

THE
FIGURATIVE
POLLOCK

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Edited by Nina Zimmer

With contributions by
Markus Klammer and Stefan Neuner, Michael Leja,
Tetsuya Oshima, Stephanie Straine,
Anne-Christine Strobel, and Nina Zimmer

Kunstmuseum Basel

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“When you’re painting out of your unconscious, figures are bound to emerge,” Jackson Pollock said in 1956 in conversation with Selden Rodman. But what is generally associated with the American painter are his abstract drip paintings. Less well known are the large number of figurative works he created before this phase and the figurative paintings that followed. The large special exhibition in the Kunstmuseum Basel is the first ever dedicated to this perspective on the American artist and seeks to illuminate the figurative aspect of the artist’s work in a concentrated way, in the process casting a new light on his oeuvre, which spanned almost three decades. A special focus is thus placed on the continuities of his painterly development from the early to the late work. “All of Jackson’s work grows from this period (of the mid-1930s); I see no more sharp breaks, but rather a continuing development of the same themes and obsessions,” declared Lee Krasner, painter and Pollock’s partner of many years. Even the notoriously taciturn Pollock traced an arc between his early work and the works of the 1950s. In a letter addressed to two friends, he pointed out that in the black canvas drawings he was currently producing, “some of my early images [are] coming thru.”

The exhibition—only the second in the new building of the Kunstmuseum Basel—continues the institution’s long history of engagement with American postwar art, as seen recently in the exhibitions *Donald Judd* (2004/05), *De Kooning: Paintings 1960–1980* (2005/06), *Jasper Johns: An Allegory of Painting, 1955–1965* (2007), and *Andy Warhol: The Early Sixties* (2010/11). Despite the collection’s focus on American abstract expressionism, the Kunstmuseum Basel does not hold any main works by Pollock, a circumstance we address in a short essay on this aspect of the collection’s history.

The Figurative Pollock is devoted to the various phases of the early work, in which the artist processed the regionalism of his teacher, Thomas Hart Benton, but also absorbed and adapted the great history of art: El Greco, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and the masters of the Italian Baroque. In the following years Pollock’s focus shifted above all to European modernism. André Masson, Paul Klee, and Joan Miró exerted an influence on Pollock. Most significant of all was Pablo Picasso, whose work Pollock studied almost indefatigably. He was inspired in particular by *Guernica*, which he studied intensively when the original was exhibited in New York. One distinct group of works is the so-called psychoanalytical drawings, referred to as such because Pollock had begun talking about drawings with his analyst Joseph Henderson in therapy originally undertaken because of his alcohol dependency. As an adherent of the teachings of Carl Jung (who, incidentally, spent his childhood in Basel, the son of a Swiss Reformed Church minister), Henderson encouraged Pollock to interpret his pictorial signs in accordance with Jung’s teachings on archetypes. But Pollock’s study of the art of North America’s original inhabitants is equally reflected in his work. The large wall paintings created by Mexican muralists in the 1930s and 1940s were also crucially formative for Pollock. In particular, the work of David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, and Diego Rivera, whom he also met personally, transformed Pollock’s idea of “figuration.”

The exhibition offers a representational overview of Pollock’s artistic development as a figurative painter from the middle of the 1930s up to his early death in an accident in 1956. The large-format drip paintings, which were produced predominantly from 1947 to 1950, are not shown in the

the frequently marginalized works of the 1930s and 1940s and those of the 1950s can be directly traced. From the “dripping” phase, we thus show, for example, the figurative black paintings—a group of works that was recently the subject of a specifically conceived exhibition at the Tate Liverpool and the Dallas Museum of Art—as well as the final works of the 1950s, which revolve permanently around the question of the “figure.”

The present catalogue approaches the subject by means of introductory essays and shorter, work-related chapter texts. Michael Leja begins by tracing how—in the intensive critical debate conducted first by Clement Greenberg and later by William Rubin and Michael Fried—the line of demarcation between abstraction and figuration has dominated the view of Pollock’s artistic development. Leja argues that the two principles should be read instead as a dynamic field of force that alternatively determined Pollock’s way of working. In their jointly written essay, Markus Klammer and Stefan Neuner advocate for a new understanding of figuration in Pollock’s work, which they approach from two sides. First, they argue that over the course of Pollock’s artistic development he increasingly separated the figure—that is, the body—from the eye. The result is a “disembodied and uncanny gaze” that merges with the abstract field image. Regarding the enamel works of the late 1940s, they hypothesize that in these works a shift of the outward gaze onto the surface texture of the picture—the gleam of the aluminum paint—takes place. Second, Klammer and Neuner approach the figurative Pollock through Pollock’s persona, through his spectacular presence in photographs and, especially, Hans Namuth’s 1951 film of the artist at work, through which Pollock became an archetypal “painter figure.”

