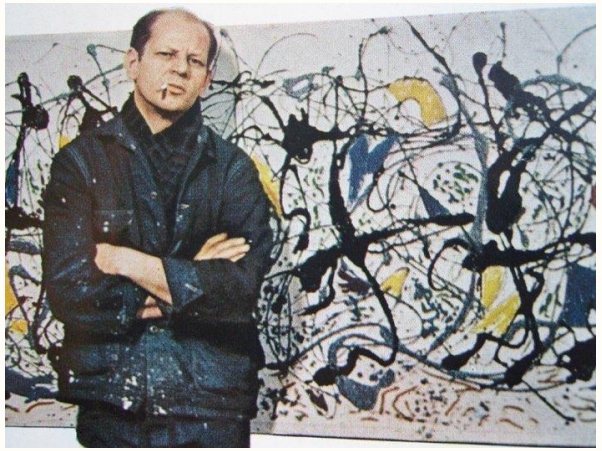
Artist Resources – Jackson Pollock (American, 1912-1956)

The Pollock–Krasner Foundation



Pollock, 1949
Photography: LIFE Magazine

"A method of painting is a natural growth out of a need. I want to express my feelings rather than illustrated them," Pollockcommented in his narration for archival footage of his painting process. "Technique is just a means of arriving at a statement. Because a painting has a life of its own, I try to let it live." Hans Namuth also captured footage of Pollock at work in his Long Island barn in 1950.

"My opinion is that new needs need new techniques. And the modern artists have found new ways and new means of making their statements. Each age finds its own technique," Pollock explained in a 1950 interview about the role of modern art and artists. "I think [viewers] should not look for, but look passively---and try to receive what the painting has to offer and not bring a subject matter or preconceived idea of what they are to be looking for... I think it should be enjoyed just as music is enjoyed---after a while you may like it or you may not. I think at least give it a chance."

Three decades of new scholarship provided MoMA with new perspective in their 1998 retrospective of Pollock's career, their first since 1967. More than 150 drawings and paintings traced the artist's output from the 1930s until his early death. The exhibition was on view in conjunction with a showcase of Pollock's printmaking and precipitated a published collection of articles, interviews, and reviews.

The Getty celebrated Pollock's 1943 *Mural,* commissioned by art dealer, collector, and curator Peggy Guggenheim for her New York apartment, in a 2014 exhibition. The Los Angeles museum and research center undertook a substantial conservation project. In addition to podcast episodes and interviews featured on the exhibition website, a video series explores the analysis of paint layers, and Pollock's process, as well as the conservation process.

2015 saw retrospectives at MoMA and the Dallas Museum of Art, which included more than 70 paintings, sculptures, drawings, and prints and showcased Pollock's rarely seen "black paintings," created in the early 1950s. Art critic Michael Fried joined DMA curators to discuss the importance of these works.

Conservation also took center stage at MoCA in Los Angelese in 2018. Pollock's 1949 masterpiece, *Number 1,* was on view during a six-month conservation and preservation process tackled in front of viewers in real time in the gallery. Listen to curator Anna Katz, conservator Chris Stavroudis, and Head of Science at the Getty Conservation Institute Tom Learner comment on the process. Stavroudis also spoke in depth about the experience and his findings with Katz in a gallery talk and with NPR.

In 2020, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston returned to *Mural,* pairing Pollock's largest painting with a new commission from contemporary German artist Katharina Grosse, celebrated for her monumental site-specific installations.



