

## Pollock symposium (Williamstown, May 13, 2006)

Suzanne Augugliaro

at Williams College, Massachusetts

Pollock Symposium at Williams College, Saturday, May 13, 2006

[Please read to the end for information on the Pollock exhibition]

Williams College Museum of Art Presents

JACKSON POLLOCK AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE: A Tribute to Kirk Varnedoe '67

April 14-October 1, 2006

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The Judith M. Lenett Fellowship Lecture by Jason Vrooman '06

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

4:00 pm at the Williams College Museum of Art

5:00-6:30 pm reception

"Jackson Pollock: Beneath the Surface, A Tribute to Kirk Varnedoe '67"  
will be held at Williams College on **May 13, 2006**. The schedule of  
events is as follows:

11:00 am

Gallery talk at the Williams College Museum of Art  
by Jason Vrooman, Graduate Student in the History of Art, Class of 2006

2:00-6:00 pm

The Plonsker Family Symposium at Brooks-Rogers Auditorium, Bernhard  
Music Center at Williams College

Welcome: Morton Owen Schapiro, President of Williams College

Introduction: Lisa Graziose Corrin, Director, Williams College Museum of  
Art and co-curator of Jackson Pollock at Williams College

Speakers include:

Adam Gopnik, Essayist at large for the New Yorker

Pepe Karmel, Associate Professor in the Department of Fine Arts, New  
York University

Tom Branchick, Director, Williamstown Art Conservation Center

Helen Harrison, Director, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

Ellen G. Landau, Professor at Case Western Reserve University

S. Lane Faison, former director of the Williams College Museum of Art,  
and Steve Gordon '55

Please RSVP for the Plonsker Family Symposium to Judy Pellerin at  
[jpellerin@williams.edu](mailto:jpellerin@williams.edu), or call 413-597-2037.

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Williamstown, MA - The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) proudly presents, 'Jackson Pollock at Williams College', a unique opportunity to see three of Pollock's famous "drip" paintings in the Berkshires. These works are extremely fragile, due to the materials with which they were painted, and rarely travel. One of Pollock's paintings will be coming to the Williamstown Art Conservation Center because it is in need of conservation treatment; the other pieces will be used for purposes of comparison. After the conservation process, the works will hang at WCMA, beginning April 14, 2006.

'Jackson Pollock at Williams College' will feature /Number 2, 1949/, from the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute Museum of Art; /Number 13A, 1948: Arabesque/, from the Yale University Art Gallery; and /Number 7, 1950/, from New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). The exhibition will demonstrate that conservation can shed light on Pollock's complex "drip-painting" method, choice of unconventional materials, and his stylistic evolution. It also examines the best methods of preserving, authenticating, and experiencing Pollock's work. The exhibition will also consider Pollock's use of the "frieze format" for the first time in Pollock scholarship, and how it affects the composition, style, and ultimately, the meaning of those works.

This exhibition is a curatorial collaboration between WCMA's new director, Lisa Corrin, and Tom Branchick, director of the Williamstown Art Conservation Center. They will be assisted by Jason Vrooman, a Williams graduate student and the Judith M. Lenett Fellow. The Lenett Fellowship is awarded to a graduate art history student to combine a "hands on" conservation treatment and art history research.

Pollock used the same commercially dyed red fabric as a background for both /Number. 2, 1949/ and /Number 13A , 1948: Arabesque/. In March, Branchick will remove a consolidant varnish coating that was applied in 1959 by conservators, "with the best of intentions," from the background of /Number. 2, 1949/. This coating altered both tone and reflectance of

the intended presentation surface. The Yale Pollock, /Number 13A , 1948: Arabesque/, was never varnished and will serve as the "control" picture from which Branchick and Vrooman can compare and contrast the surfaces of these two works. The two paintings were not made sequentially, so Vrooman will analyze why Pollock decided to again use the red oxide dyed fabric. /Number 7, 1950/, from the MoMA, was created in a similar style, and will serve as further comparison of Pollock's unique painting style.

The analysis at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center and the exhibition at WCMA will add to the scholarship of Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel, who, in 1998, published a pivotal study of Pollock's work for a major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

"This is an exceptional opportunity for Williams and for the Berkshires," stated Lisa Corrin, who came to WCMA this past October to assume the directorship. "We are enormously appreciative of our colleagues at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, the Munson-Williams Proctor Arts Institute Museum of Art, the Yale University Art Gallery, and MoMA for their help in making this important project a reality and so quickly. How fortunate for our community to have these masterpieces of modern art on display again at WCMA for the first time in over fifty years."

In December 1952, critic Clement Greenberg organized 'A Retrospective Show of the Paintings of Jackson Pollock', a landmark early survey of Pollock's work dating from 1943-1951, which opened at Bennington College and then traveled to Williams. That exhibition included /Autumn Rhythm: Number 30. 1950/, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and /No. 2, 1949/ from the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute Museum of Art, now widely accepted as some of Pollock's greatest achievements.

'Jackson Pollock at Williams College' is being organized as a special tribute to Kirk Varnedoe, Williams Class of 1967. Varnedoe was the Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). In addition to organizing MoMA's groundbreaking Pollock retrospective, he also curated retrospectives of American painters Cy Twombly and Jasper Johns. He taught at the New York Institute of Fine Arts and was awarded a MacArthur "genius" Fellowship in 1984.

"Kirk Varnedoe was an extraordinarily bold and visionary curator of modern art," Williams President Morton Owen Schapiro said. "How appropriate it is, then, to honor him here at the college he loved so dearly with this imaginative and striking exhibition." Friends of Kirk Varnedoe hope to establish a professorship at Williams in his honor. He died of cancer in 2003 at age 57.

The Williams College Museum of Art is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is free and the museum is wheelchair accessible. Contact: Suzanne Augugliaro, Public Relations Coordinator 413.597.3178; [WCMA@williams.edu](mailto:WCMA@williams.edu); [www.wcma.org](http://www.wcma.org).

Reference:

CONF: Pollock symposium (Williamstown, May 13, 2006). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 10, 2006 (accessed Jan 1, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/28045>>.