

The Museum of Modern Art Archives

FROM THE ARCHIVES: POLLOCK

From the Archives: Pollock features documentary material culled from the holdings of the Museum Archives. The purpose of the exhibition is to highlight the Museum's early interest in Jackson Pollock (beginning with the 1943 acquisition of *The She-Wolf* — the first Pollock painting purchased by a museum), as well as the Museum's promotion of Pollock's work in the United States and abroad. The exhibition, organized by Michelle Elligott, Claire Dienes and Michelle Harvey of the Museum Archives staff, is on view November 25 through February 26, 1998. It is on display in conjunction with the current Museum exhibition *Jackson Pollock*.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives was founded in 1989 to preserve the Museum's institutional records and to make this material accessible to Museum staff and outside scholars. The Museum Archives also includes primary source material and other documentation related to the history of twentieth-century art, collected by this institution to support its exhibitions and programs.

1. Exhibition Catalogue

Jackson Pollock's first solo exhibition, *Jackson Pollock: Paintings and Drawings*, was held at Peggy Guggenheim's New York gallery, Art of This Century, (November 9–12, 1944). Note that *The She-Wolf*, 1943, was included in this exhibition. Preface to catalogue written by James Johnson Sweeney.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 10.54. James Johnson Sweeney (1900–1986) was Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture from January 1945 to September 1946.

2. Note Card

Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s "Priority List of Painting and Sculpture" included index cards on which he ranked works of art in the Museum Collection into four categories. Barr rates Pollock's *The She-Wolf* as a "II", the second highest rating.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, Priority List of Painting and Sculpture. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (1902–1981) was the founding Director of the Museum until 1943, when he was named Advisory Director. In 1944, he was appointed Director of Research in Painting and Sculpture. From 1947 until his retirement in 1967, Barr was the Director of Museum Collections.

3. Memorandum D. Lytle–Miss Woodruff, May 15, 1944

Museum staff member Dorothy Lytle informs colleague Marjorie Woodruff of the Museum's purchase of *The She-Wolf*, which was lent to the Museum's circulating exhibition *Twelve Contemporary Painters* (1944–1945) by the Art of This Century gallery. With this acquisition, The Museum of Modern Art became the first museum to purchase a Pollock painting.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, II.1/112(8). Since 1931, the Museum has organized circulating exhibitions. The Department of Circulating Exhibitions, formally established in 1933, has been known since 1969 as the Exhibition Program.

4. Draft of Wall Label Text

Discussion of *The She-Wolf*, included in the Museum's circulating exhibition *Twelve Contemporary Painters*.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, II.1/112(8). *Twelve Contemporary Painters* circulated to twelve venues around the country.

5. Report, January 20, 1945

"Report on the Private Exhibition of Paintings from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Arranged for the Trustees" was written by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. The report classifies Pollock as one of the "exceptionally talented young Americans".

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 9A.28.

6. ALS Jackson Pollock–Dorothy C. Miller, April 14, 1952 [copy]

Pollock compliments Miller on the hanging of his room for *15 Americans* (April 9–July 27, 1952).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Dorothy C. Miller Papers, III.7.d. Dorothy C. Miller (1904–) joined the staff of the Museum in 1934 and was Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture upon her retirement from the Museum in 1969. *Fifteen Americans* was one of Miller's several "Americans" exhibitions in which each artist included in the show had a separate gallery.

7. TL Richard Blow–Alfred H. Barr, Jr., May 15, 1952

TL Alfred H. Barr, Jr.–Richard Blow, June 4, 1952

Museum member Blow condemns *15 Americans*. Barr challenges Blow's criticisms.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Dorothy C. Miller Papers, I.6.d.

- 8. Excerpt from Interview with Sidney Janis, June 1967**
Janis discusses the naming of Pollock's works, specifically those entitled *One*. The interview was conducted by Helen M. Franc in preparation for the exhibition *The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection* (January 17–March 4, 1968).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Oral History Project; interview with Sidney Janis, 1968, 15–16. Helen M. Franc (1908–) worked for the Museum's Department of Publications from 1954 to 1971; she was Editor-in-Chief 1969 to 1971. Sidney Janis (1896–1989), dealer, gallery owner, and collector, represented Pollock beginning in May 1952.

