WHAT IS JACKSON POLLOCK?

This course introduces students to central themes in modern and contemporary art history through the figure of one iconic modern artist: Jackson Pollock. Pollock, who emerged as a central figure in the New York art scene just as American art began to receive international attention, said very little about his own practice, and his works offer little guidance to viewers and interpreters. Despite (or perhaps because of) this opacity, Pollock has provoked significant interest in the halls of academe, the studios of generations of artists, and in the popular media. We will examine and discuss the many competing claims and representations that surround this figure, as articulated by art historians, critics, filmmakers, and curators. We will pay especially close attention to how other artists—including but not limited to Gutai, post-minimal and feminist practitioners—have appropriated and reinterpreted Pollock's practice in the half-century after his death.

This will be a reading and discussion-intensive seminar that asks students to think critically about issues of authorship, interpretation, modernism, national identity, performance, expression and mediation.

Fall, 2015 Thursdays, 2-5 pm. Professor Sarah Hollenberg