures started in 1947. Then, he worked on the cut-outs within the stylistic context of those allover poured paintings to achieve a new kind of figuration. In *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4), *Rhythmical Dance* (1948, fig. 0-5), and *Out of the Web* (1949, fig. 0-8), shapes were created, not additively by painting, but subtractively by removal. In other words, those shapes are dematerialized as both physical and visual emptiness on the non-figurative allover pictorial fields of those works. In this way, those cut-outs by Pollock show a new, interesting aspect of the Post-Cubist pictorial space that he first developed in the allover poured paintings.

De Kooning's 1948 Egan show made the American art world recognize him as a talented avant-garde artist. After that, de Kooning's public reputation was further solidified with the huge abstract painting that he made in 1950, *Excavation* (fig. 3-36). In this work, abstract shapes, contoured by sharp black lines and painted with aggressive brushwork in yellowish white, fill the whole picture plane, interlocking with each other in a complicated manner.

Excavation (80 x 100 inches) is the largest among the paintings that de Kooning had created by that time. Its fierce appearance and its huge scale combine to create a picture full of an overwhelming atmosphere, like that of a sheer cliff. *Excavation* was exhibited in 1950 at the Venice Biennale, and then at the "Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America" show held at the Museum of Modern Art in January-March 1951 as "the climax in the installation."[103] What is more, in October 1951, *Excavation* won the Logan Medal and Purchase Prize in the "Sixtieth Annual American Exhibition: Paintings and Sculpture" of the Art Institute of Chicago.

In June 1950, soon after *Excavation* had been completed and had been carried out of the studio to be exhibited in the Venice Biennale of that year, de Kooning began to work on *Woman I* (1950-52, fig. 3-37). This painting, which boldly depicts a fierce female figure with violent brushstrokes, required about two years to complete. It was unveiled in de Kooning's third one-person show, held at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1953, together with other paintings that likewise treated the theme of "woman." De Kooning's Woman series made a great impact on the art world. De Kooning's recovery of the figure encouraged representational painters who were resistant to the Abstract Expressionist tide. Also, de Kooning's return to the figure encouraged some abstract painters to change to figurative styles.

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[103] Hess, *Willem de Kooning* (1968), 74. *Painting* of 1948 (fig. 3-32) was also exhibited in the show. Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1951), 132-33, 152.

Advocates of abstract art severely criticized de Kooning's Woman paintings, seeing them as a betrayal of abstract art. De Kooning commented as follows on his Woman series in a 1960 interview with David Sylvester:

> *Sylvester*: When you started to paint the Women, you were doing something much more overtly figurative than any of the other so-called action painters or abstract expressionists had been doing. You must have felt you were out on a bit of a limb?
>
> *De Kooning*: Yes, they attacked me for that, certain artists and critics, but I felt this was their problem, not mine. I don't really feel like a non-objective painter at all. Some painters feel they have to go back to the figure, and that word "figure," that becomes such a ridiculous omen. In a way, if you pick up some paint with your brush and make somebody's nose with it, this is rather ridiculous, when you think of it, theoretically or philosophically. It's really absurd to make an image, like a human image, with paint, today, since we have this problem of doing or not doing it. But then all of a sudden it becomes even more absurd not to do it. So I fear that I'll have to follow my desires.[104]

However, de Kooning's recovery of the figure did not occur suddenly in 1950 with *Woman I*. In fact, while he was working chiefly on abstract paintings such as the black-and-white abstractions and *Excavation*, he also painted female figures, which foreshadow the Women of 1950-55, with similarly violent brushstrokes (fig. 3-38). He had even exhibited some of these female figures in the early 1950s, in advance of the 1953 Janis show in which he exhibited the

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[104] Willem de Kooning, "De Kooning's Women: Interview with Willem de Kooning," interview by David Sylvester (recorded in 1960), *Ramparts*, vol. 7, no. 71 (1969). Reprinted in *Abstract Expressionism: A Critical Record*, ed. David Shapiro and Cecile Shapiro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 225.

Woman series.[105] Human figures also exist in some of de Kooning's major abstract paintings of that period, such as *Attic* (1949, fig. 3-39) and *Excavation* (1950, fig. 3-36). As Harry F. Gaugh pointed out, in both *Attic* and *Excavation*, one can recognize human heads that recall those depicted in Picasso's *Guernica* among the abstract shapes that were intricately interlocked. Gaugh also found "a 'standing figure' fitted together like a sculpture in progress" in the midsection of *Attic*, and noted that "A similar armature stretches through the center of *Excavation* and may be a primal ancestor of *Woman I*."[106]

During the same period, Pollock also worked on the human figure in his Cut-Out series in the shadow of the allover poured paintings. Also, as Pepe Karmel demonstrated, Pollock depicted rough human figures on the initial or intermediate layers of some of his allover poured paintings of 1950 (figs. 0-9 and 0-10).[107] What is more, in some of the small non-allover poured paintings that he made between 1947 and 1950 (fig. 3-40), Pollock depicted similar rough human figures without concealing them in the web of poured paint.

We thus find a great conflict between figuration and abstraction in the

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[105] *Woman* from 1949 was exhibited in the "Young Painters in the U.S. and France" show held at the Janis Gallery in 1950. *Woman* from 1949-50 (fig. 3-38) was exhibited in the "Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting" in 1950 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and also in the historic "9th St." show in 1951.

[106] Gaugh, *Willem de Kooning*, 36.

[107] See Pepe Karmel, "Pollock at Work: The Films and Photographs of Hans Namuth," in *Jackson Pollock*, by Kirk Varnedoe with Pepe Karmel, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 87-137.

work of both Pollock and de Kooning, two artists who are considered the greatest painters in the movement called *Abstract* Expressionism. However, de Kooning's conflict between figuration and abstraction remained as such, whereas Pollock's was closely concerned with a more significant issue. In his cut-outs, Pollock worked on the figure not simply for the sake of the figure. Pollock's quest for the figure in the cut-outs was, as we previously saw, closely concerned with a quest for a new kind of pictorial space. On the other hand, when he painted figures in some of the poured paintings, he understood that those figures did not contribute to a new kind of pictorial space. Thus, he ultimately concealed them in the allover web of poured paint; or, he reservedly showed them only in some small-scale (non-allover) poured paintings.

According to Elaine de Kooning, Pollock was terribly hostile to de Kooning's Woman series: "Jackson was hostile to Bill's utilizing the figure, the *Woman* series, and would use some of his pejorative terms like 'that shit,' and so on."[108] It was the formal conventionality of de Kooning's female figures that made Pollock dislike them so much. After the abstract paintings such as the black-and-white abstractions and *Excavation*, de Kooning's brushwork gained more violence in the Woman series (fig. 3-37). However, de Kooning still could not shake off Late-Cubist contours. Or rather, as Greenberg stated, "The method of his savagery continued to be almost old-fashionedly, and anxiously, Cubist underneath the flung and tortured color, when he left abstraction for a

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[108] Potter, *To a Violent Grave*, 162.

while to attack the female figure with a fury."[109] According to Conrad Marca-Relli, Pollock violently condemned de Kooning at the party for the opening of the latter's 1953 Janis show, by saying: "Bill, you betrayed it. You're doing the figure, you're still doing the same goddamn thing. You know you never got out of being a figure painter."[110] When Pollock said this, he blamed de Kooning not simply for doing the figure. As de Kooning's contemporary and a rival artist, Pollock keenly perceived that de Kooning had not yet gotten rid of Late Cubism in the Woman series.

After the 1953 Janis show, de Kooning continued to work on the Woman series until 1955. He exhibited the later works from the series at his one-person show held at the Martha Jackson Gallery in 1955. After the Woman series, de Kooning began a new cycle of abstract paintings, called Abstract Urban Landscapes, in 1955 (fig. 3-41). Those new paintings were, according to Thomas B. Hess, "urban in theme, of and in the city. The shapes were derived from ideas about what he [de Kooning] saw as he walked through the Village streets or took a taxi to Times Square, and also from the elements out of which he had constructed his Women."[111] In these works, de Kooning painted abstract

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[109] Clement Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting" (1955/1958), in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 214.

[110] Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1989), 715.

[111] Hess, *Willem de Kooning* (1968), 103.

urban landscapes with brushstrokes that were as violent as those in the Woman series. De Kooning's Abstract Urban Landscapes were exhibited at his one-person show held at the Janis Gallery in April 1956.

The 1956 de Kooning show served as a catalyst for bringing the rivalry between Pollock and de Kooning to its final phase. While Abstract Expressionist art by its originators still flourished, the second generation of the movement had risen by the mid-1950s. It was de Kooning who had the greatest influence on those younger artists. Although Pollock's allover poured paintings had become a symbol of the avant-garde spirit among them, Pollock's paintings were, in comparison with de Kooning's, so original and so personal that those younger artists were unable to take Pollock's way without falling into poor imitation.[112] Pollock's allover poured paintings appeared to them to be one terminus of modern painting. That was true of Pollock personally, too. After creating such masterpieces as *Autumn Rhythm* (1950) and *One* (1950) and exhibiting them in his one-person show at the Betty Parsons Gallery at the end of

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[112] One of the few exceptions was Helen Frankenthaler. She stated about the influences of Pollock and de Kooning on her art as follows: "In 1951 I looked at de Kooning as much as at Pollock. . . . I felt many more possibilities in Pollock's work. That is, I looked at and was influenced by both Pollock and de Kooning and eventually felt that there were many more possibilities for me out of the Pollock vocabulary. De Kooning made enclosed linear shapes and 'applied' the brush. Pollock used shoulder and ropes and ignored the edges and corners. I felt I could stretch more in the Pollock framework. . . . You could become a de Kooning disciple or satellite or mirror, but you could **depart** [boldface in original] from Pollock." Helen Frankenthaler, "An Interview with Helen Frankenthaler," interview by Henry Geldzahler, *Artforum*, vol. 4, no. 2 (October 1965): 37. Inspired by Pollock's allover poured paintings and his subsequent black pourings, Frankenthaler created in 1952 *Mountains and Sea*, the monumental painting that would usher in Color Field Painting.

1950, he could not pursue the allover poured paintings any further. Pollock thus moved on to the black pourings in 1951. Lee Krasner commented on this shift: "After the '50 show, what do you do next? He couldn't have gone further doing the same thing."[113]

On the other hand, moving freely back and forth between figuration and abstraction, de Kooning was developing his art in those days. He had a lot of followers in his Expressionist style, giving birth to, as it were, the "de Kooning School" in the New York art world. Paul Brach reminisced about de Kooning's leadership among the younger New York avant-garde artists in the 1950s as follows: "The Cedar Bar and the Club were centers of the downtown scene. De Kooning and Kline were surrounded by young and not-so-young acolytes. Pollock was out in Springs, and Rothko, Motherwell, Newman, and others were aloof and not so available to the young. De Kooning was our leader."[114] De Kooning's reputation had thus become ironclad by the mid-1950s. In his review of the 1956 de Kooning show, Thomas B. Hess called de Kooning "the

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[113] Lee Krasner Pollock, "An Interview with Lee Krasner Pollock by B. H. Friedman," in *Jackson Pollock: Black and White*, exh. cat. (New York: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1969), 7.

[114] Paul Brach, "Postscript: The Fifties," *Artforum*, vol. 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 32. Brach went on to state as follows: "but he [de Kooning] reigned reluctantly, unhappy, perhaps, that so many of our paintings looked like his." On the other hand, James Brooks stated about Pollock as follows: "Perhaps there was no immediate Pollock school of painters because his work acted in a very different way——as a destroyer and a liberator over a wide spectrum, fertilizing seemingly opposite expressions by its disgust with the threadbare and by its strong assertion of life." "Jackson Pollock: An Artists' Symposium, Part 1," *Artnews*, vol. 66, no. 2 (April 1967): 31.

acknowledged leader of the Abstract-Expressionists" and claimed that "de Kooning has replaced Picasso and Miro as the most influential painter at work today."[115]

Two months after the 1956 de Kooning show in which the Abstract Urban Landscapes had been exhibited, Pollock again criticized de Kooning. In a conversation with Selden Rodman in June 1956, Pollock stated: "Bill is a good painter but he's a *French* [italics in original] painter."[116] (This comment recalls a phrase, "an essentially French notion of 'good' painting,"[117] in a 1960 article by Greenberg.) Pollock went on to recount to Rodman the following: "I told him [de Kooning] so, the last time I saw him, after his last show. . . . All those pictures in his last show start with an image. You can see it even though he's covered it up, or tried to."[118] At first sight, de Kooning's Abstract Urban Landscapes may appear to be non-figurative (fig. 3-41). However, if one looks carefully at them, he/she will perceive imagery, as Pollock pointed out. Although the images are obscured by violent brushstrokes in abstract

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[115] T[homas] B. H[ess], "Selecting from the Flow of Spring Shows: 'Like a New Race of People,'" *Artnews*, vol. 55, no. 2 (April 1956): 24-25.

[116] Selden Rodman, "Jackson Pollock," in *Conversations with Artists* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1957), 85.

[117] Clement Greenberg, "The Late Thirties in New York" (1957/1960), in *Art and Culture*, 235. Greenberg went on to state the following: "Gorky, de Kooning, then Bradley Walker Tomlin and the later Franz Kline seemed to stand for that notion, which was why, as it seems to me, they were celebrated and imitated downtown as Pollock never was." Ibid.

[118] Rodman, "Jackson Pollock," 85.

compositions, many solid partial contours remain. De Kooning was consistently haunted by Late-Cubist contours from his formative years through the Woman series of 1950-55. Even in the Abstract Urban Landscapes, he remained unable to tear himself away from them. Without overcoming Late Cubism, he skillfully and neatly integrated elements on the picture plane into a "well-made" picture (though he employed very violent brushstrokes). This is the meaning of "French," in de Kooning's case.

Several weeks before his death in August 1956, Pollock yet again spoke of de Kooning. When asked by his lover, Ruth Kligman, about the relationship between his work and that of de Kooning, Kline, and Motherwell, Pollock said: "De Kooning is the best of the group. He's really good. I appreciate it; but it's not what I'm involved with. . . . I open the space, they close it."[119] It was probably de Kooning himself who understood the meaning of these words better than anyone else. "[H]e's dead. It's over. I'm number one"——those were the words which escaped de Kooning's lips when Pollock died.[120]

Alfonso Ossorio

Between 1943 and 1947, Pollock had four one-person shows at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century. Guggenheim regularly gave him stipends

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[119] Ruth Kligman, *Love Affair: A Memoir of Jackson Pollock* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1974), 126.

[120] Stevens and Swan, *De Kooning*, 395.

during this period. Also, in 1943 she commissioned Pollock to make a huge painting (*Mural*, 1943, fig. 3-13) to install in the entrance hall of her duplex apartment building; and in 1945 she lent Pollock two thousand dollars for the down payment for the farmhouse in Springs, East Hampton, that he intended to purchase. Peggy Guggenheim thus strongly supported Pollock in his art and life during that period. When she closed her gallery in mid-1947 to return to Europe, Pollock lost a great patron.

Pollock transferred to the Betty Parsons Gallery not long after Art of This Century closed and had five one-person shows at the new gallery between 1948 and 1951. It was Alfonso Ossorio who appeared as Pollock's new major patron during that period. When Pollock's second one-person show at the Parsons Gallery was held in January-February 1949, Ossorio purchased a piece by Pollock for the first time.[121] Then, following that first purchase, Ossorio purchased about ten more Pollocks——including one of the artist's masterpieces, *Lavender Mist: Number 1, 1950* (1950; now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)——through the Parsons Gallery or directly from Pollock himself by the artist's death in 1956.

