



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

Video transcript – Can an Art Critic Paint a Pollock

Alastair Sooke

I've come to an art school to meet painter and lecturer Jeff Dennis, who's going to show me how Pollock used paint to achieve his striking images.

He wouldn't have had a canvas in front of him like most painters traditionally; he was painting directly on the floor.

Jeff Dennis

Yes that was the radical break, to think of placing the canvas like a dance floor.

Jackson Pollock

Having the canvas on the floor, I feel nearer more a part of the painting.

Jeff Dennis

Think of it like a snooker table, and you're the snooker player, and you're moving around it all the time, you're reaching in, trying to get to the centre.

Alastair Sooke

I like the snooker analogy; we've got the colours of the balls here.

Jackson Pollock

Sometimes I use a brush but often prefer using a stick, sometimes I pour the paint straight from the can.

Jeff Dennis

You're getting into the rhythm, keep that going. That's getting really interesting now Alastair.

Alastair Sooke

Ah that's very kind of you; say it once more with feeling. I mean that's actually, look at that, that's transformed it.

Jeff Dennis

He didn't have a prescribed technique that he'd start off with and follow through, the thing would evolve as he was working.

Jackson Pollock

I have no fear of changes, of destroying the image, because a painting has a life of its own I try to let it live.

Jeff Dennis

Already in my mind I'm starting to make it up into ghostly images. You start to see faces or animals.

Alastair Sooke

This is starting to feel, I'm in a rhythm.

Jeff Dennis

It's nice.

Alastair Sooke

It's not bad... I actually thought this was going to be a car crash but yeah.

Jeff Dennis

A rather beautiful car crash.

Alastair Sooke

Not half bad.

Jeff Dennis

I'm tempted to shout stop. The end point of a painting like this is always a matter of conjecture and imagination. Maybe we go on, and you carry on doing that, or maybe you think "this is it. This is the finished painting."

Alastair Sooke

What do you think?

Jeff Dennis

I don't know, I think, I'm quite taken with it in the vertical.

Alastair Sooke

Yeah. That's cos you're the artist, you see. I think I'm done.

