



Three years ago this month one of the most naturally gifted and yet most misunderstood of misunderstood painters passed away. Jackson Rollick was born in nineteen twenty-seven in the small town of Chicago in the American mid-west. His father ran a little hardware store in an upper low-class neighbourhood and his mother took in washing to supplement the family income. Jackson's talent in the direction of painting became apparent at an early age, and it is recorded that he won the grade three art prize at the nearby grammar school five years in a row.

When the lack of family finances forced him to quit school at grade four, he found that he couldn't help his father in the hardware store because his sensitive nature prevented him from talking to the customers, so he engaged himself to helping his mother with the washing. While he was near his mother, he felt safe and secure from his father, his father's customers, and all the bullies of the neighbourhood. He was just as safe as when he was in his mother's womb (although he missed the umbilical cord). Still he had plenty of time to spare, and this almost ideal existence provided the proper atmosphere in which Jackson could study the old and modern masters alike until he had learned enough from them to build a sound basis for his own work.

By the time he was in his late teens, he was ready to develop his own personal technique, one that would set him apart from other painters. At this time, much of the novelty of surrealism was fading away just as that of dadaism and momism had done, and art dealers were looking for an unknown artist to spearhead a fresh movement in painting. Jackson knew that this was his big chance to come out of his hermitage, or at least send his mother out, to make friends with the dealers; and through them with the art collectors; and then to fame and printed money.

To make a beginning of a revolution in the art world, Jackson had to ignore his immediate predecessors altogether, and go back to the nineteenth century for inspiration. He found just this in the Pointillism of the Frenchman, Seurat, who has painted both portraits and landscapes in dots ef-

fect by light brush-strokes. Jackson took a liking to this idea, but while he enlarged his own dots, he also eliminated subject-matter completely. His theory was to put the subconscious to work. And so, while he contemplated a flower, or a tree, he would paint vari-coloured dots through his sub-conscious mind. The resulting canvases were so striking that they shortly became the rage among serious collectors. This new style of painting with its many imitations became known as the Rollicking movement.

When Jackson was twenty-eight and still revelling in his fame, he suffered a severe shock. The only woman in his life, his mother, who had been his agent and his main contact with the art dealers and the outside world, took sick and died. Jackson now had to depend on his father, whom he disliked to the utmost. Still he bravely carried on his work, although the heartbreak and depression became evident in a further enlarging of the individual dots, the visual basis of his technique. As his dots became larger, his style declined in public estimate, and the dealers, ever watchful of their fickle customers dropped him from their showings.

What was the result of a depressed mood, however, proved to be the stepping stone to a new and maturer development. Instead of laboriously painting the now huge dots on a canvas with a standard size oil brush, Jackson took to using an old white-wash brush. This novel attempt produced a number of blotched canvases that are considered unique in all modern art. Those critics who were not completely indifferent to him, claimed that Jackson had become careless and sloppy, but it is now agreed that he merely followed his inner creative instinct towards its logical end.

The revolution continued. Just as he had discarded certain superficialities of his first, or dot period for superficialities of his second or blotch period, Rollick did another changeover and launched into a third and final period. Always keeping in mind his basic notion of the imperishable dot, Jackson experimented with the direct application of paint from can to canvas, thus eliminating the use of the brush entirely. From mathematical formulas, he calculated the exact size of a canvas needed, the distance from the

canvas he would take up his stance, and the speed and flexibility of his arms in the motion of swinging the paint container. Of course, much more than this was needed. Jackson found that a certain feeling, a certain state of mind was required to enable him to toss his pigments in such a way as to communicate directly with the viewer of the finished work. Fortunately, this state of mind remained with him until the end. The resulting canvases displayed the large, basic, though now jagged dot, along with many dramatic dribbles along radiated sideways and downwards from the dot. It was this latter effect that startled the viewing public at his last exhibit in a public gallery in the fall of nineteen hundred and fifty-seven.

