

Title

***Would You Like That With or Without Mayo?*
How Interdisciplinary Collaboration Slows the Spread of Popular
Misconceptions in Modern Art Scholarship**

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Abstract

There is no evidence that Willem de Kooning added mayonnaise to his paints, and E. I. du Pont de Nemours was not the manufacturer that supplied Jackson Pollock with custom paint formulations. These popular misconceptions can be traced to errors in interpretation or transcription of primary sources, repeatedly cited and referenced until the original mistake was transformed into accepted, albeit unsubstantiated, truth. The work of these artists and their colleagues forms a transformative link between the nature-based abstraction of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century modernists and the conceptual, materials-focused process art that rose to prominence after the Second World War. The overt materiality of mid-twentieth century art is at the heart of this evolution, and valuable information about these artworks and their production methods may be lost when misinformation becomes entrenched in the academic canon. Interdisciplinary collaboration is essential to avoid misdirection and support scholarship that enhances our understanding of modern art. This paper utilises existing documentation and collaborative research related to the manufacture, use, and physical behaviour of mid-twentieth century art materials to debunk some commonly held beliefs about well-known Abstract Expressionist artists, and

underscores how the combined resources of curators and conservators are needed to place the physical evidence in historical context and uncover the overlooked — and far more interesting — practices underlying the myths.

Keywords

Interdisciplinary scholarship, modern art, art materials, materiality, curation, conservation, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Abstract Expressionism

Introduction

Conspicuous materiality is characteristic of artwork produced in the mid-twentieth century, a key moment in the evolution of modern art when engagement with materials took precedence in art making. A prominent role in this development is assigned to the Abstract Expressionists, who ‘disregarded the idea of traditional categories and focused on the matter itself’ (Auping 1987, 152). This new engagement with the painting process was heralded as ‘address[ing] the picture surface as a responsive rather than inert object’ (Greenberg 1961, 24) as artist and material became collaborators in a creative act wherein ‘content and means are . . . completely subsumed in each other’ (Gossen 1959, 10). Personal exploration quickly transcended traditional categories of practice. ‘My opinion is that new needs need new techniques,’ proclaimed Jackson Pollock, ‘and the modern artists have found new ways of making their statements’ (to O’Connor 1967, 79). Unconventional methods and materials became associated with the Abstract Expressionists’ exploration of their craft, described by *ARTnews* editor Thomas Hess as ‘making a painting with almost nothing [to] making a painting with almost everything’ (1965, 54).

This direct communication between artist and material heralded a paradigm shift from product to process that influenced generations of artists. ‘[They] seemed to me to have solved the problem,’ Frank Stella recounted in 1972. ‘I didn’t have to go all the way back and worry again

about where I stood in relation to [Henri] Matisse and [Pablo] Picasso' (de Antonio and Tuchman 1984, 84). The Abstract Expressionist 'experience of paint and canvas, directly, without interference' (Goodnough 1951, 60) became an act of proto-performance art, a rejection of preconceived action in favour of immediate experience as the artist approached their work 'with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him' (Rosenberg 1952, 23). It was during this shift in process that '[the artist] becomes so adept at materializing as if they were meaning,' critic Harold Rosenberg suggested, 'that the problem itself is transformed' (1966, 22). Robert Motherwell alluded to this when he suggested that for Pollock, 'painting is his thought's medium' (1944, 97). Control was sometimes even ascribed to the object, for example, as when Rosenberg described Helen Frankenthaler as 'the medium of her medium' (1969, 121). Discussions of materiality later shifted from act to idea with rising interest in conceptual and experiential art, wherein 'the medium within which artists understand themselves to be working becomes a phenomenological dimension' (Krauss 1999, 175). The fulcrum on which the future of modernism came to rest was prophesied by critic and curator Lawrence Alloway in 1955. '[The] materials of the artist,' he proclaimed, 'has seldom carried so much of the burden of meaning' (2).

