

# PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION

## Press Release

***Jackson Pollock's Mural: Energy Made Visible***

**April 23 – November 16, 2015**

**Peggy Guggenheim Collection**

**Curated by David Anfam**

From April 23 through November 16, 2015 the Peggy Guggenheim Collection presents ***Jackson Pollock's Mural: Energy Made Visible***. The exhibition is curated by **David Anfam**, Senior Consulting Curator, Clyfford Still Museum, Denver, and a preeminent authority on Abstract Expressionism. It is organized by The University of Iowa Museum of Art. This touring exhibition focuses on Jackson Pollock's epochal ***Mural*** (1943, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City), following its 18-month campaign of conservation and cleaning at the Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles. The dynamic ***Mural*** is the largest painting Pollock created and has exerted a seismic impact on American art down to the present day. Commissioned in the summer of 1943 by Peggy Guggenheim for her New York townhouse, ***Mural*** established a new sense of scale and audacity for the Abstract Expressionist movement, anticipating the classic 'poured' abstractions that Pollock would begin four years later. Setting ***Mural*** into context, the selection includes Pollock's newly-restored ***Alchemy*** (1947), as well as works by the artist's wife Lee Krasner, David Smith and Robert Motherwell's ***Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 126*** (1965-75) – the latter was specifically intended to hang, as a tribute to Pollock, opposite ***Mural***. Crucially, it also sheds fresh light on Pollock's relationship to such photographers of action and energy as Herbert Matter, Barbara Morgan, Aaron Siskind and Gjon Mili. The exhibition travels to the Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle, Berlin and thence to the Museo Picasso, Málaga.

In a letter of July 29, 1943, Pollock wrote to his brother Charles of Peggy Guggenheim's commission to paint a mural-scale canvas, noting that the prospect was "exciting as all hell". In a comprehensive text in the book that accompanies this exhibition, ***Jackson Pollock's Mural: Energy Made Visible*** (Thames & Hudson, London, 2015, 132 pp. + 106 ills.), curator David Anfam investigates the sources, meanings and influences of ***Mural***. Its scale, evocative of the vast spaces of the American West, where Pollock as well as his friend Clyfford Still grew up, fulfilled Pollock's ambition – nurtured by his admiration for the great Mexican muralists and by memories of the accomplishments of his teacher Thomas Hart Benton – to move beyond the easel to the wall.

In ***Mural*** a specifically American, symbolic component is the appearance of movement from right to left – that is, towards the west. This momentum is anticipated in an early painting by Pollock, ***Going West*** (Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, exhibited in ***Charles Pollock. A Retrospective*** which is simultaneously on view at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection). Anfam explores the sources for Pollock's concern with movement: that he perceived energy and action as characteristics of modern life, seeking out contemporary images of dynamic motion, such as those by Barbara Morgan, Albanian-born Gjon Mili (who published regularly in *Life* magazine), and his close friend the Swiss photographer Herbert Matter, whose work was included in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, ***Action***

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*Photography*, in the same months that Pollock was working on *Mural*. Anfam concludes by examining *Mural's* place in the development of Pollock's handling of pictorial space, its precocious signaling of a tendency in New York to paint on an ever-larger scale, and its legacy in the work of other and subsequent artists, including Robert Motherwell, David Smith, Lee Krasner, David Reed, Brice Marden, and Richard Serra.

*Jackson Pollock's Mural: Energy Made Visible* is one of three exhibitions promoted by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection to celebrate both Jackson and Charles Pollock, Jackson's eldest brother. From February 14 through April 6 and again from April 23 to September 14, the museum presents *Alchemy by Jackson Pollock. Discovering the Artist at Work*, and from April 23 through September 14, the museum hosts *Charles Pollock. A Retrospective*. All three exhibitions enjoy the patronage of the U.S. Mission to Italy and the support of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York.

*Jackson Pollock's Mural: Energy Made Visible* is also supported by Intrapresæ Collezione Guggenheim, by Private Bank BSI, by Enel and by Regione del Veneto. The educational projects surrounding the exhibition are made possible by the Fondazione Araldi Guinetti, Vaduz.

The exhibitions of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection are made possible thanks to the support of its Advisory Board and:

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