

Week 3 Lecture 4:

Abstract Expressionism: Gesture versus Field

key decade: *1940 into 1950s*

Carried over from last week:

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

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

A. Krasner's challenge

1. The gender politics of Abstract Expressionism (Pollock to Hofmann "I am Nature")
2. The gender politics of postwar society: the little woman
3. The gender politics of art: the oxymoron of a "female master"

B. The influence of Pollock, the influence of Krasner

New today: "Abstract Expressionism" (name consolidates around **1954**)

I. Gesture or "Action" painting

A) Willem de Kooning, b. Netherlands 1904, to US in 20s, d. 1997

B) Franz Kline, b. PA 1910 - 1962

C) Robert Motherwell, b. CA 1915-1991

D) "second generation" New York School - the problems of spontaneity & followers of de Kooning's "signature" style (Jack Tworkov, Joan Mitchell...)

II. "Field" Painting

A) Mark Rothko (b. Marcus Rothkowitz in Russia, 1903, to US as child, suicide 1970)

B) Barnett Newman (b. Baruch Newman in NY 1905, d. 1970)

C) Ad Reinhardt (b. Adolf in 1913, d. 1967)

Q: *Can you see how Pollock could be both "gesture" and "field"?*

SELECTED IMAGES

carried over:

Krasner Composition 1949

Krasner Three in Two 1956

Namuth Pollock Painting, photographs and film, 1950-51

gesture/field image titles on verso

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LECTURE NOTES

Caroline A. Jones

GESTURE

de Kooning Pink Angels, 1948

de Kooning Excavation, 1950

de Kooning Gotham News 1955

de Kooning, Woman I 1950-52 (little collage)

de Kooning, Woman and Bicycle 1952-53

Kline, Figure Eight, 1952

Kline, New York, NY 1953

Motherwell, Elegy to the Spanish Republic 1953 (series beg. 1948, through at least 1970s)

Motherwell, Open series begun ca. 1968

Mitchell, Hemlock 1956

FIELD

Rothko, Primeval Landscape 1945

Rothko, Violet Black Orange Yellow White & Red 1949 (Guggenheim)

Rothko, "Rothko" Chapel (Houston, St. Thomas University, Institute for Religion. Commissioned by de Menil family), 1970

Newman, Broken Obelisk 1963-67 installed outside the "Rothko Chapel"

Newman The Command 1946

Newman Vir Heroicus Sublimis 1950-51

Newman Stations of the Cross 1965-66

Reinhardt Abstract Painting Blue 1953

Reinhardt Abstract Painting No. 5 1962

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