

BECOMING BECAME I AM what I AM



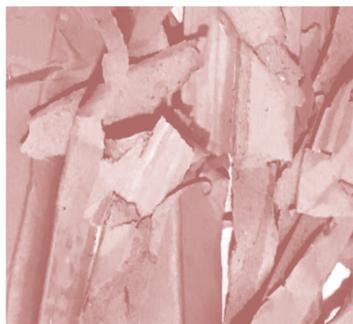
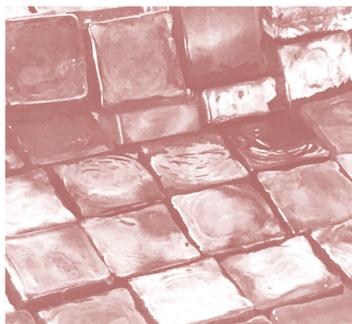
She was LEE POLLOCK, but she is LEE KRASNER.

Lee was the one of the few female artists in the Abstract Expressionist group. She learned to draw in school and she believed that her life should be full of art. During the exhibition at the Barbican Centre, I found that Lee didn't have a signature style in the way her husband Jackson Pollock did. Her body of work changed a lot throughout her life as she experimented with various ways to create. She refused to conform to a style, expressing herself with the use of different materials and colours.

'Becoming Lee' was one of the strongest claims of the exhibition for me, it made me realize that she was discovering herself throughout her life, despite everyone defining her as Pollock's wife. She was becoming herself in every step she took, and she finally became Lee with her amazing paintings.

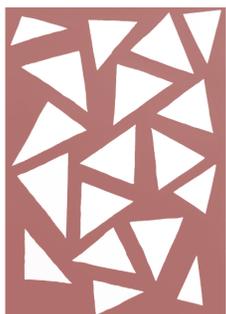
We come from different countries, we have different cultures and habits. In the past three weeks, we have been living in a strange city with a new culture that we didn't know before. When I walk on the streets, I wonder who I am so many times. I have tried to find the place where I should belong to, I tried to find a way to explain who I am. At some point I thought I should change in this foreign city and I tried, but I found it was too hard. I became myself in my country, in my culture, throughout 20 years of my life. This experience in London changed me in so many ways, but I am still what I am.

As people thought, 'became' always happened before 'becoming'. In my view, every step we have taken made us what we are now. Time flies as we are becoming ourselves, and we became ourselves during this becoming. We might have changed ourselves with a question 'who are we?', but at the end, we are what we are, I am what I am.

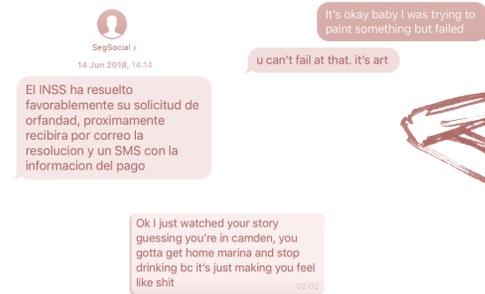


COLLECTION OF FIRST THOUGHTS

'Twisted chaos with the colour of flesh' was my first thought when I saw this series of paintings by Lee Krasner. The paintings disturbed and frightened me first. However, I was also fascinated by them. These paintings were made shortly before and after Lee lost her husband, Jackson Pollock. Instead of only seeing sorrow in these messy and tangled bodies, there are also mixed feelings such as anger, lust, and confusion. The paintings were titled *Prophecy: Birth, Embrace* and *Three in Two*. They are dominated by a combination of pink and heavy bold black lines. She referenced Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* to create broken bodies and identical disembodied eyes. Twisted bodies with twisted feelings were painted on the canvas in a way that she had never done before. These paintings connected with me emotionally and I was curious about other people's feelings. So, I decided to collect different first thoughts from different people. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, there are only pure first connections between the audience and the artist.