The literal aspects of an object's materiality play a central role in understanding the shift that took place in modern art during the twentieth century. 'The medium in its specificity is not simply a matter of physical constituents,' according to historian Thierry de Duve. 'It comprises technical know-how, cultural habits, working procedures and disciplines—all the conventions of a given art whose definition is throughout historical' (1996, 210). The 'insistent material literalness' observed in the work of the Abstract Expressionists and their colleagues (Kurczynski 2007, fn. 254) sites the movement historically, geographically, and within the modernist doctrine. The importance of materiality to modernism simultaneously helps and hinders modern-day efforts to study and preserve the relationship between these artists and their studio practices. 'The era of Abstract Expressionist painting is now somewhat distanced, part of that recent past which is so full of

documents, evidence, and memories,' noted curator and critic Richard Shiff. 'Indeed, to study Abstract Expressionism is to encounter a surplus of evidence; and when facts are so abundant, possession of them can leave interpretation as free as when there are no facts at all' (1987, 94). Assessing the extant documentation regarding artists' methods and materials poses a complex problem for researchers, who must learn to recognise and interpret incomplete or confusing information (both unintentional and purposeful) found in personal and third-party recollection, period vocabulary, and the generic terminology found within existing accounts of mid-twentieth century studio practice.

Misdirection in Scholarship

For modern art scholars addressing both specific and abstract lines of inquiry, materials are a direct line to the creative act. 'We call the artist's technical procedure a self-fashioning, a making of self,' posited Shiff, 'since it produces or defines that artist as artist as much as it produces the artwork' (1987, 95). Accurate accounts of studio practice are limited even in period art journals, which sought to provide glimpses into the artistic process through numerous interviews with artists and assistants and photographic features of artists "at work" in their studios. One such series, published by *ARTnews* and colloquially referred to as "X paints a painting," ran more than 80 articles from 1949 to 1966 and featured Abstract Expressionist artists including Hans Hofmann (February 1950), Pollock (May 1951), Franz Kline (December 1952), Willem de Kooning (March 1953), Adolph Gottlieb (March 1955), Elaine de Kooning (December 1960), and Ad Reinhardt (March 1965). Much of the studio practice descriptions appearing in the popular press are too vague or theatrical to provide tangible documentation of an artist's methods and materials. Articles were generally crafted for lay readership, providing incomplete or exaggerated accounts of the artists' working methods. Films of artists at work—Pollock (by Namuth in 1950) and Hofmann (by Feinstein in 1950), for example—are typically performances acted out for the viewer, with little

connection to actual studio methods, and with lighting and camera angles that prioritize drama over visual evidence. Accounts published late or after the artist's career mix student recollection, conflicting reports from associates, and the observations of scholars viewing the work years after the artist's passing. Such accounts rarely differentiate between empirical and anecdotal information.

Where detailed accounts of studio practices were created, the information was often considered secondary and edited from the final manuscript or archive. This can be seen, for instance, in an interview with Sam Feinstein, who studied with Hofmann and filmed the artist at work. Hofmann kept few technical records and was notoriously evasive when talking about his materials. 'Only the result counts,' he stated, 'not how it is done. The means in themselves mean nothing' (1955). Although Feinstein discussed Hofmann's preparatory methods and materials when interviewed late in life, the published interview focused on Hofmann's legacy as a teacher and did not include detailed information about his process (Feinstein 1989 and Rogala 2016, 50-51). Technical information is often overlooked entirely in the archiving of historical documentation. Many Abstract Expressionist painters were employed through New Deal programs at the Works Progress Administration, for example – including William Baziotis, de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb, Philip Guston, Kline, Lee Krasner, Pollock, Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, and Mark Tobey – and were exposed to new and experimental art materials and application techniques while working on those projects (Lodge 1988 and Marontate 1996). Interviews conducted by the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art with more than 400 project participants focus on the logistical underpinnings and art historical significance of the program, providing little information on actual practices and materials (Marontate, 74-75). The historical records of the WPA's Federal Art Project likewise prioritize arts administration policies; no archived copies have been found of the technical bulletins on materials and techniques written by Federal Art Project staff and reviewed by the Technical Services Laboratory in Washington, D.C. (74, 92).

