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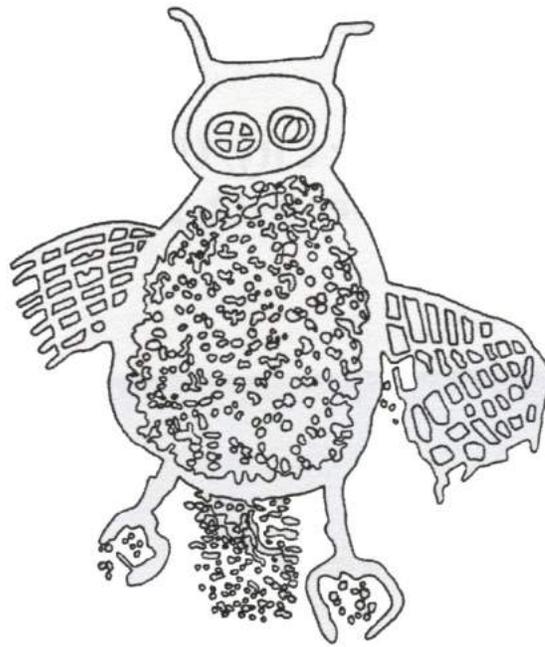
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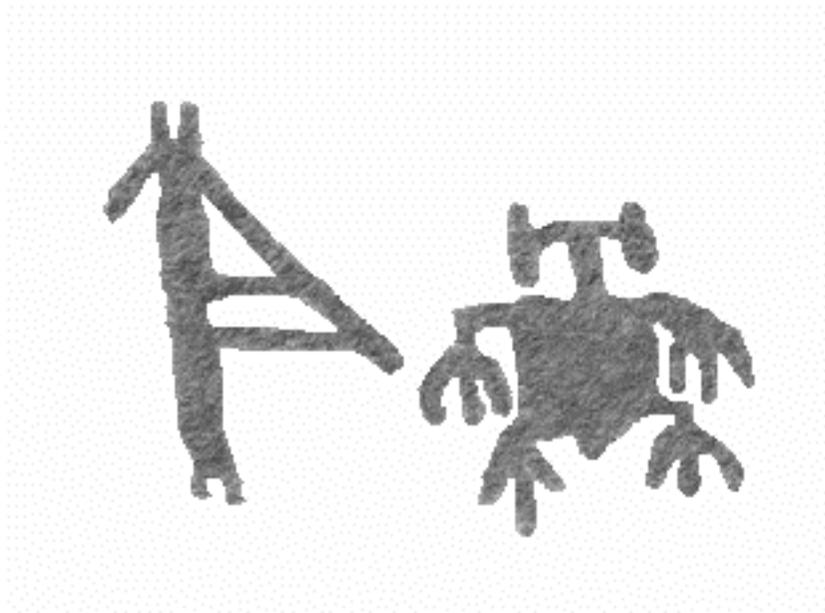
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Joe Brame

THE GREAT GALLERY GOES TO NEW YORK

In January of 1941, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City presented a landmark exhibition entitled “Indian Art of the United States”. This exhibition revolutionized modern American perceptions of traditional North American Indian art forms, and had a profound impact on a rising generation of modern painters in New York at the time. MOMA sits on 53rd St. between 5th and 6th Avenues in the heart of Manhattan. Figure 1 shows the entrance to the museum in 1941 while the show was in progress.



Figure 1. Museum of Modern Art, New York City, 1941, during the exhibition *Indian Art of the United States*. (Albert Fenn, photographer; Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; ID#: IN123.1; MMA 20.441).

The exhibition organizers went so far as to install an actual Northwest Coast totem pole on the sidewalk at the entrance to publicize the show. By 1941, as it still is today, MOMA was widely regarded as the center of modern 20th-century American art, and was quickly gaining prestige as a center of modernism at the international level. The Indian Art show presented hundreds of archaeological objects from ancient, historic and modern Indian cultures as true works of fine art, including pottery, sculpture, painting, and textiles, but the centerpiece of the show, at least by the intent of the designers, was a full-scale painted reproduction of the Great Gallery pictograph panel from Horseshoe Canyon, Utah, now widely acknowledged as the premier example of the Archaic Barrier Canyon Style of Southwestern rock art.