PASSION POWERFUL DESTINY



PINK EXPRESSIVE DIFFERENCE

Three Course Meal

First Course: Birth

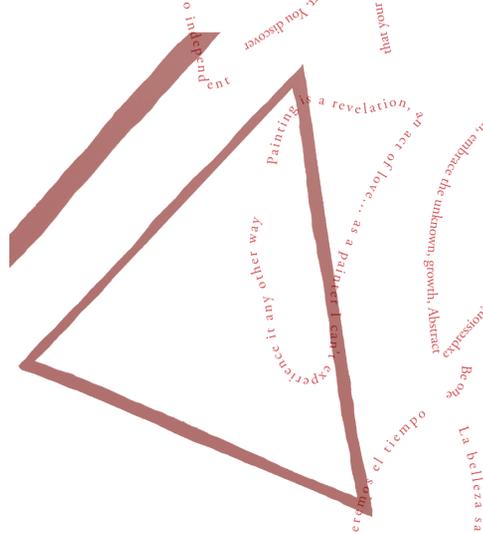
Avignon salad a blend of fleshy gazes, buttocks, breasts, big feet. Served with a testicle, a black smear of pubic hair, an eye.

Second Course: Embrace

Chopped Pablo steak covered in a rich carnal gravy with roasted limbs and sautéed eye balls. Served with mashed torsos and raging alcoholics.

Third Course: Three in Two

Les Femmes soufflé filled with melted ecstasies, a selection of seasonal memories, nightmares and emotions.



ART HISTORY HISTORIES

There were two encounters during the very first day of this course that inform this piece. The first was a visit to the Central Saint Martins school library that had a stack of zines focused on decolonising the arts curriculum located by the staircase. The second was the introduction of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the rhizome as a way of thinking about art. Grounded in thinking about knowledge via an assemblage of multiplicities, Deleuze and Guattari push for non-hierarchical and plural approaches as opposed to linear chronological explanations and narratives.

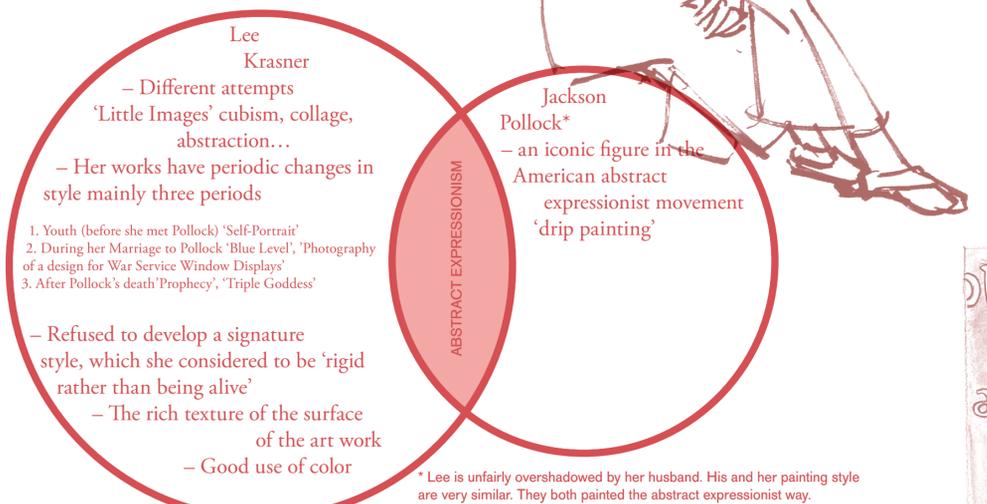
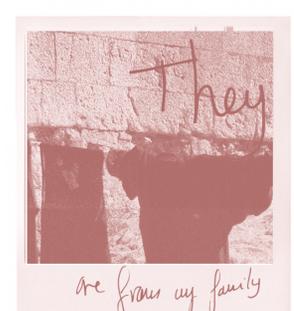
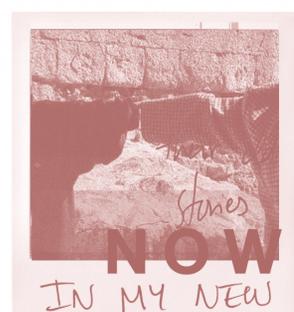
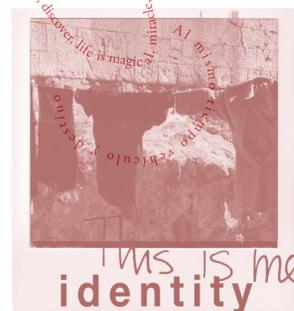
Lee Krasner's works are most commonly associated with Abstract Expressionism, with the movement frequently being claimed as a period within American Art. Yet if Abstract Expressionism is very much characterized as a national movement, one might question why it occupies a space within an exposition of modernist art history, an endeavor one might think should survey experiences of modernity transnationally.