Accounts that appeared in the popular press regarding mid-twentieth century artists at work were rarely accompanied by scientific analyses, a touchstone of museum practice and preservation efforts. These artists benefited from advancing paint technology and the proximity of small-run paint manufacturers who designed (and sometimes customized) materials in response to input from artists who utilized tools and materials previously considered inappropriate for fine arts practice. De Kooning's painting technique, for example, incorporated sign-painting tools he mastered during his early years as a commercial artist, and the experimental paints incorporated into workshops held by Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros played a formative role in Pollock's embrace of industrial paint media. Commercial house paints have been found on works by Abstract Expressionist painters such as Pollock, Kline, and Barnett Newman (Rogala et al. 2010 and Wijnberg et al. 2011), with Pollock 'taking full advantage of the relatively new alkyd-resin paints by 1949' (Lake et al. 2004, 140). The complex aging characteristics and formulations of mid-twentieth century paints jeopardize the preservation of these important artworks and underscore the importance of scholarly collaboration in compiling and clarifying existing accounts of the artists' studio methods.

Valuable information about modern artists and their materials is lost when misinformation becomes entrenched in the academic canon. Distortion in art history and technical art history can arise from inconsistencies in transcription or misinterpretation of period terminology and ambiguous language found in artist's interviews and contemporaneous accounts of studio practices, and in the unsubstantiated accounts of students or studio assistants years (and in some cases, decades) after their time with the artist. 'Despite the extent to which the general character of [Willem] de Kooning's methods and materials have been broadly described,' conservator Susan Lake has noted, 'writers confuse de Kooning's actual practices and tend to repeat Hess's observations without confirming them through technical examination' (1999, 11-12). Popular misconceptions become normalized as they are repeatedly cited and referenced, until the original

mistake becomes difficult to dislodge from the mythology of the artist or period. One descriptive term for this phenomenon is the *standardization of error*. This concept is similar to *standard error*, scientific terminology broadly understood to refer to inherent vice in experimental data — the limits of an analytical technique or equipment failure, for example, that skews all data in a consistent manner. *Standardization of error* in humanities scholarship refers to published or broadcast misinformation that is repeated until it becomes widely accepted while remaining inaccurate. *Standardization of error* skews scholarly results, drawing discourse away from deeper examination of individual artworks and interpretation of an artist's oeuvre. When misleading information makes its way into credible scholarship it is more likely to be repeated and perpetuated, and the resulting misdirection of time and effort delays original research and effective conservation treatment. Collaboration between art historians and conservation professionals is key to redressing misconceptions and offering new avenues for research. Curators and conservators have overlapping — but not identical — spheres of knowledge that can inform and enlighten each other's work. Each scholar, an expert in their own right, taps into networks (of conservation scientists or period/region specialists, for example) that may not be accessible to their colleagues. Interdisciplinary collaboration limits the chance of error by expanding the available resources. No research protocol is infallible, but in the realm of technical studies, the combined expertise of multiple disciplines is the most effective way to place the physical and documentary evidence in historical context.

Case Studies

The following case studies highlight how the united resources of curatorial and conservation scholars were used to debunk some commonly held beliefs about two artists associated with the new materials and techniques at the heart of Abstract Expressionism. There was no purposeful

transmission of misinformation in either of the examples presented below. In both cases, the original error arose from unclear documentation, abetted by the convenience of a plausible but inaccurate explanation—seemingly small irregularities in interpretation or transcription, cited and referenced again and again, with far-reaching consequences. Existing documentation related to the manufacture, use, and behaviour of mid-twentieth century art materials helped place the physical evidence in historical context and uncover the overlooked — and far more interesting — practices underlying the myths about these artists.

