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1-1-2002

# Fautrier's Fortunes: A Paradox of Success and Failure

Curtis L. Carter

Marquette University, [curtis.carter@marquette.edu](mailto:curtis.carter@marquette.edu)

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Curtis L. Carter

Fautrier's Fortunes: A Paradox of Successes and Failures"

Published pp 17-35 in Jean Fautrier 1898-1964, Haggerty Museum of Art, Columbia U, Harvard, University Art Museums, Wallach Art Museum, Columbia University 2002-2003.

Essay: CLC December 27, 2001

Jean Fautrier

I

With respect to Fautrier's contributions **to the history of art**, his paintings of the late 1920s anticipate the emergence of post World War II *art informel* and the invention of **his own haute pate (high paste) technique for making paintings, and original multiples, which combine print-making with original paintings**. In his paintings, whether of nudes, animal carcasses, or landscapes, as well as in sculptures and works on paper, he evokes a world of darkness and violence while pressing the boundaries of traditional academic art further and further into abstraction. His invention of Haute Pate (high paste) constructions provided the painter with an alternative technical process by inventing an original technique. Further, his *Original Multiples* raised important questions for artists and the public in the future concerning the relevance of originality to making art. While he abandoned the easel and traditional uses of oil, he maintained the scale of easel painting, never expanding his works to monumental dimensions. Driven by his desire for technical control and mastery over the medium, his approach to painting is mainly guided by production related conceptual issues, and the material aspects of production, but not by art theory or criticism. In Fautrier's earlier works the dominant shapes, in the compositions, whether figure or abstraction, are differentiated from the ground of the picture surface. Attractive textured surfaces and unusual mixes of color were the key elements used by the artist. Blacks, dark browns, saumon (rose), dark green, blue, grey, and yellow are prevalent in the works through the mid fifties. In the later object series pinks, greens, and purples decorate the haute pate constructions, leading Yves Alain Bois and others to label these works kitsch.<sup>1</sup>

While studying in London at the Royal Academy<sup>2</sup> and the Slade School of Art, Fautrier was attracted to the works of Turner, whose influence would later appear in his own investigations of abstraction in virtually all periods of his painting.<sup>3</sup> **After his return to France at the beginning of World War I, Fautrier served briefly in the French army**. He regularly exhibited during the twenties in the annual salon exhibitions of Paris, for example Salon d'automne beginning in 1922 and Salon des Tuileries beginning in 1924. **He appeared in group exhibitions of various private galleries during the twenties and beyond**. For example, in 1926 Fautrier was exhibited at Galerie Zborowski, together with Derain, Friesz, Modigliani, Kisling, Soutine, and Utrillo. He was significantly aided in these efforts by Jeanne Castel, a collector and gallery director, who became a close friend. His first solo exhibition was held in 1924 at the Galerie Visconti.

The exhibition of 31 works included portraits, still life, flower paintings, female nudes, and landscapes in various media.<sup>4</sup> His second solo exhibition took place at the Galerie Georges Bernheim in 1928.<sup>5</sup> This early activity was the beginning of Fautrier's participation in over 140 documented exhibitions between 1922 and 2002. Of these, ---were solo gallery exhibitions, ---were solo museum exhibitions and -----group exhibitions. His exhibitions at the Galleria Rene Drouin from 1943-- especially the introduction of *Les Otages* in 1945-- marked a significant shift in his work. The exhibitions before 1950 took place mainly, but not exclusively, in selected private galleries of Paris.

After 1955 Fautrier exhibited periodically in various countries across the world: Belgium (Bruxelles), England (London), Finland (Helsinki), Germany (Berlin, Bonn, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Frubourg en Brisgau, Hamburg, Leverkusen, Munich, Stuttgart, Wupertal), Italy (Bologna, Milan, Turin, Rome), Japan (Kyoto, Osaka, Tokyo), Spain (Barcelona, Madrid), The Netherlands (Amsterdam), Sweden (Bergen, Goeteborg, Halmstad, Oslo, Stockholm), Switzerland (Fribourg en Brisgau, Geneve, Saint Gall, Zurich?), United States (New York). The pattern reflected in this overview of Fautrier's exhibitions shows that the predominant interest in Fautrier's art was based in Europe, mainly in France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, with notable interest in Sweden. The distribution of museums and collectors surveyed in preparation for this exhibition also supports this interpretation. Increased interest in Fautrier in the late fifties resulted in a substantial rise in exhibitions, culminating in a major exhibition in the Italian Pavillion and the award of the Grand International Prize at the 30th Venice Biennial in 1960, shared with ---- Hartung.. Shortly afterward in 1963, Fautrier was given an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona (1960) and at the Museum of Modern art in Stockholm (1964).

It was not until 1964 that Fautrier received a major museum exhibition in France, at the Musee de art moderne de la ville de Paris. This exhibition took place posthumously in conjunction with a gift of his works. The Musee de art moderne de la ville de Paris again mounted an exhibition in 1989 covering all all aspects of the artist's works: paintings, works on paper, and sculpture including the early works of the twenties and thirties. Between these two major exhibitions and afterward, sporadic gallery shows and museum exhibitions have continued, predominantly in Germany. Exhibitions at the Frankfurt Kunstverein in 1973, at the Stedelijk in Amsterdam and the Kunsthaus in Zurich in 1986, and the Muse d'Art et d' Histoire in Geneve all extended Fautrier's exposure to increasingly wider audiences. Outside Europe, sporadic exhibitions of Fautrier's work took place for example, in New York (private galleries 1952, 1956, 1957), London (Institute of Contemporary Art, 1958), Tokyo (Metropolitan Art Gallery, 1960). Currently Fautrier's work is featured in two notable exhibitions, *Andre Malraux et al Moderninte Malraux* at the Musee de la Vie Romantique in Paris and ***Paris: Capital of the Arts 1900-1968, The Royal Academy, London and at the Guggenheim in Bilbao.***<sup>6</sup>

Much support for the advancement of Fautrier's career came from prominent writers such as Andre Malraux, and the poets Paul Eluard, Jean Palhan, Francis Ponge, **and Robert Ganzo** who provided important texts for his illustrations and offered interpretations of Fautrier's works. Similarly prominent collectors and art dealers, particularly Jeanne Castel, Paul Guillaume and Sami Tarica were seminal figures in advancing Fautrier's career. Castel, who met Fautrier in the twenties, was one of his earliest collectors and introduced him to Andre Malraux and other important Paris art world figures. Malraux, a life long friend of and correspondent of Fautrier, wrote texts for various Fautrier exhibitions. Tarica, himself an important collector of Fautrier's work, presented Fautrier's work to major collectors and is responsible for placing Fautrier in important private and museum collections. Other writers: including Andre Berne-Joffroy, Michel Tapie de Celeyran, and Caspar Siebel were instrumental in advancing Fautrier's work. Siebel, a writer and collector, was particularly instrumental in facilitating interest in Fautrier's work, among German collectors and museums. Despite these considerable efforts Fautrier remained mainly an outcast in the official French art world.<sup>7</sup>