In separate chapters on the artist’s various creative phases, Tetsuya Oshima, Stephanie Straine, Anne-Christine Strobel, and Nina Zimmer take a more precise look at the exhibited works and the new connections that have arisen through the perspective of the exhibition.

The Kunstmuseum Basel owes a great debt of gratitude to the many lenders who made their works available for this exhibition. In the first place I would like to mention the excellent collaboration with the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, which made large features of the exhibition possible. Our thanks go to Samuel Sachs II, Charles C. Bergman, Kerrie Buitrago, and Francis Valentine O'Connor. Special thanks go to Joan Washburn and Brian Washburn. We are also grateful to Jason McCoy and Stephanie Simmons, McCoy Gallery, New York, for their advice and valuable suggestions. The same applies to Helen A. Harrison, director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center. In helping to procure works from Japanese collections, Tetsuya Oshima was indispensable. We are also grateful for suggestions offered by Gavin Delahunty and Stephanie Straine, Tate Liverpool; Pepe Karmel, New York University; Ulla Dreyfus-Best and the staff of Christie's Zurich, New York, and London offices; Sotheby's New York; Guggenheim, Asher, Associates; as well as McClain Gallery.

We give special thanks to the Tate London and its director, Sir Nicolas Serota, for their early and enthusiastic support of this exhibition project. Among our American colleagues, those at the Museum of Modern Art, New York—we thank Glenn D. Lowry, Ann Temkin, and Christophe Cherix—and those at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York—thanks go to Sheena Wagstaff and her team—have shown an extraordinary degree of generosity despite their own concurrent projects. Warm thanks also go to Adam D. Weinberg and Carter Foster at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Richard Armstrong at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Philip Rylands at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, each of which made key works in their collections available to us. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, supported us with a group of works, and Glenstone contributed an extremely important painting as well as a drawing. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art parted with one of Pollock's important early masterpieces for the duration of the exhibition; thanks for this are owed to Neal Benezra and Gary Garrels. Further important paintings and drawings came from the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Menil Collection, Houston; The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the Princeton University Art Museum; the University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque; the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock; the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; the Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, Nebraska; the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts—here a special thank you to Judith F. Dolkart; and the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. Among the private lenders from the United States I mention in particular the Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson, San Francisco Bay Area; the Collection of Robert Aichele; the Collection of Mark Grotjahn and Jennifer Guidi; and the Collection of Stephen Mazoh, Rhinebeck, New York.

The Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, made a special exception for us. We are delighted that *Galaxy* was allowed to travel to Basel; it is a painting whose origins perfectly exemplify the set of problems entailed in a consideration of the figurative Pollock.

One special feature of this exhibition is that we have been able to borrow a series of important works from Japanese collections that can now be seen for the first time in Europe. We are grateful for the unparalleled

12 generosity of The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo. Our thanks go to general director Akiko Mabuchi and chief curatorial

director Hiroya Murakami. We own an equal debt of gratitude to The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Our personal thanks here go to director Sachio Kamogawa and curator Katsuo Suzuki. We are also grateful for the unique, important loans from the Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki. There, our thanks are owed to director Shuji Takashina and chief curator Hideyuki Yanagisawa. We also thank Toshio Miura of the Gallery OLYM, Tokyo.

One especially far-traveled guest is *Totem Lesson 2* from the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, which is now united—for the first time in decades—in our exhibition with *Totem Lesson 1* from the Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson, San Francisco Bay Area. Furthermore, The Taylor Foundation, Brisbane, made a drawing available.