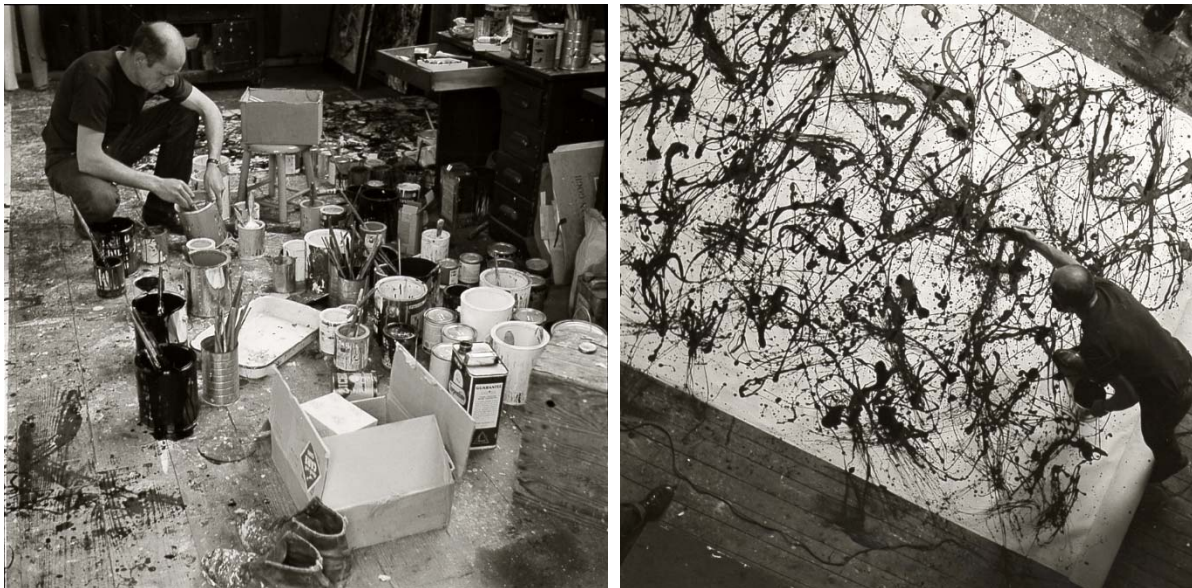


Figure 1 (left): Jackson Pollock in his studio, 1950 / Rudy Burckhardt, photographer. Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner papers, circa 1905-1984. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. **Figure 2** (right): Jackson Pollock at work, 1950 / Rudy Burckhardt, photographer. Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner papers, circa 1905-1984. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Jackson Pollock (1912-1936)

One instance of reasonable but misleading information appears in connection with the materials used in the famous “drip” paintings by Jackson Pollock. The artist’s signature painting style (figs. 1, 2) highlights the unconventional practices and ‘unapologetic materialism’ at the foundation of modern art making (Hunter 1956-57, 12). His physical technique located the transformation of

modernist painting into what historian T. J. Clark described as 'the intersection of body . . . and medium' (1999, 331), and encouraged the experimental work of other artists. Helen Frankenthaler, for example, credited Pollock with prompting her own shift in technique. 'Influenced by his painting and taking hints from his methods and materials,' she recalled, 'I experimented and proceeded to try other ideas' (in Glueck 1977, 85). Commercial materials were familiar to the Abstract Expressionists, many of whom worked as tradesmen or were introduced to some of these materials and their application methods during their early years in New York. Pollock's affinity for industrial paints is central to ongoing debate over the modernists' acceptance or rejection of cultural norms (started by Greenberg in 1939, and thereafter followed by Wolfe 1975, Clark 1994, Krauss 1994, and Bois and Krauss 2000, among others). Although he continued to incorporate traditional oil paints in his work throughout his career, Pollock is best known for his use of industrial paints with material characteristics suited to his dripping and pouring of paint onto canvas. Pollock was introduced to industrial and synthetic paint binders in 1936, at Siqueros's Laboratory for Experimental Techniques in Art (Marontate 1996, 60), where artists worked with innovators such as the German paint maker Adolph Keim, and tried newly developed synthetic paints, named Duco, from Delaware-based coatings manufacturer E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. (Originally an explosives manufacturer, the post-war E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company transitioned to coatings production, later focusing on paint manufacture and shortening their name to DuPont.) The prominent role this new binder played in his work and teaching earned Siqueiros the nickname "Il Duco." Pollock's use of industrial materials appears throughout the art historical literature, including an oft-cited interview with Pollock's wife, the artist Lee Krasner, for the arts and politics journal *Partisan Review*. Krasner's conversation with art historian Barbara Rose underscores the close relationships between mid-twentieth century artists and paint makers:

Barbara Rose: You didn't have plastic [synthetic] paints yet. No matter how you thinned oil down you could never get the liquidity of enamel or house paint.

Lee Krasner: Exactly. I think that had more to do with his decision in getting commercial paint. He could do what he wanted to do with it. He also at one point got Du Pont to make up very special paints for him, and special thinners that were not turpentine. I don't know what it was.

Barbara Rose: Do you remember how he got in touch with the paint chemist?

Lee Krasner: I don't remember, but at the time the painting Rockefeller owned was burned, the restorer got in touch with me, and I had to go to the studio and write it out so they could contact the Du Pont people and find out precisely how to deal with it.

Barbara Rose: What were these special paints that Du Pont developed for Pollock?

Lee Krasner: I don't know. I simply gave them the name of the paints and asked them to be in touch with Du Pont's chemists to find out. (Rose 1980, 87)

It was not unusual for modern artists to work directly with paint manufacturers during this period, especially when the artist or manufacturer was using experimental techniques or materials. Samuel Golden and Leonard Bocour of New York's Bocour Artist Colors, for example, regularly modified formulations for their Magna paint (the first acrylic paint on the commercial market) to address requests for different handling characteristics or custom formulations from such artists as Morris Louis (Gates et al. 2005, 330). Pollock is commonly associated with the paint he encountered through "Il Duco," but E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, it turns out, was not the supplier of the artist's custom paint formulations. The original transcript from the Krasner interview, covered with editor's marks and corrections (fig. 3), shows that it was the Chicago- and New York-based commercial paint maker Devoe & Reynolds Co. who supplied Pollock with these materials (fig. 4). Below is the same section of the *Partisan Review* interview, lifted directly from the transcript, with the corrections in place and highlighted:

Barbara Rose: You didn't have plastic paints yet. No matter how you thinned oil down you could never get the liquidity of enamel or house paint.

Lee Krasner: Exactly. I think that had more to do with his decision in getting commercial paint. He could do what he wanted to do with it. He also at one point got **Devoe to make up very special paints for him**, and special thinners that were not turpentine. I don't know what it was.

Barbara Rose: Do you remember how he got in touch with the paint chemist?

Lee Krasner: I don't remember, but at the time the painting Rockefeller owned was burned, the restorer got in touch with me, and I had to go to the studio and **check the paints he used** so they could contact the **Devoe** people and find out precisely how to deal with it.

Barbara Rose: What were these special paints? Do you know?

Lee Krasner: I don't know. I simply gave them the name of the paints and asked them to be in touch with **Devoe's** chemists to find out.

Barbara Rose: These paints were especially developed for Pollock and they were from **Devoe**? (Rose 1978, 5)

The position of Devoe paints in Pollock's studio practice is substantiated by physical evidence preserved from the artist's studio. Technical analysis of paint drips on the floor and the examination of the labels on the surviving paint cans in the artist's studio—a project performed by conservators and scientists in association with Pollock scholars and the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center—revealed only limited use of DuPont materials, with wider employment of house paint, floor paint, and radiator paint manufactured by the F. W. Devoe and C. T. Raynolds Company, and Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. (now Pittsburgh Paints) (Coddington 1999, Lake et al. 2004, Harrison 2014).