## II.

Since the 1913 Armory show in New York, art from Paris had been the focal point of modern art exhibitions in America. This continued to be true in the art season of 1930 when Fautrier first appeared in an American museum exhibition, *Painting in Paris* at the Museum of Modern Art.<sup>8</sup> Following the gala opening of the new Museum of Modern Art, featuring Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Seurat,<sup>9</sup> was a virtual deluge of gallery exhibitions featuring French art. The Valentine Gallery showed Raoul Dufy, while other New York galleries featured a string of one-person exhibitions of Picasso, Braque, Chagall, Derain, Dufy, and Matisse, as well as other School of Paris artists. Ralph Flint's review article of the 1930s art season in New York-- published in Duncan Phillip's *Art and Understanding*-- provided extensive coverage of exhibitions featuring French modern artists. He described "Painting in Paris" at the Museum of Modern Art as the "third and most sensational offering of its short career."<sup>10</sup> This exhibition surpassed the record of the opening exhibition and was extended to accommodate the crowds eager to learn about the new Paris art. The response is not surprising given that the School of Paris luminaries—Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Rouault, as well as Bonnard, de Chirico, Dufy, Soutine, along with numerous others-- were featured. Picasso dominated the main gallery with his "Abstraction," "Woman and Child," "Pierrot," and "Seated Woman." Yet the exhibition included a much broader spectrum of Paris based artists. Indicative of the popularity of French artists among American collectors is the fact that the entire exhibition of Paris based paintings is comprised of works from American collections

Where did Fautrier fit in the French-American exhibitions of 1930? His first documented appearance in an American exhibition was in the exhibition *Painting in Paris* at the newly opened Museum of Modern Art in 1930.<sup>11</sup> At this point in his career, Fautrier was just a few years past the peak of his early period (1926-28) of black nudes, animal carcasses, flowers, landscapes, and Glaciers, and beginning to consider new experiments anticipating the *informel* work of the post-world war II era.<sup>12</sup> In this Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1930, Fautrier is represented by a single flower painting, *Flowers of Disaster*, 1927 from the Philips Memorial Gallery, Washington. It is not surprising to find a work by Fautrier in the collection formed by Duncan Phillips, whose museum opened in 1921 as the first American Museum dedicated to modern art. Phillips was eager to build a strong collection of important modern art, and he was especially attracted to French art. The catalogue entry for *Flowers of Disaster* describes Fautrier as a new romantic “unique for his ability to invest still life...with an atmosphere of uncanny horror,” a theme that would recur later in his *Otage* (hostage) paintings of 1943-45.<sup>13</sup> In his review article for *Art and Understanding*, Ralph Flint refers to Fautrier as “the little known Fautrier.”<sup>14</sup> Flint’s mention of Fautrier, as well as his inclusion in the exhibition are noteworthy for our purposes, because this exhibition, appears to be Fautrier’s first representation in a museum exhibition, certainly it would be his most prestigious exhibition to date. Its occurrence in an American museum is ironic, given his lack of success in crossing the Atlantic. Also, Fautrier’s mention in Flint’s essay is one of the earliest known references to his work in an American art publication.---**check this**---

The interest of Phillips and others in modern art is influenced in part by the aftermath of the 1913 Armory Show, which helped to create an audience for modern art. Writing in 1930 in *Art and Understanding*, Duncan Phillips noted “The sudden reversal of taste in our period, the violent change of mode from Sargent to Picasso within fifteen years, is startling until we remember that there has been a steady stream of propaganda and publicity ....At last we know what it is to be modern and what is to be our style for the first half of the Twentieth Century.”<sup>15</sup> Modernism, in this context was understood as a general cultural term, or a state of mind rather than a narrow critical category. It referred to the efforts of those artists, “who dissatisfied with old forms for new ideas and emotions, make their own aesthetic language” using their own inventions to reflect current changes in their culture. According to Phillips, “A modernist is an individual or a member of an embattled group who is at war with collective and organized expression and the tyranny of tradition.”<sup>16</sup> Given Fautrier’s radical individualism and his uncompromising search for his own artistic voice, Phillips’ account of modernism could hardly offer a more receptive environment.

By the time of Fautrier’s encounter with America in the post-war 1950s, he had invented a new process for making paintings, replacing traditional oil and easel painting with haute pate (high paste) constructions . Dissatisfied with oil paint, Fautrier undertook a series of experiments with materials –among them wood, cloth, plaster—and techniques that would free him from the limitations of traditional easel painting. A tormented artist with respect to the limits of traditional painting techniques, his aim was to find materials and develop a technique that would allow him the required control over the medium to satisfy his artistic needs. Oil was too slow to capture his deft gestures and allow for

manipulation of the material to the desired state of perfection . He settled on a multi-stage process that began with gluing rag paper left over from production of his books to the canvases. The glue was made from boiled fish skin scrapings. After the paper is incorporated into the structure of the piece, thick white pigment is applied, and a preliminary drawing is made with a light oil glaze. The initial drawing is then covered with a layer of enduit, a plaster like substance used to repair walls, to form the haute pate structure. The material is worked with a palette knife, spoon, or trowel until the right surface form is achieved. The frosting-like surface is firm enough to hold the artist's marks and gestures as it adheres to the paper, yet it remains supple, allowing maximum freedom in the execution of the painting. At this stage, the artist again draws and recovers with enduit the motif, a process which might recur repeatedly throughout the process until the final stage. Sprinkling crushed pastel crystals or powder in various shades is then applied to the paste surface. For different effects Fautrier could further manipulate the surface with the end of his paintbrush, giving the pastel trace a paint-like quality. This unique process is the continuation of the artist's search for a perfect medium that was his own.<sup>17</sup>

. His new work was introduced in an exhibition of the *Les Otages* (hostage) series at the Gallery Durand Ruel in 1945. The Otages paintings were revolutionary both in their production according to Fautrier's new process and for their subject, which was the victims of Nazi executions in the woods **near Châtenay Malabry** outside of Paris where Fautrier had his studio during the war. Sometimes compared to prehistoric cave images,<sup>18</sup> the Otages exemplify the tortured bodies of the massacred and executed prisoners. In their outcry against such anti-human violence, the Hostages join Goya's images of war—title-- and the protest of Picasso's *Guernica* addressed to the atrocities of the Fascist dictator Franco which happened during World War II. Although they were not immediately popular with the public, the Otage paintings helped win a place of lasting importance for Fautrier in the history of art. A selection of the Otage works were included in the works shown in the American exhibitions of the 1950s. Yet these efforts largely failed to attract the attention of American Museums, and certainly the American public remained unaware of Fautrier.