Ossorio did not simply collect Pollock's works. Around the beginning of 1951, probably with the intention of helping to meet Pollock's living expenses, Ossorio gave Pollock two hundred dollars in advance for a painting that he intended to acquire. After that, Ossorio offered to give Pollock the same

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[121] Ossorio purchased *Number 5, 1948* (1948) from the show.

amount of money each month for future purchases of Pollock's works.[122] Also, Ossorio helped Michel Tapié to finance and organize Pollock's first one-person show in France to be held at the Studio Paul Facchetti in Paris in 1952. In the catalogue of this show, the French version of the English text, which Ossorio had written for the catalogue of Pollock's 1951 Parsons show, appeared with Tapié's text and Hans Namuth's photographs.[123] This 1952 Facchetti show played an important role in introducing Pollock's work to the French art world.[124]

Meanwhile, Pollock and Ossorio had become close friends. Before leaving the United States in early 1950 to work on his mural project in the

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[122] "Dear Jackson, In my last letter to Lee I enclosed $200 to be applied towards the next paining of yrs. we acquire. We'd like to continue sending this amount on a monthly basis if this sort of arrangement is agreeable to you & Lee. We've no particular painting (or sculpture) in mind at the moment but I know that there'll [be] many we'll want in the future. Love to you both, Alfonso." Alfonso [Ossorio] to Jackson [Pollock], 21 January 1951, Jackson Pollock Papers, circa 1914-1975, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 3046, frame 440. In response to this letter from Ossorio, Pollock wrote as follows: "Dear Alfonso——I really hit an all time low——with depression and drinking——NYC is brutal. I got out of it about a week and a half ago——followed with a constructive dream——(happily Tony [Smith] was here to interpret it for me) and now your letter. It is so thoughtful and kind——I won't try to find words (of my feeling). . . . Again Alphonso [*sic*] I am really moved by your generosity and thoughtfulness, and of course you and Ted [Dragon] may have first on any thing I do." Jackson Pollock to Alfonso Ossorio, undated [between January 23 and January 29, 1951], in *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works*, ed. Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 4:257-58, doc. 94.

[123] Alfonso Ossorio, "Mon Ami, Jackson Pollock," in *Jackson Pollock*, by Michel Tapié and Alfonso Ossorio, exh. cat. (Paris: Studio Paul Facchetti, 1952), no pagination.

[124] Regarding the reaction of the French art world to the show, as well as the aftermath of the show in the French art world, see B. H. Friedman, *Alfonso Ossorio* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1972), 59.

Philippines, Ossorio offered his house on MacDougal Alley in Manhattan to Pollock. Pollock lived there with Lee Krasner for a few months in early 1950. When Pollock made his will in 1951 to appoint Krasner as his executrix, he also appointed Ossorio as the third substitute executor next to his brother Sanford McCoy and Clement Greenberg.[125] The frequency of Pollock's correspondence with Ossorio during 1951 also indicates the depth of their friendship. Although in general, writing was great labor for Pollock, his many letters to Ossorio in that year represent an exception.[126]

By the time Ossorio's sponsorship of and friendship with Pollock was solidified, as an artist Ossorio had created a series of works deeply concerned with Pollock's cut-outs. Those works by Ossorio are an important example which shows, in advance of Krasner's collages of 1953-55, the influence of Pollock's cut-outs on other artists. They were also a significant turning point in Ossorio's oeuvre.

Alfonso Ossorio was born to a wealthy Spanish family in Manila, the Philippines, in 1916. He came to the United States in 1930 and was naturalized as an American citizen in 1933. In the next year, Ossorio enrolled in Harvard University to study fine arts. The courses he took there included a class in

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[125] For Pollock's will, see O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:259-60, doc. 96.

[126] For Pollock's letters of 1951 to Ossorio, see O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:257-58, 261-63, docs. 93-95, 99, 101.

methods and processes of painting in which he learned fresco, oil painting and other techniques. During his senior year, he wrote a thesis on Christian iconography from its beginnings through the Romanesque period. After graduating from Harvard University in 1938, he continued his studies in sculpture, graphic arts, egg tempera and other methods at the Rhode Island School of Design until 1939. During the winter of 1939 he worked in Boston, where he also participated in some group shows. In 1941 Ossorio had his first one-person show at the Wakefield Gallery in New York, where Betty Parsons was serving as director. He had his second one-person show at the same gallery in 1943, and his third one-person show in 1945 at the Mortimer Brandt Gallery, to which Parsons had transferred a short time before. Ossorio had thus developed his career as an artist far in advance of his fateful encounter with Pollock in 1949.

From 1939 to a certain point in 1949, Ossorio made grotesque figurative paintings strongly influenced by Surrealism (fig. 3-42).[127] However, when he visited Pollock's one-person show at the Parsons Gallery at the beginning of 1949, Ossorio was affected by Pollock's Abstract Expressionist art. Actually, although Ossorio had already known Pollock's work to some degree,[128] he had

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[127] On Ossorio's Surrealist work, see Klaus Kertess, *Alfonso Ossorio Drawings, 1940-48: The Anatomy of a Surrealist Sensibility*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992), no pagination; Ellen G. Landau, "Making the Unknown Knowable: Alfonso Ossorio in the 1940s," in *Reflection and Redemption: The Surrealist Art of Alfonso Ossorio, 1939-1949*, exh. cat. (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1996), 3-5.

[128] According to Ellen G. Landau, Ossorio first saw a work by Pollock

disliked it before the show. Ossorio wrote about how he felt about Pollock's art prior to the show as follows: "I had previously encountered isolated examples of his work. But such is the perversity of incomprehension that I cannot quote chapter and verse, and recall only a general memory of intense antipathy, an instinctive feeling that the acceptance of his work would mean radical displacements in one's cherished hierarchy of values."[129] The 1949 Pollock show turned Ossorio's view one hundred eighty degrees around. Ossorio related his reencounter with Pollock's art at the show as follows: "I had never liked Pollock's work until then, . . . but this show was a revelation. Here I saw a man who had both broken all the traditions of the past and unified them, who had gone beyond cubism, beyond Picasso and surrealism, beyond everything that had happened in art."[130] Deeply impressed by Pollock's art, Ossorio shifted his attention from Surrealism to Abstract Expressionism before long.

In the summer of 1949, Ossorio visited Pollock in East Hampton. He rented a house in which to work in the town for the summer and spent a lot of time with Pollock. During his stay in East Hampton, Ossorio began to move toward expressive abstraction, bringing his fantastic figurative work to an end.

(*Mural*, 1943, fig. 3-13) at a party given by Peggy Guggenheim sometime during World War II. Ellen G. Landau, "Alfonso Ossorio: Behind the Congregations," in *Alfonso Ossorio: Congregations*, by Klaus Kertess, exh. cat. (Southampton, N.Y.: Parrish Art Museum, 1997), 24-25.

[129] Alfonso Ossorio, "Ossorio on Pollock: From the Yale University Art Gallery," *New Harvest*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March/April 1979): 48.

[130] Francine du Plessix, "Ossorio the Magnificent," *Art in America*, vol. 55, no. 2 (March-April 1967): 60.

Untitled (c. 1949, fig. 3-43) is one of Ossorio's first works to show the influence of Pollock.[131] In this work, Ossorio discarded his previous minutely representational style and depicted a human figure roughly and abstractly. In the background, thick lines run freely over the picture plane and paint is dripped and spattered over the surface. In another painting from the same year, *Golden Couple* (1949, fig. 3-44), Ossorio depicted two skeleton-like abstract human figures. The space around those figures is filled allover with winding and whirling lines created by vigorous brushwork, and paint is dripped in small amounts on the picture surface.

The above-mentioned 1949 works by Ossorio show the significant influence of another artist, too. Ossorio's childish, graffiti-like rendering of figures in those works recalls Jean Dubuffet's primitivized, "raw" manner of depicting the figure. While Ossorio was with Pollock in the summer of 1949, they often discussed the French artist.[132] Taking into account the stylistic

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[131] In some earlier, representational works dated to 1947-48, such as *Dunstan Thompson* and *Gist of Ballet*, Ossorio extensively dripped paint. If those works were really completed in 1948, they would indicate that Ossorio had been influenced by Pollock's art before his reexposure to it in Pollock's Parsons show of early 1949. Or, were those drippings added after those works were once finished in 1948? Parenthetically, regarding *Gist of Ballet*, Ossorio claimed in a 1980 interview that the work was completed in late 1948 and was never reworked later. Alfonso Ossorio, "Interview," interview by Judith Wolfe, in *Alfonso Ossorio: 1940-1980*, exh. cat. (East Hampton, N.Y.: Guild Hall Museum, 1980), 14.

[132] Dubuffet had frequently exhibited his work at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York since 1946. Incidentally, in a postcard from Pollock to Harry Jackson and Grace Hartigan (postmarked 13 December 1948), a mention of Dubuffet is found: "Dear Harry and Grace. Sent the book to-day——enjoyed having it. The art world here (as every where) is tuff. Haven't had any report on

tendencies in Ossorio's new works, Pollock advised him to see more of Dubuffet's work.[133] As a result, Ossorio went to Paris in the late fall of that year. In Paris, Ossorio met Dubuffet, saw his many works, and discussed art with him at great length. Pollock and Dubuffet thus became the two greatest influences on Ossorio in 1949.[134] Ossorio's effort to assimilate their art would bear fruit in a very personalized and inventive form as early as the next year.

Not long after he had returned from Paris to New York, Ossorio left for Victorias on the island of Negros in his native country, the Philippines, in early 1950. His family, which ran a sugar refinery in the town, was then building a church for the community; Ossorio was commissioned to execute a mural for the sanctuary of the church. He spent ten months in Victorias to complete the mural.

During his stay in Victorias, Ossorio also created a series of some three hundred small ink, wax, and watercolor works on paper, today known as Victorias paintings (fig. 3-45),[135] in the intervals when he was not working on

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the Dubuffet?——what do you think of it?" Probably "the Dubuffet" in this postcard refers to the following exhibition: "Jean Dubuffet: Paintings, Gouaches, 1946-1948," Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, November 30 – December 30, 1948. My thanks to Harry Jackson for bringing the postcard to my attention.

[133] B. H. Friedman, "Alfonso Ossorio: A Biography, Mostly of His Work," *Art International*, vol. 6, no. 3 (April 1962): 29.

[134] Ossorio stated in 1968 as follows: "I begin by searching for a master who corresponds to my ideal, and I owe a lot to Jean Dubuffet and Jackson Pollock." Quoted in Landau, "Making the Unknown Knowable," 3.

his mural commission.[136] In these paintings, Ossorio characteristically employed the wax resist technique.[137] He drew with candle stubs or hot liquid wax on paper that he often stained with watercolor in advance. Then, he overpainted the wax drawing with watercolor. A property of wax is that it "resists" water-based mediums. Thus, the watercolor did not adhere onto the areas covered by the wax, and those underlying areas showed through. Then, Ossorio further drew with ink. Finally, according to Helen A. Harrison, "Layer upon layer of watercolor, wax and ink drawing were supplemented by the application of melted wax brushed on like paint and . . . polished, giving the finished drawings a satiny sheen."[138] In this way, Ossorio created unique pictures that possess a complicatedly multi-layered spatial structure.

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[135] These works were generally called Victorias drawings until the late 1990s, and they are often called so even today. However, in 1998, Francis V. O'Connor urged that "Given the complex facture of the works, . . . they are best understood as paintings"; thus O'Connor called those works Victorias paintings. Francis V. O'Connor, "Alfonso Ossorio's Expressionist Paintings on Paper," in *Alfonso Ossorio: The Child Returns, 1950 — Philippines, Expressionist Paintings on Paper*, exh. cat. (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1998), 15, n. 2. In this dissertation, following O'Connor's opinion, I refer to those works as Victorias paintings.

[136] Dubuffet called those works Ossorio's "decoration of his personal and private church." Jean Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio* (Paris: La Pierre Volante, 1951), 18.

[137] Ossorio's use of the wax resist technique is also seen in such works from the previous year as *Return* (1949) and *Variegated Family* (1949). Ossorio had known the technique through an article on or by the Romanian-born Surrealist, Victor Brauner, published in *Cahiers d'art*. See Ossorio, "Interview," by Wolfe, 15.

[138] Helen A. Harrison, introduction to *Alfonso Ossorio: The Victorias Drawings, 1950*, exh. cat. (East Hampton, N.Y.: Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, 1991), no pagination.

For Ossorio, wax resist was, as Francis V. O'Connor has argued, a technique that "answered his need to maintain independence from Pollock and Dubuffet, while transcending his former graphic facility." Pollock showed Ossorio "how the medium itself could become the image in a work of art." For his part, Dubuffet showed Ossorio "how a consciously intended image could be abstracted down to its most primitive, gut essentials, and presented by the medium in the bluntest possible manner." In his Victorias paintings, by employing the wax resist technique, Ossorio "created 'accidental' effects and images"; and thus he then "could exploit the surrealist, free associative device of psychic automatism, while achieving direct, painterly expression. The result was a style of his own, independent of the influences upon him."[139] However, it was only through Ossorio's further absorption of both another aspect of Pollock's art, as well as Dubuffet's art, that the artistic originality that the wax resist technique brought to him fully blossomed.

In *Untitled [W50-037]* (1950, fig. 3-46), by combining drawing and painting done on various layers of the picture, Ossorio created a large vague human image intended to read as a whole. Because of the structural complexity, the pictorial space of this work is very ambiguous. Furthermore, Ossorio cut many slender biomorphic shapes away from the interior of the picture. Because of this, real space abruptly intrudes into the picture, and thus the pictorial space collides with real space. In this way, the spatial structure of this picture

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[139] O'Connor, "Alfonso Ossorio's Expressionist Paintings on Paper," 8-10.

becomes more intricate.

Ossorio's employment of the cut-out technique in a subgroup of his Victorias paintings (hereafter, "type A"), in which *Untitled [W50-037]* is included, unquestionably derives from Pollock's practice.[140] Ossorio's slender cut-out biomorphic shapes as seen in the work recall, especially, the attenuated human figures in one of Pollock's cut-outs, *Shadows* (1948, fig. 0-7). *Shadows* was exhibited at Pollock's one-person show at the Betty Parsons Gallery in January-February 1949.[141] Also, the two major works in Pollock's Cut-Out series, *Out of the Web* (1949, fig. 0-8) and *Cut Out* (fig. 1-7), were both in progress in Pollock's studio while Ossorio stayed in East Hampton during the summer of 1949;[142] and the former was exhibited at Pollock's one-person show held at the Parsons Gallery in November-December 1949. At the very least, Ossorio must have seen the above three cut-outs by Pollock before he left New York for Victorias in early 1950.

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[140] This has already been pointed out briefly by O'Connor. See O'Connor, "Alfonso Ossorio's Expressionist Paintings on Paper," 10.

[141] *Shadows* drew Clement Greenberg's attention at this show. In his review, he praised the work as follows: "the general quality that emerged from such pictures as the one with the black cut-out shapes——*Number Two* [*Shadows*]——that hung next to it [*Number 1A, 1948*, fig. 0-1], and from nuEers [*sic*] *Six*, *Seven*, *Eighteen*, and especially *Nineteen*, seemed more than enough to justify the claim that Pollock is one of the major painters of our time." Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Adolph Gottlieb, Jackson Pollock, and Josef Albers" (1949), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 286.

[142] Regarding the progress of *Out of the Web*, see Ellen G. Landau, *Jackson Pollock* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 208.

However, there is a subtle difference in purpose between Pollock's cut-out technique and Ossorio's. Pollock mainly explored a new kind of figuration with his cut-out technique; whereas Ossorio seems to have been interested chiefly in bringing real space into a picture by cutting out parts of it, as I pointed out with regard to *Untitled [W50-037]*. Ossorio's intention is closely related to his practice in two other types of his Victorias paintings, examined below.

In such works as *Dancers* (1950, fig. 3-47), instead of cutting away parts of the interior of a picture, as in the works of type A, Ossorio broke the conventional rectangular format of painting and cut the picture into an irregular shape. In *Dancers*, he created a vague pair of dancing figures by combining drawing and painting done on various layers of the picture. Then, he cut the picture into a shape roughly corresponding to the outline of the shape of the pair of dancing figures. In this type of work (hereafter, "type B"), the physical shapes themselves have thus created an image. And because of this, those works assume the quality of a sculptural work. On the other hand, in such works as *Acrobatic Babies* (1950, fig. 3-48), Ossorio did not cut the picture with a knife as in type B, but tore it by hand into an irregular shape. In this type of work (hereafter, "type C"), the sculptural quality has increased due to the materiality of the rough edges of torn paper.

In these ways, Ossorio's Victorias paintings of types B and C strongly assert their substantiality in real space rather than bringing real space into themselves, as in type A. There is a big difference between type A and types B

and C. Nevertheless, what is fundamentally common to all of these three types is Ossorio's active involvement with real space. In fact, Ossorio did some works that combined all three types by cutting and tearing a picture into an irregular shape and then cutting away parts of the interior of the picture.

It is not clear what type of painting Ossorio undertook first. In any case, Dubuffet's art as well as Pollock's was deeply influential. In a 1990 interview with Helen A. Harrison, Ossorio stated that "the concept of breaking the rectangle was already commonplace"[143] to him when he worked in irregular formats in the Victorias paintings in 1950. Quoting this statement by Ossorio, Harrison pointed out: "he had developed an interest in free-form imagery while studying Medieval manuscripts and early printed volumes, in which illustrations are often shaped to accommodate irregular blocks of text. He had produced wood engravings of this sort during his student days."[144] However, the question remains: Why did Ossorio begin to work in irregular formats——or, to use his own words, "shaped images"——in 1950? We need to turn our attention to the fact that Ossorio began to seriously assimilate Dubuffet's art, in conjunction with Pollock's, in the year before he undertook the Victorias paintings.