Many important works by Pollock can meanwhile be found in European collections, some of them right here in Switzerland. We are grateful for the crucial loans made available to us from the Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, as well as for works from the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam—here thanks go to Beatrix Ruf and Bart Rutten; the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; and the Albertina, Vienna. We were kindly permitted to borrow an outstandingly important painting from the Daros Collection, Switzerland, as well as high-quality paintings from the Kunstmuseum Bern; the Fondation Beyeler, Riehen; the Kunsthaus Zürich—here our thanks are owed to Christoph Becker, Philippe Büttner, and Hanspeter Marty. We are able to show a small, fine group of works from the collection of Alfred Richterich, Laufen; our thanks go to Alfred Richterich and Roman Kurzmeyer. Additional works were made available by the Städel Museum, Frankfurt; the Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden; the Sprengel Museum Hannover; the Döpfner Collection; the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen; as well as the Galerie 1900–2000, Paris, and Anthony d'Offay, London.

The Kunstmuseum Basel owes an equally great debt of gratitude to numerous private collectors who prefer to remain unnamed.

I also thank the authors of the catalogue, Markus Klammer, Schaulager Professor of Art Theory at the Art Historical Seminar of the University of Basel; Michael Leja, University of Pennsylvania; Stefan Neuner, University of Zurich / eikones NFS Bildkritik, Basel; Tetsuya Oshima, Hiroshima University; and Stephanie Straine, Tate Liverpool. Thanks also to Katharina Haderer and Anja Besserer of Prestel Verlag, Munich, and to our graphic designers Nina Hug, Stephan Eberlein, and Wolfgang Schwärzler in Leipzig and Basel for the excellent collaboration. Thanks to Holger Steinemann for his conscientious editing of the German edition and to Christopher Davey for the English, as well as to translators Nikolaus G. Schneider and Elizabeth Tucker for their careful work.

Our thanks are owed equally to our colleagues at the University of Basel, especially Ralph Ubl and Simon Baier, for their collaboration during the Pollock conference, as well as to the participants: Jonathan D. Katz, Markus Klammer, Pamela Lee, Megan Luke, Stefan Neuner, and Michael Schreyach.

For support with the research and visual materials for this catalogue, we were also able to depend on the valuable efforts of Valentina Frutig, Esther Baur of the Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, and Lorenz Wiederkehr.

Thanks are also owed to all the colleagues of the Kunstmuseum Basel, especially curator Nina Zimmer, whose vision, initiative, and energy formed the foundation of this exhibition; Anne-Christine Strobel, who, as curatorial assistant, attended to the exhibition and catalogue with enormous engagement, energetically supported by Salome Schnetz; Charlotte Gutzwiller and Corina Forrer for the organization of this complex exhibition project; and the Kunstmuseum's responsible conservators under the direction of Werner Müller.

Sincere thanks go to Credit Suisse, partner of the Kunstmuseum Basel, for its support, which made this exhibition possible in the first place. We owe our thanks to Pierrette Schlettwein for financing the present catalogue.

The Federal Office of Culture supplied a considerable financial contribution toward the costs of insuring the loans, and we received additional financial support from the Foundation for the Kunstmuseum Basel. We are enormously grateful to these supporters.

Josef Helfenstein
Director

Prologue

Early Pollock
Reception in Basel,

or

How the Kunstmuseum
Twice Almost
Acquired a Painting
by Jackson Pollock

16 The first visit by an American, from New York, to the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel was recorded in 1774.¹ Another 185 years

would pass before the first American works of art gained entry into the collection in 1959. At that moment, the collection in Basel suddenly became the number one address for contemporary American art in Europe. On the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of its founding, the Schweizerische National-Versicherungs-Gesellschaft presented the museum with a special gift. The director of the insurance company, Hans Theler, who was also the president of the Basler Kunstverein, arranged for Arnold Rüdlinger, the curator of the Kunsthalle Basel, to travel to New York and acquire paintings by American painters for the Kunstmuseum's collection.

