

April 21, 2003

## **Interim Report of Findings**

### **Introduction**

You had contacted me in January of this year regarding a collection of eight paintings that you believe are the works of Jackson Pollock. After several telephone discussions we agreed that I would visit you in Lodi, California, so I could personally examine them.

You expressed to me that you became interested in my work because of the research I had conducted in another Pollock attribution which was published on the Internet. In that case I employed fingerprint evidence to substantiate the attribution. I suggested to you that if fingerprints were found on your paintings then comparisons could be made to reference fingerprints which come from various objects in Pollock's studio, now called the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center.

I visited you in March, 2003, in Lodi and you made available eight paintings in all for my examination. I was provided with ample time and comfortable surroundings to examine each work of art. In addition, you spent a lot of time introducing me to their background and to the research you had done to date on them. You also introduced me to the gentleman who had come into their possession in 1958 and in whose possession they have remained until you had obtained them.

My work in this file is diverse and still ongoing. It centers on forensic evidence which establishes the connection of one painting we refer to here as 'Morning Sun' to a

fingerprint on a paint can exhibited in the Pollock-Krasner House that I had documented.

There is considerable work which is still in progress or not yet begun, therefore, this report is of a necessarily provisional nature. Among the main tasks remaining are: one fingerprint which is a promising match needs to be re-photographed; an exhaustive technical study needs to be conducted to examine the chemical composition of the paint materials employed; the paintings' provenance needs to be documented and explored further to see if additional information can be gained and documented; each work, as well as the collection as a whole needs to be fully studied in terms of style and technique to place them meaningfully in Pollock's oeuvre.

Since I did not find fingerprints on all the eight paintings, and so far I could find only one match, I can only refer to Morning Sun with reassurance. However, importantly, all the paintings appear to share the same provenance hence the importance of comparing their chemical composition in parallel. Three paintings are on canvas and five on paper. The ones on paper appear to share a great degree of technical and stylistic uniformity as do the three on canvas. They all appear to be a sequence in a process of artistic development - yet to be studied in depth. Concurrently, the paintings on canvas also share this sequential characteristic with the two Revelations relating more closely.

I am informed that the eight pieces are part of a once larger number, fifteen or so in all. I have yet to examine the balance of the collection which is now dispersed but nevertheless available except for two which I am informed are no longer traceable. During my upcoming visit to Lodi I will be examining some of the remainder of the group.

After my return from California I spent considerable time examining the data I had collected. These were in the form of notes and digital photos. I had also collected numerous pigment samples from each piece. These await analyses.

The photographs I had taken serve both for illustration/documentation as well as for evidence - these were taken as macro-photographs principally to record fingerprints. The images of fingerprints required scientific enhancement (and some are still work in progress) as many of the fingerprints are very faint or were found on surfaces that interfered with their interpretation. This first visit to Lodi was one of exploration and naturally I did not have all the optimal equipment on hand. This 'first pass' was invaluable in determining how to proceed next and to optimize the data.

As to fingerprint evidence my focus was on collecting those that were evidently left in paint when it was still wet as well as those that were left with wet paint on the finger - the rationale being that these fingerprints were most likely to have been connected with the creative process both in terms of physical and chronological contact. To go over the main points of the methodology employed here, which is standard and generally accepted fingerprint examination practice, it should be noted that the

combination of a number of characteristics in a given finger impression is specific to a particular print. The placing of implicit reliance on fingerprint evidence by our courts of law has always been on the basis that no two fingers can have identical ridge characteristics. The functionality of this technique is that the probability for the existence of two identical finger impressions from different individuals is nil.

The individuality of a fingerprint is not determined only by its general shape or pattern but by the careful study of its ridge characteristics. Since at a crime scene, and for that matter on a work of art, usually only partial prints are found, comparison of a relatively small number of characteristics is accepted in legal practice. If two prints are to be compared, they will have to reveal characteristics, which are not only identical but are also similarly located in relation to one another in the two prints. In a judicial proceeding, a point-by-point comparison must be demonstrated by the fingerprint expert.