Today, over 70 years later, the Indian Art show is still considered one of the most influential and important exhibitions in the USA during the 20th-century. The key person here was the exhibition’s designer and curator, René d’Harnoncourt, not a name widely associated specifically with rock art studies, but in the field of ancient American or Precolumbian art history, he is rather an iconic figure. He is known for organizing several major museum exhibitions on ancient American, Oceanic and Folk art in the mid-20th-century, he served as Director of MOMA between 1949 and 1964, and he is the central figure in this essay (Wikipedia, “René d’Harnoncourt”, 2014; Dictionary of Art Historians, “René d’Harnoncourt”, 2014). The Indian Art show occupied all three floors of MOMA at the time, and was designed to be viewed starting on the third floor and working your way down. Upon entering the museum from the street, one immediately took either stairs or the elevator to the third floor to begin viewing the exhibition.

Each of the three floors was dedicated to a different theme regarding Native American art; the first section (third floor) was entitled “Prehistoric Traditions”, the second section (second floor) entitled “Living Traditions” (historic and modern cultures), and the third section (first floor), “Indian Art for Modern Living”, devoted to Native American-inspired 20th century fashion and design.

Upon arriving at the third floor, the visitor initially passed through a small introductory gallery containing a variety of ancient Native American works, including late Paleolithic Clovis spear points, before entering the first of 11 galleries or “units” as the museum labeled them.¹ Each unit was dedicated to a specific prehistoric Native American style or culture, and contained various display cases or wall installations presented in typical museum fashion of the time (Figure 2). The show was remarkable (by d’Harnoncourt’s intention) for the presentation of such ancient Native American objects as stone sculpture, pottery, wooden figurines and masks, textiles, and reproductions of ancient fresco wall murals as works worthy of true consideration as sophisticated works of art. D’Harnoncourt was widely praised in reviews for the exhibition design and installations, especially his use of dramatic lighting and spatial arrangements of the objects (Rushing 1995:106-107). But, based on surviving photographs from the MOMA archives, most of the installations in fact generally followed standard museum installation practices of the time, that is multiple podium-style bases and cabinets with glass enclosed cases in each unit, or wall mounted panels for vertical presentation of flat objects such as textiles. There was, however one notable exception to the typical installation format, as discussed below. Unit I was dedicated to the tribes of the Northeast, followed by Unit II dedicated to the Northwest Coast. Units III-VI presented objects from the Woodlands traditions of the Southeastern

United States, followed by Units VII-X dedicated to the American West and Southwest.



Figure 2. Gallery installation view, third floor, Museum of Modern Art *Indian Art of the United States* exhibition, 1941. (Unidentified photographer; Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; ID#: IN123.10; MMA Original Negative Number: OH52).

The last Unit XI was a logical extension from the American Southwest, dedicated solely to “Pictographs”. Before entering the Pictographs Unit, the visitor had to pass through Unit X which contained reproductions of the recently excavated polychrome fresco murals from the ancient Hopi site of Awatovi. Unit X was darkly lit compared to the other units, with dramatic spotlighting of the wall murals.



Figure 3. Great Gallery canvas mural installed in Unit XI (the “Pictograph” gallery). This is the only existing photograph of the mural installation at the 1941 MOMA exhibition. (Unidentified photographer; Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; ID#: IN123.6B; MMA Original Negative Number: OH7).

This was done to not only to suggest the original darkened kiva-like environment of the murals but to set the visitor up for entrance to the next Unit XI. Upon exiting the darkened Unit X into Unit XI, the visitor was confronted *not* with another typical museum type of installation, with a number of different cases presenting a variety of different objects, but rather a large semi-circular or amphitheater like space, much larger than any of the previous units. Unit XI was not square as the other units; rather it was in the shape of a giant pie wedge, two perpendicular walls connected at their ends by a large curving third wall. This large Unit XI was completely empty except for a life-size color painting of the central section of the

Great Gallery pictograph panel from Horseshoe Canyon, Utah (Figure 3).