Dubuffet rejected traditional illusionism, created by perspective and shading, because of the belief that "The objective of painting is to animate a surface which is by definition two-dimensional and without depth. One does not

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[143] Alfonso Ossorio, interview by Helen A. Harrison, 19 July 1990; quoted in Harrison, introduction to *Victorias Drawings*.

[144] Harrison, introduction to *Victorias Drawings*.

enrich it in seeking effects of relief or trompe-l'oeil through shading; one denatures and adulterates it."[145] He aimed to "let the surface speak its own language and not an artificial language of three-dimensional space which is not proper to it."[146] Dubuffet thus depicted the figure, "as though flattened by a pressing iron,"[147] in his characteristic primitivized manner. When he made such a flattened figure, Dubuffet often incised deeply into an impastoed surface with a putty knife or similar tool to create its outline. Dubuffet's figures sometimes seem as though cut out and put on a background, as typically seen in *The Villager with Close-Cropped Hair* from 1947 (fig. 3-49).[148] It seems that Dubuffet himself was, to a considerable degree, conscious of his figures' quality

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[145] Quoted and translated in Margit Rowell, "Jean Dubuffet: An Art on the Margins of Culture," in *Jean Dubuffet: A Retrospective*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1973), 24. The original French text: "Le propos de la peinture est d'orner des surfaces, et elle considère donc deux dimensions seulement et exclut la profondeur. Ce n'est pas l'enrichir mais la dévier et adultérer que de viser à des effets de relief et de trompe-l'œil par le moyen du clair-obscur." Jean Dubuffet, "Notes pour les fins-lettrés" (1945), in *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants*, ed. Hubert Damisch (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 1:74.

[146] Quoted and translated in Rowell, "Jean Dubuffet," 24. The original French text: "faire parler à la surface son propre langage de surface et non un faux langage d'espace à trois dimensions qui n'est pas le sien." Dubuffet, "Notes pour les fins-lettrés," 1:74.

[147] Quoted and translated in Rowell, "Jean Dubuffet," 24. The original French text: "aplatis au fer à repasser." Dubuffet, "Notes pour les fins-lettrés," 1:74.

[148] Ossorio once owned this painting. Although the exact date of his acquisition is not clear, it is included in a list made by Dubuffet on July 22, 1951, of the artist's paintings that belonged to Ossorio at the time. The list is now kept in the Fondation Dubuffet in Paris. My thanks to Sophie Webel, the director of the Fondation Dubuffet, for bringing the list to my attention.

as though cut out. In his description of the creation of another painting of his from the same year, *Antonin Artaud with Tufted Hair* (1947, fig. 3-50), Dubuffet wrote as follows:

> I painted in the personage roughly by spreading out a doughy paste of paint (Rollplastique). Onto this I threw a good lot of: 1) ashes almost everywhere, 2) sand in places, 3) coal dust in places.
>
> Then I spread some of the paste (Rollplastique) around the figure to make the background. . . .
>
> Afterward I worked the figure. I rubbed with the spatula, summarily, so as to arrive at an irregular coarse substance (the ashes in some places penetrating into the paste).
>
> Just as it was, the look of it was fairly pleasing (*but a little confused, the figure not standing out well from the ground* [italics added]). Interruption for one hour (lunch).
>
> I put some paste over the figure again (not everywhere but on a good part of it——especially to draw the contours, large outlines of white paste) (with spatula).
>
> Then with the putty knife I redrew the figure (a little differently from before). . . .
> . . . . .
>
> *And carefully traced the outlines of the figure with the point of a knife* [italics added].
>
> And put black all around (quite thick liquid black paint) *so as to make the figure stand out* [italics added] (with large supple flat brush), and also over the ground.[149]

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[149] The artist's studio logbook for 1947-50; quoted and translated in Andreas Franzke, *Dubuffet*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1981), 47.

In this way, Dubuffet made an earnest effort to make the figure separate from the background and stand out from it.

As we saw above, Dubuffet rejected traditional illusionism and boldly pursued a flattened rendering. However, he did not break with the conventional rectangular format of painting. Rather, a rectangular format was necessary for him as a device to emphasize the flatness of his pictures, as he stated: “My eyes like to rest on a surface which is very flat, particularly a rectangular surface.”[150] On the other hand, when Ossorio saw Dubuffet’s flattened and incised figures during his first visit to the artist in Paris in the late fall of 1949, their strong cut-out quality probably suggested to him the possibility of liberating the figure not only from traditional illusionism, but also from the conventional rectangular format. And at the time, Ossorio had also obtained a concrete method for realizing that possibility from Pollock’s cut-outs. Ossorio explained his employment of irregular formats as follows: “It’s part of not needing the rectangle, that there’s no need for a geometrical shape to contain a vanishing point.”[151] In his Victorias paintings, Ossorio thus often cut or tore a picture into an irregular shape (figs. 3-47 and 3-48). In addition, especially when tearing, Ossorio also concerned himself with another aspect of Dubuffet’s aesthetic. In

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[150] Quoted and translated in Rowell, “Jean Dubuffet,” 24. The original French text: “Mes yeux se plaisent grandement à se reposer sur une surface bien plane et particulièrement une surface rectangulaire.” Dubuffet, “Notes pour les fins-lettrés,” 74.

[151] Ossorio, “Interview,” by Wolfe, 20. Ossorio also says: “A rectangular frame is not the logical necessity that it was for Renaissance painters obsessed by perspective and the vanishing point.” Friedman, *Alfonso Ossorio*, 51.

such torn works as *Acrobatic Babies* (fig. 3-48), Ossorio made prominent use of expressive materiality (which the rough edges of torn paper evoke) for the sake of the image that the picture's irregular shape creates. There, Dubuffet's idea of "art born out of the material" operates again.[152]

Inspired both by Pollock's and Dubuffet's art, Ossorio did remarkable work in his Victorias paintings. In particular, Ossorio was about to take his paintings into real three-dimensional space, integrating an idea he got from Dubuffet's flattened and incised figures with a technique he learned from Pollock's cut-outs. Ossorio explained his shaped paintings to Helen A. Harrison as follows: "I wanted it to be a free-floating thing."[153] In fact, he once hung one of his shaped paintings on the upper part of a window of his house (fig. 3-51). The painting remained there as though it were literally floating in the real space.[154] According to Pollock's close friend Harry Jackson, "Several years [before 1955] . . . Pollock spoke of his strong desire to destroy the restricting boundaries of the two-dimensional canvas."[155] We might say that Ossorio was

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[152] "Art must be born out of the material. Spirituality must borrow the language of the material. Each material has its language, is a language. It is not a matter of associating a language with it or even of putting it at the service of a language." Dubuffet, "Notes pour les fins-lettrés," 57-58; quoted in Franzke, *Dubuffet*, trans. Wolf, 32.

[153] Ossorio, interview by Harrison; quoted in Harrison, introduction to *Victorias Drawings*.

[154] The shape of the painting is very similar to that of *yakko-dako*, a type of Japanese traditional kite. Whether Ossorio knew that is uncertain.

[155] Quoted in Larry Pointer and Donald Goddard, *Harry Jackson* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1981), 97.

beyond Pollock in that respect.

Ossorio returned to New York from the Philippines in October 1950. Then, he experimented with ways of mounting his Victorias paintings,[156] ultimately placing some of them on shaped plywood. It seems that in early 1951, Ossorio wrote a letter to Pollock explaining this kind of work.[157] Pollock showed interest in this experiment by Ossorio, writing back to him in late February of 1951 as follows: "Dear Alfonso & Ted. Your description of the paintings sounds exciting I get it that the plywood is cut out too."[158] Also, reportedly Ossorio gave Pollock one of his Victorias paintings, though the work is not identified.[159] Ossorio's Victorias paintings, which show the strong influence of Pollock's cut-outs, must have spurred Pollock to return to his own *Cut Out*, which had resided in his studio in a still unresolved state for a long time (figs. 1-3 and 1-5).[160]

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[156] Friedman, *Alfonso Ossorio*, 41.

[157] This letter has not been found. It possibly exists in Ossorio's archives, which are not presently accessible.

[158] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:258, doc. 95.

[159] "Alfonso A. Ossorio," in *Surrealist Art of Alfonso Ossorio*, 28.

[160] On the other hand, Harrison pointed out a connection between Ossorio's Victorias paintings and Pollock's black pourings of 1951, stating: "the re-emergence of symbolic figures and mythological overtones in [Pollock's black pourings] was, if not inspired, at least affirmed by Ossorio's similar experiments." Harrison, introduction to *Victorias Drawings*. Siobhán M. Conaty examined the mutual influence, or synergy, between Ossorio's Victorias paintings

Pollock seems to have been stimulated also by Ossorio's deep engagement with Dubuffet's art. Pollock, as already mentioned, discussed Dubuffet's art with Ossorio in the summer of 1949 and advised Ossorio to further explore Dubuffet's work. In this way, Ossorio began to seriously absorb Dubuffet's art. It seems that Ossorio's fascination with Dubuffet, prompted by Pollock, in turn strengthened Pollock's own interest in the French artist. Sometime in 1949, while he continued with his allover poured paintings, Pollock reworked one of his earlier abstract figure paintings (fig. 3-52).[161] He thickly overpainted its background and parts of the figure with oil paint mixed with sand, in a manner much like Dubuffet's *haute pâte*, to greatly reshape the image.[162] The result by Pollock was, so to speak, a more abstract version of a series of Dubuffet's portraits from 1946-47 (fig. 3-50). Pollock gave the reworked painting to Ossorio's life partner, Edward Dragon, in the early 1950s.[163] Dragon named it *Dancing Head*. On the other hand, Barbara Rose pointed out another kind of influence of Dubuffet on Pollock. She proposed that Dubuffet's

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and Pollock's silk-screen prints of 1951 based on six selected black pourings from 1951. Siobhán M. Conaty, *Synergy: Alfonso Ossorio and Jackson Pollock, 1950-51*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Visitors Center, Federal Reserve Board, 2003), 1-9.

[161] This work, now called *Dancing Head*, was dated to c. 1938-41 in Pollock's catalogue raisonné published in 1978. However, the date was corrected to 1941-49 by O'Connor later. O'Connor, "Alfonso Ossorio's Expressionist Paintings on Paper," 9.

[162] In a sense, Pollock thus "cut out" the underlying figure, not physically but visually, by thickly overpainting around it. In this respect, Pollock's reworking of the painting is related to his cut-outs to a degree.

[163] O'Connor, "Alfonso Ossorio's Expressionist Paintings on Paper," 8.

ink drawings of 1950 in the *Corps de dames* series influenced Pollock's return to figuration in 1951 with his black pourings.[164]

Ossorio's Victorias paintings impressed Dubuffet, too. When Ossorio went to Paris again at the end of 1950 or at the beginning of 1951, he took a large number of his Victorias paintings with him in order to show them to Dubuffet. Dubuffet admired them and was motivated to write a book on them. In this book, entitled *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio* and published in 1951,[165] Dubuffet wrote a long introductory text and furthermore closely examined the form and content of each of forty-odd works selected from among the Victorias paintings and Ossorio's related works. This book became the first important monograph on Ossorio. Meanwhile, Dubuffet also introduced Ossorio to Michel Tapié. This leading critic of French postwar art organized an exhibition of Ossorio's Victorias paintings at the Studio Paul Facchetti in Paris in October 1951. Then, Tapié published his famous book, *Un art autre*, in the next year, in which he treated Ossorio and included reproductions of the artist's four works from 1950-51.[166]

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[164] Barbara Rose, "Jean Dubuffet: The Outsider as Insider," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 53, no. 8 (April 1979): 147.

[165] Jean Dubuffet, *Peintures initiatiques d'Alfonso Ossorio* (Paris: La Pierre Volante, 1951).

[166] Michel Tapié, *Un art autre: où il s'agit de nouveaux dévidages du réel* (Paris: Gabriel-Giraud et fils, 1952), no pagination. Ossorio's works reproduced in this book are *Orante* (1950), *Limbo* (1950), *Foule* (1950), and *Living Skull* (1951).

Around the summer of 1951, Ossorio began to work on a number of larger shaped paintings mounted on plywood.[167] In those new works, Ossorio took a tendency that the Victorias paintings had shown even farther. For example, in *Generations II* (1951, fig. 3-53), Ossorio painted with oil and enamel on a canvas support and then cut the canvas into four parts in irregular shapes. He then mounted each of those parts on plywood, which had been cut out in the same shape. Finally, he connected those parts to one another with metal rods. In these new larger shaped paintings, Ossorio thus intensified the sculptural quality that such shaped works in the Victorias paintings as *Dancers* and *Acrobatic Babies* (figs. 3-47 and 3-48) had shown.

Ossorio's inclination toward sculptural art, which developed in the Victorias paintings and intensified in subsequent larger shaped paintings, led to his later assemblages, which would become his signature works. By 1958, Ossorio began to embed into his paintings various found objects such as shells, plastic beads, and glass eyes.[168] At first, those works maintained rectangular formats and were kept rather flat. However, before long, Ossorio's assemblages began to break the rectangular format (fig. 3-54) and intensify a sensation of three-dimensionality. Ossorio titled one of his assemblages, made in 1965,

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[167] Friedman, *Alfonso Ossorio*, 51.

[168] Landau pointed out the connections of those works with Krasner's two mosaic tables (1947 and 1948) and with Pollock's allover poured paintings, such as *Full Fathom Five* (1947), into which small objects such as pebbles and nails were embedded. Landau, "Behind the Congregations," 29, n. 20.

Congregation (fig. 3-55); thereafter, "congregations" came to be used as a general term for a series of those assemblages.[169]

In retrospect, Ossorio foreshadowed his congregations with his Victorias paintings. In his sketch diary, compiled during his stay in the Philippines in 1950, Ossorio wrote as follows:

> Cyclops & Argus
> think of one of the wax pictures in 3 dimensions
> Enclose wire, rust, oddments in plastic
> EYES of glass in Paris
> for studding Argus, for sewing on cloth.[170]

Furthermore, as already quoted, in a 1980 interview, Ossorio explained his employment of irregular formats in the Victorias paintings as follows: "It's part of not needing the rectangle, that there's no need for a geometrical shape to contain a vanishing point."[171] In fact, in another interview which took place in 1968, he made a similar comment about his congregations: "As you see in those large hanging panels there is no frame at all, no rectangle around them. The rectangle is a convention that evolved out of the need for a perspective grid at the

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[169] "I have taken to calling them congregations simply because they all work together and the parts are unified to a final end, working for one final effect." Alfonso Ossorio, "Interview with Alfonso Ossorio," interview by Forrest Selvig, 19 and 25 November 1968, online transcript, Archives of American Art, http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/ossori68.htm

[170] Quoted in Landau, "Behind the Congregations," 27. See also Klaus Kertess, "Eyewitnesses," in *Congregations*, 15-16.

[171] Ossorio, "Interview," by Wolfe, 20.

time of the Renaissance after the Gothic altarpieces."[172] The Victorias paintings of 1950 were thus a watershed in Ossorio's career.

Ossorio's Victorias paintings are also worthy of note in connection with other artists' work. They show the influence of Pollock's cut-outs earlier and more directly than Lee Krasner's collages of 1953-55. Also, Ossorio's Victorias paintings predate Frank Stella's well-known shaped canvases by a decade, though their aesthetics of an irregular format are different. Serious attention to Ossorio's art has only been paid to date by a narrow circle of scholars, curators, and art dealers. However, as examined here, Alfonso Ossorio did significant work in his Victorias paintings, assimilating both the art of Jackson Pollock, the foremost painter of American Abstract Expressionism, and the art of Jean Dubuffet, the unique painter of its contemporary European counterpart, *art autre*.

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[172] Ossorio, "Interview with Alfonso Ossorio," interview by Selvig.