My visit to examine this collection was astonishing, rewarding, and exciting. I came away with many experiences and questions - some of which have already been answered. As one who has numerous years of learning invested in Pollock's oeuvre I find myself in no doubt that the collection is an undocumented body of work by Pollock unless proved to me otherwise. As subjective as this position may be for the moment, (and it has to be at this time as I have only one piece with matching fingerprints), the organic and cohesive nature of the collection lends substantial credence to the suggested authorship.

Peter Paul Biro  
Montreal  
April of 2003

# **Report of Findings**

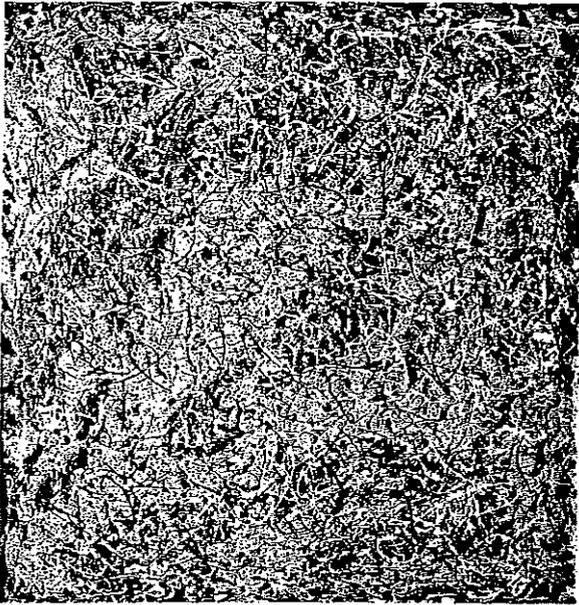
## **Preliminary comments**

In the physical description of these works of art it is important to bear in mind that their medium is conceivably diverse containing commercial paints such as, alkyds, oil paint, acrylics, Duco etc. Since two of the paintings' pigments have undergone spectral analyses which clearly underline this (these are attached at the end of this document) and the paintings appear to be of great similarity in color use, it is safe to assume that the paints upon all of them are of similar varied composition. For this reason and until an exhaustive study is undertaken, I will describe the medium as 'mixed media'. Additionally, Pollock's known methods of mixing and diluting (mostly) commercial paint and lacquer to achieve the best consistency for his poured technique are known and partially documented however not yet fully interpreted.

The report begins with the works on canvas and continues with those on paper.

The titles and numbers given to the paintings are arbitrary and have no bearing on the nomenclature used in the catalogue of Pollock's works.

## Blue Heaven



### Physical description

Mixed media on primed linen, 49 7/8 x 51 3/8 inches.

### Examinations carried out

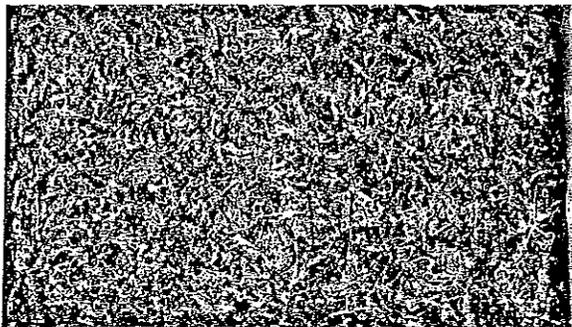
12 paint samples were removed for analyses. The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. No fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of conservation. Numerous photographs were taken.

### Special remarks

The pigments of this painting were previously sampled by the Williamstown Art Conservation Center. Their FTIR (*Fourier Transform Infrared* spectroscopy) results show the expectable chemical composition from a Pollock poured painting containing oil, alkyd, acrylic and cellulose nitrate. The painting is in a good state of conservation having suffered only minor paint loss. The painting is clean and well supported.

I tentatively date this work from 1949 to the early part of 1950 based on stylistic and colouristic factors. The painting is built up on a primed white base with a transparent coating of Ultramarine blue followed by silver (aluminium paint) likely applied by brush. Generally, patches of ochre, kaki green and black followed. Delicate bravura streaks of white, red and black completed the composition. The painting was likely executed in several sessions as underlying layers needed time to dry – this is evidenced by the noticeable lack of marbling or intermixing of liquid paint.

