

Staging Jackson Pollock

4 September 2018 – 24 March 2019

Gallery 5, Free Entry

#JacksonPollock

09 July 2018 - **Jackson Pollock's** (1912 – 1956) monumental masterpiece *Summertime 9A* is the centerpiece of this exhibition exploring the UK premiere of the revolutionary painter's work, held at the Whitechapel Gallery 60 years ago.

Displaying Pollock's works within a radical exhibition layout, the first UK display of the American Abstract Expressionist provoked bewilderment and excitement. *Staging Jackson Pollock* presents Pollock's 5-meter-wide drip painting, returning to the Whitechapel Gallery after six decades, alongside rare archival material. A new exclusive audio interview with British modernist architect **Trevor Dannatt** (b. 1920, UK), the original show's designer, provides fresh perspective on this seminal moment in the history of exhibition-making and Pollock's legacy.

Trevor Dannatt was invited to design a new environment for Pollock's works by the Whitechapel Gallery's then Director Bryan Robertson (1925 – 2002) in 1958. The original exhibition consisted of 58 paintings created during Pollock's 'drip period' between 1947 and 1950, during which the painter became internationally famous.

Dannatt's constructivist approach to the display transformed the salon style gallery into a theatrical environment. His 'cohesive architectural ensemble' included freestanding breezeblock walls, black panels, and an undulating ceiling of suspended fabric. This audacious layout enabled a dynamic encounter with the paintings from numerous angles, immersing visitors in a powerful encounter with painting as environment.

The new interview featured in *Staging Jackson Pollock* reveals Dannatt's architectural approach to creating the display and his collaborative process with Robertson. The pair travelled together to Berlin to the exhibition, which was travelling to Europe from New York's Museum of Modern Art after Pollock's untimely death. MoMA's International Programme was rumoured to be sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as part of a raft of cultural initiatives serving as soft power in the Cold War. Abstract Expressionism was used to emblematised freedom of expression, countering the communist ideology of the Soviet Union.

Press Release

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Notes to Editors

- Nayia Yiakoumaki, Curator: Archive Gallery and Head of Curatorial Studies, assisted by Candy Stobbs, Assistant Curator
- A curator's tour will take place at 6.30pm on 20 September, including an insight into the design of the new exhibition

About Whitechapel Gallery

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see. It is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Nearest London Underground Stations: Aldgate East, Liverpool Street, Tower Gateway DLR

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