Chapter 4

Existentialism

> But he could not do that, because man leaped past life, into where death was; he dashed into death and did not die, because when death took a man, it took him just this side of the end of living. It was when death overran him from behind, still in life.
>
> ——William Faulkner, *Red Leaves*[1]

Soon after the end of World War II, existentialism rose to prominence in France, triggered in large part by Jean-Paul Sartre's lecture "Existentialism Is a Humanism," given at the Club Maintenant in Paris on October 29, 1945. The lecture was extensively announced in several newspapers including *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*, as well as through bills in town; people crowded into the club on that day. Reportedly, the venue fell into so much excitement and turmoil that Sartre had great difficulty in entering the club when he arrived there to speak.[2] The next day, a number of newspapers reported on this unprecedented event in the world of philosophy with bold headlines. Sartre's lecture and subsequent debate with the audience were published in the next year as a book entitled

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[1] William Faulkner, "Red Leaves," in *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1950), 330.

[2] See Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life*, ed. Norman MacAfee, trans. Anna Cancogni (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 249-50.

L'existentialisme est un humanisme.[3] This book, in which Sartre explained his existentialism as intelligibly as possible to the general public, would become a kind of beginner's book of existentialism and play a great role in propagating these ideas.

Sartre's existentialism soon spread to the United States. Many American magazines——from the intellectual *Nation* and *Partisan Review* to the popular *Time* and *Life*——picked up the new French philosophy during the course of 1946.[4] Furthermore, an English translation by Bernard Frechtman of *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* appeared in 1947.[5] This English version was accompanied by an introduction by Frechtman, in which he explained Sartre's existentialism in simple terms to American readers. Sartre's existentialism had thus become popular in the United States by 1947.[6]

In the American art world, Clement Greenberg showed a keen interest in

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[3] Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris: Nagel, 1946).

[4] See, for example, "Existentialism," *Time*, vol. 47, no. 4 (28 January 1946): 28-29; Hannah Arendt, "French Existentialism," *Nation*, vol. 162, no. 8 (23 February 1946): 226-28; William Barrett, "Talent and Career of Jean-Paul Sartre," *Partisan Review*, vol. 13, no. 2 (Spring 1946): 237-46; Bernard Frizell, "Existentialism," *Life*, vol. 20, no 24 (17 June 1946): 59-60, 62, 64, 66.

[5] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947). In the next year, another English version was published in England. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948).

[6] For detailed studies on the American reception of Sartre's existentialism, see Ann Fulton, *Apostles of Sartre: Existentialism in America, 1945-1963* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1999); George Cotkin, *Existential America* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

Sartre's existentialism as early as mid-1946. In his article entitled "Jean Dubuffet and French Existentialism" he wrote:

> It is easy to perceive the affinities between Dubuffet's painting . . . and the world-hating attitudes revealed by French Existentialism in such works as Jean-Paul Sartre's *La Nausée*. . . . Whatever the affectations and philosophical sketchiness of Existentialism, it is aesthetically appropriate to our age, and may make up in art for what it lacks as a complete philosophy. Precisely for this reason it may be able to reach a fuller expression in painting than in fiction.[7]

Greenberg's interest in Sartre dated back to the late 1930s when he read Sartre's novel *La Nausée* (1938) and was impressed by it. He later described the book's impact on him: "It was new, original, and I'd never heard of him before . . . I had to dig him up. He wasn't famous yet."[8] (Greenberg actually met Sartre when he went to Paris in 1939.) It seems that as an art critic, Greenberg strengthened his interest in Sartre in the international vogue of the philosopher's existentialism after World War II.

In the intellectual climate of the age, American artists——especially, Abstract Expressionists who were then coming into prominence——were inevitably exposed to existentialism. Looking back to those days, Willem de Kooning stated to Irving Sandler as follows: "We weren't influenced directly by

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[7] Clement Greenberg, "Jean Dubuffet and French Existentialism" (1946), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 91-92.

[8] Florence Rubenfeld, *Clement Greenberg: A Life* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 52.

Existentialism, but it was in the air, and we felt it without knowing too much about it. We were in touch with the mood."[9] In fact, some scholars of Abstract Expressionism sensed the existential mood in some of the statements that Abstract Expressionists made in the late 1940s; for example, in the essay "The First Man Was an Artist," published by Barnett Newman in the first issue of the avant-garde magazine started in 1947, *Tiger's Eye*. In this essay, Newman stated: "It is not enough for the artist to announce with arrogance his invincible position: that the job of the artist is not to discover truth, but to fashion it, that the artist's work was done long ago. This position, superior as it may be, separates the artist from everyone else, declares his role against that of all. . . . What was the first man, was he a hunter, a tool-maker, a farmer, a worker, a priest, or a politician? Undoubtedly the first man was an artist."[10] Robert Hobbs found, in Newman's discussion on the role of the individual, a parallel with Sartre's existentialism, which made a point of choosing oneself and assuming responsibility for oneself.[11] To give

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[9] Willem de Kooning, conversation with Irving Sandler, 16 June 1959; quoted in Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, and London: Icon Editions / Harper & Row, 1970), 98. In the early 1950s, two panels on existentialism were held at The Eighth-Street Club, which was a major rendezvous for the Abstract Expressionists. See Steven Johnson, "A Junction at Eighth Street," introduction to *The New York Schools of Music and Visual Arts: John Cage, Morton Feldman, Edgard Varèse, Willem de Kooning, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg*, ed. Steven Johnson (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 7.

[10] Barnett Newman, "The First Man Was an Artist," *Tiger's Eye*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 1947): 57, 59.

[11] Robert Hobbs, *Lee Krasner*, exh. cat. (New York: Independent Curators International; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 93.

another example, let's look at Mark Rothko's statement entitled "The Romantics Were Prompted," which appeared in the first issue of another important avant-garde magazine started likewise in 1947, *Possibilities*.[12] Stephen Polcari pointed out that Rothko discussed such Sartrean issues as "situation," "identity," and "solitude" in the statement.[13] Polcari made a further interesting comment regarding one of the editors of the magazine, Robert Motherwell. According to Polcari, although the magazine's title was originally intended to be *Transformation*, Motherwell changed it to *Possibilities*. Polcari found there "the abrupt and partially willful transition from previous interests to existentialism."[14] Also, Dore Ashton pointed out "a clearly existentialist tone" in the preface to the first issue of the magazine, co-written by Motherwell and another editor, Harold Rosenberg.[15] Although *Possibilities* did not continue after the first issue, the magazine played an important role in connecting Abstract Expressionist art with existentialist philosophy.[16]

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[12] Mark Rothko, "The Romantics Were Prompted," *Possibilities*, no. 1 (Winter 1947/48): 84.

[13] Stephen Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 354, 357. Rothko's "The Romantics Were Prompted" was actually heavily edited by Robert Motherwell. See Stephanie Terenzio, ed., *The Collected Writings of Robert Motherwell* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 46, n. 2.

[14] Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience*, 354.

[15] Dore Ashton, *The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning* (New York: Viking Press, 1973; reprint, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 182.

[16] See Nancy Jachec, *The Philosophy and Politics of Abstract*

To illustrate the interest of the New York art world in Sartre, John Bernard Myers recounted the following episode. When Sartre came to the United States in 1946, he gave a lecture on the French theater at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York under the sponsorship of the American Surrealist magazine *View*. According to Myers, who attended the lecture, the hall "was filled to the rafters," and about half of the audience seemed to be "people from the Fifty-seventh Street art world."[17] Perhaps one of the reasons for the deep interest of the New York art world was that the philosopher himself actively returned an engagement in art. He often visited Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century on Fifty-Seventh Street during 1946 to acquaint himself with artists through the gallery, including David Hare, Isamu Noguchi, and Charles Seliger.[18] As for Hare, Sartre later wrote a text on the artist, a few excerpts from which appeared as an introduction to the

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Expressionism, 1940-1960 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 85.

[17] John Bernard Myers, *Tracking the Marvelous: A Life in the New York Art World* (New York: Random House, 1983), 64.

[18] The following anecdote regarding Sartre and Seliger appears in several sources. A few days after the opening of a 1946 group exhibition at Art of This Century, which included Seliger, the artist happened to ride in the same bus with Sartre in Manhattan. At this time, Seliger invited Sartre to visit the gallery. A day or so later, Sartre went to the gallery in order to see Seliger's work in particular. Sartre was fascinated by it and particularly praised the artist's *Homage to Erasmus Darwin* of 1945-46. See Jasper Sharp, "Serving the Future: The Exhibitions at Art of This Century 1942-1947," in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century*, ed. Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands (Venice: Peggy Guggenheim Collection; Vienna: Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Private Foundation, 2004), 341; Francis V. O'Connor, *Charles Seliger: Redefining Abstract Expressionism* (Manchester, Vt.: Hudson Hills Press, 2002), 40. Parenthetically, it is not clear whether or not Pollock had direct contact with Sartre, though Pollock had a one-person show at Art of This Century in 1946, during which time Sartre frequented the gallery.

catalogue of the artist's one-person show held at the Samuel M. Kootz Gallery in 1948.[19] Also, Sartre met Harold Rosenberg during his stay in the United States in 1946,[20] and they became close friends.[21]

Samuel Kootz organized a group exhibition of Abstract Expressionists at his gallery in 1949. The exhibition was entitled "The Intrasubjectives" after a phrase in an article by the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, who was one of the precursors to existentialism. Two passages from the article were quoted as an epigraph in the catalogue of the exhibition.[22] Two untitled texts by Rosenberg and Kootz also appeared in the catalogue. Rosenberg briefly declared in his text: "The modern painter . . . begins with nothingness."[23] After this, Rosenberg subsequently used the word "nothingness" (or "nothing") six more times. It

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[19] Jean-Paul Sartre, introduction to *Sculpture by Hare*, exh. cat. (New York: Samuel M. Kootz Gallery, 1948), no pagination.

[20] Ann Eden Gibson, *Issues in Abstract Expressionism: The Artist-Run Periodicals* (Ann Arbor and London: UMI Research Press, 1990), 43.

[21] Ann Eden Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 194, n. 28. Cf. Hobbs, *Lee Krasner*, 196, n. 113.

[22] "After Cézanne, painting only paints ideas——which, certainly, are also objects, but ideal objects, immanent to the subject or intrasubjective." "The guiding law of the great variations in painting is one of disturbing simplicity. First things are painted; then, sensations; finally, ideas. This means that in the beginning the artist's attention was fixed on external reality; then, on the subjective; finally, on the intrasubjective. These three stages are three points on a straight line." José Ortega y Gasset, "On Point of View of the Arts," trans. Paul Snodgress and Joseph Frank, *Partisan Review*, vol. 16, no. 8 (August 1949): 833-34.

[23] Harold Rosenberg, introduction to *The Intrasubjectives*, exh. cat. (New York: Samuel M. Kootz Gallery, 1949), no pagination.

seems that this word derives from Sartre's chief book, *L'être et le néant* (*Being and Nothingness*),[24] setting aside how much Rosenberg actually understood this abstruse seven-hundred-page book written in French. (Sartre also discussed the relationship between "a creation from nothing" and "a mode of *intrasubjective* [italics added] being" in the introduction of the book.[25]) "The Intrasubjectives" show was probably the first exhibition of Abstract Expressionism to deal with the movement comprehensively, though the number of the works exhibited was not large. The twelve artists included in the show——William Baziotes, Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb, Morris Graves, Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Mark Tobey, and Bradley Walker Tomlin——almost cover the roster of the major Abstract Expressionists. Although this show has not been given much scholarly attention, it is worthy of note that it was organized within an existentialist atmosphere.

By the end of 1952, the existentialist tide in interpreting Abstract Expressionist art became decisive with Rosenberg's essay "The American Action Painters."[26] With his original notion of "Action Painting," Rosenberg examined

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[24] Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943).

[25] "Mais une création *ex nihilo* ne peut expliquer le surgissement de l'être, car si l'être est conçu dans une subjectivité, fût-elle divine, il demeure un mode d'être intrasubjectif." Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943; reprint, 2006), 31.

the work of such "gestural" painters in the Abstract Expressionist movement as Pollock, de Kooning, and Hofmann.[27] Although Rosenberg made no direct mention of Sartre in his essay, Rosenberg's tone was informed by Sartre's existentialist thought. For example, Rosenberg wrote:

> Each stroke had to be a decision and was answered by a new question. By its very nature, action painting is painting in the medium of difficulties.[28]

In addition, when Rosenberg published a slightly revised version of the essay in 1959, he annexed the following footnote to the above-quoted statement:

> . . . Action Painting has extracted the element of decision inherent in all art in that the work is not finished at its beginning but has to be carried forward by an accumulation of 'right' gestures. . . .[29]

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[26] Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *Artnews*, vol. 51, no. 8 (December 1952): 22-23, 48-50.

[27] Rosenberg later explained his conception of Action Painting as follows: "Action Painting was *not* [italics in original] intended to describe Rothko, Still, Gottlieb or Newman. Nor Gorky either. . . . In short, A.P. is not a synonym for Abstract Expressionism, though there is a connection." Letter from Harold Rosenberg to B. H. Friedman, 22 June 1970; quoted in B. H. Friedman, *Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visible* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 197. On the other hand, Rosenberg also stated: "Jackson Pollock was an Action painter, and so was Hans Hofmann, and so is Willem de Kooning. But so also, or very close to being one, is, in his own view, Barnett Newman." Harold Rosenberg, "The Concept of Action in Painting," *New Yorker*, vol. 44, no. 14 (25 May 1968): 116.

[28] Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," 48-49.

[29] Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," in *The Tradition of the New* (New York: Horizon Press, 1959), 33. This passage is an extract from Rosenberg's own statement in Thomas B. Hess and Harold Rosenberg, "Some Points about Action Painting: A Conversation between Thomas B. Hess and

These passages strongly reflect Sartre's idea of existentialism, which makes a point of an individual's ceaseless, active choices and decisions within the personal situation of anxiety, solitude, or despair. All of this, according to Sartre, goes into an individual's struggle to realize himself as a human being.[30]

After the publication of "The American Action Painters," Rosenberg claimed in 1961 that "the article was not 'about' him [Pollock], even if he had played a part in it."[31] (Indeed, in the article, Rosenberg did not name Pollock or any other artists of new American painting that he described.) However, it is unquestionable that Pollock was the main model for Rosenberg's idea of Action Painting——even if the critic had been interested in the notion of "action" far previously.[32] For instance, in "The American Action Painters," Rosenberg gave the subhead, "GETTING INSIDE THE CANVAS," to the section that begins with the following well-known passage:

Harold Rosenberg," in *Action Painting . . . 1958*, exh. cat. (Dallas: Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts, 1958), no pagination.

[30] Sartre, for example, wrote in *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* as follows: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism. . . . Man is at the start a plan which is aware of itself, rather than a patch of moss, a piece of garbage, or a cauliflower; nothing exists prior to this plan; there is nothing in heaven; man will be what he will have planned to be. Not what he will want to be." Sartre, *Existentialism*, trans. Frechtman, 18-19.

[31] Harold Rosenberg, "The Search for Jackson Pollock," *Artnews*, vol. 59, no. 10 (February 1961): 60.

[32] Rosenberg stressed that he "had *published* [italics in original] writings on the subject of action as constitutive of identity as far back as 1932." Rosenberg, "The Search for Jackson Pollock," 60.

> At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act——rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyze or "express" an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event.[33]

In May of the year before Rosenberg published the essay in *Artnews*, Robert Goodnough's article on Pollock appeared in the same magazine.[34] This article, entitled "Pollock Paints a Picture," was accompanied by several black-and-white still photographs of Pollock at work taken by Hans Namuth in 1950. Because of their blurred effect, they dynamically and dramatically showed the artist working on a huge allover poured painting, physically stepping onto the canvas stretched on the studio floor (fig. 4-1). In the next month (June 1951), the color documentary film of Pollock at work produced by Namuth and Paul Falkenberg was publicly shown at the Museum of Modern Art.[35] This film revealed the artist's unique working methods. Rosenberg must have gotten an idea for his writing on Action Painting from these still photographs and live-action film. In fact, Barbara Rose has stated that in "The American Action Painters," Rosenberg was not talking about Pollock's painting or that of any other Abstract

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[33] Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters" (1952), 22.

[34] Robert Goodnough, "Pollock Paints a Picture," *Artnews*, vol. 50, no. 3 (May 1951): 38-41, 60-61.

[35] *Jackson Pollock*, produced by Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg, music by Morton Feldman, narration by Jackson Pollock, 16 mm, 1951.