## Revelation No. 2

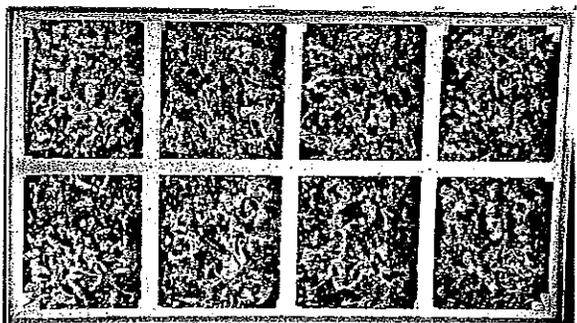


### Physical description

Mixed media on unprimed linen, 91 x 51 inches.

### Examinations carried out

11 paint samples were removed for analyses. The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. No fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of conservation. Numerous photographs were taken.



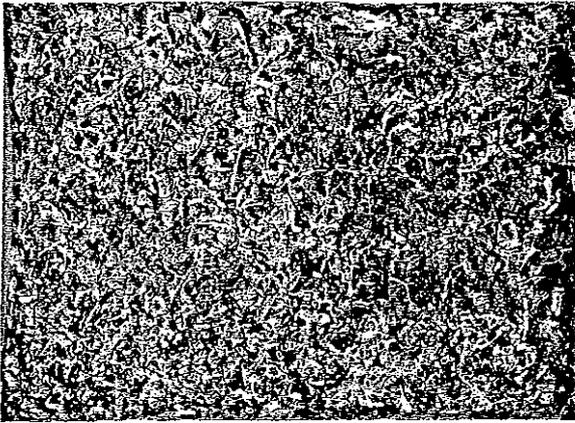
### Special remarks

The painting is in a good state of conservation having suffered only minor paint loss. The painting is clean and well supported. In comparison to Blue Heaven this painting is somewhat darker due to the visibility of now darkened linen in areas where paint was not applied.

I tentatively date this work from 1949 to the early part of 1950 based on stylistic and colouristic factors. The painting is built up on unprimed natural linen. The first deposits of paint appear to be silver (aluminium paint) and black. The painting was likely executed in several sessions as underlying layers needed time to dry – this is evidenced by the noticeable lack of 'marbling' or intermixing of liquid paint.

The unprimed canvas provides the opportunity to examine in detail the sequence of development as the photo of the verso demonstrates revealing that the painting's beginnings are not unlike its completion in level of detail or dynamics.

## Revelation No. 3



### Physical description

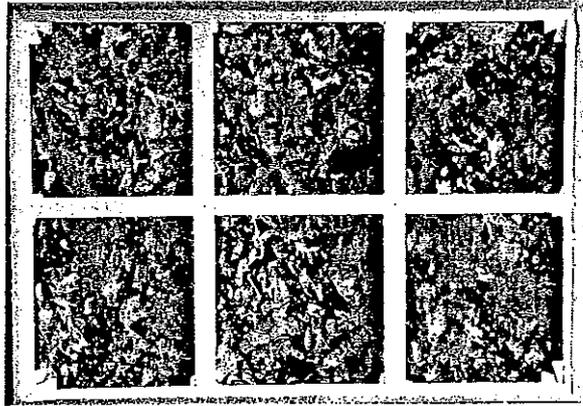
Mixed media on unprimed linen, 72 x 51 ¼ inches.

### Examinations carried out

11 paint samples were removed for analyses. The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. No fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of conservation. Numerous photographs were taken.

