

POSTWAR PRIMITIVES:

Anti-culture? Dubuffet, Pollock, and Premonitions of the Postmodern

...make the surface speak its own surface language... – Dubuffet, 1945

Personally, I believe very much in the values of savagery . . .
instinct, passion, mood, violence, madness. . . . – Dubuffet, “Anti-Cultural Positions.” 1951

I *am* Nature. – Pollock, ca. 1947

I. Review: Rational vs Irrational Production

- A. Empty pavilions versus stuffed cups (Bauhaus vs Surrealism)
- B. Staging postmodernism (1970) as a return to the virtues of irrationalism in a full-blown technocracy (1950s) and emerging “information society” (1960s)

II. Existentialism and Surrealism – international movements in the post WW2 period

- A. New York’s Surrealist exiles (escaping Eurofascism) in the ‘30s - ‘40s:
 - 1) Masson, Ernst, Matta (all in NY during war), Magritte (showed in NY 1936)
 - 2) Peggy Guggenheim “Art of This Century” Gallery promoting Surrealism, curated by Duchamp . . . an entry point for Jackson Pollock
- B. European *informe* (automatism, Bataille) versus Breton’s dreamscapes
- C. *Informel* in the U.S.
 - 1) Wols (1947), Giacometti (1950s), and Dubuffet (1950) all had crucial exhibitions in the 1950s in NY; Brassai’s graffiti photos at MoMA
 - 2) Jean Dubuffet gave talks on “Anti-Cultural Positions” in Chicago and elsewhere, 1951; showed his *corps de dame* series in NY

III. Jean Dubuffet’s *l’art brut* (raw or crude art) and Anti-Cultural Positions

- A. Theory of no-theory, art that is anti-art – Dubuffet (and Klee) reading Hans Prinzhorn’s Bildneri der Geisteskranken (Painting of the Insane), 1922
- B. Formal recipes
 - 1) Jean Fautrier’s *haut pâte* (“high paste,” or “impasto”), and graffiti line
 - 2) abject materials: dirt, asphalt, pebbles, leaves
 - 3) biaxial symmetry (a psychotic tendency)
- C. *Corps de dame* series, 1950 onward

III. (Adolph Gottlieb), Jackson Pollock, and (Native) American Primitivism

- A. Gottlieb and the Americanization of the pictograph
- B. Pollock’s shift from formal readings of Native American art to *shamanism*
- C. Pollock and the public
 - 1) from Mexican muralists to Picassoid Surrealism (1930s and ‘40s)
 - 2) Mural (1943, portable; no longer part of the wall; *abstract*)
 - 3) Pollock’s modernism per Greenberg (via Jones): industrial body disciplines
- D. Pollock as a trope in *Post*-modernism
 - 1) the avant-garde’s capacity for co-optation (Lawler, Muniz)
 - 2) the appropriated author (Bidlo)
 - 3) the search for authentic process (Kaprow, Oldenburg, Antoni)

Image List (selected) for **Lecture 15**

all works are o/c unless noted; Dubuffet's also often include gravel, sand, pebbles

Bauhaus:

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Barcelona Pavilion* (and chair), International Exposition, Barcelona, Spain, 1928-29, architectural design and building, interior decorations, furnishings.

Paul Klee, Magic Garden, 1926, mixed media (often he works with plaster and paint on paper on canvas)

Surrealism:

Alberto Giacometti, City Square (Plaza), 1948

Max Ernst Europe After the Rain, 1949-52

Yves Tanguy, Indefinite Divisibility, 1942

Andre Masson, Elk Attacked by Dogs, 1945

Rene Magritte, The Key of Dreams, 1936

Brassai (G. Halasz), Graffiti series, early 1930s photographs, published in a book and shown at MoMA in 1950s, fueling "informel"

Parisian *Informel*, or "Informel"

Wols, (Wolfgang Schulze), Painting 1944-45 o/c

Wols, The Blue Phantom, 1951 o/c

Jean Fautrier, The Massacre (also known as Sarah), 1944 o/paper on canvas

["haut paté"]

Fautrier, Tête d'Otage, no. 8 (Head of Hostage, 8) "1943" o/cardboard with plaster

["haut paté"]

Jean Dubuffet, Metro, 1943 o/c

Dubuffet, The Smoker by a Wall, 1945, o/c

Dubuffet, Archetypes, 1945 o/c

Dubuffet, Fautrier from the Front, 1947 o/c

Adolf Wolfli, Herdsman, 1911, drawing

<— "Outsider" artist, clinically insane

Dubuffet, Will to Power, 1946

Dubuffet, Tree of Fluids (corps de dame) 1950 o/c Adolph Gottlieb, Pictograph, 1946

American-Type Painting (aka "Action Painting," "Abstract Expressionism")

Pacific Northwest Native American works:

Kwakiutl painted cedar bark cape, 19th century

Tlingit speaking peoples, House Screen, 1840, carved, assembled, and painted wood

Haida Mask, ca. 1850s

George Walkus (Kwakiutl people), Dance Mask 1938, carved, assembled, and painted wood

Gottlieb, Evil Omen, 1946

Jackson Pollock, Birth, 1938-41

Pollock, Bird, 1938-41

Pollock, Head, 1940-41

Pollock, She-Wolf, 1943

Pollock, Mural, 1943

Pollock, Totem Lesson #2, 1945

Pollock, No. 1, 1948 (and detail with handprints)

Hans Namuth, Pollock Painting, 1950, photographs; (and film with Paul Falkenberg, 1951)

Gjon Mili, Picasso Painting with Light 1949, photograph published in Life magazine

Mili, Housewife Making a Bed, 1946

Ruptures in the Modernist Avant-Garde

Cecil Beaton, "The New Spring Line," *Vogue* models in front of Pollock's Lavender Mist, 1951

Allan Kaprow, Yard, 1961 ("Happening," installation and participation)

Claes Oldenburg, The Store, 1961-62 (ongoing "Happening")

Norman Rockwell, The Connoisseur, 1962

Postmodern Pollocks

Vik Muniz, Action Photo, after Hans Namuth from Pictures of Chocolate, 1997. (Photograph of chocolate painting of appropriated photograph)

Louise Lawler, Pollock and Tureen Arranged by Mr and Mrs Burton Tremaine, Connecticut, 1984

Mike Bidlo, Not Pollock ("Pollock" series), 1982-84.

Janine Antoni, Loving Care (performance art), 1992.

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