Expressionist, but "he was describing Namuth's photographs of Pollock."[36]

Rosenberg also wrote in the second paragraph in the section given the subheaded "GETTING INSIDE THE CANVAS" as follows:

> The painter no longer approached his easel with an image in his mind; he went up to it with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him. The image would be the result of this encounter.[37]

This strongly recalls the following passage from Pollock's well-known statement of 1947, "My Painting":

> When I am *in* [italics in original] my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of "get acquainted" period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through. It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well.[38]

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[36] Barbara Rose, "Hans Namuth's Photographs and the Jackson Pollock Myth: Part One: Media Impact and the Failure of Criticism," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 53, no. 7 (March 1979): 113. Rose went on to state: "All the metaphors were decipherable from the photographs: Pollock attacking his canvas spread out on the floor in front of him like a boxing ring or a bullfighting arena, with paintbrush extended aggressively, in the manner of banderillas——Pollock pictured alone, isolated from any frame of reference save his own creation which obviously dwarfed and engulfed him——what images could more poignantly conjure up a literary vision of the existential hero?" Ibid.

[37] Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters" (1952), 22.

[38] Jackson Pollock, "My Painting," *Possibilities*, no. 1 (Winter 1947/48): 79.

Rosenberg was one of the editors of the magazine in which Pollock's "My Painting" appeared and therefore knew the statement well. One might even say that in his "American Action Painters," Rosenberg paraphrased the above-quoted extract from Pollock's "My Painting."

Furthermore, Rosenberg mentioned the following episode in a later part of the same section: "'B. is not modern,' one of the leaders of this mode said to me the other day. 'He works from sketches. That makes him Renaissance.'"[39] Rosenberg revealed in a later year that it was Pollock who had made this remark to him.[40] Pollock had previously described his own work in an interview with William Wright as follows:

> I approach painting in the same sense as one approaches drawing; that is, it's direct. I don't work from drawings, I don't make sketches and drawings and color sketches into a final painting. Painting, I think, today——the more immediate, the more direct——the greater the possibilities of making a direct——of making a statement.[41]

This interview took place in 1950, and it was broadcast, for the first and only time,

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[39] Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters" (1952), 22.

[40] Rosenberg, "The Search for Jackson Pollock," 60. Parenthetically, the painter "B.," whom Pollock had named but to whom Rosenberg referred only with an initial in "The American Action Painters," is probably Willem (Bill) de Kooning. On Pollock's criticism of de Kooning, see the section on de Kooning in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[41] Jackson Pollock, "An Interview with Jackson Pollock," interview by William Wright (1950), in *Jackson Pollock*, by Francis V. O'Connor, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), 81.

on a radio station in Rhode Island in 1951.[42] Although Rosenberg likely did not listen to the broadcast, Pollock probably related the gist of the content to Rosenberg in 1952. Regarding the issue of the sketch, Rosenberg went on to write:

> Here the principle, and the difference from the old painting, is made into a formula. A sketch is the preliminary form of an image the *mind* [italics in original] is trying to grasp. To work from sketches arouses the suspicion that the artist still regards the canvas as a place where the mind records its contents——rather than itself the 'mind' through which the painter thinks by changing a surface with paint.[43]

In fact, according to B. H. Friedman, Pollock regarded Rosenberg's "The American Action Painters" as an essay principally centered on himself.[44]

Existentialist interpretations of Pollock's art were accelerated by the artist's dramatic death——sometimes rumored as a suicide because of Pollock's agony of unproductiveness——in an automobile accident in August 1956. For example, Sam Hunter wrote the following in a strong existentialist strain in the catalogue of Pollock's retrospective exhibition given at the Museum of Modern Art four months after the artist's death:

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[42] Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw, eds., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 4:248.

[43] Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters" (1952), 22.

[44] Friedman, *Energy Made Visible*, 197.

> The drama of his life and of his art was their indivisibility; he lived his painting intensely, with a complete absorption, and he painted his life, especially in an early style when he made his own tormented individualism the theme and substance of his art. The problem of painting was identified in a total way in his mind with the problem of existence. In neither were easy solutions admissible. Happening when it did, death may have come as a deliverance from the deep mental anguish of a paralyzing spiritual crisis.[45]

In this way, Pollock would be set up as the existential hero in American art.

Rosenberg's particular notion of Action Painting also established itself in Pollock studies by the end of the 1950s. In 1958, Allan Kaprow published an article entitled "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock." Interpreting Pollock as an Action Painter, Kaprow argued that Pollock had destroyed "the idea of a 'complete' painting" and created a new kind of art in which "[t]he artist, the spectator and the outer world are . . . interchangeably involved."[46] In 1959, Frank O'Hara published a survey book on Pollock and devoted one whole section to the examination of Pollock's work from the viewpoint of Action Painting. He gave the section the subhead "Action Painting."[47] In the same year, Rosenberg published a collection of his essays and articles entitled *The Tradition of the*

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[45] Sam Hunter, *Jackson Pollock*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1956), 6.

[46] Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *Artnews*, vol. 57, no. 6 (October 1958): 26.

[47] Frank O'Hara, *Jackson Pollock* (New York: George Braziller, 1959), 21-22.

New.[48] "The American Action Painters" of 1952 was included in the book, and the essay attracted the public's attention afresh.

Then, in 1962, Clement Greenberg severely criticized Rosenberg's Action Painting. Greenberg had already briefly demeaned this notion as a "concoction" in his 1955 article on Abstract Expressionism.[49] In this article, presenting the term "American-Type Painting" as a more proper alternative to "Abstract Expressionism" and "Action Painting," Greenberg deeply analyzed the innovativeness of the art of this school from a formalist viewpoint. Then, in his 1962 article with the provocative title, "How Art Writing Earns Its Bad Name," Greenberg intensified his criticism of Rosenberg's Action Painting in response to its spread and his perception of its ill effects.[50] He especially argued that if we follow Rosenberg's theory, a painted picture——which is a result of the accumulation of "acts"——becomes "an indifferent matter," "the unmeaning aftermath of an 'event.'" What are really important for us, according to Greenberg, are the very picture that is painted and the aesthetic judgment of its quality as well. In addition, making special mention of Pollock, Greenberg

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[48] Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New* (New York: Horizon Press, 1959).

[49] Clement Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting" (1955), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 3, *Affirmations and Refusals, 1950-1956*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 217.

[50] Clement Greenberg, "How Art Writing Earns Its Bad Name" (1962), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, *Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 135-44.

sarcastically commented that Rosenberg's Action Painting notion had offered "a plausible explanation" to those who could not understand the artist's allover poured paintings.[51]

After Greenberg's criticism of Rosenberg's Action Painting, Michael Fried and William Rubin each presented excellent formalist monographic studies on Pollock in the second half of the 1960s. At the very beginning of his Pollock article, Fried pointed out Rosenberg's existentialist interpretation of Pollock's art as one of the factors in "[t]he almost complete failure of contemporary art criticism to come to grips with Pollock's accomplishment."[52] A discussion of Fried's subsequent examination of Pollock's work in the article is contained in the introduction and second chapter of this dissertation. Rubin also, in the first of a series of four Pollock articles, asserted that Rosenberg's Action Painting notion was, as applied to Pollock's art, a "falsification" and a "myth."[53] In the subsequent three articles, Rubin examined Pollock's work in the context of the formal development of painting since Impressionism, thereby admirably showing

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[51] For another, more detailed criticism of Rosenberg's Action Painting, see Teruo Fujieda, "Criticizing Action Painting," chap. 6, and "Process of Creation," chap. 7, in *Jackson Pollock*, new ed. (Tokyo: Toshindo, 2007), 107-45.

[52] Michael Fried, "Jackson Pollock," *Artforum*, vol. 4, no. 1 (September 1965): 14. Fried went on to assert: "Pollock was, on the contrary, a painter whose work is always inhabited by a subtle, questing formal intelligence of the highest order, and whose concern in his art was not with any fashionable metaphysics of despair but with making the best paintings of which he was capable." Ibid.

[53] William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition, Part I," *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 6 (February 1967): 16. Rubin's criticism of Rosenberg in this article caused a fierce controversy between the two. See "Letters," *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 8 (April 1967): 6-7; "Letters," *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 9 (May 1967): 4.

the artist's position and significance in the history of modern painting.[54]

In 1967, Rosenberg expressed his objection to these formalist studies on Pollock (especially, Rubin's) in his own article on Pollock by stating: "To picture Pollock as the solver of certain formal 'problems' of art history is precisely to blur his part in the history of painting and the desperate efforts of artists in the twentieth century to revive art's ancient powers."[55] Rosenberg thus continued to discuss Pollock as an Action Painter.[56] However, Rosenberg's Action Painting gradually went out of favor at the forefront of Pollock studies in the above-mentioned formalist current and in the vogue of Jungian readings of Pollock's art in the 1970s.[57] In parallel with that, existentialist interpretations in general of Pollock's art also became banal.

Many years have passed since it became stale to interpret Pollock's art in terms of existentialism. It is exactly because a certain aspect of the relationship

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[54] William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition, Part II," *Artforum*, vol. 5, no. 7 (March 1967): 28-37; "Part III," no. 8 (April 1967): 18-31; "Part IV," no. 9 (May 1967): 28-33.

[55] Harold Rosenberg, "The Mythic Act," *New Yorker*, vol. 43, no. 11 (6 May 1967): 162.

[56] See, for example, Harold Rosenberg, "The Concept of Action in Painting," *New Yorker*, vol. 44. no. 14 (25 May 1968): 116, 118, 120-28.

[57] See, for example, Judith Wolfe, "Jungian Aspects of Jackson Pollock's Imagery," *Artforum*, vol. 11, no. 3 (November 1972): 65-73; David Freke, "Jackson Pollock: A Symbolic Self-Portrait," *Studio International*, vol. 184, no. 950 (December 1972): 217-21; Elizabeth Lawrence Langhorne, "A Jungian Interpretation of Jackson Pollock's Art through 1946" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977).

between Pollock's art and existentialism has been overlooked to date that I am taking up the issue in this chapter. The pivot of the overlooked aspect is the Cut-Out series that is the subject of this dissertation. When we direct our attention to Pollock's cut-outs in the context of existentialism, some interesting issues emerge; namely their relationship with Sartre's chief book, *L'être et le néant*, as well as with the sculpture of Alberto Giacometti, who is often regarded as a representative existentialist artist. By examining these issues, I hope to cast a new light on the relationship between Pollock's art and existentialism.

It is not clear how much Pollock was actually interested in Sartre's existentialism. Stephen Polcari asserts that there is no evidence that Pollock had anything more than a superficial interest in this philosophy.[58] Indeed, no book by or on Sartre was found in Pollock's library, though he owned books by such existentialist writers as Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, and W. H. Auden.[59] Also, as far as is known today, Pollock never wrote or talked about Sartre. However, an article on Pollock, which was published by Parker Tyler in 1950, is worthy of attention in considering Pollock's interest in Sartre. In the article, Tyler examined Pollock's allover poured paintings using such words as "being," "non-being," and "being in non-being":

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[58] Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience*, 356.

[59] Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946); Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis*, trans. A. L. Lloyd (New York: Vanguard Press, 1946); W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue* (New York: Random House, 1947). For a list of the books in Pollock's library, see O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:187-99.

> Pollock's paint flies through space like the elongating bodies of comets and, striking the blind alley of the flat canvas, bursts into frozen visibilities. What are his dense and spangled works but the viscera of an endless non-being of the universe? Something which cannot be recognized as any part of the universe is made to represent the universe in totality of being. So we reach the truly final paradox of these paintings: being in non-being.[60]

Dore Ashton keenly pointed out an existentialist tone in this passage.[61] Going even further, it seems that Tyler's examination in the passage is inspired, specifically, by Sartre's argument on the relationship between "being" and "non-being" in his *L'être et le néant* of 1943. (I will concretely refer to Sartre's argument on this relationship later.) Because Pollock did not know French, it would be improbable that, prompted by Tyler's article, he read Sartre's *L'être et le néant*. (An English translation of the book was not available until 1956, the year of Pollock's death.[62]) However, at the very least, Pollock must have understood the importance of the book. *L'être et le néant* probably came up in conversation among Pollock's colleagues as Sartre's key work in the vogue of existentialism after World War II. Furthermore, a review of the book by William Barrett appeared in 1946 in *Partisan Review*, to which Pollock subscribed. Although

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[60] Parker Tyler, "Jackson Pollock: The Infinite Labyrinth," *Magazine of Art*, vol. 43, no. 3 (March 1950): 93.

[61] Ashton, *The New York School*, 178.

[62] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956). A partial English translation was published in 1953 as: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existential Psychoanalysis*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953).

Barrett wrote a scathing review of the book, he referred to it as "the bible of French Existentialism" and introduced it to readers as "the book by which to approach him [Sartre]."[63] Tyler's article perhaps made Pollock conscious of Sartre's existentialism in connection with his own art. Parenthetically, Pollock had the following conversation with Selden Rodman in 1956:

> [Rodman] "When you start a picture . . . do you have any preconceived visual image in mind, or is the result wholly spontaneous, something that happens in the process of painting?"
>
> [Pollock] . . . "How do I know? I have and I haven't. Something in me knows where I'm going, and——well, painting is a state of being."
>
> [Rodman] "You mean 'being' and 'becoming' are one?"
>
> [Pollock] "Exactly——I guess."
>
> [Rodman] "I don't blame you for guessing. . . . I'm not sure what I mean myself."
>
> [Pollock] "No. This is what I'm trying to get at. Painting is self-discovery. Every good artist paints what he is."[64]

Whatever Pollock's actual understanding of Sartre's existentialism, the relationship between "being" and "becoming" was one of the pivotal issues in Sartre's *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* of 1946.[65] Moreover, Sartre plainly

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[63] William Barrett, "Talent and Career of Jean-Paul Sartre," *Partisan Review*, vol. 13, no. 2 (Spring 1946): 239.

[64] Selden Rodman, "Jackson Pollock," in *Conversations with Artists* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1957), 82.

[65] Sartre wrote in the book: "man first exists, that is, . . . man first of all is

stated in the introduction of *L'être et le néant* from 1943: "being is the being of becoming and due to this fact it is beyond becoming."[66]

I do not intend to examine the influence of Sartre's existentialism on Pollock's cut-outs here. What I would like to direct my attention to is a kind of parallel between Sartre's thinking on human reality in *L'être et le néant* and Pollock's exploration of the human figure in the cut-outs. Sartre asserted in the book: "All consciousness is consciousness *of* [italics in original] something."[67] In other words, "consciousness is born *supported by* [italics in original] a being which is not itself."[68] In this way, Sartre thought that "transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness"[69] and that consciousness is "a revealing intuition of something—*i.e.*, of a transcendent being."[70] Sartre called the

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the being who hurls himself toward a future and who is conscious of imagining himself as being in the future." Sartre, *Existentialism*, trans. Frechtman, 19.

[66] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxvi. The original French text: "l'être est l'être du devenir et de ce fait il est par delà le devenir." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 32-33.

[67] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lx. The original French text: "Toute conscience est conscience *de* [italics in original] quelque chose." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 26.

[68] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxi. The original French text: "la conscience naît *portée sur* [italics in original] un être qui n'est pas elle." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 28.

[69] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxi. The original French text: "la transcendance est structure constitutive de la conscience." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 28.

[70] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxi. The original French text: "intuition révélante de quelque chose, c'est-à-dire d'un être transcendant." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 28.

transcendent being "*l'être-en-soi* (being-in-itself)."[71] Being-in-itself is "the inherence in itself without the least distance"[72] and "beyond the active as it is beyond the passive";[73] equally, it is "beyond negation as beyond affirmation."[74] In short, "[i]t is *itself* [italics in original]."[75] Thus, "consciousness absolutely can not derive being[-in-itself] from anything";[76] and therefore, to consciousness, "the being of the object is pure non-being. It is defined as a *lack* [italics in original]."[77] Sartre called the "pure non-being," which is what consciousness derives, "*l'être-pour-soi* (being-for-itself)."[78] Being of ourselves, of which we are conscious, is also being-for-itself; that is to say, "human reality is before all else

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[71] Sartre defined being-in-itself as "what it is." Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxv.

[72] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxv. The original French text: "l'inhérence à soi sans la moindre distance." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 31.

[73] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxv. The original French text: "par delà l'actif comme le passif." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 31.

[74] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxv. The original French text: "par delà la négation comme l'affirmation." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 31.

[75] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxv. The original French text: "il est *soi* [italics in original]." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 32.

[76] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxvi. The original French text: "elle ne peut absolument le dériver de *rien* [italics in original]." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 33.

[77] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxi. The original French text: "l'être de l'objet est un pur non-être. Il se définit comme un *manque* [italics in original]." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 27.