**Judging from his correspondence with Andre Malraux in the 1950s concerning exhibitions and other references to American visitors and collectors, Fautrier was keenly interested in having his work shown in America. He apparently visited in the United States in the early fifties and possibly on other occasions. Check sources Perhaps the main link between Fautrier and American culture was his interest in jazz. According to Jacqueline Cousin, Fautrier's companion at end of his life, the artist's favorite music was American jazz. He apparently had a collection of jazz records to which he regularly listened. His interest in jazz is also reflected in the titles of certain of his paintings especially after his New York showings in 1956-57. Among the titles with jazz references are "Its How You Feel," 1958; "Body and Soul," 1957; "Can't Give You Anything But Love," 1957; and "I'm Falling In Love," 1957.**

Fautrier's first New York solo gallery shows were held at the Iolas and the Holo galleries in 1952 and again in 1956.<sup>19</sup> In November of 1952, the Alexander Iolas Gallery offered a selection of the paintings, among them *Les Otages* which a reviewer for *Art Digest* notes for their exquisite color: "It is the color of weather-stained masonry, of mineral deposits left by water seeping over stone."<sup>20</sup> Fautrier's second exhibition of paintings at the Iolas Gallery held January 17-February 5, 1956 was accompanied by Andre Malraux's text, *Lettre a un ami americain*. The exhibition of paintings included **Glaciers, Fleurs, and Paysages from 1925 to 1928 : Les Otages from 1943-1945; and Partisans as well as other works from 1956. Note: Check content against the catalogue--** In March 1956, Fautrier wrote to Andre Malraux that the Iolas exhibition in New York was a triumph, resulting in its being extended three weeks beyond its closing. According to word from Alexander Iolas, three ambassadors, along with museum representatives and critics were among those attending the opening reception.<sup>21</sup> **Glaciers," 19"26-28, which was shown in the Iolas exhibition of 1956, is now in the de Menil Museum in Houston, evidently having been acquired from the gallery by Mr. and Mrs. Jean de Menil.**<sup>22</sup> Other works in the exhibition passed to a Pittsburgh collector identified in Bucarelli as Thompson.

**Before their debut in New York, the *Original Multiples*, were first presented in 1950 at the Galerie Billiet-Caputo in Paris accompanied by Jean Pallhan's essay *Les debut d'un art universel* . The Original Multiples consisted of series of lithographs planned for editions of 300 with identical subjects, each varied in its treatment with original painting executed by or under Fautrier's direction.<sup>23</sup> These hybrid works represented an experiment by Fautrier intended to challenge the concept of uniqueness with respect to original art works and to increase the audience for his work. Apparently the reception of the *Original Multiples* was no more successful in New York than in Paris. In 1952 *Art Digest* found that Fautrier's "Multiple Originals" offered concurrently at the Hugo Gallery less interesting than the paintings. The reviewer noted that the multiples resembled his paintings in subject and texture, each copy in the set varied in linear detail and chroma, but questioned what purpose this invention served. A second exhibition featuring Fautrier's *Original Multiples* took place at the Hugo Gallery in 1956, again with little success. Nor did the work elicit public recognition as an invention of note. Yet, as Michel Tapie de Celeyran, has noted, Fautrier's experiments with replicas of existing art and the *Original Multiples* helped establish the groundwork for the future debates in contemporary arts concerning the identity of a work of art by challenging the usual practices concerning original art works.<sup>24</sup>**

Evidently, arrangements between Iolas and the artist did not go well following the second exhibition, as Fautrier announced in a letter to Malraux on July 10, 1956 that he was leaving Iolas "qui est definitivement impossible" noting that his next exhibition in New York would be with Sidney Janis. The Catalogue for the Janis exhibition, "Fautrier Paintings," (February 4-March 2, 1957) listed thirty one works mainly from 1956. Among the titles listed in the catalogue are *Otage No. 10, 1945, Baby Mine, 1956, Summer Trees, 1956 and Le Visage, 1956* (from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Walter H. Annenberg), *The Big tin Box, 1956, and Wa da da, 1956*. Other lenders to the exhibition mentioned in the acknowledgments included Mr. and Mrs. William Jaffe,

**M. Pierre and Mme. Helene Lazareff, Mrs. Barbara Rockefeller, Baron Eli de Rothschild, and Mr. Sam [sic] Tarica.**<sup>25</sup> According to Sami Tarica, the American artists attending the Janis exhibition included Adolph Gottlieb, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko. Of these artists, Tarica recalls, only Rothko was sympathetic. The others reportedly regarded Fautrier's works as too much rooted in the past. Commercially, the Janis venture evidently was not a success. Tarica believes that Janis did not wish to advance Fautrier as competition for the American Abstract Expressionists that he intended to promote.<sup>26</sup> **It is also possible that the Iolas sales had exhausted the limited market in America, or that the indifferent responses of the critics, or simply the inability of the American viewers to understand the importance of these unfamiliar and often difficult works were factors.**

These five New York exhibitions, as well as the presence of Fautrier paintings in at least one other private gallery, suggest that there was at least a small market for Fautrier in the United States in the mid-nineteen fifties. Although there is no mention of an exhibition, the World House Gallery in New York was listed in Bucarelli (1960) as the owner of eight Fautrier paintings dated 1956, 1957 and 1958.<sup>27</sup> In fact the handful of American private collectors named in Bucarelli (1960) represent an impressive group. They include Walter Annenberg, Ira Haupt (Annenberg's brother-in-law), William B. Jaffe, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luce, Helene Rubenstein, Mr. & Mrs. Jean de Menil, Barbara Rockefeller, and Thompson (from Pittsburgh). The Bucarelli list also includes collectors in Montreal and Rio de Janeiro.

**Note: If possible compare the contents of the three catalogues: Iolas 52, 56, Janis 57.**

**Again the New York press in 1957 did little to advance the appreciation of Fautrier's works, although this time his name did appear correctly in the reviews, that is as Jean instead of Georges Fautrier. Still, the Critics' comments were at best lukewarm and often were derisory. T. B. Hess who reviewed Fautrier's 1956 Iolas and the Janis 1957 exhibitions for *Art News* characterized Fautrier's role in French art as the once promising young successor to the School of Paris whose future was eclipsed by the success of the American Abstract Expressionists. He interpreted Fautrier's later haute pate paintings as a form of painted criticism, intended to make the point that the Post World War II avant garde French art of Fautrier's day (so called tachisme, art informel) had reduced art to cuisine. The significance of Fautrier's visual criticism, Hess believed, had vanished in light of new works by artists such as Pollock and Franz Kline whose work had already superseded the French. In Hess's mind, Fautrier's own work had turned the cuisine into confection.<sup>28</sup> The critic for *Arts Magazine* wrote, "Fautrier's work seems rather hollow, small, limited, for its textural precision—and the admiration of some of the French critics."<sup>29</sup> The most insightful criticism of Fautrier's art by an American writer actually occurred a few years later in 1960 in Sidney Tillim's report on the Thirtieth Venice Biennale. Tillim compares the works of Fautrier, Hartung, and Kline, who all participated in the Biennale.<sup>30</sup> While he is critical of Fautrier's art, his insightful analysis nevertheless contributes to a fuller understanding of the**



artist's work than other American critics have offered to date. His main objectin is that Fautrier's discoveries are based on an earlier pahse of abstraction and have been overtaken by the Americans' more recent work in abstraction.

See Also Reviews Art International ., New Yorker

Perhaps the most important reference to Fautrier by an American critic comes in a little noted text of Clement Greenberg, in-between the New York gallery showings from 1952 to 1957. This reference locates Fautrier in the then contemporary debate concerning post WorldWar II American and French art and provides a context for critical discussion of his work in reference to American Abstract Expressionism. This reference occurs in Greenberg's contribution in 1953 to a "Symposium: Is the French Avant-Garde overrated?" Greenberg mentions Fautrier as one of four abstract artists that he liked most among French painters under 55 whose work he has seen.<sup>31</sup> The others were the Dubuffet of 1945-1948, Hartung, and Tal Coat. In order to show the principal differences between American and French art of the post-war era, Greenberg compares these French artists to the American artists Gorky, Gottlieb, Hoffman, Kline, de Kooning, Motherwell, Newman, Pollock, and Rothko. Based on this comparison, he argues for a crucial difference between the French and the American versions of "so called" Abstract Expressionism. "In Paris they finish and unify the abstract picture in a way that makes it more agreeable to standard taste.... For all the adventurousness of their 'images,' the latest generation in Paris still go in for 'paint quality' in the accepted sense. They 'enrich' the surface with films of oil or varnish, or with buttery paint."<sup>32</sup> The result is a tamed Abstract Expressionism, disciplined by long established practices in painting and aesthetics.

