



Why can't a four year old Paint a Pollock?

Video transcript – Introduction

Alastair Sooke

Jackson Pollock was an American artist who pioneered the technique of flicking and pouring paint directly onto a canvas – called action painting - to create the striking abstract pieces for which he is best known.

Before long he'd earned the wry nickname 'Jack the Dripper', and there was no consensus on whether he was a genius or a madman.

His art has divided critics and the public ever since. His paintings have met with controversy, even derision and hostility.

So what's all the fuss about? This is Pollock's 'Yellow Islands'.

The first thing that strikes you when you see his paintings in real life, rather than on a screen or in a book, is how big they are.

This one, it sorts of explodes with a tremendous energy. It's like the paint has been detonated across the canvas.

You may think that the swirls and colours are essentially random, that anyone could do it, even a child.

When asked how people should view the work, Pollock said: "I think they should not look for, but look passively – and try to receive what the painting has to offer."

Is Pollock's work different from that of a child? Actually, yes I think there is.

To gain a better understanding of Pollock's work, we need to know more about his influences, his techniques, and his intentions.