But the point of this piece, really, is not to remove but to incorporate. Embrace, and not eliminate. Abstract Expressionism undoubtedly has value, formulating new methods and ways of thinking about art. Female artists have also, without a doubt, been overlooked within the canon. Lee herself was frequently overshadowed by her association with Jackson Pollock, her achievements rendered invisible by simply being a woman. And so one does not wish to detract the accomplishments of Lee, or what Abstract Expressionism has brought to the table. Rather, we should move towards a more inclusive and decolonized understanding of modernist art history. Hence, the more accurate question is: **why are other national movements relegated to the sidelines?**

In a seminar presentation about modernist art histories, several non-western national art movements were mapped onto a single powerpoint slide but left unelaborated. In contrast, artistic developments happening in Europe and America were accorded multiple slides and formed the breadth of the presentation. And so encouragingly, there was a recognition of the multiplicity of artistic movements around the world. But the implication was still the foregrounding of Americentric and Eurocentric artistic movements over others to understand modern art. The optics were created (unintentionally), subliminal messages sent, perpetuated and not subverted. Yet were these other artistic movements on the single slide any less influential or valuable?

If modernist art history is defined by the period of modernity, revolving around notions of the modern, such ideas are never universal — being culturally specific. What was deemed as modern in Europe and North America would have been vastly different elsewhere due to the material and psychological conditions of each specific place. Untethering one away from a singular conception of how societies should progress thus destabilizes the preponderance of grand narratives and the western art canon. A more productive way to think about the modern would instead come from thinking about a plethora of modernisms and modernities occurring simultaneously, while at the same time, considering artists and histories disenfranchised from the legacy of colonialism, imperialism and patriarchy — just like a rhizome.

And so while categorizing artistic developments into a nicely organized canon might make for easy reading, it is perhaps unproductive in also being a process of exclusion in privileging certain artists and works over others. **We need to be mindful of how art history is being taught, discussed and talked about. We need to do more.**