By contrast, the new American art extends the possibilities of the medium beyond traditional boundaries by its willingness to treat the canvas as "an open field" rather than a "given receptacle." This difference in approach results in paintings by the Americans that exhibit qualities of rawness, freshness, spontaneity, and directness, as opposed to French paintings finished in a **more** conventional way.<sup>33</sup> Basing his findings on these considerations, Greenberg concludes that the Americans are ahead of the French. Their art, he says, possesses a certain "plenitude of presence" lacking in the French art, which has been a mark of successful art in the past. He attributes the advancements of the American artists to the influences of Klee, Miro, Matisse, and Andre Masson on their work.

What was the impact of Greenberg's favorable mention of Fautrier? It may have helped bring his work to attention of the art galleries, or **prospective American collectors**. However, **any** positive effect on Fautrier's market in America is offset by Greenberg's placing the entire generation of post World War II French *avant garde* artists in a secondary position. More importantly for our purposes it invites a closer look at Fautrier approach to art in relation to Abstract Expressionist art. **Check also Greenberg on Fautrier in "After Abstract Expressionism' in Geldzahler**

Rather than to attempt a broad comparison with the group as a whole, I will offer a brief analysis comparing the two artists Fautrier and Jackson Pollock, the leader of the Abstract Expressionists. Fautrier's interest in exhibiting in America may have been motivated in part by his interest in the New York Abstract Expressionists. It is certain that he was aware of their work, as but his direct contact with the artists has not been documented. Jackson Pollock's work was exhibited in Paris at the Studio Facchetti in 1952, and his work appeared in "Twelve American Painters and Sculptors" in 1953 at the Musée d. Art Moderne.<sup>34</sup> In the mid-fifties, he began exhibiting in New York.

It is well known that , the personalities of both artists were volcanic in temperament, harboring violence and resulting in uncompromising art practices and often difficult social and professional relations. My aim is to bring into focus similarities and differences with respect to Fautrier's and Pollock's innovations. They shared a common interior anguish and a desire to free art to advance into unknown territories Both Fautrier and Pollock were responsible for inventive work that helped shape major themes of Twentieth Century abstract art. Each produced work that is truly his own, as there were no direct precedents for their inventions. Working in their respective ways, the two artists launched successful assaults on traditional easel painting and alternate ways of working, Fautrier applying his haute pate method on a table top, Pollock creating drip paintings on the floor. Both artists radically altered how a painting is made and how it might look.

Yet their starting points were quite different. **Unlike Fautrier who spurned Cubism as well as other contemporary influences, Pollock begins in part with Picasso's late Cubism. Rather, he absorbs a wide range of painterly and literary influences including Picasso and Jungian psychology. His teacher Thomas Hart Benton, old master painters such as Reubens and El Grecco, the American nineteenth century romantic Albert Pinkham Ryder, the Mexican muralists Orozco and Siequierios, Kandinsky, Miro, and Masson are all important to his development.**<sup>35</sup> He established independence by inventing his own vocabulary of abstract calligraphy colored gestures and shapes and applying them across the entire canvass. Pollock's gestural marks on the canvas are essentially driven by inner feeling expressed through bodily actions. His improvisational paintings were executed with great freedom, and intense physical effort, in some instances requiring huge canvases placed on the floor for execution of the paintings. **Stylistically the paintings change over time, but retain a similar intensity.**

By contrast, the ferocity of strokes in the early Fautrier paintings, **and** even in the powerful **Les Otages** series of the mid-1940s, are typically more contained as if deriving **primarily** from **conscious, measured steps** instead of **improvisation or powerful** emotive forces. Yet **Fautrier's** haute pate paintings nevertheless required significant physical action to **to prepare the canvas with layered glued papers and structure the material surface on the canvas. And he also refers to emotion as a consideration in his artistic process.**<sup>36</sup> **Both artists are consummate draftsmen as is evident in their drawings and in the control achieved in their unorthodox approaches to creating paintings. Almost always, Fautrier's works are smaller in scale than Pollock's large**

canvasses. The picture space **in Pollock's paintings** must be read as a whole, as the gestures comprising the paintings typically do not break down **into** separate forms within the picture space. **This is also true of Fautrier's small abstract landscapes of the 1920s and surely of his enigmatic haute pate abstractions. Typically the signs in Pollock's abstract works are more complex, perhaps intended to express a meaning. The signs and meanings, if any, of Fautrier's paintings are even less transparent than Pollock's enigmatic surfaces. It may be that Fautrier means what he says when he states that a painting is simply meant to decorate an empty wall space, or to please the artist in its making. –document--**

Perhaps the most important comparison **of Fautrier and Pollack** for our purposes concerns their respective use of abstraction. It is necessary to begin **this discussion** with the **reminder** that abstraction for Fautrier (and I think for Pollack as well) did not entail a negation, or the exclusion of reality outside of painting itself. In Fautrier's own words, "The gesture of painting is not merely the need to spread paint on a canvas, and we must admit that the desire to express oneself stems originally from what one sees."<sup>37</sup> Reality serves as the impetus **for** creating the work of art, and subsists beneath **its** form "sustaining it and making it function" according to Fautrier. **Although Fautrier references his subjects in the external world by the paintings' titles, if nothing more, the images frequently dissolve into abstraction. That is, the paintings are of interest primarily for their formal textural and color features rather than their representational aspects. His practice thus exemplifies his belief that reality is a starting point for the painting process, whether in abstract or representational works. Parenthetically, the Swedish painter August Strindberg follows a similar approach in his abstract paintings executed in the 1890s<sup>38</sup>** The artist's task is to transform the reality, which serves as an initial drive for the painting process, according to temperament. Pollock and Fautrier would appear to agree on this point, except that the reality Fautrier speaks of begins with the outer world, while the reality that is important in Pollack's art is his inner psychological reality.

