

SUSAN SHEEHAN GALLERY

Lee Krasner

Biography

Lee Krasner was born on October 27, 1908 in Brooklyn, New York. From a young age, Krasner knew she wanted to be an artist and worked hard to attend the Washington Irving High School for Girls, as it was one of the few schools that offered art education to girls. She went on to first attend the Women's Art School of Cooper Union before completing her degree at the prestigious National Academy of Design in 1932. While initially painting in a classical style, Krasner was highly influenced by the opening of the Museum of Modern Art and soon began painting in an advanced neo-cubist style. Her career was stifled by the onset of the Great Depression, and she was forced to return to realism as a mural painter for the WPA and later the War Services department. She turned to her iconic style after joining the Abstract Style, and after her relationship with fellow painter Jackson Pollock began.

Krasner's continuously experimented throughout her career. After changing into a new style, the highly self-critical Krasner would often destroy previous works. Thus, her oeuvre is small. Several factors unify most of her work however. Krasner often used bright, vibrant colors throughout her paintings. Prior to 1970, her work shows strong evidence of brushstrokes and features no hard lines or geometric shapes.

Krasner initially struggled to be recognized, first due her being a woman, and later being overshadowed by the success of her husband, Jackson Pollock. While the critic Clement Greenberg highly praised her work, she wouldn't be recognized by a wider audience until the 1960s, which coincided with the rise of feminism. She exhibited at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1965 and for the first time received widespread acclaim and success. She continued to enjoy success and also won a great critical success when she exhibited at Pace Gallery in 1977. Krasner died in 1984 and six months later, was the subject of a major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. She remains one of only four women who have received such a show.