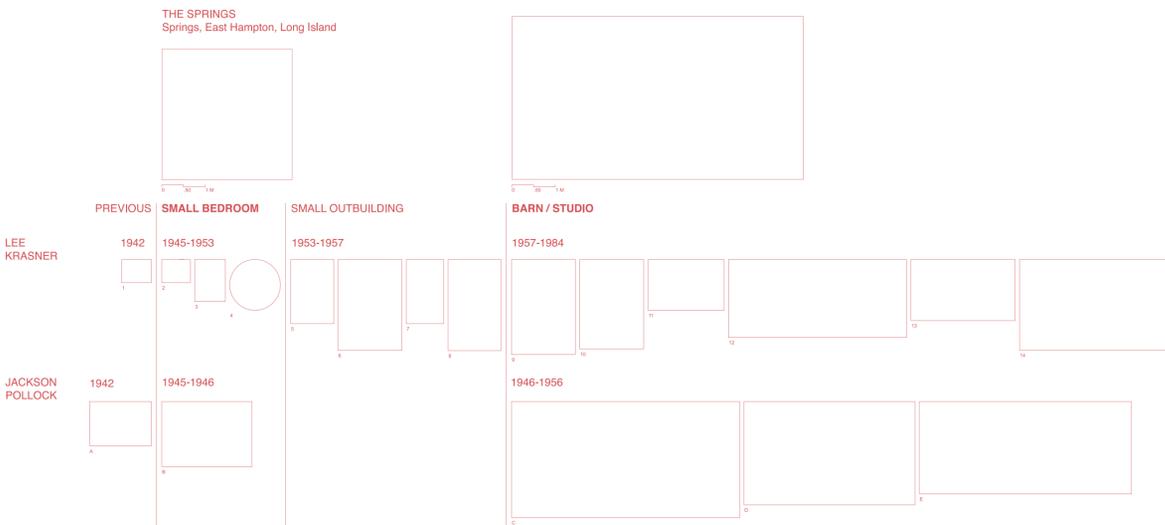


Abstract expressionism belongs to the artists themselves
The audience may not understand
I studied art but couldn't understand it as well
Maybe it's encrypted self-expression
Just like what I said
Sometimes you can put your thoughts in a journal
But you prefer to set up a facebook trumpet to record your nonsense
Catharsis does not need to be understood

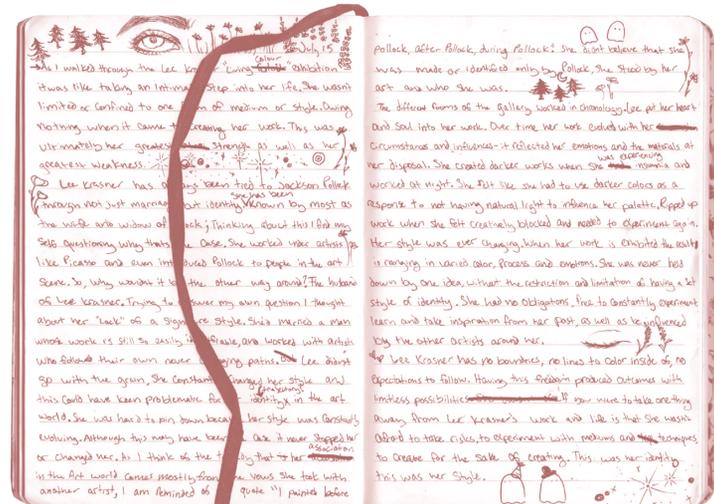
Everyone had a fire in their hearts
And the passing people only saw the smoke
But there was a person
There was always one person who would see the fire
Then came over and accompanied me
I saw his fire in the crowd
And I walked quickly for fear that he would be drowned in the dust of the years if I moved slowly
I took my enthusiasm, my indifference, my violent, my gentle
And unexplainable belief in love
I was out of breath
I stuttered to him and said
What is your name
To start with the name
And later, everything happened

BUTTERFLIES BOLD BRIGHT

THE SPRINGS
Springs, East Hampton, Long Island



FIGURATIVE



LINE MESS COLOURS

ABSTRACT

Hidden from the viewers' eyes, behind the layers of paint and the lower-right corner sign of a finished piece lays the 'mystifying' space of the artist studio.

- A studio can be a:
1. Facility designated to create art or craft. Various disciplines.
 2. First limit, frame or envelope where the work is conceived and produced.
 3. Most intimate space: a continuous confrontation of the artist vs. white canvas vs. himself.
 4. A silent-permanent witness of the process.
 5. Microclimate: orientation, lighting, temperature, humidity, ventilation...
 6. 'Productive' working area.
 7. Gap between conception and execution.
 8. Laboratory, a space of experimentation.
 9. *Studiolo*, a place of (private) study set apart from the hustle and bustle of the traditional workshop.
 10. (In contemporary practice) Showroom?

Within four thin wooden walls of an old barn somewhere in Springs, East Hamptons, under precarious conditions (both physical and psychological), Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock created their most significant and 'physical' work.