With respect to abstraction, the two artists begin from quite different starting points. Fautrier's introduction to abstraction began with Turner and the English landscape **painting**, whereas Pollock's abstraction evolves **in part** from Picasso and abstract **cubism**. Fautrier discovered in Turner's landscapes the beginnings of abstraction during his early training in England. Turner's late canvasses **are a** likely a source for Fautrier's *Les Glaciers* paintings of 1926-1928, as well as his forests, and landscapes of this period from Port Cros. *Les Glaciers* are among the most spectacular works in Fautrier's oeuvre. They are essentially black canvases highlighted with swirls or blocks of whites or yellows. The forms are more explosive in the black landscapes such as "Paysage de l'Enfer," 1928, anticipating forms that did not become fully realized until the post-war American **Abstract Expressionists**. More tranquil are **Fautrier's** 1928 landscapes of Port Cros such as "Foret de Port Cros," 1928 where yellow and white streaks highlight the unfolding forms of the landscape. Later on, his small Port Cros landscapes show an expanded palette with innumerable variations in the forms.<sup>39</sup>

**As noted previously, Pollock's abstraction devives from Picasso and a variety of other historic and literary sources. His early abstract paintings such as "Seascape,"**

1934 are closer to Fautrier's early abstract landscapes than are his paintings of the mythical period such as "Moon Woman Cuts the Circle," 1943. **Pollock's later drip paintings with their "shattered images, jagged angles, and raw colors" as in "Cathedral," 1947 extend painting significantly beyond the abstraction found in Fautrier's gentler, more restrained abstract works. This is not surprising when one recalls, as Jean Yves Mock reminds us that, after all Fautrier belongs to a French tradition of painting "...with a certain sensibility, a spirit which is classical in its great care for balance"... and "a subtle and profound fineness of form."<sup>40</sup> At this point it is useful to recall Greenberg's comparison of American and French post war avant garde painting where he contrasts the rawness, freshness, spontaneity, and directness of the Americans with the more agreeable, finished look of the French art.**

**Fautrier rarely spoke about his own art, preferring to leave that task to the poets. Yet he expressed certain beliefs concerning art which would suggest that, in certain respects, he remained within the French tradition. According to Fautrier, significant work depends on the "quality of the artist's sensitivity."<sup>41</sup> Although he did not accept any rules for creating art, he acknowledged the importance of formal intention and facility with the materials, including draftsmanship, as elements that distinguish the great from the mediocre artist. On the other hand, he departed from the French tradition in declaring that, "Painting is something that can only be destroyed...in order to reinvent itself,"<sup>42</sup> and that each artist must reinvent the process of painting according to his own interior temperament. Yet these same aims and qualities would seem to bring Fautrier very close to Pollock's views on art and the practice of art that he undertook. Evidently both artists understood very well the informal rage that engages the modern spirit in the post-World War II period. Fautrier was aware that this rage has produced great work in a few instances (perhaps including himself and Pollock) and also a considerable amount of mediocre painting as in the case of the late abstract cubists and the lesser informal painters.**

### III.

The context for viewing Fautrier's art in relation to America had changed substantially in the post-war era. For the first time a group of artists working in America—Pollock, as well as Arshile Gorky, WillemDeKooning, Mark Rothko and others successfully launched a serious challenge to the dominance of Paris art. By the early Fifties, Abstract Expressionism had become the dominant American art movement—at least in the eyes of prominent critics such as Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg.<sup>43</sup> The success of the Abstract Expressionists had largely put to rest any hopes that Fautrier and his fellow artists in Paris—Dubuffet, Hartung, Tal Coat-- for example, **would succeed the School of Paris artists and sustain Paris as the capitol of the art world..** If the reception of Pollock in Paris in the fifties was not comparable to the reception of Marcel Duchamp upon his arrival in New York some thirty-five years earlier in 1915, the impact of his art would be no less revolutionary for the next few years. Alas, there was **to be** no comparable fame awaiting Fautrier in America.

Serge Guilbaut has attempted to analyze the shifting relations in French-American culture in the context of cold-war politics after World War II. Guilbaut argues that the dynamics of French and American aesthetics during this period is primarily a function of cold-war political strategies on the part of America and the lack of a consensus among artists in Paris over who or which movement would emerge as successor to the School of Paris. The strategy, he alleges, was to enhance America's political and economic role by promoting the success of American Abstract Expressionist art as a replacement for the dominance of Paris based modern art. In support of this claim, Guilbaut cites the efforts of American cultural leaders such as Alfred Barr at the Museum of Modern Art, Clement Greenberg--a leading art critic and champion of Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists--and certain prominent American collectors (Nelson Rockefeller) to promote the Abstract Expressionists, first as the leading voice of American art, and then as the successor to the School of Paris.<sup>44</sup> Guilbaut's essay provides a useful context for interpreting the state of art in postwar France, but he overestimates the role of art in American foreign policy. Despite the aims and efforts of critics and art museum leaders, art has never achieved the implied consensus on a particular style of art to function as an essential component of international relations. This was the case with Abstract Expressionism which never managed to capture the interest of all artists, the public, or the politicians. Nor would such a move set well with the spirit of individualism among artists.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, a group of American realists launched a protest in 1950 to protest against abstract art, in defense of human values in art.<sup>46</sup>

The state of the arts in France is aptly characterized by Guilbaut in these words: "The Parisian art scene looked like a shattered mirror."<sup>47</sup> Social realists, Informel artists such as Dubuffet and Wols, and abstract painters such as Soulage, and Georges Mathieu were representative of the fragmentation. ----Andre Breton and Charles Estienne, sensing the threat to Paris' central role in art, attempted to address the threat from American (and the Soviet Union), by launching an anti-realist movement. They declared that the roots of the new abstraction was actually Paris, not New York, but their views attracted few followers.<sup>48</sup> Jean Casou, chief curator of the Musee d'Art de Paris in the 1950s, acknowledged, perhaps reluctantly, that abstract art was the dominant art of the fifties. He declared that, "...one has to recognize that this so-called abstract art is cultivated in France with that powerful sense of invention, that confident taste, and that flair for quality that are specifically tied to the French spirit. One has to recognize that, if abstract art is produced in Denmark or Argentina, it is still done better in France."<sup>49</sup> Yet Casou failed to show contemporary French painting, choosing instead to focus on tapestries, and on American Abstract painters such as Jackson Pollock.<sup>50</sup> Michel Tapie de Ceyleron ?, author of the book *Art Autre*, attempted to forge a new coalition of international artists from France, Italy, and the United States around the concept of *Informel*. He too misjudged the situation, failing to convince even the artists of the connections he had hoped to establish. Although Tapie included Fautrier with the *Informel* group, Fautrier disavowed any connection with the movement. After initial interest on the part of a few critics in the *Otage* paintings shown at Galerie Durand Ruel in 1945, he did not have a major voice in postwar art in France.

#### IV

Since the 1950s, the main encounter between the Fautrier and the Americans took place at the Venice Biennale in 1960 when Fautrier shared the Grand International Prize of the Biennale with Hans Hartung. Judging from the response of the press worldwide, the award was controversial.<sup>51</sup> The decision to award the Grand Prize to Fautrier and Hartung was perplexing to the Americans who were hoping for “overdue” recognition of the Abstract Expressionists. An American critic, Sidney Tillim characterized the American artists in Venice as “victims of the official resistance to their art” owing to alleged “French supremacy.”<sup>52</sup> The situation turned ugly at one point resulting in a row between Fautrier and Franz Kline at a Venetian café prior to the official opening of the Biennale.<sup>53</sup> As reported by Tillim, Fautrier “denounced Frans Kline and American painting in general and suggested that the Americans should vacate the Biennale.” Kline then reportedly pushed, shoved, or socked Fautrier knocking him back into his chair. This event did not endear Fautrier to the Americans at the time, and was symbolic of a growing tension in the relation of American and European art, focused mainly on American-French issues.