### Special remarks

The painting is in a good state of conservation having suffered some minor paint loss. The painting is clean and well supported. In comparison to Blue Heaven this painting is somewhat darker due to the visibility of now

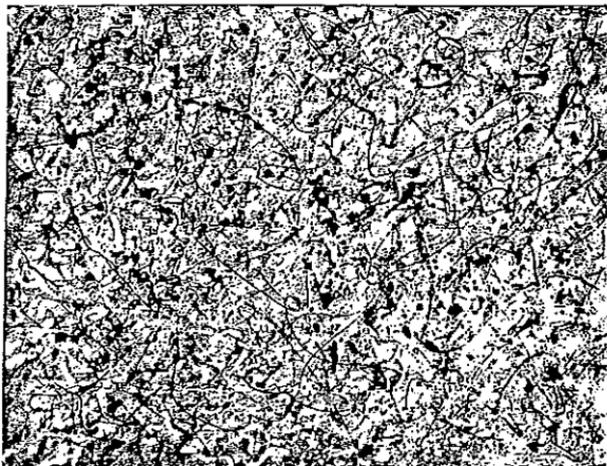


darkened linen in areas where paint was not applied.

I tentatively date this work from 1949 to the early part of 1950 based on stylistic and colouristic factors. The painting is built up on unprimed natural linen. The first deposits of paint appear to be a light warm grey and black. The painting was likely executed in several sessions as underlying layers needed time to dry – this is evidenced by the noticeable lack of marbling or intermixing of liquid paint.

The unprimed canvas provides the opportunity to examine in detail the sequence of development as the photo of the verso demonstrates. In comparison to Revelation No. 2 larger areas of uniform color appear that serve as ground for further development.

## Number 4



### Physical description

Mixed media on heavy cardboard,  
30x40 inches.

### Examinations carried out

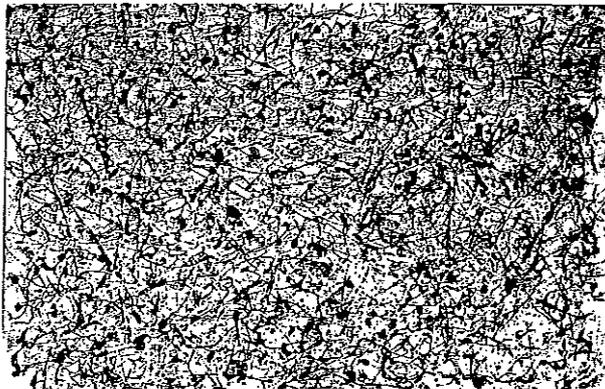
The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. No fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of conservation. Numerous photographs

were taken.

### Special remarks

The work is in excellent condition apart from minor losses of paint.

# Silver Moon



conservation. Numerous photographs were taken.

## Special remarks

The painting is executed on the white 'ground' of the paper with a generous application of flowing aluminium paint. The painting's color scheme appears to be focused on the primary colors, red green and blue with some black, white and yellow. The composition is of extraordinary luminance no doubt due to the silver and white ground.



## Physical description

Mixed media on white paper, 28x44 inches.

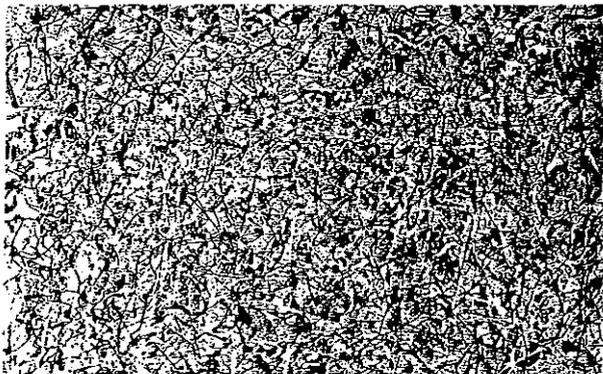
## Examinations carried out

The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. Two fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of

The work is in excellent condition apart from minor losses of paint.

Two fingerprints were found on this composition. These have to be re-photographed as the portable equipment proved unsuitable for the on-location task. From the images available at this time the general pattern of the fingerprint suggests a match but that cannot be confirmed yet.

## Number 6



### Physical description

Mixed media on white paper, 28 x44 inches.