[78] Sartre defined being-for-itself as "being what it is not and not being what it is." Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, lxv.

its own nothingness."[79] However, Sartre said: "Nothingness is the peculiar possibility of being and its unique possibility."[80] For, being-in-itself is a transcendent plenitude, and is none other than itself. Therefore, being-in-itself includes no possibility or impossibility. On the other hand, being-for-itself is a lack. Therefore, being-for-itself has a possibility of "surpassing [itself] toward what it lacks."[81] To Sartre, man is one who lives in this possibility of nothingness.

In some of his cut-outs, Pollock treated the human figure as, so to speak, nothingness. For example, he cut out a human figure from a sheet of painted cardboard and collaged it on a support to make *Cut-Out Figure* (1948, fig. 0-4); at the same time, he made *Cut Out* with the cardboard from which the human figure had been cut (fig. 1-4). He also made *JPCR1033* (c. 1948, fig. 0-6) and *Rhythmical Dance* (1948, fig. 0-5) in a similar way. What is important here is, as I examined in the second chapter of this dissertation, that *Cut-Out Figure* and *JPCR1033* were created as by-products; that is to say, Pollock's primary concern lay in *Cut Out* and *Rhythmical Dance*, in which the human figure was represented

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[79] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, 88. The original French text: "la réalité-humaine est avant tout son propre néant." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 125.

[80] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, 79. The original French text: "Le néant est la possibilité propre de l'être et son unique possibilité." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 115.

[81] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, 89. The original French text: "son propre dépassement vers ce qu'elle manque." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 125.

in negative form, namely as nothingness. Pollock especially found artistic possibility in the human figure as nothingness in *Cut Out*; and he made some experiments with how to deal with the nothingness. He ultimately superposed *Cut Out* on *Black and White Painting II* (fig. 1-6). In the second chapter, with the term "optical stenciling," I examined that experiment as Pollock's attempt at achieving a new kind of figuration by combining those two works. To interpret that in a different way, we also would be able to say that Pollock was then trying to create a new human image by filling the human-shaped nothingness in *Cut Out* with *Black and White Painting II*.

What I consider above is a kind of parallel between Sartre's existentialism and Pollock's cut-outs, rather than a concrete influence of the former on the latter. That is to say, Pollock did not submissively incorporate Sartre's ideas into his own cut-outs. Instead, in his cut-outs Pollock, as a painter, independently did work that corresponded to Sartre's philosophy, which had a great influence on the intellectual climate of the age. Seen in those terms, I believe that the relation of Pollock's cut-outs to Sartre's existentialism is all the more meaningful for us.

Here I would like to discuss a 1959 exhibition that shows the absence of understanding of the relationship between Pollock's cut-outs and existentialism. In that year, the large group exhibition entitled "New Images of Man" took place at the Museum of Modern Art. This exhibition, which included 102 figural paintings and sculptures created by twenty-three European and American artists during the 1940s and the 1950s, was organized in the context of existentialism. The curator, Peter Selz, wrote in the introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition

as follows:

> The revelations and complexities of mid-twentieth-century life have called forth a profound feeling of solitude and anxiety. The imagery of man which has evolved from this reveals sometimes a new dignity, sometimes despair, but always the uniqueness of man as he confronts his fate. Like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Camus, these artists are aware of anguish and dread, of life in which man—precarious and vulnerable—confronts the precipice, is aware of dying as well as living. . . .
>
> Like the more abstract artists of the period, these imagists take the human situation, indeed the human predicament rather than formal structure, as their starting point. Existence rather than essence is of the greatest concern to them.[82]

Although Selz avoided a direct mention of Sartre in the introduction, the last sentence in the above quotation, "Existence rather than essence is . . ." clearly reflects Sartre's important definition, "existence precedes essence," from his *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* of 1946.[83] Selz included Pollock in the exhibition as part of its core content, together with such artists as Jean Dubuffet and Alberto Giacometti. Selz exhibited four works from Pollock's black pourings of 1951-52, one of which was *Black and White Painting II* (c. 1951, fig. 1-2). Selz probably selected it based on the inverted, strange human image that is depicted in the work. However, the work had a more remarkable aspect concerned with the exhibition's concept, namely the above-examined relationship

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[82] Peter Selz, introduction to *New Images of Man*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1959), 11.

[83] Sartre, *Existentialism*, trans. Frechtman, 15. The original French text: "l'existence précède l'essence." Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, 17.

with *Cut Out* (fig. 1-6). Selz missed this aspect. Even if that is pardonable——because *Cut Out* was detached from *Black and White Painting II* by Lee Krasner soon after Pollock's death in 1956——at the very least I find the following fact disappointing: though Selz dealt with the issue of "new images of man" in the context of existentialism, he directed his attention only to Pollock's black pourings and did not include any cut-outs. As we saw above, Pollock's Cut-Out series, in which the artist worked on the human figure with a new method and a new idea, has a notable connection to existentialism.

As previously mentioned, it seems that Pollock did not own any book by or on Sartre. However, he did own a copy of the catalogue of Alberto Giacometti's show held at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York from January 19 to February 14, 1948.[84] An English translation of Sartre's "La Recherche de l'absolu"[85] served as an introduction to this catalogue.[86] Although the show covered the artist's whole career from the 1920s to the 1940s, including his important Surrealist period, Sartre focused on the artist's most recent elongated and gaunt human-figure sculptures (fig. 4-2), examining them in the context of his own brand of existentialism. According to Sartre, Giacometti's aim was to sculpt

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[84] O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:190.

[85] Jean-Paul Sartre, "La Recherche de l'absolu," *Les Temps Modernes*, vol. 3, no. 28 (January 1948): 1153-63.

[86] Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Search for the Absolute," introduction to *Alberto Giacometti: Exhibition of Sculptures, Paintings, Drawings*, exh. cat. (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1948), 2-22.

the full form of the human being in the real world. Giacometti destroyed everything and began again from scratch, searching for the absolute. Sartre thus found "the real beginning and absolute source of gesture"[87] in Giacometti's elongated sculptures with rough textures. Sartre stated that Giacometti was a sculptor who was able to give his material "the only truly human unity: the unity of the Act."[88] Sartre also interjected the phrase "nothingness and being" from his *L'être et le néant* of 1943: "What bothers him [Giacometti] is that these moving outlines, always half-way between nothingness and being, always modified, bettered, destroyed and begun once more, setting out at last on their own and for good, are commencing a social career far from him. He will forget them. The marvellous unity of this life lies in its insistent search for the absolute."[89] This text by Sartre, which appeared in a catalogue of an exhibition held at a major gallery in New York, seems to have been received by Abstract Expressionists as a significant existentialist statement.[90] Quoting Sam Hunter, Sally Yard wrote:

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[87] Sartre, "The Search for the Absolute," 14. The original French text: "commencement premier, source absolue du geste." Sartre, "La Recherche de l'absolu," 1161.

[88] Sartre, "The Search for the Absolute," 14. The original French text: "la seule unité vraiment humaine: l'unité de l'acte." Sartre, "La Recherche de l'absolu," 1161.

[89] Sartre, "The Search for the Absolute," 4-5. The original French text: "Ce qui le gêne, c'est que ces esquisses mouvantes, toujours à mi-chemin entre le néant et l'être, toujours modifiées, améliorées, détruites et recommencées, se mettent à exister seules et pour de bon, entreprennent loin de lui une carrière sociale. Il va les oublier. L'unité merveilleuse de cette vie, c'est son intransigeance dans la recherche de l'absolu." Sartre, "La Recherche de l'absolu," 1156.

[90] See Sally Yard, *Willem de Kooning: The First Twenty-Six Years in New*

"Critics and artists alike reacted to the show and to Sartre's prose, 'similar in its poetic cadences, despairing mood, and exaltation of the artist-hero to Rosenberg's later essay on Action Painting.'"[91]

Willem de Kooning was one of the Abstract Expressionists who saw the 1948 Giacometti show. Elaine de Kooning, who visited the show with him, described the impact that it had on him as follows: "[the show] knocked him out—it was crucial; it looked like the work of a civilization—not one man."[92] Barnett Newman is also said to have seen the show. According to Thomas B. Hess, Newman made the following comment on Giacometti's work: "[Giacometti's elongated human figures] looked as if they were made out of spit—new things, with no form, no texture, but somehow filled. . . . I took my hat off to him."[93] Referring to this comment, Hess pointed out the similarity between the perpendicular, roughly painted stripe ("zip") in Newman's *Onement I* (1948, fig. 3-34),[94] and Giacometti's vertically elongated plaster human figures with rough textures from the 1920s (which were exhibited at the artist's 1948 show together with the likewise elongated human figures from 1947).[95] Later, Ann

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York (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), 226-27, n. 245.

[91] Yard, *Willem de Kooning*, 226-27, n. 245.

[92] Elaine de Kooning, interview by Sally Yard, 5 August 1979; quoted in Yard, *Willem de Kooning*, 181.

[93] Quoted in Thomas B. Hess, *Barnett Newman* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1971), 57.

[94] Newman undertook this work on January 29, 1948; namely, ten days after the opening of the Giacometti show.

Gibson examined the connection between those two artists' work more deeply, entering into both perceptual and metaphysical matters in addition to formal ones.[96]

Pollock also probably saw the 1948 Giacometti show. It seems that he had a special interest in the Swiss sculptor in those days—in fact, Pollock owned a copy of the catalogue of the Giacometti show that was next held at the same gallery in 1950,[97] as well as that of the 1948 show. As previously noted, originally Pollock was deeply involved in the art of sculpture. And, as a painter, he was consistently concerned with the human figure. Giacometti's elongated and gaunt human-figure sculptures evoke a feeling of loneliness, angst, or affliction in the viewer's mind, which corresponded well to the atmosphere of what W. H. Auden called "the age of anxiety." Probably for these multiple reasons, Giacometti's art spoke to Pollock's heart.

In fact, it seems that Giacometti's human figures, exhibited at the artist's one-person show in January-February 1948, exerted an influence on Pollock's recovery of the human figure in his cut-outs, undertaken supposedly a few months later. After having realized non-figurative painting with the allover poured pictures in 1947, Pollock sought a new kind of figuration in the next year. At the

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[95] Hess, *Barnett Newman*, 57. See also Thomas B. Hess, *Barnett Newman* (New York: Walker and Company, 1969), 39.

[96] Ann Gibson, "Barnett Newman and Alberto Giacometti," *Issue, A Journal for Artists*, no. 3 (Spring/Summer 1985): 2-9.

[97] *Alberto Giacometti: Sculpture, Paintings, and Drawings*, exh. cat. (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1950); O'Connor and Thaw, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 4:190.

time, as I closely examined in the second chapter of this dissertation, he obtained a hint about a method for it from Matisse's *Jazz*. In parallel with that, when he saw Giacometti's human figures in the same year, his attention must have been strongly re-directed to the human figure by Giacometti's work: it deeply explored the issue of human existence in the medium of sculpture and presented a new image of human beings corresponding to the atmosphere of the time. Perhaps partly because of this, Pollock newly worked on the human figure in his cut-outs. The "Henri Matisse——*Jazz*, Tériade editor" show that was mentioned in the second chapter, as well as the Giacometti show, were held in the same district in Manhattan during roughly the same period.[98] Pollock might have even seen Matisse's *Jazz* and Giacometti's sculptures on the same day.

There is another significant aspect of the possible influence of the 1948 Giacometti show on Pollock's cut-outs that I would like to discuss. This aspect is concerned not with Giacometti's oeuvre, but rather with the catalogue of the show, which was designed in a unique way. In the catalogue, a photograph of Giacometti's plaster study for *Tall Figure*, placed in the artist's studio, appears as the frontispiece on the first page (fig. 4-3). In conjunction, a long vertical rectangle is cut away from the middle of the stiff-paper cover. Because of this, the catalogue is contrived so that the narrow human figure in the frontispiece will show through the cut-out part in the front cover when the catalogue is closed (fig.

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[98] Matisse's show was held at Pierre Berès, Inc. at 6 West 56th Street from January 20 to February 3, 1948. Giacometti's was held at the Pierre Matisse Gallery at 41 East 57th Street from January 19 to February 14, 1948.

4-4). This device recalls Pollock's experiments with a backing for *Cut Out*. In 1949, he put a drawing of a human-figure (*JPCR785*) under the cut-away cardboard for *Cut Out* (fig. 1-7). In 1956, he put a human-figure painting (*Black and White Painting II*) under the same cut-away cardboard (fig. 1-6). Pollock might have gotten the idea for those experiments from the unique binding of the catalogue of the 1948 Giacometti show.[99]

Sartre wrote in his text for the catalogue of the 1948 Giacometti show as follows:

> But Giacometti remains dissatisfied. He could collect his wager at any time. He has only to decide that he has won. But this he cannot resolve to do, he puts off the decision from hour to hour and from day to day; sometimes, in the course of a night's work, he is ready to admit victory; in the morning everything is broken. . . . The end is achieved; now one must do it a little better. And then a little better still; this new Achilles will never catch the tortoise. . . . it is thanks to what he has done that he forms the ideal in whose name he judges it to be imperfect. He will never be finished with it; this is simply because a man is always beyond what he has done. "When I have finished," he says, "I shall write, I shall paint, I shall enjoy myself." But he will die before finishing.[100]

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[99] The design of this catalogue probably drew Newman's attention, too. Ann Gibson pointed out the similarity between the design of the catalogue and the composition of Newman's *Onement I* of 1948 (fig. 3-34). Gibson, "Barnett Newman and Alberto Giacometti," 5. See also Armin Zweite, *Barnett Newman: Paintings, Sculptures, Works on Paper*, trans. John Brogden (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 1999), 227-28.

[100] Sartre, "The Search for the Absolute," 20. The original French text: "Pourtant Giacometti n'est pas content. Il pourrait gagner la partie sur l'heure: il n'a qu'à décider qu'il l'a gagnée. Mais il ne peut s'y résoudre, il remet sa décision d'heure en heure, de jour en jour; parfois, au cours d'une nuit de travail, il est tout près d'avouer sa victoire; au matin tout est brisé. . . . Le terme est là, pour

In 1970, Harold Rosenberg wrote: "In Action painting the pressing issue for artists was: When is a painting finished? Answer: At exactly the end of the artist's lifetime. Acting to the end, instead of waiting for the end."[101] These statements by two existentialists recall the following words by Newman in an artists' session held at Studio 35 in 1950: "I think the idea of a 'finished' picture is a fiction. I think a man spends his whole life-time painting one picture or working on one piece of sculpture. The question of stopping is really a decision of moral considerations."[102] In fact, the issue of when a painting is finished was one of the central concerns of many Abstract Expressionists. In the above session, many other artists in addition to Newman, such as James Brooks, Adolph Gottlieb, de Kooning, and Ad Reinhardt, eagerly exchanged their opinions in response to the question of "How do you know when a work is finished?" raised by Robert Motherwell.[103]

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l'atteindre il faut mieux faire. Voilà qui est fait: à présent il faut faire *un peu* [italics in original] mieux. Et puis *un tout petit peu* [italics in original] mieux: ce nouvel Achille n'atteindra jamais la tortue. . . . c'est grâce à son œuvre qu'il conçoit l'idéal au nom duquel il la juge imparfaite. Il n'en finira pas; simplement parce qu'un homme est toujours au delà de ce qu'il fait. «Quand j'aurai fini, dit-il, j'écrirai, je peindrai, je me donnerai du bon temps». Mais il mourra avant de finir." Sartre, "La Recherche de l'absolu," 1162-63.

[101] Harold Rosenberg, *Act and the Actor: Making the Self* (New York and Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1970), 9.

[102] "Artists' Session at Studio 35, 1950," in *Abstract Expressionism: Creators and Critics, An Anthology*, ed. Clifford Ross (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 214.

[103] "Artists' Session at Studio 35, 1950," 212-15. For example, Brooks stated: "[A painting] can't be brought to a stop. I think you have to abandon it

Although Pollock did not participate in the session, the concern of "When is a painting finished?" was, of course, also important for him. To confirm this, Lee Krasner told B. H. Friedman with regard to Pollock's black pourings of 1951-52: "[The determinations of tops-bottoms and margins of works] were difficult sessions. His signing the canvases was even worse. I'd think everything was settled——tops, bottoms, margins——and then he'd have last-minute thoughts and doubts. He hated signing. There's something so final about a signature."[104] The works, which Pollock gave to his brother Sanford McCoy, are also a case in point. According to Sanford's wife, Arloie McCoy, they once asked Pollock to sign the unsigned ones among those works. However, Pollock was reluctant in spite of his brother's request and signed only one of them.[105] These two anecdotes indicate that even after he had "finished" a work, Pollock often wanted to retain the possibility of modification by leaving it unsigned.