Pollock in Long Island studio, 1950
Photography: Hans Namuth

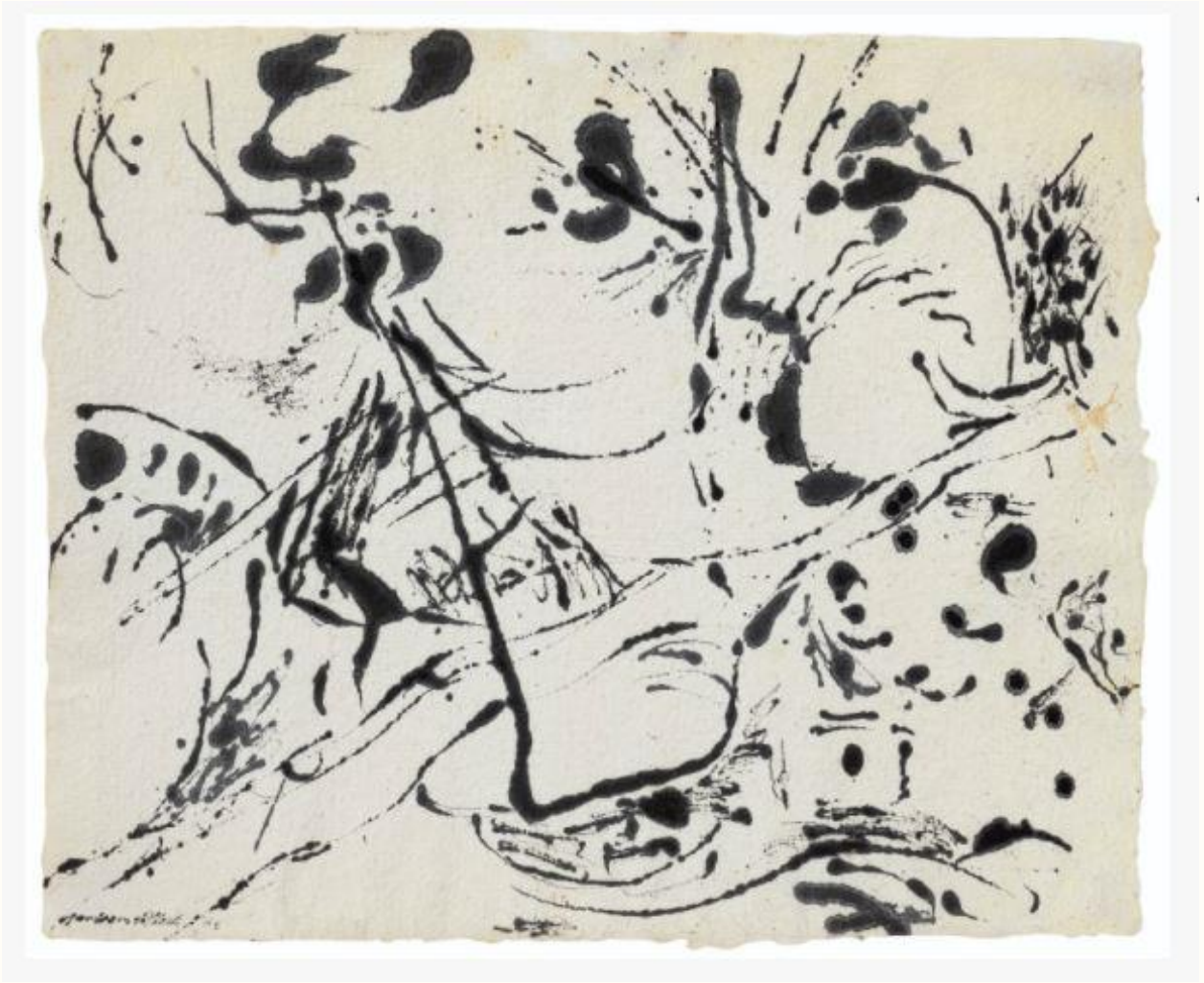
Jackson Pollock (American, 1912-1956)
Number 21, 1949
Enamel and oil on paper mounted on Masonite

Private Collection; L2026:64.1

Jackson Pollock was one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. His pioneering drip technique of pouring, flicking, and splashing paint onto horizontal unstretched canvas made a major impact on the development of Abstract Expressionism. In the late 1940s, Pollock created a series of thirteen paintings on Masonite repurposed from his brother's screenprinting business. **Number 21** is a rare example from this pivotal moment in the artist's career. Pollock said at the time: "My opinion is that new needs new techniques…. It seems to me that the modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of another past culture. Each age finds its own technique."

On view August 19 – November 22, 2026





Jackson Pollock (American, 1912-1956)
Untitled, 1953
Ink on Howell paper

Private Collection; L2021:2.1

Paul Jackson Pollock began his artistic training fueled by the ambitions of his older brothers and discovered a talent for painting in high school in Los Angeles. After moving to New York at eighteen, Pollock trained at the Art Students League and painted murals for the Works Progress Administration. In the early 1950s, he diverged from the paint-splattered canvases that defined his leadership of Abstract Expressionism in the latter 1940s. Trading enamel paint for watercolor and ink, Pollock turned his attention to more intimate works featuring a monochrome palette and echoing the raw but lyrical figuration of his early paintings. **Untitled** is a rare example of this, a moment when Pollock exchanged his trademark unstretched canvas on the studio floor for handmade paper, in this case produced specifically for the artist by artisan Douglass Morse Howell. In such late works, Pollock expanded on the trajectory of intuitive gesture and expressive energy begun twenty years prior, utilizing what he defined as the “craftmanship” of “brushes, pigments, and a surface to paint on.” At that point, his work was propelled by a need to express “the contemporary aims of the age that we’re living in” without attending to exterior subject matter, to “work from a different source. [To] work from within.”

On view February 17 – May 23, 2021