### Examinations carried out

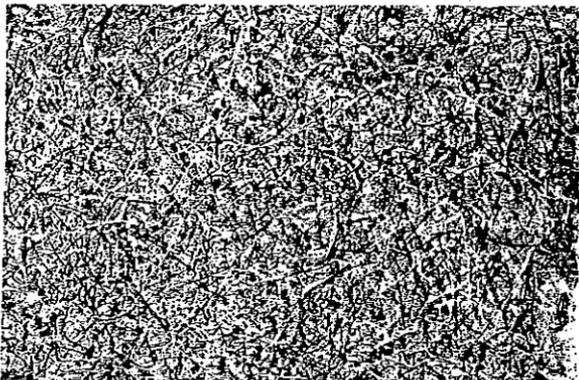
The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. No fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of conservation. Numerous photographs were taken.

### Special remarks

This painting is highly similar to Silver Moon except for the dominance of blue which appears in three tones.

The work is in excellent condition apart from minor losses of paint. It is clean and well supported.

## Number 7



### Physical description

Mixed media on white paper, 28 x44 inches.

### Examinations carried out

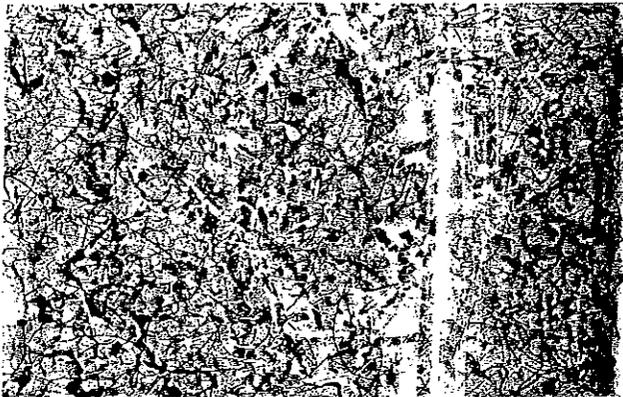
The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. No fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of conservation. Numerous photographs were taken.

### Special remarks

As noted previously, the works on paper suggest a close relationship. Number 7 delves into the warmer tones with a predominance of ochre yellow. Little blue is used while black and white with the interplay of some silver create an almost atmospheric effect.

The work is in excellent condition.

## Morning Sun



### Physical description

Mixed media on white paper, 28 x44 inches.

### Examinations carried out

The painting was examined for fingerprints with bright lighting and magnification. Eight fingerprints were found. Assessed the state of

conservation. Numerous photographs were taken.

### Special remarks

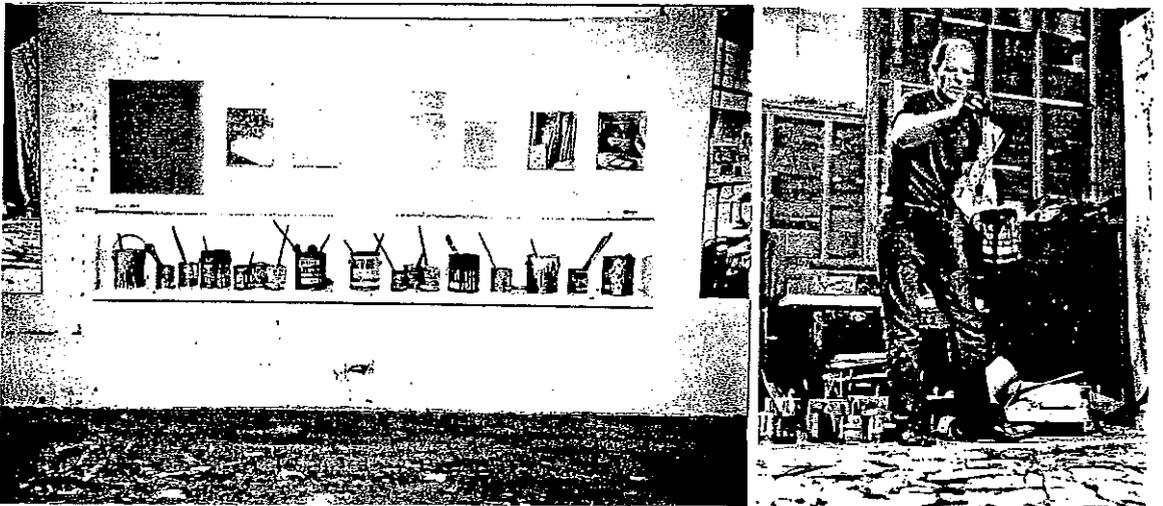
The work is in excellent condition apart from minor losses of paint. The present illustration on this page has some unavoidable glare as the painting had to be photographed under glass.