- 9. Note Card**
As part of his "Priority List of Painting and Sculpture", Barr rates Pollock's *Number 1*, 1948, as a "I", the highest rating.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, Priority List of Painting and Sculpture.

- 10. Installation Photographs**
U.S. Representation: IV Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderne, São Paulo, 1957: Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956 (Sept. 22–Dec. 31, 1957).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *U.S. Representation: IV Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderne, São Paulo*. (ICE-F-32-57): Box 31.20. The creation of the Museum's International Program and Council, in 1952, expanded the geographical scope of the Museum's traveling exhibitions to include not only domestic venues and those in Latin America, but also in Asia, Australia, Europe and New Zealand.

- 11. Press Release, September 20, 1957**
"American Artists Win Recognition at São Paulo Bienal" mentions the "hors de concours" award given to Pollock.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records *U.S. Representation: IV Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo* (ICE-F-32-57): Box V.28.2.

- 12. Excerpt from Oral History Interview with Waldo Rasmussen**
Rasmussen discusses the exhibition *Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956*, which constituted the United States Representation at the IV Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, 1957. Pollock was the only American artist to receive an “hors de concours” award at the Bienal.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Oral History Project; interview with Waldo Rasmussen, 1994, 45–48. Rasmussen (1928–) was Executive Director, Department of Circulating Exhibitions for the International Council, 1962–1969, and Director, Department of the International Program, 1969–1993.

- 13. Exhibition Catalogue**
Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956, Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany (July 19–August 17, 1958).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956*. (ICE-F-35-57): Box V.35.11.

- 14. Exhibition Catalogue**
Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956, Hochschule für bildende Künste, Berlin, Germany (September 3–October 1, 1958).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956*. (ICE-F-35-57): Box V.35.11.

- 15. Exhibition Catalogue**
Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956, Musée National d’Art Moderne, Paris, France (January 16–February 15, 1959).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956*. (ICE-F-35-57): Box V.35.11.

- 16. Invitation**
Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, June 6, 1958 opening.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956*. (ICE-F-35-57): Box V.35.2.

- 17. Announcement Poster**
Mostra di J. Pollock, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy (March 1–30, 1958).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956*. (ICE-F-35-57): Box V.35.2.

- 18. Installation Photograph**
Man Ray (center) at *The New American Painting*, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France (January 16–February 15, 1959). *Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956* and *The New American Painting* were shown simultaneously in Paris. *The New American Painting* also contained works by Pollock.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *The New American Painting*. (ICE-F-36-57): Box V.38.26.

- 19. Installation Photograph**
Jackson Pollock, 1912–1956, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France (January 16–February 15, 1959). Organized by Frank O'Hara, the exhibition circulated to Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, England, and France (March 1958–February 1959). In Switzerland, Germany and France, the exhibition was shown concurrently with *The New American Painting*.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *The New American Painting*. (ICE-F-36-57): Box V.38.26.

- 20. TLS Ben Heller–Dorothy C. Miller, March 11, 1958**
Correspondence compliments Miller on her exhibition, *The New American Painting*.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Dorothy C. Miller Papers, I.14.d. The exhibition had a private preview at the Santini Warehouse in New York City before it was sent to Europe.

- 21. Exhibition Itinerary**
The New American Painting traveled to eight international venues.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *The New American Painting* (ICE-F-36-57): Box V.36.1.

22. Exhibition Checklist

U.S. Representation: Documenta II, Kassel, Germany, 1959.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *U.S. Representation: Documenta II* (ICE-F-40-59): Box V.44.1.

23. Hand-written Notes

O'Hara's lists and notes for the planning of *U.S. Representation: Documenta II, Kassel, Germany, (July 11–October 14, 1959)* including possible Pollock works to be included, c. 1959.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Frank O'Hara Papers, 4. Frank O'Hara (1926–1966) was a poet, critic, playwright and a member of the Museum staff. From 1955–1966, he organized circulating exhibitions, and in 1960 was appointed Assistant Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture. He organized the Pollock retrospective that toured Europe in 1958.