As the Americans saw the situation, the Europeans preferred to concentrate on their own art (particularly French art) at the Biennale while ignoring new and important developments of American Abstract Expressionism. Pollock’s work had been shown as part of the Peggy Guggenheim collection at the 1948 Biennale in the Pavillion of Decorative arts, and in 1950 three drip paintings were included in the American Pavillion, virtually unnoticed. With Pollock out of the picture by 1960, Kline, Philip Guston, and Hans Hoffman were chosen for the American Pavillion. Klein, who was represented by the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York, (the same Janis Gallery that had exhibited Fautrier just three years earlier) was awarded a special Biennale prize, possibly to address the growing concerns of the Americans. Apparently the Americans had expected the Biennale Jurors to consider Kline for the Grand International Prize, which went instead to Fautrier and Hartung. But as Alloway has pointed out, Kline’s work had scarcely been seen in Europe and lacked a strong portfolio of catalogues and written documentation. In this respect, he could not compete with a Fautrier, backed up by a solid resume of international exhibitions as well as illustrated catalogues and magazine articles.<sup>54</sup> The failure of the Abstract Expressionists to win the Grand Prize in Venice in 1960 meant that Abstract Expressionism would pass into history without this important validation by the Biennale Grand Prize.<sup>55</sup> At this point new developments and a shift of emphasis of the Biennale moved beyond Abstract Expressionism, as well as *Art Informel* to consider the new developments including new figuration and Pop Art. In 1964 Robert Rauschenberg at the age of 39 was awarded the Grand Biennale Prize, finally validating new developments in American art and signaling that art had moved on.<sup>56</sup>

#### ++++Conclusion

The modest New York reception of Fautrier, as well as other post-World War II French Avant Garde artists in the mid 1950s, stands in remarkable contrast to the

domination of French art in 1930 when his work first appeared in the Museum of Modern Art exhibition, “Art in Paris.” Similarly a change of attitude had taken place toward American art. For example, an exhibition of American painting shown in 1930, also at the newly opened Museum of Modern Art, just prior to the showing of “Art in Paris,” proved to be an anti-climax, giving further evidence that American artists could not successfully compete with their Paris counterparts for the attention of the American public at the time of Fautrier’s initial showing in America. This was true, despite its showcasing of the most prominent American artists of the day including Hopper, Weber, Kuniyoshi, Kuhn, Marin, O’Keefe, Demuth and other notable American artists. Critical and public attention in 1930 were reserved primarily for French artists. By the 1950s, American Abstract Expressionist art had captured the lime light, replacing French art as the dominant interest in Euro-American art. The perception then, both among critics and the public, was that the most important art was now being produced in America. Based on these considerations, Fautrier’s poor reception can be understood in the context of a general decline of interest in French artists in America during the post World War II era. The rift between French and American artists that surfaced at the Venice Biennale over the awarding of the grand prize and exhibition to Fautrier only served to symbolize the growing distance between Avant Garde American artists and their French counterparts. The American Abstract Expressionists clearly felt that the moment for recognition of their achievements on the international scene had come.

There were other factors that may have hindered Fautrier’s reception among the American art public. His classification as a part of a movement variously referred to as *tachisme*, *art autre* *art informel*, which gained currency in Europe, but not in America, would not have enhanced interest in his art in America. Even though Fautrier who eschewed any connections to all art movements, and specifically to *art informel* and expressed his doubts about the *informel*, most critics and art historians persist in locating him in the context of *art informel*.<sup>57</sup>

There is also a feeling that Fautrier’s champions in the literary field-- Malraux and the French poets Eluard, Ganzo, Palhan, and Ponge—who greatly admired his work had not been successful in convincing art critics and others outside their circle of his importance as an artist. Their texts demonstrate the close affinities between poetry and visual themes in Fautrier’s paintings and drawings, but were insufficient to sustain his reputation as a painter. This choice of writers was Fautrier’s preference, as he trusted poets to write about his work but had little regard for critics. But the significance of his collaborations with the poets remained largely at the level of aesthetics. These considerations and the relative dearth of useful writings in English have undoubtedly hindered American awareness of Fautrier. Even the texts of the poets have not been accessible to English speaking audiences, leaving the field mainly to specialists.

Of course, the artist’s secretive ways, and his often difficult personality did not help to advance his fame. See Galansino note on personal characteristics

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Since the fifties, the exposure of Fautrier in America has mainly been limited to a few sporadic gallery exhibitions or in museum collections. Most recent gallery exhibitions include exhibitions of paintings and drawings at the Michael Werner Gallery in New York.<sup>58</sup> Museums in the United States with works by Fautrier are relatively few. The largest holdings are located in the Ponza collection at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art. The de Menil Museum in Houston owns -----paintings. Museums in the United States with a single Fautrier painting include the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the Phillips Collection in Washington, D. C., the Fogg Museum at Harvard University, and the Haggerty Museum at Marquette University in Milwaukee. Several of these institutions' collections also include drawings, prints, or illustrated books.<sup>59</sup> The Museum of Contemporary art in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil also own work by Fautrier. **The Museum exhibitions at the Muse de Ville de Paris in 1964 and again in 1989, together with the awarding of the Grand Prize at the Venice Biennale, document his place in French art and helped sustain interest in his work. But the main strength of interest in Fautrier's work has been among a dedicated small group of private collectors in Europe. Through their dedication, Fautrier has again come to the attention of the world in this, his first American Museum exhibition, and other recent showings.**

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**Paragraph on Fautrier and Jazz. Perhaps his closest link, the one thing that he took from American Culture.**

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Among the most influential of American writers on abstract art during the mid-Twentieth Century was Clement Greenberg. Greenberg helped define abstract art as a language in which the abstract picture field "is one single, continuous center of interest," replacing recognizable images organized within an illusion of three dimensional space. According to Greenberg, the language of abstract painting consists of "relations of color, shape and line largely divorced from descriptive connotations" or metaphor and does not allow the viewer to distinguish centers of interest within the picture surface.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yves Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless* (New Yorks: Zone Books, 1996, originally published as *L'Informe: Mode d'emploi* by Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1996), pp.121, 122.

<sup>2</sup> The student registry of the Royal Academy lists an entry for Jean Leon Fautrier: :N. 5168, 23 July 1914, Lower School of painting, admitted to Upper School of Painting in January 1915, p. 30, register for students 1890-1922. Cited in Giorgio Galansino, *Jean Fautrier: A Chronology of His Early Paintings (1923-1942)*, Dissertation, Department of Art, University of Chicago, 1973, p.18.

<sup>3</sup> Palma Bucarelli, *Jean Fautrier: Pittura e Materia* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1960) pp. 29,30. Also Pierre Cabanne, *Jean Fautrier* (Paris: E. L. A. La Difference, 1988) pp. 11-15.

<sup>4</sup> A checklist of the 31 works in Fautrier's first solo exhibition, which took place in May-June of 1924 at the Galerie Visconti, is found in the invitation to the exhibition, in "Dossiers de l'action artistique," The



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Cabinet des Estamps, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. Cited in Appendix I of Galansino, *Jean Fautrier: A Chronology of His Early Paintings*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> “La Presse a propos de l’Exposition Fautrier,” in *Les Arts a Paris*, No. 16, January, 1929, pp. 29-32.

<sup>6</sup> *Andre Malraux et la Modernite: Le Dernier des Romantiques, November 20, 2001 to March 24, 2002. Also, Paris: Capital of the Arts 1900-1968*, The royal Academy, London, January 26-April 19, 2002, and The Guggenheim, Bilbao, Summer, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Andre Berne-Joffroy, “Zigzags to Straighten Things Out,” *Jean Fautrier 1898-1964*, Exhibition Catalogue, Paris: Musee de Ville de Paris, 1989, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> *Painting in Paris: From American Collections*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, January 19 to February 16, 1930, Cat. No. 35, Jean Fautrier, *Flowers of Disaster*, 1927, 21.5 x 25.75 in., Collection of Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.