The painted mural measures 8 feet high by 60 feet long, consisting of 11 sections of 6 foot wide canvas stitched together to form the complete canvas (the mural still exists; note discussion below). The composition consists of approximately fifty abstracted, red anthropomorphic figures varying in height from a few inches to approximately five feet, seemingly floating across the apparent canyon wall surface. Mounted on the large curving third wall, the giant canvas was intended to visually overwhelm the viewer in both its scale and dramatic imagery, providing a shocking transition from the previous units. Along with

the lack of any other objects in the unit, the viewer was forced to concentrate solely on the vast mural; it was impossible, by design, for the visitor to avoid or miss the mural, and in fact it appears that d'Harnoncourt intentionally saw the mural as the highlight of the entire third floor, and perhaps the entire exhibition. Upon exiting Unit XI, the visitor would immediately proceed down to the second floor to continue the exhibition.



Figure 4. Native Puebloans posed in front of the Great Gallery mural for promotional photography and special events during the MOMA show. (Albert Fenn, photographer; Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; ID#: IN123.74; MMA 18.055).

Today, the Great Gallery is considered the premier example of the ancient Archaic Barrier Canyon Style of rock art found across much of southern Utah, and widely acknowledged as one of the most significant ancient rock art panels in the United States. In 1971, the section of Horseshoe Canyon containing the Great

Gallery and other Barrier Canyon Style paintings was added to Canyonlands National Park specifically to protect the paintings, the first instance in the United States of a parcel of land being accorded National Park status specifically because of its ancient rock art. But in 1941, virtually no non-Natives outside of southern Utah had ever heard of, much less visited the actual Great Gallery.



Figure 5. Visitors watch Navajo sandpainters at work in front of the Great Gallery mural in Unit XI. (Eliot Elisofon, photographer; Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; ID#: IN123.52; Original Negative Number: Elisofon Indian No. 1; MMA 18.054).

As part of its contribution to the galleries of the third floor, the Unit XI Pictograph gallery served as the backdrop for a number of special events presented during the run of the exhibition to promote the show. So-called “authentic” Native Americans of different cultures from all around the country, dressed in native attire, were displayed and photographed in front of the Great Gallery mural (Figure 4); dances and performances were routinely scheduled in the gallery, such as the creation of an “authentic” Navajo sandpainting² by Navajo priests (Figure 5). All of these events occurred with the Great Gallery mural looming in the background, again a visual reminder intended by design to keep the



Figure 6. Donald Scott photograph of the Great Gallery, c.1930.
(Donald Scott Photography Collection, Peabody Museum of Archaeology
and Ethnology at Harvard University, Peabody Number: 2004.24.10462).

visitor constantly aware of its fundamental importance.

D'Harnoncourt co-authored a fully illustrated catalog for the exhibition with Frederic Douglas, then Director of the Denver Art Museum and a renowned specialist on ancient Native American art (which d'Harnoncourt was *not*). The catalog contained the first-ever published color photograph by photographer Robert Jones of the actual Great Gallery, rather than a photograph of the painted mural displayed in the show (Douglas and d'Harnoncourt 1941:24-25). The exhibition label for the mural, reproduced in the catalog, identified the Great Gallery as belonging to the ancient Basketmaker culture of the Southwest,

dating to 1000-1200 AD. Scholarship focusing on the Barrier Canyon Style in recent decades has confirmed that both the style and the Great Gallery are certainly much older, probably dating to at least 2000 BC, and not directly associated with the later Basketmaker or Pueblo traditions. But at the time, the ancient Basketmaker and Fremont styles were the earliest archaeologically identified cultures in Utah, so the (erroneous but understandable) presumption was that the Great Gallery belonged to one of those traditions.

The giant mural was painted by Lynn Fausett of Salt Lake City in 1940, specifically for inclusion in the MOMA show. Fausett had attained a modest national reputation as mural

painter, and had spent considerable time in New York City (Hague 1975:5-50). However, the history of this mural actually begins around 1929. Between 1929 and 1931, the Peabody Museum of Harvard University sponsored an expedition to Utah to record rock art sites, including Horseshoe Canyon (Schaafsma 1971:xv-xvii). Donald Scott was a Harvard graduate student and member of that expedition and oversaw the photography team, which produced the first photos of the Great Gallery. Those photos are still at the Peabody Museum, and formed the basis of Polly Schaafsma's 1971 book *The Rock Art of Utah*, in which she first identified the Barrier Canyon Anthropomorphic Style (Schaafsma 1971:65-83). In those same years, d'Harnoncourt organized a major international exhibition of Mexican Arts, which was shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1930 (Wikipedia, "René d'Harnoncourt", 2014). That show included examples of Precolumbian art borrowed from the Peabody Museum, and that is when d'Harnoncourt first met Donald Scott.