Cut Out was also left unsigned; or rather, Pollock could not complete the work as a practical matter (figs. 1-1 and 1-6). He continued to work on it literally until the end of his lifetime without reaching a definite conclusion. In *L'être et le néant*, Sartre stated: "Human reality is its own surpassing toward what

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while it is still alive and moving, and so I can't consider a painting 'finished.'" Ibid., 213.

[104] Lee Krasner Pollock, "An Interview with Lee Krasner Pollock by B. H. Friedman," in *Jackson Pollock: Black and White*, exh. cat. (New York: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1969), 10.

[105] Jeffrey Potter, *To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1985), 268.

it lacks,"[106] or in other words, human reality is "a perpetual surpassing toward a coincidence with itself."[107] However, according to Sartre, such a coincidence is never realized——for "man is constantly outside of himself; in projecting himself, in losing himself outside of himself, he makes for man's existing."[108] Within the context of existentialism, Pollock's inability to complete *Cut Out* seems pregnant with meaning.

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[106] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, 89. The original French text: "la réalité-humaine est son propre dépassement vers ce qu'elle manque." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 125.

[107] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Barnes, 89. The original French text: "dépassement perpétuel vers une coïncidence avec soi." Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (2006), 125-26.

[108] Sartre, *Existentialism*, trans. Frechtman, 59-60. The original French text: "l'homme est constamment hors de lui-même, c'est en se projetant et en se perdant hors de lui qu'il fait exister l'homme." Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, 92.

Chapter 5

The Cut-Outs and the Artist's Career

> Then it had not been merely the stars to which he had aspired on that June night. He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendor.
> ––F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*[1]

I have examined the relationship of Pollock's cut-outs of 1948-56 to Henri Matisse's *Jazz* and paper cut-outs (chapter 2); to the work of Lee Krasner, Willem de Kooning, and Alfonso Ossorio (chapter 3); and to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism (chapter 4). Pollock incorporated into his cut-outs the same variety of concerns he pursued within his own work from its earliest period on. In this respect, perhaps it is possible to regard the Cut-Out series as something of a synthesis of the artist's career. In this final chapter, I would like to look at this issue from the perspectives of technique, image, and subject matter.

As I closely examined in the second chapter, technically Pollock's cut-outs reflect his deep engagement with the art of sculpture during the late 1920s and the early 1930s. They also closely relate to his continuous practice of, so to speak, "masking," in his pictorial work between 1943 and 1946. An untitled

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[1] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Bantam Books, 1946), 87.

work from 1944, the catalogue raisonné number of which is 977 (fig. 5-1), shows Pollock's exemplary use of the masking technique. In this work, after having drawn with black ink and painted with yellowish green and brown watercolor on paper, Pollock overpainted much of the created image with black ink. What is more, he covered almost all of the rest of the picture surface with the same black ink. Thus, while the reworked image emerges perceptually as figure, it underlies the black ground in physical terms. In many other works he made between 1943 and 1946, such as *The She-Wolf* (1943), *Totem Lesson 2* (1945, fig. 5-2), and *Composition on Paper II* (c. 1946), Pollock physically reversed the customary relationship between figure and ground to a greater or lesser degree by the same method. Then, as Jordan Benjamin Kantor has pointed out, Pollock radicalized this reversal in *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4), *Rhythmical Dance* (1948, fig. 0-5), and *Out of the Web* (1949, fig. 0-8) by employing the cut-out technique.[2]

Cut Out is, furthermore, concerned with Pollock's experience of working with David Alfaro Siqueiros in 1936. In that year, Siqueiros founded the Experimental Workshop near Union Square in Manhattan. He did this in order to perform technical experiments for posters, banners, and floats to use for various

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[2] In his examination of *Totem Lesson 2* of 1945 (fig. 5-2), Kantor stated as follows: "Pollock achieved figuration through a negative process of 'masking.' . . . This device, which Pollock commonly used in the 1940s——and eventually developed as a more radical negative figuration in works like *Out of the Web: Number 7, 1949*, 1949 and *Untitled (Cut-Out)* [*sic*], c. 1948-50——reversed the conventional relation between figure and ground." Jordan Benjamin Kantor, "Jackson Pollock's Late Paintings, 1951-55" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2003), 144-45.

political events such as May Day, as well as for his own easel paintings.[3] According to Axel Horn, who worked with Pollock at the workshop, the technique of spraying lacquer through stencils was attempted there, as well as many other novel techniques, including the dripping/pouring technique that Pollock would develop in his own work later.[4] When he cut out the middle of the cardboard for *Cut Out* in a human shape, Pollock unquestionably saw what was left and created there (fig. 1-4), not only as a "cut-out" but also as a "stencil." As I mentioned in the first chapter, Pollock created the human images in *JPCR783* (c. 1948-49, fig. 1-11) and *JPCR785* (c. 1948-49, fig. 1-8) probably by using the cut-away cardboard for *Cut Out* as a stencil. Furthermore, as I explained with the term "optical stenciling" in the second chapter, Pollock tried a new kind of figuration by combining the cut-away cardboard for *Cut Out* with *Black and White Painting*

[3] For a detailed study of Siqueiros' Experimental Workshop, see Laurance P. Hurlburt, "The Siqueiros Experimental Workshop: New York, 1936," *Art Journal*, vol. 35, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 237-46. On the relationship between Siqueiros and Pollock, see Irene Herner, "Siqueiros/Pollock: Nets," trans. Magalí Morales, in *Primicia. 9 obras maestras de David Alfaro Siqueiros que coleccionistas privados prestan a la Kunsthalle de Düsseldorf, Alemania con motivo de la gran exposición: Siqueiros/Pollock, Pollock/Siqueiros*, exh. cat. (Mexico City: Galería Arvil, 1995), no pagination; Jürgen Harten, *Siqueiros/Pollock, Pollock/Siqueiros*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf; Köln: DuMont, 1995).

[4] "Spurred on by Siqueiros, whose energy and torrential flow of ideas and new projects stimulated us all to a high pitch of activity, everything became material for our investigations. For instance; lacquer opened up enormous possibilities in the application of color. We sprayed through stencils and friskets, embedded wood, metal, sand and paper. We used it in thin glazes or built it up into thick globs. We poured it, dripped it, spattered it, hurled it at the picture surface. It dried quickly, almost instantly, and could be removed at will even though thoroughly dry and hard. What emerged was an endless variety of accidental effects. Siqueiros soon constructed a theory and system of 'controlled accidents.'" Axel Horn, "Jackson Pollock: The Hollow and the Bump," *Carleton Miscellany*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 85-86.

II (fig. 1-6). Although I examined there the direct influence of Matisse's *Jazz*, printed by the stenciling technique, in those attempts by Pollock, the technique was also what he himself had already experimented with in his early period.

In order to look at the Cut-Out series from the additional perspective of image, I would like to consider some of Pollock's possible sources. Around 1946, Byron Browne (1907-61) painted a work that consists of six compositions and was titled *Circus Figures* (fig. 5-3). This work——specifically, the two compositions in the upper- and lower-middle sections——is interesting in several respects in connection with Pollock's cut-outs. First, in both compositions, Browne created a figure in negative form by the masking technique. Next, in the same two compositions, Browne depicted a figure that seems to be a clown. Those figures have a crescent shape on their heads, probably representing a hat. In this respect, those figures recall the ones depicted in Pollock's *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4) and *Cut-Out Figure* (1948, fig. 0-4), the heads of which are rendered in half-moon shape. The similarity between the figure in the lower-middle section of Browne's *Circus Figures* and the figures in those two cut-outs of Pollock is most striking in that all of them have a thick trunk, outstretched arms, and, what is more, twisted bodies that appear to be dancing. Since Pollock personally knew Browne, he may have seen the latter's *Circus Figures*.[5] This perhaps tempts one to think of Browne's

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[5] A mention of Browne is found in a letter that Pollock sent to friend and painter Louis Bunce in June of the year Browne made *Circus Figures*: "[Max] Spivak is working toward abstraction. Byron Brown [*sic*] continues along at the

possible influence on Pollock. However, Pollock had already begun to use the masking technique a few years before, as we previously saw. And as for the figures with heads depicted in peculiar shapes in *Cut Out* and *Cut-Out Figure*, they essentially came from Pollock's own subconscious repertory of images, as will be examined below.

During treatment for his alcoholism, Pollock underwent psychoanalysis by a Jungian doctor, Joseph L. Henderson, from early 1939 through the summer of 1940. During that period, Pollock submitted about eighty drawings to Henderson, who used them as an aid to his treatment of Pollock.[6] In the lower-left part of the untitled work among them, the catalogue raisonné number of which is 525 (c. 1939-40, fig. 5-4, hereafter *JPCR525*), Pollock drew a female figure with a crescent shape bisecting her neck. M. Esther Harding's Jungian study on the relationship between the moon and the feminine principle, *Woman's Mysteries* (first published in 1935), included a reproduction of a drawing by a patient of the author that illustrated five different phases of the moon-goddess (fig. 5-5).[7] The above-mentioned figure in Pollock's *JPCR525* holds a striking similarity to the

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same slick pace. N.Y. seems to be the only place in america [*sic*] where painting (in the real sense) can come thru." Jackson Pollock to Louis Bunce, undated (postmarked 2 June 1946), Louis Bunce Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 3999, frame 17.

[6] For a detailed study on the relationship between Pollock and Henderson and on those drawings, see Claude Cernuschi, *Jackson Pollock: "Psychoanalytic" Drawings*, exh. cat. (Durham, North Carolina and London: Duke University Press; Durham: Duke University Museum of Art, 1992).

[7] M. Esther Harding, *Woman's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern*, 1st ed. (London, New York, and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1935), 250, fig. 43.

far-left figure in the illustration in that they are both female and both support a crescent shape on or behind their necks. Although Harding's *Woman's Mysteries* was not found in Pollock's library, it is highly likely that he knew the book through Helen Marot, who was an amateur psychologist with a deep interest in Jung and who was a close friend of Pollock from around 1934 to her sudden death in 1940.[8] (As Ellen G. Landau has pointed out, Pollock wrote down the titles of a review and a lecture/article by Harding in a list of Jungian lectures delivered at meetings of the Analytical Psychology Club of New York between 1938 and 1940, as well as Jungian papers published in volumes 1-4 [1936-38, 1938-39, 1939, 1940] of *Papers of the Analytical Psychology Club of New York*.[9] Henderson commented on the list: "I feel quite sure that Pollock's knowledge of the APC [Analytical Psychology Club] programs came from Helen Marot."[10]) In any event, as Philip Leider has pointed out, it seems that the illustration in Harding's *Woman's Mysteries* is the main iconographical source of the female figure with a crescent shape drawn in Pollock's *JPCR525*.[11]

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[8] It was Marot who referred Pollock to Henderson.

[9] Ellen G. Landau, "Jackson Pollock: 'The True Painter's Approach,'" in *Jackson Pollock*, exh. cat. (Munich and New York: ACA Galleries, 1993), 27, n. 7. For the list, see Francis Valentine O'Connor, ed., *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works*, supplement no. 1 (New York: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 1995), 64-65, figs. 8 and 9.

[10] Joseph L. Henderson to Francis Valentine O'Connor, 12 May 1994; quoted in O'Connor, *Catalogue Raisonné*, supplement no. 1, 63.

[11] See Philip Leider, "Surrealist and Not Surrealist in the Art of Jackson Pollock and His Contemporaries," in *The Interpretive Link: Abstract Surrealism into Abstract Expressionism, Works on Paper, 1938-1948*, ed. Paul Schimmel, exh.

According to Lee Krasner, "the moon had a tremendous effect on him [Pollock]. . . . He spoke of the moon quite often."[12] Pollock's deep interest in the moon frequently appeared in his art, too. After *JPCR525* of around 1939-40, Pollock repeatedly worked on an image or motif of the moon-goddess——or, to use his expression, the moon-woman——during the first half of the 1940s, not only in drawing but also in paintings such as *The Mad Moon-Woman* (1941), *The Moon-Woman* (1942, fig. 5-6), and *The Moon-Woman Cuts the Circle* (c. 1943). All of those three Moon-Woman paintings were exhibited at Pollock's first one-person show, held at Art of This Century in 1943, and constituted an important part of the show. The moon-woman depicted in 1943's *The Moon-Woman Cuts the Circle* does not possess a distinct moon shape; and as for 1941's *The Mad Moon-Woman*, we cannot even recognize an image of the moon-woman because the whole picture is frenziedly chaotic. However, in 1942's *The Moon-Woman* (fig. 5-6), Pollock clearly painted the moon-woman with a black half-moon head.[13] (This image seems to be derived from the second figure from the left in the illustration from Harding's *Woman's Mysteries* [fig. 5-5].) This type of moon-woman image reemerged in Pollock's *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4) and *Cut-Out Figure* (1948, fig. 0-4). These later manifestations came from his subconscious in more abstracted form, when he newly explored figuration in the midst of his

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cat. (Newport Beach, Calif.: Newport Harbor Art Museum, 1986), 43-44.

[12] Lee Krasner, "Jackson Pollock at Work: An Interview with Lee Krasner," interview by Barbara Rose, *Partisan Review*, vol. 47, no. 1 (1980): 86.

[13] Pollock painted a similar black half-moon head in the left figure in *Male and Female* from the same year, too (fig. 3-5).

non-figurative period——even though the symbolism of the moon-woman was perhaps lost there. Pollock also depicted a large figure with a half-moon head in *Out of the Web* (1949, fig. 0-8), which he created in the next year. In 1951, Pollock wrote of his black pourings: "I've had a period of drawing on canvas in black——with some of my early images coming thru."[14] In fact, the latter part of his statement, "with some of my early images coming thru," is also true of those cut-outs.

Lastly, I would like to examine the relation of Pollock's cut-outs to his career up until that time from the viewpoint of subject matter. Pollock depicted two human figures in negative form in *Rhythmical Dance* (1948, fig. 0-5), and in positive form in its companion work, *JPCR1033* (c. 1948, fig. 0-6). Those figures are so abstract that their genders are unclear. However, in each work, Pollock probably intended one of the two figures to represent a male and the other to represent a female. The reason this seems plausible is that "male and female" was one of Pollock's major subjects and it frequently recurred in his art.

Around 1934-38, Pollock made an untitled painting that consists of four independent compositions and is known today as *Panel with Four Designs* (fig. 1-16). We can see the germ of Pollock's male-female subject in this painting. In the far-left composition (*Panel A*, fig. 5-7), Pollock, in my view, depicted an

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[14] Letter from Jackson Pollock to Alfonso Ossorio and Ted Dragon, 7 June 1951, in *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works*, ed. Francis Valentine O'Connor and Eugene Victor Thaw (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 4:261, doc. 99.

image of a skeleton-like couple embracing and kissing. The almond shape of pale reddish-brown, painted at the top of the picture, represents the head of a bald man. The roundish trapezoid-like shape of the same color, painted in a slightly lower position to the left side of the man's head, represents the head of a woman with semi-long hair. The long white horizontal shape, washed with green, right under the woman's head, probably represents her right arm placed around the man's left shoulder. According to Lawrence Alloway, Lee Krasner also found a "male and female" subject in *Panel A*.[15] On the other hand, Alloway himself found in *Panel A* an image of an alchemist or researcher who is bent over a desk or apparatus, rather than an image of a couple.[16] Although Alloway's reading is interesting, it is possible to buttress my reading of the image of the same panel by comparing it with Pollock's untitled drawing from around 1939-42, the catalogue raisonné number of which is 635 (fig. 5-8, hereafter *JPCR635*). Pollock clearly drew a couple in the upper-right part of the work. A bald man stands at the right, while a slightly shorter woman stands at the left. They are embracing with the woman's right arm placed around the man's left shoulder, and they are kissing. Pollock thus repeated the image of *Panel A* in a more representational form in *JPCR635*, which he made a little later.

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[15] "Lee Krasner Pollock considers it might be a 'male and female' subject." Lawrence Alloway's note on *Panel A* in *Jackson Pollock: Paintings, Drawings and Watercolours from the Collection of Lee Krasner Pollock*, by Lawrence Alloway, exh. cat. (London: Marlborough Fine Art, 1961), no pagination.

[16] "My reading tends towards a simplified figure bent over a desk or apparatus. Given Pollock's romantic interests an alchemist (?) may be intended or an image of research (?) influenced by the themes of Mexican murals." Ibid.