Rüdlinger had studied art history at the University of Bern beginning in 1940. By 1944 he was already responsible for the installation of exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Bern, and he took over as director from 1946 to 1955. In Paris he met Alexander Calder, whose work he presented at the Kunsthalle in 1947. This was followed in 1953 by his acquaintanceship with Sam Francis, who suggested he visit New York and its current art scene. In 1952 and 1953, Rüdlinger presented new trends in European painting in two exhibitions under the title *Tendances actuelles de l'Ecole de Paris*. He also included American painting in the exhibition *Tendances actuelles 3*, which took place at the Kunsthalle Bern in February 1955. Besides works by the Europeans Georges Mathieu, Henri Michaux, Tancredi Parmeggiani, and Wols, he showed paintings by Sam Francis, Mark Tobey, and—still during his lifetime—Jackson Pollock. The press was indignant. A reporter from Olten compared the paintings on exhibit with his “bib from the distant past,”² whereas the *National-Zeitung* in Basel opined that Pollock achieved an effect that was reminiscent of an “oversized plate of raw vegetables with strings of mayonnaise.”³

In 1955, Rüdlinger transferred to the Kunsthalle Basel. Franz Meyer succeeded him in Bern. Rüdlinger traveled to New York in 1957 accompanied by the Bern-based art dealer Eberhard Kornfeld, where he again met Sam Francis, who would soon become a close friend. Francis introduced him to Clyfford Still and Barnett Newman, whom they visited in their studios. During his stay, Rüdlinger also saw works by Pollock, who had died in a car accident the previous year. He began thinking about an exhibition. Rüdlinger explained his intention in a letter to Alfred Hentzen, the director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle and the



A



B

1 The visitor was a certain Mr. Verplanck. See Max Burckhardt, “Europäische Nobilitäten auf der Durchreise in Basel: Ein Einblick in das alte Gästebuch der Basler Universitätsbibliothek,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 71 (1971): 203–50, esp. 215.

2 *Die Woche*, February 21, 1955, cited in Nora Fiechter, “Der Durchbruch des Abstrakten Expressionismus in der Schweiz: Eine Untersuchung der Ausstellung ‘Die neue amerikanische Malerei’ von 1958 in der Kunsthalle Basel” (master’s thesis, University of Lausanne, 2011), 21. This thesis, submitted to the Faculty of Arts at the University of Lausanne, summarizes fundamental research on the overall subject and constitutes the basis of the present text.

3 *National-Zeitung*, February 14, 1955 (evening edition), cited in Fiechter, “Der Durchbruch des Abstrakten Expressionismus in der Schweiz,” 21.

Kunstverein in Hamburg, asking him if he wished to take over the exhibition: "I have been busy for some time now with plans for an exhibition of those American artists who seem to me to have attained a style of painting that for the first time is independent from Europe and from all of art history. I am referring to 'abstract expressionists' such as Pollock, Kline, De Kooning, Rothko, Tobey, and Sam Francis. In a genuinely comprehensive exhibition I would like to capture the literally historic moment at which American painting highly unsettles and influences young European artists."⁴ Hentzen responded to Rüdlinger in a letter dated January 15, 1957: "As far as your plans go, I must say that I do not really feel like it. ... Pollock is certainly interesting and has had no small influence on European painting. However, if one sees a lot of paintings by him, one loses interest somewhat. I find de Kooning and Rothko really unpleasant."⁵



one of its own curators to Basel to supervise.⁷ To ensure that the exhibition could take place, inquiries were made in advance as to whether the Kunsthalle Basel had a stable wall at least three meters in height.

Although Rüdlinger's plan ultimately failed because of the high costs, in spring 1958 the Kunsthalle Basel was able to host a traveling exhibition titled *The New American Painting* from the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, as well as a solo exhibition of works by Pollock. The International Council sent both of the exhibitions on tour. After its presentation at the São Paulo Biennial in fall 1957, the Pollock exhibition continued on to a series of destinations in Europe, including Basel. The group exhibition, which came to Basel from Paris and subsequently went to Milan, crossed paths with the Pollock exhibition in Basel, where they were presented concurrently from April 19 to May 26, 1958 [→ p.16^A]. Rüdlinger took advantage of the overlap to place greater weight on the Pollock presentation by integrating two of the artist's three works from the survey exhibition into the monographic exhibition. The Pollock exhibition's next stop was the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, whose director, Willem Sandberg, had even designed the accompanying catalogue. In summer 1958, Hentzen showed the Pollock exhibition at the Kunstverein in Hamburg after all.⁶ MoMA assumed all of the costs for insuring the exhibition and even paid the high transportation costs across the Atlantic. However, in return it demanded extensive say in the hanging and promotion of the exhibition. MoMA supplied a press release and catalogue texts and sent

