

As noted in my discussion post: I think the asymmetry between Pollock's supporters and critics/cynics is a focus on his process, inspirations and art as opposed to a superficial derision of his perceived eccentricity and undeserved acclaim.

Pollock's detractors often share the "even I could paint that"/"my 2 year-old could do that" sentiment of cynical internet commenters under an artists' instagram posts. This sort of cynicism is paradoxically focused on the surface-level perception of the artist and their art, and is often in vitriolic reaction (and quite validly at that) to the sort of metaphysical importance or radicalism that artists attach to themselves.

Pollock and his contemporaries were part of the abstract-expressionist movement, that was framed as a direct response to the "prison" of figurative expressionism that dominated western art. While there was a lot of validity to this "rebellion", I tend not to attach too much importance to the pseudo-politics of the western art world where everything from the style of art to the nature of critique are really just determined by the stupendously wealthy patrons and who they happen to fancy at any moment in time. Of course, the nature of patronage isn't the only consideration for whether or not art is radical, but it is often the determinant of other factors as well, such as the general accessibility of the art and -- most importantly -- how art serves to widen the class divide by accruing superficial value for the ruling class in a way that the common man cannot so much as participate or make claims to any of the surplus.

Supporters of Pollock are often looking at the artist in a holistic sense; in terms of his influences and those he influenced, the movement within modern art he spurred and the inherent politics surrounding what he represented. While this is indeed how artists should be perceived, I feel like there is still some dishonesty in such "holistic" perspectives on art that fail to look beyond the underlying power structures that influence the art, critique of art as well as the public perspectives (or lack thereof) of both. Indeed Pollock's supporters and the sort of people attracted to rebellious movements have an appreciation for things that represent "radicalism", but are often misguided in what they recognize as radical.

My argument here could maybe also be looked at as a bit intellectually sanctimonious, after all the sort of meta-influence present in the art world's politics is the very same in national politics. But that would sort of miss the point I'm trying to pass across here, which is that: we can't ever reduce radicalism to conformist framing.

Perhaps the best way to sum up my argument here is that, discourse about art and art movements like Pollock's shouldn't be framed as "is the art actually *good* enough", but instead as "is the art as *radical* as it claims to be".