Figures 3 and 4: Barbara Rose interview, 1978. Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner papers, circa 1914-1984, bulk 1942-1984. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Pages 1 (left) and 5 (right, detail) are from the edited transcript of an interview with Lee Krasner.

It is not clear how the original error entered the 1978 transcription, or how that error, corrected in editing, re-appeared in the 1980 publication of the interview in *Partisan Review*. An unfamiliar brand name, heard via audio tape, may sound at first to be similar to a name readily associated with Pollock. The recent collaborative studies performed by curators and conservators may help to offset the error entrenched in the “official” publication, and lead to new discoveries

about the relationships between artists and manufacturers during the rise of mid-twentieth century modernism. New discoveries about Pollock's materials may also impact the technical research and preservation of his paintings. This case underscores the importance of reviewing primary source material and serves as a reminder against retrofitting information to preconceived notions of history. We miss an opportunity to follow what might be a fruitful line of inquiry if we are primed to hear "Duco" in our heads whenever anyone talks about Pollock.



Figure 5 (left): Willem de Kooning, ca. 1960 / Fred W. McDarrah, photographer. Photographs of artists by Fred McDarrah, 1963-1976. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. **Figure 6** (right): Willem de Kooning's studio, ca. 1960s / W. (Walter) Silver, photographer. Thomas Hess papers, 1937-1978. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Willem de Kooning (1904-1997)

Another example wherein new avenues of scholarship have been obscured by popular myth occurs in relation to the work of Willem de Kooning (fig. 5). Like Pollock, De Kooning's work is utilized as a standard of mid-twentieth century physicality in technique, when 'what was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event' (Rosenberg 1952, 23). De Kooning was known to prepare his own paints, and the belief that the artist added mayonnaise to his paint mixtures is firmly lodged in the historical legend. Accounts of de Kooning's studio practice include claims that he used paints 'thinned with water and add[ed] kerosene, safflower oil or mayonnaise,' for example, 'as a binding agent' (Waldman 1978, 26). Reports listing mayonnaise among de Kooning's studio materials

appear in newspapers and journals alike, but are nowhere supported by the artist's own statements or the accounts of his assistants. 'Distortions and fallacious stories have passed around since he has become famous,' proclaimed studio assistant Herman Cherry. 'But I can say, "NO!", when I read that [de Kooning] used mayonnaise as a medium' (1989, 230).

The genesis of this misinformation is not definitively known, but may arise from oversimplification of the artist's technique. As part of his studio practice, de Kooning dispersed his oil paints in other liquids to create a thick but lightweight material with handling properties that differed from those of traditional oil paints (fig. 6). 'De Kooning used to add water and salad oil to his paint,' explained conservator John Brealey. 'He whipped them up together to get a kind of emulsion, like mayonnaise' (in Tomkins 1987, 66). It is not a great leap to see how the two emulsions could be confused, particularly when they share some of the same ingredients and have similar methods of preparation. The mayonnaise myth also fits the theatrical narrative of Abstract Expressionist experimentation advanced by the popular press. 'Safflower oil, kerosene and mayonnaise are pressed into service as binding agents' for the artist, according to an article in the *New York Times*. 'His studio tables look like . . . the kitchen of a very good cook who is big on sauces' (Russell 1978, D25). This myth was conclusively disproved by a team of conservators and conservation scientists who analysed de Kooning's paints and found no evidence of egg — a key ingredient of mayonnaise — in any of the artist's work (Lake 1999).

In refuting this beloved but unsupported tale of de Kooning's studio practice, technical study of the artist's work reveals an unexpected and potentially illuminating pattern in his use of materials, and an intimate connection between de Kooning's work and his physical surroundings. '[A] painting is both a thing and an event,' declared second-generation Abstract Expressionist Ray Parker. 'Ontologically, it exists as a part of nature, not only as a "ethetic" [sic] object, but as behavior in the form of a significant record' (1958, 20). A comparison of materials from early and late works in de Kooning's career disclose both a figurative and material shift in the artist's technique.