<sup>9</sup> *The Museum of Modern Art First Loan Exhibition*, featuring Cezanne, Gauguin, Seurat, and Van Gogh, New York, November, 1929.

<sup>10</sup> Ralph Flint, “The Current American Art Season,” *Art and Understanding: 195*.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph Flint, “The Current Art Season,” *Art and Understanding*, Phillips Memorial Gallery (Washington, D.C., I:2, March, 1930: 203.

<sup>12</sup> A series known as the *Enfer* lithographs based on Dante’s *Inferno* was commissioned by Andre Malraux for the Gallimard Press were among the early works associated with *informel*. The term *informel* was applied by Michel Tapié to works of Fautrier, Dubuffet, and Wols in the post-war era to account for the dissolution of form in their works. Fautrier himself disavowed any identification with this movement.

<sup>13</sup> *Paintings in Paris*, p. 27. The writer comments that *Flowers of Disaster* shows Fautrier at his best. The subject of the painting is a bouquet of chrysanthemums with strongly contrasting white highlights against black and shades of gray.

<sup>14</sup> Flint, “The Current Art Season,” p. 203.

<sup>15</sup> Duncan Phillips, “Modern Art, 1930,” *Art and Understanding*, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C., I: 2, March, 1930: 136. Duncan Phillips was the founder of the Phillips Gallery, the first museum in the United States dedicated to modern art.

<sup>16</sup> Duncan Phillips and Charles Law Watkins, “Terms We use in Art Criticism,” *Art and Understanding: 163, 164*. Hence, modernism is not limited to any time period or style of art which change as experiments in art proceed.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Jean Paul Ledeur, conservator and archivist, Paris, December 17, 2001. Mr. Ledeur very kindly shared his extensive knowledge based on his first hand knowledge of Fautrier’s work process. See also, Michael Tapié de Celeyran, “Fautrier Paints a Picture,” *Art News*, Vol.--, December, 1955: 32,33. Robert Descharne’s photographs of Fautrier creating haute pate works accompany the text of Tapié, pp. 33,34.

<sup>18</sup> Matthias Barmann suggested the prehistoric connections on the basis of Fautrier’s associations with Robert Ganzo and ---Bataille, who were both knowledgeable in prehistoric art. “Jean Fautrier: The Birth of Art from the Spirit of Revolt,” in *Jean Fautrier: En el Centerario de su Nacimiento, Exhibition Catalogue, Fundacion Bancaja, 1998, English Translation*, p.286.

<sup>19</sup> **The standard listings of Fautrier’s exhibitions have previously overlooked the New York exhibitions of November, 1952 at the Alexander Iolas (ending November 27) and Hugo Galleries (ending November 18), possibly because the reviewers list them under the name Georges Fautrier. See “57<sup>th</sup> Street in Review: Georges [sic] Fautrier,” *Art Digest Vol. V, No. 27, November 15, 1952: 21, 23*. See also: *Art News Vol.51, December, 1952: 46*. *Bucarelli, for example, lists only the 1956 exhibitions at the Iolas and the Holo galleries: Iolas Gallery, Les objets de Fautrier*, January 18-February 5) and *Les Originaux Multiples, Hugo Gallery*, 1956.**

<sup>20</sup> **“57<sup>th</sup> Street in Review: Georges [sic] Fautrier,” *Art Digest Vol. V. No. 27, November 15, 1952: 21, 23*.**

<sup>21</sup> Jean Fautrier to Andre Malraux, March [1956], Letter 34-MLX C.239.

<sup>22</sup> The Iolas Gallery exhibition, *Les Objets de Fautrier* (January 18-February 15, 1956), is listed in the provenance for this painting supplied by the de Menil Museum, Houston, Texas.

<sup>23</sup> The original multiples represent a largely failed effort, but nevertheless an important experiment, both as artistic innovation and economic incentive. They were particularly problematic for the dealers who had to explain their status to collectors. The original multiples raise complex issues examined by various writers. See Rainer Michael Mason, *Jean Fautrier Les Estampe*, Exhibition Catalogue, Geneve, 1986, pp. 154-169.

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See also Rachael Perry, *Retour à l'Ordure: Defilement in the Postwar Work of Jean Dubuffet and Jean Fautrier*, Ph. D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2000, pp. 75-187, and Rachael Perry, "-----" elsewhere in this publication.

<sup>24</sup> Michel Tapié de Celeyran, "Fautrier Paints a Picture," *Artnews*: December, 1955: 30-33,63. This article previews Fautrier's forthcoming exhibition at the Iolas Gallery, January 18-February 5, 1956. The article is illustrated with Robert Descharne's photograph's of Fautrier's working on the haute pate paintings in his studio. It also included a lucid description of the details of Fautrier's working process.

<sup>25</sup> **Fautrier, *Exhibition Catalogue*, Sidney Janis Gallery, February 4-March 2, 1957.**

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Sami Tarica, Geneva, Switzerland, June 1, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Bucarelli, *Jean Fautrier*, "Catalogo Delle Opere, Nos. 260, 351, 395, 403, 404, 408,, 427, 448.

<sup>28</sup> T. B. Hess, *Art News* Vol. 55, March, 1956: 50, and February 1957: 11.

<sup>29</sup> E.P., "Jean Fautrier," *Arts Magazine*, Vol. 31, February 1957: 55.

<sup>30</sup> **Sidney Tillim, "Report on the Venice Biennale," *Art News* Vol. 35, No. 1, (October, 1960): 28-35.**

<sup>31</sup> Clement Greenberg, *Art Digest*, September 15, 1953 reprinted in *Clement Greenberg, The Collected Works I*, p. 156.

<sup>32</sup> Greenberg, "Symposium: Is the French Avant-Garde Overrated?," *Art Digest*, September 15, 1953. Reprinted in *The Collected Works III*, p. 156.

<sup>33</sup> Greenberg develops more fully his discussion of the characteristics of Abstract Expressionist painting in "American Type Painting," *Partisan Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 2., Spring, 1955: 179-196.

<sup>34</sup> Guilbaut, "1955: The Year the Galous Fought the Cowboy," p. 172. Pollack was prominently featured in the various other Paris exhibitions during the fifties including *New American Painting* organized by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for presentation at the Musee d'Art Moderne in January 1959.

<sup>35</sup> Irving Sandler, *The triumph of Armeican Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism*, (New York, Washington, 1970, p.103.

<sup>36</sup> Jean Fautrier, "To Each His Reality," 1957, published in *Xxe, siecle*, No. 9, June, 1957. **-Type in from below--**

<sup>37</sup> Jean Fautrier, "To Each His Reality," 1957, published in *XXe siecle*, no. 9, June, 1957. Reprinted in English in *Jean Fautrier: En el centenario de su nacimiento*, exhibition catalogue, with essays by Matthias Barmann and Castor Seibel, Fundacion Bacaja, p. 294.