A Arnold Rüdlinger, director of the Kunsthalle Basel; Elias McQuaid, US general consul; and Hans Theler, president of the Kunstverein, at the opening of the exhibition *Jackson Pollock 1912–1956*, Kunsthalle Basel, April 1958

B A view into the large glass-roofed hall of the Kunsthalle Basel with *Number 32* (today at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf) and *Blue Poles* (today at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra)

4 Arnold Rüdlinger to Alfred Hentzen, January 1, 1957, Staatsarchiv Basel, ref. code PA 888a N 6 (1) 499 1958/4. See also Fiechter, "Der Durchbruch des Abstrakten Expressionismus in der Schweiz," 24.

5 Alfred Hentzen to Arnold Rüdlinger, January 15, 1957, Staatsarchiv Basel, ref. code PA 888a N 6 (1) 499 1958/4.

6 The exhibition at the Kunstverein in Hamburg ran from July 19 to August 21, 1958. See Alfred Hentzen, Arnold Rüdlinger, and Porter A. McCray, *Jackson Pollock 1912–1956*, exh. cat. (n.p., n.d. [1958]), n.p.

7 See Porter A. McCray, director of the International Program at MoMA, to Arnold Rüdlinger, December 3, 1957, Staatsarchiv Basel, ref. code PA 888a N 6 (1) 499 1958/4.

The selection of works by Pollock comprised thirty-one paintings and twenty-nine drawings. Whereas the spaces supplemented with additional partition walls on which the paintings were presented are well documented [→ p.16^B], it is unknown whether photographs of the display of the drawings exist. Nearly all of the works in the exhibition were for sale. Terms in the contract with MoMA regulated the prices and designated the contact persons. The list of the works on show is breathtaking, with one world-class painting after the other [→ p.18^{C,D}]: from *Pasiphaë*, today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, *Guardians of the Secret*, today at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art [→ cat.50], *Totem Lesson 1*, now in the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Collection [→ cat.53], and *Totem Lesson 2*, today at the National Gallery of Australia [→ cat.67], to *Easter and the Totem*, today at MoMA in New York [→ cat.103]. The exhibition met with a sizable response, including internationally, and a report on the tour's stop in Basel by *Schweizer Filmwochenschau* marked the first time Swiss TV reported on contemporary art from abroad. Yet, despite the brilliant selection of paintings and the enormous echo, not one of the works on exhibit was bought by a Basel-based collection.

A year later, in 1959, the Kunstmuseum Basel was afforded a big opportunity to expand its collection of contemporary art: as mentioned at the beginning, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of its founding, the Schweizerische National-Versicherungs-Gesellschaft presented the museum with a special gift: 100,000 Swiss francs for the purchase of contemporary American art. At an exchange rate in 1959 of approximately 4.3 Swiss francs per dollar, this corresponded to about 23,000 dollars. Arnold Rüdlinger, who had been commissioned to transact the purchase, bought four paintings: *Andes* by Franz Kline, *Day Before One* by Barnett Newman, *No. 16 (Red, White, and Brown)* by Mark Rothko, and *1957-D No.2* by Clyfford Still. Reports state that he also wanted to buy a work by Pollock, but the prices were already so high that a purchase was out of the question—a statement that seems plausible given that the large works by Pollock in the Basel exhibition in 1958 were on sale for 12,000–20,000 dollars each. Once again, the purchase of a work by Pollock did not come about. The works Rüdlinger bought arrived several weeks later packed in a tube. They were first shown in an exhibition in St. Gallen before being tentatively hung in the Kunstmuseum. The art commission, which had to approve donations, was not too enthusiastic about the American paintings at first; however, it finally brought itself to accept them. The purchase proved historic: the Kunstmuseum became the first European museum to possess works of contemporary American art.



C

83 x 68 x 21 inches	161 lbs.
(210.8 x 172.7 x 53.3 cm.)	(73.0 ks.)
Pollock:	TOTEM II. 1945. Oil on canvas.
Pollock:	CATHEDRAL. 1947. Duco and oil on canvas.
Pollock:	GUARDIANS OF THE SECRET. 1945. Oil on canvas.
Pollock:	FOUR OPPOSITES. 1953. Oil on canvas.
Pollock:	SHE-WOLF. 1943. Oil on canvas.