In his thirty-second year, Jackson contracted a rare disease of the brain brought on by constant inhalation of fumes from his many experimental paints. He was confined to a wheelchair on weekdays and a straight-jacket on weekends. His creative energies, nevertheless were as unconfined as ever. With the help of his father, who had suddenly ceased being nasty and became highly affectionate, sentimental and doting, Jackson continued to turn out canvases in quantity. His father did all the physical work such as carrying paint containers and left only the final paint applications to the artist.

The last great experiments of the third period went on. Canvases were now placed flat on the floor so that Jackson could work on them with a minimum of effort to himself. On a memorable series of canvases, colours were squirted from the tube, thrown, sloshed, dipped, and trickled from the wheelchair above, culminating in a combination of "the spatter" and the "drag" called the "scrimmage" in which the excited artist sometimes ran the rubber tires of his chair over the wet paint. The three surviving examples of this last are now the prizes of the Glich collection in Chicago.

Death came quietly to Jackson Rollick while he was in the midst of a weekend convulsion. He was buried in a pauper's grave, not because he was a pauper, but because he felt it was traditional among misunderstood geniuses who were certain that their genius would be appreciated in years to come. As might have been expected, the artists death sent prices of his works climbing. Today, three years after, Rollick not only commands some of the highest prices, but he has become one of the most beloved of all American artists. Again and again he has been praised by writers and scholars. The distinguished and esteemed critic Bernard Beerand-song has written: In simple composition and directness Jackson Rollick has far surpassed the flamboyancies of the late Baroque age, while in boldness of coloring he has put to shame the best of the Mannheim school." It was none other than the great naturalist and authority on wild-life, Ulysses Kydd, better known as U. I. Kydd who said of Rollick: "There stands this magnificent tree holding its branches erect against all comers. Even the rampaging elephant and the charging rhinoceros fail to bruise its mighty stem. Then there is the baobab tree." Need anything more be added?

## CIVIL RIGHTS AND PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

Two years after Democrat John F. Kennedy became the thirty fifth president of the U.S., opposing republican policy makers were all but conceding his re-election in nineteen sixty four. At that time, the young chief executive was at the height of his popularity; he had just won a "cold war" battle over Nikita Krushchev and had succeeded in casting a favourable image across the land. In contrast, opposition leaders were gloomy. Events leading to and following the defeat of Richard Nixon two years hence had split the party organization. Results of the "off year" congressional elections of nineteen sixty two were disastrous. Washington wondered who would accept certain defeat by clashing with a solidly entrenched Kennedy machine.

Today, the dark shadows are illuminated. In all fifty states Republican party groups are quickly rearming. A widening ray of hope has awakened enthusiasm and restored new life to the restless organization. What has occurred in the last twelve months to effect this progressing reversal?

Almost daily, headlines around the globe are announcing results of an alarming racial battle in the United States. Once reluctantly tolerant negroes have joined *en masse* to demand equal recognition, while adamant segregationists stand determined to maintain status quo. The resulting crisis and accompanying violence have reached the boiling point. So long as both sides hold firm, arbitration can only forstall an inevitable showdown.

The political results of the racial revolution are a growing concern to the Democrats. Their once sturdy wall has been jarred and loosened. The Administration's policy has angered already defiant Southern Democrats beyond reproach. They promise to cut party lines in nineteen sixty four. Gallop poll results show an all time low in the President's popularity rating. This, coupled with a revised interest in Republican affairs has reopened the race for the White House.

Former American Presidents Truman and Eisenhower chose not to take an emphatic civil rights stand. Political considerations led them to avert the issue whenever possible. The current rights legislation presented to Congress by President Kennedy represents one of the most revolutionary moves in recent U.S. history. Whether Kennedy's action will result in his own downfall remains to be seen. Events of the next twelve months — on both the National and International scene — will undoubtedly decide his fate. But if circumstances compel the President to uphold his affirmative civil rights position, grave political turmoil will be at hand.

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