Pollock developed his distinctive technique, pouring liquid painting directly onto the canvas on the floor, moving around from all four sides (1946-1952), while Krasner explores several methods up in the wall, embarked on a colorful journey of self-discovery from small to large scale (1956-1984).

The diagram (Left) explores the evolution of Lee's artworks in relation to their context, a variety of physical spaces and conditions. Shifting from the domestic scale of a bedroom located on the first floor of her house, the private realm for reproductive/female chores where 'Little Images' were painted, towards her last working area, Pollock's former studio, the productive/male and 'public' space, with the biggest dimensions and the best natural light. This spatial expansion liberated her, resulting in the largest series of works ever made by the artist, 'physical paintings' that forced her to use her entire body to create her most intimate and abstract representations.

SHE'S JUST LEE KRASNER

When I first saw the photos of this artist, I realised her paintings were behind her. She stood confidently in front of them and I could tell she was proud and she loved them. They were her world. When watching her works, they all clearly express her own emotions and feelings. She painted her life with a brush, and expressed her changes of mood and love with collages and colours. Her art is the expression of her own personality and the writing of her emotions. It abstractly expresses everything about her in various ways.

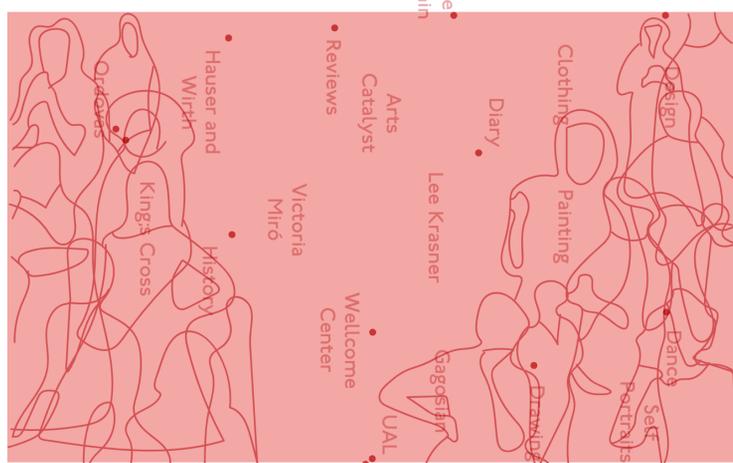
In her works and in her interviews, you can only see her. She was just herself, and she gradually changed from a girl who loved painting and wanted to be an artist to a mature artist who experienced life changes. She's just her, an independent cool attractive woman.



SOMETHING 'SIMILAR'

Contact is a wonderful thing. It is really amazing to see two things that have nothing to do with each other, and don't connect. All the paintings of Lee seem to be abstract and disorderly but there are some rules in them. In her work *Leonus* for instance, it is not difficult for us to see the similarity of the constituent elements and the reproducibility in the use of colour. *Leonus* reminds me of the dance work *Rosas danst Rosas*, which also seems to be abstract and disorderly but it is actually traceable. The choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker uses repetitive methods to deconstruct the arrangement and reassembles several sets of actions. Rosas company describes this dance as 'pure writing with movement in time, space or colour'.

There is actually no connection between Lee's work and Anna's work, but their works all convey an abstract but regular visual experience to the audience, letting them feel the works in an unpredictable and mysterious way.

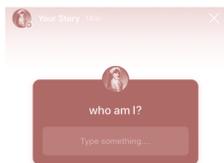


This publication was made by Adriana Cagigas, Nianyu Chen, Zilin Deng, Sharon Fainstein, Marina Kaysen, Haley Kroll, Jia Yang Kwok, Bonnie Lee, Miriam Levit, Trisha Lim, Yue Peng, Michelle Salgado, Katherine Sharpless, Fuxi Wang, Yilin Wang, Jingnian Wei, Xihui Wen, Jingyi Wu, Jingyi Zhan, Yixuan Zhang, Zhenhuan Zhang and Yingqiu Ophelia Zhao.