In 1936, d'Harnoncourt was appointed the first general manager of the newly established Indian Arts and Crafts Board within the Department of the Interior, charged with promoting the economic development of the American Indian arts and crafts market. In this role, d'Harnoncourt organized the first significant exhibition of North American Indian Art in the United States in San Francisco in 1939 as part of the Golden Gate International Exposition. That show did not include any rock art images, but that show was so successful, that d'Harnoncourt submitted an offer to MOMA in 1939 to organize an expanded version of the show in New York City. The museum agreed and it was at this point in 1939 that d'Harnoncourt probably first conceived of including the Great Gallery in the exhibition. In June of 1940, d'Harnoncourt borrowed some of the Great Gallery photographs from his old buddy Donald Scott at the Peabody Museum, and flew to Salt Lake

City for one day to meet with Elzy J. Bird, the Director of Utah's Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Arts Project. D'Harnoncourt showed the photos to Bird (Figure 6) and asked Bird if he could produce a full-scale reproduction of the Great Gallery for the MOMA show. Bird agreed, and d'Harnoncourt got on a plane the next day and flew back to New York City (Bird nd:4). In his 1989 memoir *Remembering Barrier Canyon*, photographer Robert Jones states that "The mural was to be the dominant piece of art in the [Indian Arts] show" (Jones 1989:4), though it is unclear whether he was told this by Bird or d'Harnoncourt. D'Harnoncourt never visited Horseshoe Canyon and never saw the Great Gallery in person. He based his decision entirely on the Donald Scott photos.

Bird assembled a team of four WPA artists, including photographer Robert Jones, and contracted Fausett to oversee the production of the mural (Bird nd:5; Hague 1975:75-78). Bird's team made two trips to the Great Gallery, in June and again in late July of 1940. Fausett was along on the first trip which was just a preliminary reconnaissance and first viewing of the Great Gallery. Fausett spent only one or two days at the site. Fausett fell ill and was hospitalized after the first trip and never returned to Horseshoe Canyon. The second trip in July lasted 10 days when most of the preliminary field sketches and photographs were taken. It was during this second trip that the team chalked grid lines and numbers on the Great Gallery wall to create accurate scale drawings and paintings to be used by Fausett back in Salt Lake City. The remains of these chalk marks are still visible today. Fausett began work in August 1940 in a make shift studio he set up in a rented warehouse in Salt Lake City. He created two canvas murals, the large one for the MOMA show, and a smaller one measuring 8' x 20' of the famous Holy Ghost panel, which now hangs in the Utah State University Eastern Prehistoric Museum in Price, Utah. The murals were completed in late October, and the large one rolled up and



Figure 7. Great Gallery mural installed in the old University of Utah Natural History Museum, Salt Lake City, 1993. (Photo J. Farmer, 1993).

shipped to d’Harnoncourt in New York in early November 1940.

After the MOMA show closed in April 1941, a scaled down version of the show with the Great Gallery mural traveled to several other cities around the country between 1941 and 1944, including Gallup, New Mexico, Worcester, Massachusetts, and New London, Connecticut, as well as Cleveland, Omaha, St. Louis, and Los Angeles. In 1945 the show went to Mexico City, but the Great Gallery mural did not go with that show. World War II was still raging and d’Harnoncourt withdrew the mural because of concerns with international security and travel. A Spanish version of the catalog, written and edited by legendary Mexican artist and scholar Miguel Covarrubias, accompanied the Mexico exhibition, but instead of a color picture of the actual Great Gallery, it contained

a black and white photograph of a section of the reproduced canvas mural (Covarrubias 1945:69; Fig. 43). In the catalog, Covarrubias notes that Barrier Canyon rock art “...shows a certain resemblance to the Stone Age rock art paintings from the Old World” [“*que muestra cierto parecido con las pinturas rupestres de la Edad de Piedra del Viejo Mundo*”] (Covarrubias 1945:23). His comment was based solely on his viewing of only the catalog photograph, for indeed like d’Harnoncourt, Covarrubias never came close to seeing the actual Great Gallery.