<sup>38</sup> **Although there is no evidence that Fautrier was familiar with the paintings of the Swedish painter August Strindberg, the abstract paintings of Strindberg painted in the 1890s might easily have served as predecessors of Fautrier's early abstract paintings. For example, compare Strindberg's painting *Snötjocka, 1892*, and *Svartsjuskans natt, 1893* reproduced in *Strindberg: Painter and Photographer*, translated by Nancy Adler, Roger Tanner, Laurie Thompson, National Museum, Stockholm, February 9-May 13, 2001 pp. 28, 45, —check pages, with Fautrier's *Glaciers of 1926-1928*. See also Strindberg's *Unterlaudet, 1894, p.8; Solnedgang, 1892* for a comparison with Fautrier's Port Cros landscapes.**

<sup>39</sup> Reproduced in Yves Peyre, *Fautrier: Ou Les Outrages de l'Impossible* (Paris: Editions du Regard, 1990), *Glaciers, 1926-1928* pp. 72-75; *Paysage de l'Enfer, 1928*, p. 99; *Foret de Port Cros, 1928*, pp. 104, 107; *Paysage de Port Cros, 1940*, pp. 126-127, 130.

<sup>40</sup> Jean Yves Mock, "Jean Fautrier," *Apollo*, Vol. 68, No.—September, 1958, p. 82.

<sup>41</sup> Jean Fautrier, "Parallel Bars over the Informal?," in *Jean Fautrier: En el centenario de su nacimiento*, p. 297.

<sup>42</sup> Jean Fautrier, "Why Parallel Bars over the Informal?," first published in German in *Blatter + Bilder, no. 1, Wurzburg and Vienna*, March-April, 1959., March, 1959. Reprinted in *Jean Fautrier: En el centenario de su nacimiento*, p. 297.

<sup>43</sup> As a matter of fact, the debate over realism and abstraction, both in America and France, was far from over. Abstraction was under attack in America for being illegible, failing to communicate to the masses, and for aiming at a highly educated bourgeoisie, as -----Golan has noted, in----- . On the other hand some Americans associated abstract art with Communism.---**footnote**---. In France, similar controversies raged over abstraction and realism. The Left in France largely favored Social Realist Art and viewed abstraction as the enemy but for entirely different reasons.

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<sup>44</sup> Serge Guilbaut, "Postwar Games: The Rough and the Slick,," *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal 1945-1964*, edited by Serge Guilbaut, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England,: Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990) pp. 35,36.

<sup>45</sup> Clement Greenberg makes this point explicitly in his essay, "Abstract Painting," published in *The Nation* April 15, 1944, in these words, "Art is under no categorical imperative to correspond point by point to the underlying tendencies of its age. Artists will do whatever they can get away with, and what they can get away with is not to be determined beforehand..." See John O'Brian, editor, *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, Vol. I. p. 204. In a speech at the Norton Gallery, December 10, 1951 Albert Barr proclaimed that artists should be free to choose between realism and abstraction. See Sandler and Newman, editors, *Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr Jr.* (New York, 1986), p. 212 ?--verify

<sup>46</sup> See Hill, note 41. The artists included Raphael Soyer, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Edward Hopper, and Philip Evergood.

<sup>47</sup> Guilbaut, p. 43.

<sup>48</sup> Serge Guilbaut, "1955: The Year the Galous Fought the Cowboy," *Yale French Studies: The French Fifties*, No. 98, Yale University, 2000, p. 171. Greenberg, interestingly, acknowledges the European origins of Abstract Expressionist art in "German, Russian, or Jewish expressionism and the break away from late Cubist abstract art. "But they all started from French painting..." especially Picasso. Clement Greenberg, "American-type Painting," *Partisan Review* Vol. XXII, No. 2, Spring 1955: 181.

<sup>49</sup>Quoted in Guilbaut, "The year the Galous Fought the Cowboy," p. 168.

<sup>50</sup> Romy Golan, "'L'Eternal Decoratif: French Art in the 1950s," in *Yale French Studies: The French Fifties*, No. 98, Yale University, 2000, pp. 109-114.

<sup>51</sup> **Giorgio Galansino, *Jean Fautrier: A chronology of His Early Paintings (1921-1942)*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, March, 1973, p. 4, footnote No. 1. Galansino provides a list of articles with quotes detailing the American and European responses to the 1960 Biennale.**

<sup>52</sup> **Sidney Tillim, "Report on the Venice Biennale," *Arts*, Vol. XXXV, no. 1 (October, 1960): 28-35. Tillim (citing the official statement of the jurors) reported that the Biennale jurors approved Fautrier's award by a majority vote, indicating some disagreement over the decision. Hartung was awarded the prize by unanimous vote, p. 30.. See also Galansino, *Jean Fautrier, p. 4, footnote No. 1 for additional references.***

<sup>53</sup> **Lawrence Alloway, *The Venice Biennale 1895-1968: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1968), p. 144. Reported also in Tillim, "Report on the Venice Biennale," *Arts*, XXXV, No. 1, (October, 1960): 30.**

<sup>54</sup> **Alloway, *The Venice Biennale: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl*, pp. 144, 145.**

<sup>55</sup> **Giacometti and Manessier received the main prizes in 1962, Alloway, p. 146.**

<sup>56</sup> **Apparently, the Americans were caught by surprise upon learning of the intent of the Biennale jurors to make the award to Rauschenberg who was represented by a single painting in the American in an off site exhibition at a former U. S. Consulate in Venice. Since Kenneth Noland and Morris Lewis occupied the main American Pavillion, the Americans hastily arranged a spillover display area for Rauschenberg, adding paintings to meet the Biennale requirements that the winning artist be displayed at the Giardini Biennale grounds. The Museum of Modern Art, which had administered the American Pavilion at Venice from 1948 to 1962, relinquished its administration citing funding problems, and was replaced by the United States Information Agency who appointed Alan Solomon, director of the Jewish Museum, as Commissioner. See Alloway, pp. 148-150.**

<sup>57</sup> **Fautrier's brief remarks on *art informel* are included in his texts, *To Each His Reality, 1957*, and *Parallel Bars over the Informal*, December, 1958, and *Painting in this Day*, November 1960, in *Fundacion Bancaja*, English translation, pp. 296-298. Confusion over the French words 'informal (informal) and informe (devoid of shape) have contributed to ambiguities concerning the precise meaning of art informel, as Yve Alain Bois and others have noted. See Yves Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless,---get pages.***

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- <sup>58</sup> *Jean Fautrier*, featuring works of the black period, 1926, 1927. Michael Werner, New York/Koln, February 12-April 11, 1998 with text by Caspar Siebel, "Note on the Early Work of Fautrier." Also, *Jean Fautrier: Nudes*, featuring nude drawings of 1940-1946, with one sculpture, *Sstanding Woman*, 1935. Michael Werner, New York/Koln, 2001, with text by Caspar Siebel, "Jean Fautrier: Drawings/Nudes."
- <sup>59</sup> Bucarelli lists the Museo d'Arte Moderna, Rio de Janero, Brazil as owning the painting, no. 279, *Panorama*, 1956. The -----Museum in Buenos Ares, Argentina also owns " " by Fautrier.
- <sup>60</sup> Clement Greenberg, "Abstract and Representational," *Art Digest* 1 November 1954, reprinted in *Clemement Greenberg, The Collected Essays and Criticism III*, pp. 189-191.