Pollock's male-female subject entered a significant stage in 1942. In a painting entitled *Male and Female* (c. 1942, fig. 3-5), Pollock depicted two large totem-like male and female figures. The femininity of the figure standing on the left side is indicated by long showy eyelashes and curvilinear body lines. In her abdomen, Pollock painted an oval contoured in red, which suggests a womb. The male figure on the right side has a triangle contoured in yellow around his crotch, which suggests a penis. Furthermore, Pollock splashed white paint and poured black paint right under the yellow triangle, which suggests ejaculation. However, the sexes of these two figures are, as many scholars have pointed out, ambiguous; or rather, they are androgynous. The seemingly male figure on the right side also has two pronounced breasts painted in pale pink. As for the "female" figure on the left side, it is possible to regard the long black S-shape, starting right above the red oval in the abdomen, as a penis; and to regard the red oval not as a womb but as a scrotum in its positional relationship with the penis. What is remarkable here is that Pollock came to take up the subject of male and female in a distinct and fully conscious way by titling this painting *Male and Female*.[17] As a great factor in this painting's development, Ellen G. Landau pointed out the deepening of Pollock's relationship with Krasner. Their romance started at the end of 1941, and they began to live together in the fall of 1942. Landau stated: "Since this

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[17] When this work was exhibited in Pollock's first one-person show, Clement Greenberg commented on the title as "pretentious." Clement Greenberg, "Review of Exhibitions of Marc Chagall, Lyonel Feininger, and Jackson Pollock" (1943), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 1, *Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 165.

new commitment represented Pollock's first emotionally and intimately successful female partnership, it seems quite natural that he would choose at this time to explore in more depth the masculine/feminine theme."[18] With *Male and Female* of 1942, the "male and female" theme became one of the major subjects in Pollock's art.

In the next year, he made a painting entitled *Male and Female in Search of a Symbol* (1943, fig. 3-8). As I mentioned in the third chapter, Pollock painted this work in order to refute the words of James Johnson Sweeny, who had called Pollock "undisciplined." It is worthy to note that he again took up a male-female subject in this work, which had special personal significance. Then, around 1945, Pollock depicted a copulating couple of Native Americans in a painting entitled *Two* (fig. 2-15). The right-hand female figure pushes her buttocks toward the left-hand male figure, looking back at him. The male figure inserts his penis into the female figure. Furthermore, in 1946's painting entitled *The Child Proceeds* (fig. 5-9), Pollock depicted a man and a pregnant woman. The swollen abdomen of the right-hand female figure is rendered in section, where a fetus is visible. The orifice on the left side of her abdomen represents a vagina, into which the left-hand male figure inserts his penis.

Pollock created *Rhythmical Dance* (1948, fig. 0-5) and *JPCR1033* (c. 1948, fig. 0-6) against the background of the above-examined development of his male-female subject. When Pollock created two other works in the Cut-Out

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[18] Ellen G. Landau, *Jackson Pollock* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 112.

series, *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4) and *Cut-Out Figure* (1948, fig. 0-4), his interest in a male-female subject was perhaps also at work. In the yin and yang of Chinese philosophy, the universe is dualistically perceived with two concepts: yin as the passive/negative female principle and yang as the active/positive male principle. Yin and yang are in an opposing but complementary relationship. In *Cut Out* and its companion work, *Cut-Out Figure*, Pollock created a figure in the same shape, in negative form in the former and in positive form in the latter. Based on these oppositions in Chinese philosophy, we should be able to regard *Cut Out* as yin and *Cut-Out Figure* as yang. Pollock must have known of the yin-yang because it is sometimes mentioned in Jungian psychology.[19] In fact, Pollock even drew many shapes that resemble the yin and yang symbol (fig. 5-10) in one of the drawings that he submitted to Joseph L. Henderson (c. 1939-40, catalogue raisonné number 521v, fig. 5-11). Taking all of this into account, we should be able to say that *JPCR1033* and *Rhythmical Dance*, which were created likewise in a positive-negative relationship, include the subject of male and female at two levels.

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[19] For example, in *Woman's Mysteries*, the book that included the illustration of five phases of the moon-goddess (fig. 5-5) that seems to have been the main iconographical source of Pollock's moon-woman images, M. Esther Harding wrote the following: "In the [*sic*] Chinese philosophy the feminine principle, *Yin* [italics in original], stands in direct opposition to the masculine principle, *Yang* [italics in original]. Yang is the bright, hot, powerful, creative energy, while Yin is the dark, moist, shadowy and receptive power which is also creative because it brings to birth and manifestation the creative stirrings of the yang energy. The yin is said to be of equal power with the yang because it brings *all* [italics in original] his stirrings into manifestation." Harding, *Woman's Mysteries*, 82. Harding also discussed woman as yin on the page opposing the one on which the above illustration appears.

Pollock also depicted a male and a female in another work in the Cut-Out series, *Shadows* (1948, fig. 0-7). Unlike the figures depicted in *Cut Out*, *Cut-Out Figure*, *Rhythmical Dance*, and *JPCR1033*, the middle and right figures in *Shadows* are clearly sexualized. A sharp triangle, to represent a penis, appears between the legs of the middle figure. A pair of half-ellipses, to represent breasts, appears in the upper-half of the body of the right figure. The middle male figure raises his left leg and faces the right female figure. The female figure raises her left arm high and wriggles her body as if experiencing delight. They seem just about to hug. However, Pollock depicted one or two more figures in this picture; therefore, the subject seems to be different from "male and female," as will be examined below.

Pollock made an untitled painting, known as *Woman* today (c. 1930-33, fig. 5-12), in the early 1930s. In this work, he painted a large, fleshy female figure dominating the center of the picture. Pollock obviously projected the image of his mother, Stella May McClure, on the female figure. He also painted, around the central female figure, several smaller figures that appear to obey her and to be protected by her. In this scenario, probably Pollock projected not only his mother's image on the female figure but also his family's image on the whole picture (fig. 5-13). Pollock also made an untitled painting, known as *Family Scene* today (c. 1934-36 fig. 5-14), in the mid-1930s. In this work, he painted a peasant family that reflects his memory of his own family during his childhood growing up in the West. Pollock thus painted a family subject at least twice during the several years after he had left his home in Los Angeles in 1930 to go to

New York. In *Shadows* (1948, fig. 0-7), Pollock depicted a figure with a thick trunk and an ample buttock on the left side of the picture. These characteristics recall the female figure suggestive of Stella in *Woman*. In fact, I believe that Pollock again implicitly worked on a family subject in *Shadows*. But, setting aside for now whom the other figures in *Shadows* represent, why did Pollock's early subject of family reappear in this picture in 1948? One possible trigger might have been that Pollock's nephew Jason was born to Pollock's brother and sister-in-law with whom Stella lived, Sanford and Arloie McCoy, on January 26 of that year. Having a nephew must have made Pollock again strongly conscious of the ties of the family. And the attention to Jason's birth makes further interpretation of the subject of this picture possible.

The left figure in *Shadows* (who represents Stella in my estimation) raises one leg high as if jumping in the air. A long narrow form protrudes to the right and upward from the top of the trunk, which represents one arm of the figure (or both arms visually coinciding and appearing to be one). Although the figure does not have a neck, the angular shape above the trunk might represent a head. More uncertain is the identity of the form with a balloon shape at the end of the figure's arm(s). It seems to me that it is not part of the left figure but another, small figure, and that the balloon shape represents the head of this fourth figure. Judging by its size, the fourth figure seems to be an infant. Thus, it is possible to interpret the fourth figure as representing Jason lifted high by Stella; and the male figure in the middle and the female figure on the right side as Jason's parents, Sanford and Arloie, or Pollock himself and Krasner.

My reading of the subject matter of *Shadows* goes further. It seems to me that on a deeper level the fourth small figure represents Pollock's imaginary baby. Pollock strongly wanted to have children, though Krasner would not agree. Ben Heller told Pollock's biographer, Jeffrey Potter: "Jackson was very upset about not having had children, at least on this night. We talked about it and he said, 'You know, I wasn't just shooting blanks all these years'——meaning that he wasn't sterile."[20] Moreover, reportedly, Pollock, refused by Krasner in their bedroom sometime in his last years, "went around asking various women he knew if they would have his baby."[21] Krasner's biographer, Andrea Gabor, pointed out the couple's financial problems as one of Krasner's reasons for deciding not to have children.[22] Gabor also mentioned Krasner's fear of Pollock's mental instability: "Krasner certainly understood that even if she were willing to take full responsibility for parenthood, having children with an artist as emotionally unstable as Pollock would be difficult——and doing so as a woman who remained devoted to her own work long after other wives had given it up would have been very nearly impossible."[23] Perhaps, triggered by Jason's birth, Pollock implicitly

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[20] Jeffrey Potter, *To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1985), 190.

[21] Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1989), 745.

[22] Andrea Gabor, "Lee Krasner," in *Einstein's Wife: Work and Marriage in the Lives of Five Great Twentieth-Century Women* (New York: Viking, 1995), 69.

[23] Gabor, "Lee Krasner," 70. According to Harold Rosenberg's wife, May Tabak, "Lee told him [Pollock] *after* [italics in original] they were married that she would not have children with him because he couldn't be counted on for the long

put his desire to have a child into *Shadows*. Parenthetically, we also can see Pollock's interest in the birth of a child in 1946's *The Child Proceeds* (fig. 5-9), which I previously examined in the context of a male-female subject. In fact, Ellen G. Landau thinks that the pregnant woman in this painting is possibly intended to represent Krasner.[24] Landau goes on to state: "It is tempting to conjecture that Krasner may have been briefly pregnant when Pollock painted this work (CR 145), sometimes also called *Development of the Foetus*. . . . In her dissertation, [Elizabeth Lawrence] Langhorne points out that Pollock owned an illustrated text, *Gynecology* by William Graves, Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1919, which may have influenced *CR* 145."[25]

Many of the above-examined ideas concerning Pollock's art, which he incorporated into the cut-outs, reappeared to a greater or lesser degree in some of his later works. As I mentioned in the third chapter, in 1949 Pollock reworked one of his earlier paintings by thickly masking its background and parts of the already-painted figure with oil paint mixed with sand (*Dancing Head*, 1941-49, fig. 3-52). Pollock also conspicuously used the masking technique in two paintings of 1953, *Ocean Greyness* and *The Deep* (fig. 5-15). In the latter work, he created a dark image, like a chasm on the surface of the earth, by overpainting around it

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haul [of child care]. There was nothing he could do about that." Potter, *To a Violent Grave*, 190.

[24] Landau, *Jackson Pollock* (1989), 217.

[25] Landau, *Jackson Pollock* (1989), 263, n. 13.

with white. This image also, as Anna C. Chave has pointed out, suggests a vaginal slit.[26] More interestingly, Pollock poured white liquid paint on (or rather, into) the female-genital image, which suggests his ejaculation. Thus, it would be possible to find his desire to have children in this picture, too. On the other hand, in another work from the same year, *Ritual* (1953, fig. 2-14), Pollock painted a pair of male and female Native Americans. Are they performing a ritual of marriage? In any case, here we can see the continuance of Pollock's male-female theme. Furthermore, Pollock again painted a figure, which recalls the moon-woman, in one of the allover poured paintings that he made in 1950. Pepe Karmel pointed out a rough human figure with a crescent head in the upper part of the right half of the first layer of *Number 27, 1950* (figs. 0-9 and 0-10). Karmel suggested Picasso's influence on the shape of the crescent head.[27] It seems to me that the figure is related to Pollock's own images of the moon-woman, as well as to Picasso. In any case, unlike in such cut-outs as *Cut Out* (fig. 1-4) and *Cut-Out Figure* (1948, fig. 0-4), the figure with a crescent head in *Number 27, 1950* is only a minor element in the picture; furthermore, Pollock ultimately covered the figure with the skein of poured paint. On the other hand, in a painting from 1953, *Portrait and a Dream* (fig. 5-16), Pollock overtly painted a large moon-woman image. In the left section of this picture, namely the "dream" section, we can see

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[26] Anna C. Chave, "Pollock and Krasner: Script and Postscript," *Res*, vol. 24 (Autumn 1993): 100.

[27] Pepe Karmel, "Pollock at Work: The Films and Photographs of Hans Namuth," in *Jackson Pollock*, by Kirk Varnedoe with Pepe Karmel, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 107.

a titillating image of a naked woman who opens her legs wide.[28] This female figure has a crescent shape on her head. According to Krasner, Pollock referred to this head as “the dark side of the moon.”[29] The Cut-Out series thus offers us a significant point of reference in reconsidering Pollock’s oeuvre to include new interpretations.

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[28] Francis V. O’Connor has pointed out that the face of this female figure resembles Krasner. Also, according to O’Connor, Pollock told his homeopath, Elizabeth Wright Hubbard, that the portrait depicted in the right section was one of himself when he was “not sober.” Francis V. O’Connor, “Jackson Pollock: The Black Pourings,” in *Jackson Pollock: The Black Pourings, 1951-1953*, exh. cat. (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980), 20.

[29] Lee Krasner Pollock, “An Interview with Lee Krasner Pollock by B. H. Friedman,” in *Jackson Pollock: Black and White*, exh. cat. (New York: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1969), 8.

Conclusion

> At the same moment it chanced that the vapory fleece hanging low in the East, suddenly dyed by the sun behind approaching nearer the horizon, took on a glory as of the Lamb of God seen in mystical vision. ——Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*[1]

In the final stages of completing the draft of this dissertation, I learned that the Ohara Museum of Art, which owns *Cut Out* (fig. 0-3), had partly accepted my opinion on the date and author(s) of the work, original research that I presented in my 2003 article.[2] In the article (and in the first chapter of this dissertation), I demonstrated that the white canvas that presently backs *Cut Out* originally stood alone as another independent work of Pollock's from around 1950. I argued that, realizing her own idea (or rather, in my opinion, opposing Pollock's final intentions), Lee Krasner attached the once-independent work as a backing for *Cut Out* two years after Pollock's death, namely in 1958. In a new catalogue to the collection of the Ohara Museum of Art (2004), the following caption appears with a reproduction of *Cut Out*:

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[1] Herman Melville, *Melville's Billy Budd*, ed. F. Barron Freeman ([Cambridge, Mass.]: Harvard University Press, 1948), 339.

[2] Tetsuya Oshima, "Jackson Pollock's *Cut Out*: An Examination Concerning Its Date and Author," *Art/Criticism* (Tokyo), no. 0 (2003): 70-117.

Jackson POLLOCK 1912-1956
Cut Out
1948-*1958* [italics added]
oil, enamel, aluminum paint, plastics on board, canvas and fiberboard[3]

What is more, without specifically mentioning my 2003 article, Shuji Takashina, the director of the museum, wrote at the end of his expository text on *Cut Out* in the catalogue: "A recent study has substantially revealed that after Pollock's death, his wife, Lee Krasner, selected one from among his other works and glued it [to *Cut Out*] as a backing to fill the cut-out part."[4]

Nevertheless, the Ohara Museum of Art has refrained, to date, from officially changing the author of *Cut Out* in its present form (in which they have admitted Krasner greatly intervened), from "Jackson Pollock" to, as I proposed, "Jackson Pollock with Lee Krasner." The caption for the original of *Cut Out*, which is now attached to the wall of a gallery in the museum, still states the work's maker as "Jackson POLLOCK." In addition to its date, the problem of *Cut Out*'s attribution should also be settled in the near future. Further, I hope that chemical investigation of the paint and canvas used in the work now attached to *Cut Out* as backing, as well as x rays of the whole image, will be undertaken in order to definitively identify the attached portion as a Pollock work from around

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[3] Shuji Takashina et. al., *155 Works from the Ohara Museum of Art* (Kurashiki, Japan: Ohara Museum of Art, 2004), 77. This catalogue is a revised and enlarged version of Shuji Takashina et. al., *120 Pieces of the Ohara Museum of Art* (Kurashiki: Ohara Museum of Art, 1980).

[4] Takashina et. al., *155 Works from the Ohara Museum of Art*, 77.

1950.

However, the heart of the problem regarding *Cut Out* is not in modifying its date and author, nor in identifying the work used as backing in the present *Cut Out*. It is rather in reinterpreting *Cut Out* by going back to the state in which Pollock ultimately left it (figs. 1-1 and 1-6). After Matisse and Picasso, there is probably no artist who has been so widely and deeply studied as Pollock. Today, setting aside room for further theoretical study, one might perhaps feel that art historical approaches to major parts of the artist's work have been exhausted. However, reinterpreting *Cut Out* is significant not only for the work itself. As I attempted to show with this dissertation, it opens the possibility of looking at new aspects of Pollock's art, as well as of reframing various already-known significant aspects. And it might even help to change how we conceive of the artist's oeuvre.

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