Morning Sun relates to Number 7 very closely in colorism but demonstrates a compression of fine details into larger masses of color space.

The painting bears numerous fingerprints (recto, verso) one of which matches a fingerprint from a paint can which I documented in Pollock's studio in 2001.

## The Fingerprint Evidence

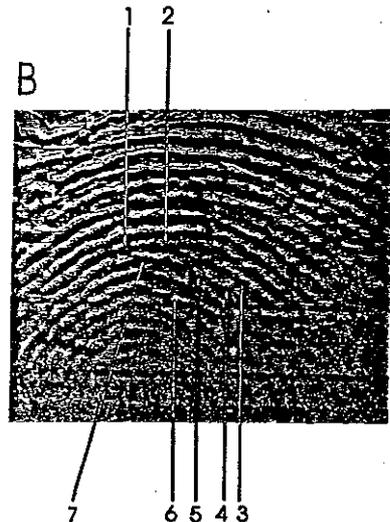
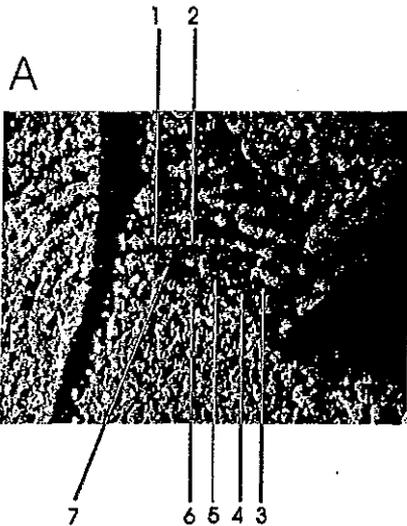
As noted before, several fingerprints were documented on Morning Sun. These were digitally enhanced as required and then compared to numerous fingerprints I had collected at the Pollock-Krasner House – Pollock's East Hampton Long Island Studio. These fingerprints were found on various objects used by Pollock such as paint cans and brushes. A number of these objects are now in a display case reproduced left below. I have been successful in identifying a number of these objects on period photographs by Hans Namuth as seen right below. The photograph dates to 1950. The paint can immediately to the left of Pollock's feet is the third can from the left in the display case at the Pollock-Krasner House. The identification was made by the comparison of the label and the drip marks of paint on the side of the can. The brush in the can is also the same.



One fingerprint compared positively to a finger impression left in paint on a paint can of Ultramarine Blue exhibited at the Pollock-Krasner House. It is the fifth can from the left. The fingerprint on Morning sun is a stamped impression on the front of the painting. Since part of the fingerprint is hidden by drips of paint its deposit had to coincide with or precede the painting process.

## The Comparison

Fingerprint A is from Morning sun. The vertical black streak is a drip of black paint as is the one at the right hand side. The tint of the image is cause by digital processing. Fingerprint B is from the can of Ultramarine blue. The image is a close reproduction of the actual color of the paint.



The central portion of the fingerprints show a close grouping of bifurcations and islands. They appear in the same relative positions when compared.



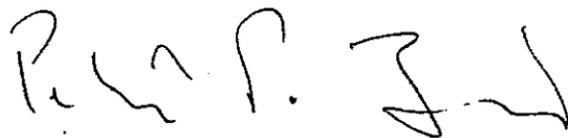
## Conclusions

Given the positive fingerprint comparison on Morning Sun I have no doubt that the finger that left its mark is the same finger that left its mark on the paint can at the Pollock-Krasner House. Unless proved to me otherwise I am satisfied that its ascription to Pollock's hand is justifiable.

The organic and cohesive nature of the rest of the collection is highly suggestive and supportive of the attribution as is the provenance - albeit partial.

In my view this is a singular collection that requires a full exploration of its breadth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Paul Biro". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Paul Biro