D

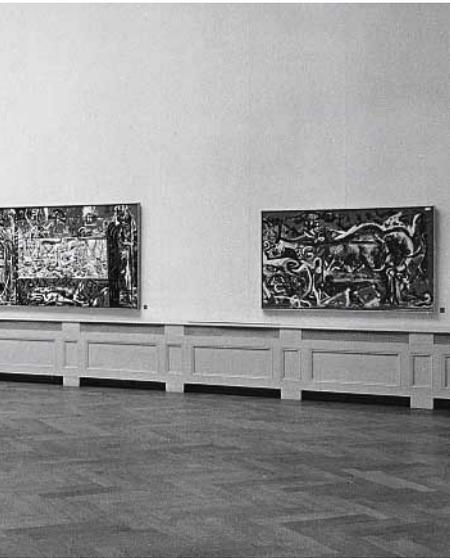
The purchase also laid a foundation to build on further. Franz Meyer succeeded Georg Schmidt as director of the museum in 1961.

He initiated a general discussion about how the Modern Department could continue to take shape, and he attempted to direct the focus increasingly toward American art; that is, toward assembling groups of abstract expressionist works while also allowing for younger American movements.

Meyer reflected in an interview, "I later realized that most of the artists that I had recommended to buy in the early 1960s, for example Sam Francis, Eduardo Chillida, Antoni Tàpies, were only an extract from the Ecole de Paris and did not lead anywhere. One had to first learn how to deal productively with the great Americans. ... I was in New York again for the first time in 1963, after that almost every year. Newman was in Basel twice. I often visited him in New York; I was in Rothko's studio five or six times. Unfortunately, it was not until the end of the decade that I tried to win over the commission for purchases of these two still living abstract expressionists. One should have undertaken a great deal more, of course!"⁸

Meyer made an attempt to buy a work by Pollock in 1966. The work—*Number 7A, 1948* → p. 21 ^E—was then owned by the Swiss photographer Herbert Matter, who had been on friendly terms with and in close artistic dialogue with Pollock.⁹ Matter had—even before Hans Namuth—considered making a film of Pollock at work on his drip paintings but gave up the idea because it would have been too difficult. An entry in the art commission's minutes from April 27, 1966, reads, "One of the most sensitive gaps in the museum's Modern Department is the absence of an important work by Pollock. The director can submit an offer in photography, which would be precisely that picture that the museum would have to have: Painting, 91×330 cm, owned by the New York-based Swiss photographer

Herbert Matter. Price approx. 100,000 dollars (a comparable but bigger picture bought in Düsseldorf cost 700,000 francs). Unfortunately, this exceptional purchase will not be easy to carry out, since all of the funds will be taken up by the planned Picasso purchase."¹⁰ Thus Meyer recalled the acquisition of Pablo Picasso's *Woman with Hat Seated in an Armchair* (1941/42) → p. 21 ^F, which had already been arranged through Heinz Berggrün. A clash ensued between advocates of Pollock and Picasso: "In the discussion it was Mrs. Petzold in particular who emphatically championed this work by Pollock. For her, a decision between the Picasso and Pollock offers would be made in favor of Pollock, since it is now important to continue the line of modern art, and in this case Pollock is the protagonist."¹¹ Whereas Martin Burckhardt, the architect on the commission, campaigned for the purchase of both works, pointing out that the commission



300 lbs., 461 lbs.	68.6 cu.ft.
(136.1 ks.) (209.1 ks.)	(1.9425 cu.m.)
Canvas, canvas.	\$20,000.
aluminum paint on/	\$2,500. 4404
1943. Oil on canvas.	\$10,000. 4407
duco and aluminum	\$13,000. 4405
Canvas.	\$8,000. 4406
----- Total Value, Case 11: \$53,500	

C Jackson Pollock, *Totem Lesson 2, Totem Lesson 1, Guardians of the Secret, and The She-Wolf* (today at The Museum of Modern Art, New York) in the exhibition *Jackson Pollock 1912–1956*, Kunsthalle Basel, 1958

D Excerpt from the transport list of Pollock loans for the exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel

8 "Das amerikanische Vierteljahrhundert: Ein Interview mit Franz Meyer von Philip Ursprung," in *White Fire—Flying Man: Amerikanische Kunst 1959–1999 in Basel*, exh. cat. (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 1999), 46.