Paintings produced during de Kooning's years in New York City contain 'a range of house paints and sign painters' enamels along with artists' paints, often mixed with sand, charcoal, plaster of Paris, calcite, wax, and ground glass' (Lake, Lomax, and Schilling 1999, 381). Industrial materials were in keeping with the artist's commercial work as a sign painter, and the gritty additive materials were in common use among New York artists and their experimental European colleagues (Standeven 2003, 44). De Kooning moved to Long Island late in his career; art historians acknowledge a shift in the artist's style with his move from city to seashore, and there is now evidence to suggest that de Kooning's materials also reflected his changing environs. Technical analysis by conservator Susan Lake revealed that de Kooning discarded his house paint and poppy oil mixtures after relocating to Long Island, where he began to formulate new emulsions made from traditional oil paints and cooking oil, with thinners such as kerosene and water, 'whipping the ingredients with a brush to fluffy consistency' (2010, 64, 65). Years of collaborative technical research among conservators, conservation scientists, and art historians have shown 'the extent to which [de Kooning] consciously employed unconventional materials in his paintings' (Lake, Lomax, and Schilling 1999, 381). What more is there to learn from these newly identified materials? Is de Kooning's shift from house paint to artist's oils a reflection of increasing monetary stability as an established artist? Is his change in additive oils a simple matter of working with a new paint material, or are we witness to a literal shift from city soot and ash to a new world filled with sky and sea? Critic and art historian Irving Sandler once called Pollock's work an attempt by the artist to 'literally be in the painting' (1970, 102). Are we witness to an attempt by de Kooning to embed his physical world in his work?

Familiarity may go some way towards explaining the ease with which we embrace the amusing but simplistic idea of foodstuff in de Kooning's paints, or the ease with which one manufacturer's name eclipsed that of a lesser known company in transcriptions of Pollock's studio practice. The hazards in these cases are similar; by accepting information that fits an existing

conception of the facts without confirmation or further research, we miss opportunities for discovery and overlook material data that might directly impact collections care.

Conclusion

Interdisciplinary collaboration is essential to avoid misdirection and support scholarship that enhances our understanding of modern art. The innovative use of materials is a recognizable characteristic of modern painting, notably associated with the mid-twentieth century movement known as Abstract Expressionism. Scholars continue to debate the workings of this relationship, a question faced by the artists themselves. 'Modernism and materialism go together,' posited Clark. 'This does not mean . . . that the fellowship was always recognized . . . or that, even when it was, [the] artists agreed on which version of materialism to follow and exactly how' (1999, 139). The appearance of new art making materials and procedures in the mid-twentieth century encouraged experimental practices that shaped modern art history. Understanding an artist's materials helps us uncover and preserve their legacy; the technical study of these materials sites both artist and artwork on a historical trajectory. 'A painting that is an act is inseparable from the biography of the artist,' Rosenberg noted. 'The painting is a "moment" in the adulterated mixture of his life' (1952, 22-23). The technical study of material-heavy works of artists such as de Kooning and Pollock are rich resources for scholarship. How scholars approach the study of these complex works sets the direction for future research, avoiding or ensuring the perpetuations of myths that delay or damage effective scholarship and preservation efforts.

Misinformation, repeated and propagated, leads to entrenched myth and, more tragically, to the loss of the scholarship that could have happened without the misdirection. Like the artists we study, curators and conservators 'derive their chief inspiration from the medium [in which] they work' (Greenberg 1939, 36), and it is incumbent upon us to seek out scholars with shared interests but disparate expertise, so that we may increase the perspectives from which we approach our inquiry. In each of the cases presented above, misinformation was recognized by one scholar, then

investigated by a group of collaborators from multiple disciplines, each of those scholars making a notable contribution to replacing the misinformation and placing new information in context. Interdisciplinary collaboration is a crucial component of technical study in modern art, and a valuable tool in fighting the spread of popular misconception. By working together, art and technical scholars avoid misdirected research, and in doing so free up the resources to uncover the hidden truths underlying these myths.

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