

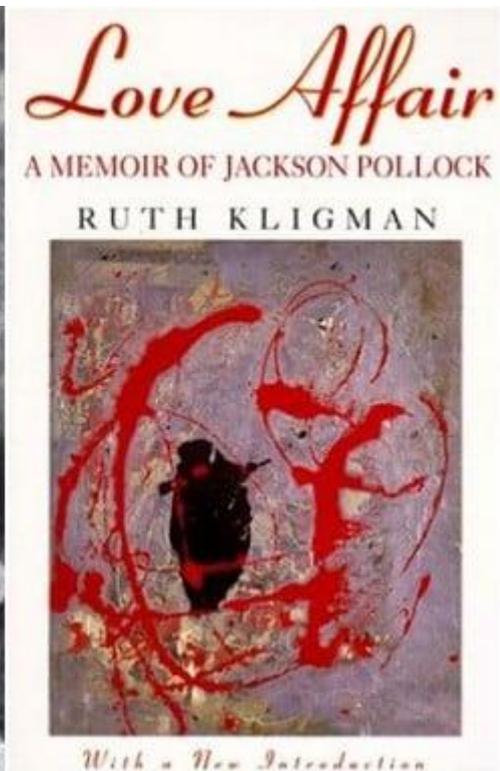
AUTHENTICATION IN ART

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The Telegraph

Mistress proved right in war of words over Jackson Pollock's last painting

It is a mystery that has divided the art world for decades but new evidence suggests Jackson Pollock did paint a final work which he gave as a gift to his lover weeks before he died



Jackson Pollock with Ruth Kligman, left, and Ruth Kilgman's book with the painting 'Red, Black & Silver' on the cover



By [Nick Allen](#), Los Angeles

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According to Ruth Kligman, who was Pollock's mistress at the end of his life, Red, Black & Silver was painted for her in 1956 - months before his death. She fought for years before her own death in 2010 for recognition of the work.

Now, in the latest twist, a forensic expert who has tested the 2ft high canvas, has found traces of Pollock's hair secreted in the paint - adding credence to Kligman's claim.

Other evidence put forward in support of its authenticity includes sand particles unique to the area around the his home that were taken from the painting.

Shortly after completing the work, Pollock was killed in a car accident in East Hampton, New York, on Aug 11, 1956. Kligman was with him in the car but survived.

Kligman spent decades fighting hard for recognition of the painting and took it to several experts for pigment testing and fractal analysis. She even took and passed a lie detector test in an attempt to prove the work was genuine.

But the painting, which shows a black oval amid red swirls on a silver background, was never authenticated by the official Pollock-Krasner Authentication Board, or Pollock's widow Lee Krasner, who was also his executor.

Kligman, who had moved in with Pollock at the end of his life while Krasner went to Europe, claimed the refusal to authenticate the painting was caused by the bitter love triangle, and stemmed from those loyal to Krasner.

Kligman once described how Pollock painted the canvas for her in his back garden, adding: "I stood next to him and watched him paint it. It was a very joyous moment for us both. Above all, it was an intensely personal gift from Jackson to me." In a 1999 book she wrote how the artist had told her "Here's your painting, your very own Pollock" and described how she "watched dazzled as you created it. How incredible, miraculous you were that afternoon in the sun."

According to Kligman the work was the "final painting of your life, your legacy to me, silver shimmering substance of the cosmos, the red heart oval shape of love."

She reportedly kept the painting hidden in the studio where she painted in New York for decades. In the most recent attempt to prove its authenticity Kligman's estate employed Nicholas Petraco, a forensics expert and former New York police detective to analyse the painting.

He reportedly found hair from a polar bear rug at Pollock's home in the paint. According to the New York Post he is also said to have found Pollock's own hair, and sand from near the home. Jonathan Cramer, one of the Kligman estate's co-trustees said: "We are tracing the painting back to where it was executed. It's very CSI." The painting was supposed to go up for auction in September 2012 in New York but at that time was listed as "Attributed to Jackson Pollock" rather than "By Jackson Pollock."

The auction was postponed partly due to an extensive investigation into the painting's authenticity by Vanity Fair magazine.

Pollock was a major influence in the abstract expressionist movement and is considered among the most influential painters of the 20th century.

In May this year Pollock's Number 19 sold at Christie's in New York for \$58.4 million. In 2006 his Number 5, 1948 was reportedly sold for \$140 million in a private sale.