9 On this, see Ellen G. Landau, "Action Re/action: The Artistic Friendship of Jackson Pollock and Herbert Matter," in *Pollock Matters*, exh. cat., ed. Ellen G. Landau and Claude Cernuschi (Chestnut Hill: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 9–57.

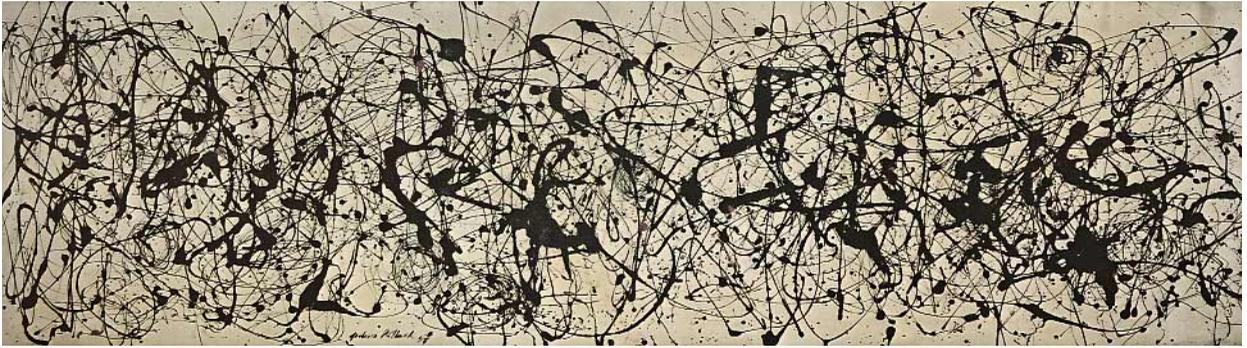
10 Kunstmuseum Basel, archive.

11 Ibid.

could combine two years' worth of funds, the two Basel-based artists on the commission, Walter Bodmer and Lenz Klotz, argued in favor of concentrating on the Picasso purchase. Meyer ultimately tipped the scales by yielding to the Picasso vote, postponing the purchase of a Pollock to a future date. The Picasso acquisition also proved to be difficult and could not be made until 1967—shortly before Basel's "Picasso Year" would increase the museum's collection by no fewer than seven major works by Picasso.¹² A large-format Pollock painting remained beyond reach.

However, in 1995 the museum was able to take delivery of two smaller paintings bequeathed by Anne-Marie and Ernst Vischer-Wadler: *Electric Night* (1946) [→ cat.87], a red figure mysteriously aglow on a black ground; and the piece of canvas cut out of a drip painting, *Silver and Black I* (1950) [→ cat.91]—as well as a drawing from the black paintings series [→ cat.95]. In 1998, the Kunstmuseum's Department of Prints and Drawings, which had already acquired prints by Pollock in 1979 [→ cat.71–76], was able to purchase an early drawing by Pollock from 1943 [→ cat.58] with funds provided by the Arnold Rüdlinger-Fond of the Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft, and in 2002 it succeeded in buying *Untitled* (ca.1939–1942) [→ cat.37], a densely drawn page from a sketchbook, worked recto and verso, from among Pollock's psychoanalytic drawings.

¹² See *Die Picassos sind da! Eine Retrospektive aus Basler Sammlungen*, exh. cat., ed. Anita Haldemann and Nina Zimmer (Basel: Kunstmuseum Basel, 2013), 30–31.



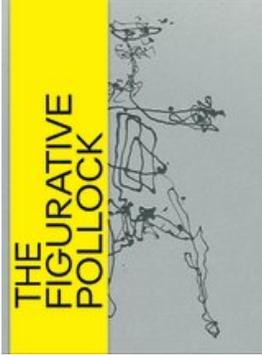
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E Jackson Pollock, *Number 7A*, 1948, 1948, oil and enamel on canvas, 91.4×342.9 cm, Private Collection (CR 210)

F Pablo Picasso, *Woman with Hat Seated in an Armchair*, 1941/42, oil on canvas, 130.5×97.5 cm, Kunstmuseum Basel, purchased with a contribution from the Max Geldner Foundation and an exceptional contribution from the government, 1967, Inv. G 1967.3



Josef Helfenstein, Nina Zimmer

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