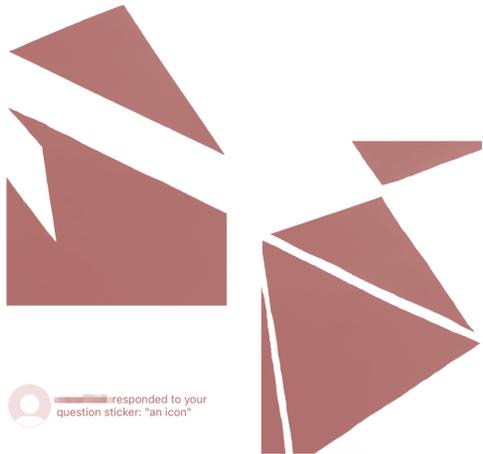
We would like to thank our tutors Charlie Abbott, Helena Bonetti, Jake Hopwood, David Morris and Alexine Rostenhuis, our visiting lecturers Ami Clarke, Charlotte Flint, Mattia Giussani, Katy Hessel, Amber Husain, Rachel Rose-Smith and Siannon Saunders and our course leader Sol Polo for sharing their knowledge and guiding us in every step of the way. We would also like to thank Banner Repeater, Barbican Centre, Cell Project Space, Gagosian, Hauser and Wirth, Herald St., Maureen Paley, Ordovas, Serpentine Galleries, Tate Britain, Tate Modern, Thaddeus Ropac and Victoria Miro for welcoming us into their space and hosting us during our gallery visits.

Lastly we would like to dedicate this publication and the exhibit "Becoming, Became, I am what I am" to Lee Krasner, whose life and works have deeply inspired us.

SENSUAL FLOW ROUND- NESS



- responded to your question sticker: "A survivor"
- responded to your question sticker: "an icon"
- responded to your question sticker: "A poet"



EXPANSION UNITY HONEST



EROTIC MESS PINK

A letter to all the survivors out there:

Dear you, I may not know your name or your story but if you're reading this, I hope it means that we managed to survive and even if currently our forecast is full of black rain and toxic waste, we haven't let Mother Nature down.

The truth must be told and the words written in this piece of paper (even if they're brief) relate how the human race showed its true colours and brought about another century full of pain and hate. Don't get me wrong, we did have a lot of good things and progress increased but just like with most things, the bad tends to outweigh the good. The classic war between good and evil began, and we have been letting the latter win.

All stories need a beginning and for most of us we had happy childhoods but I guess and hope most people would say that even now. However, as we grew older we began to see and fear the reality of what people who were supposed to protect us had brought on. All these problems and damages our ancestors inherited to us that suddenly, 16 to 30 year olds were expected to resolve.

Our oceans are turning black and mercury rules the sea, as tides rise and ecosystems fade away. Stars have stopped shining their light and the moon barely makes an appearance at night. Nations are falling apart while innocents starve and cry out in the night looking for a reason to explain why. Leaders who preached of a better world take off their masks to reveal genuine grins and yellow eyes.

Technology rules our world and advertising dictates our lives. We watch stories full of oppression and dystopian worlds to entertain ourselves, believing that this could never happen to us, when in reality democracies are falling, beauty defines women and more rights are granted to corpses than to girls. Children are being put away reminding us of a time back in 1939 and minorities more and more are being shown how unwelcomed they are even though we're all children of the Earth.

As a race, we wanted to be the most powerful, to play God and to rule the world. We got our wish at a great cost and now it's time for us to meet the headman.

We the new generation now have the responsibility of making a change and I sincerely hope that we can manage it. I hope you get to experience the world as we did throughout our childhoods and that the feeling lasts. If we failed, I want to say from the bottom of my heart, how sorry we are that we have passed this burden to you and I hope that you can forgive us.

With regret, Still trying to survive. Circa. 2019



FLESH CORPSE FLUID

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- Dance
- Self Portraits
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- Wellcome Center
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