24. Photographs

Pollock paintings, *One: Number 31, 1950, 1950, Echo, 1951, and Blue Poles, 1953*, are returned to owner Ben Heller on April 9, 1959, after completing a 20,000 mile tour as part of *Jackson Pollock: 1912–1956*.

Top left and center: The paintings are lifted by block and tackle from the sidewalk in front of 151 Central Park West to Heller's 10th floor apartment.

Top right: Heller, left, on the ledge outside his apartment window, reaches out to *Blue Poles*, a seven by sixteen foot painting.

Bottom Left: *Echo*, a seven by seven foot painting, is hoisted through the window with Heller assisting in the foreground.

Bottom Right: Pollock's *One: Number 31, 1950*, a nine by seventeen foot painting, was the first to make the ten floor ascent. The painting was rolled on a rubber cylinder and crated.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Event Photos, 6.

25. Catalogue Material

Annotated, typed draft of "A Collector's Viewpoint", written by Heller, includes a detailed account of his purchase of Pollock's *One: Number 31, 1950, 1950*. The anecdote was included in the catalogue that accompanied *The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Heller*, an exhibition organized and circulated by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, (1961–1962).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 1.467.

- 26. TLS Ben Heller–William S. Lieberman, April 4, 1967**
Art collector Heller congratulates Lieberman on the direction of *Jackson Pollock* (April 5–June 4, 1967).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: William S. Lieberman Papers, V.25.20.
William S. Lieberman (1923–) worked at the Museum from 1945 to 1979. His positions included Director of Drawings and Prints, Director of Painting and Sculpture and Director of Drawings.

- 27. ALS Hans Namuth–William S. Lieberman, April 5, 1967**
Namuth compliments Lieberman on his exhibition, *Jackson Pollock*. Namuth also suggests that the Museum acquire a better copy of his film of Pollock at work.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: William S. Lieberman Papers, V.25.20.
Photographer Hans Namuth (1915– 1990) was largely responsible for the mythologizing of Pollock's working method due to the extensive number of photographs and films he created of the artist at work.

- 28. Exhibition Poster**
As part of its international tour, *Jackson Pollock: Drawing into Painting* was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (April 1–May 13, 1979). The exhibition was selected by Bernice Rose and also circulated to Germany, Portugal, France and the Netherlands before it went on view at The Museum of Modern Art in New York (February 4–March 16, 1980).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. *Jackson Pollock: Drawing into Painting* (ICE-F-182-77): Box V.109.3.
Bernice Rose (1935–) began full time employment at The Museum of Modern Art in 1964 and remained on staff until 1993. She held a variety of positions including Assistant Curator of Painting and Sculpture and Senior Curator of Drawings.

- 29. Exhibition Pamphlet**
Jackson Pollock: Works on Paper (1968–1969), directed by Lieberman and Rose, 1967.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, II.2/144(7).

30. Press Clippings

Reviews of *Jackson Pollock* (December 19, 1956–February 3, 1957). This exhibition was on display concurrently with the Museum exhibition *Balthus* (December 19, 1956–February 3, 1957).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Public Information Scrapbooks # 78.

31. Album

Photographs of paintings in the 1944–45 circulating exhibition, *Twelve Contemporary Painters*, including *The She-Wolf*.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Records of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions, Album 7. The other eleven artists included in the exhibition were Darrrel Austin, Francisco Cristofanetti, Matta Echaurren, John Ferren, Arshile Gorky, Morris Graves, Jacob Lawrence, Loren MacIver, I. Rice Pereira, Walter Steumpfig, and Andrew Wyeth.

32. Lecture

Audio recording of lecture entitled “The Concept of Action from Action Paintings to Happenings” delivered on March 6, 1968 by art critic Harold Rosenberg, with an introduction by Barbara Jakobson, a Trustee of The Museum of Modern Art. Recording can be heard through DADABASE. Please contact Museum Archives staff for appointment.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Sound Recordings of Museum-Related Events, Subgroup A, #68.6. The speech was published two months later in *The New Yorker*, May 25, 1968; it also appears in Rosenberg, H. *Art Works and Packages* (New York: Dell Publishers, 1969).