In 1944, the mural itself was transferred to the Denver Art Museum, which promptly rolled it up and put it in storage, where it stayed apparently unseen until 1964. In that year the Amon Carter Museum of Art and the Utah Travel Council organized a traveling exhibition

entitled “Standing Up Country: The Canyon Lands of Utah and Arizona” which included the mural. The catalog published with this show is still in print and widely available, though it includes no mention of the mural. An aging Fausett did some restoration painting to the mural, and that show toured several cities in the United States between 1964 and 1967, ending in Salt Lake City in 1968. It was then that the University of Utah worked out a trade with the Denver Art Museum of a collection of archaeological pieces in the university’s holdings in exchange for the mural, which was installed in the University of Utah Natural History Museum (Figure 7) (Hague 1975:82-83).

It remained there on view until 2011, when it was relocated to its present setting in the entryway of the new University of Utah Natural History Museum (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Great Gallery mural installed in the new University of Utah Natural History Museum, Salt Lake City, 2013. (Photo J. Farmer, 2013).

I want to return to the MOMA show in New York City, because I think that the Great Gallery mural may have played a more interesting role in that show than even d’Harnoncourt originally intended. One has to think about that show in its own time, that is the early 1940s in New York City. D’Harnoncourt had multiple motivations for

organizing the show. His primary goal was to present, more or less for the first time, North American Indian art as true works of fine art, rather than archaeological curiosities or ritual objects, to a sophisticated, international art world centered in New York, in a sense fulfilling his promotional mission for the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. But he was also inspired by other factors. The art world of New York in the 1930s had been dominated by several well known art movements, including Surrealism, the Mexican muralists, and so-called Primitive Art. D’Harnoncourt believed that American Indian art, prehistoric and modern, demonstrated clear and equal complexity and sophistication to these movements, providing a quintessentially American counterpart to these foreign styles and influences (Rushing 1995:108-109).

Further, by 1940, the United States was keenly aware of the approaching war with Germany, which had caused massive migration of Europeans to the United States, including many prominent members of the art world, in the previous decade. There was a wide-spread general feeling in the air that that the social and political turmoil in Europe represented the decay of the traditional Old World system, while the Americas, and particularly the United States, represented a land of new opportunity and beginning, insulated as it were from the trouble in Europe (Rushing 1995:108-109). In this spirit, d’Harnoncourt wanted to illustrate both the artistic sophistication and deep antiquity of ancient Native Americans as comparable to the more familiar pre-modern, Old World traditions (Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman, etc.).

The Surrealist influence in New York at the time is particularly interesting. Many New York critics who reviewed the exhibition for well known periodicals such as *Art in America* and *New Yorker Magazine*, as well as many visitors, routinely noted parallels between the objects in the show (including the Great Gallery mural) and “surrealist” imagery

(Rushing 1995:109), a description still often used today by modern visitors to the actual Great Gallery. An anonymous reviewer of the exhibition in the January 26, 1941 edition of the New York Herald Tribune described the Barrier Canyon mural as “a macabre, ghostlike pattern of tall human figures, chiselled (*sic*) and painted by the Basketmakers of Utah on a cliff in Barrier Canyon.” (New York Herald Tribune 1941). Similar Surreal-sounding descriptions were common. This played right into d’Harnoncourt’s hand, because he and other critics could therefore claim that ancient Americans had developed a “Surrealist” or “modern” style at least 1000 years before the Europeans. One might suspect that in its own way, the entire show was d’Harnoncourt’s veiled way of “one-upping” the established European traditions.

Also during the 1930s, the New York art world was heavily influenced by the Mexican mural movement, led by such notable painters as Jose Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and most notably Diego Rivera (Indych-Lopez 2009; Rushing 1995:103-104). Each of these great mural painters had spent time and created murals in New York and throughout the United States in the 1930s. One of the most notorious events in Rivera’s career had occurred in New York in 1933, when Rivera was commissioned by John D. Rockefeller (a friend of d’Harnoncourt) to create a mural in the lobby of his newly constructed Rockefeller Center, just a few blocks from MOMA. When Rivera refused a demand from Rockefeller to remove a portrait of Lenin in the painting after he had started it, Rockefeller fired Rivera and had the incomplete mural removed from the wall. The event made headlines throughout New York and the art world, and remains one of the more controversial moments in 20th century American art. But it also underscores the level of interest in mural painting at the time, though again, the movement was clearly seen as another “foreign” style.

By the 1930s, both Europe and the New York art world had also become heavily interested in what had come to be known as “Primitive” art. Not really a tightly defined style, but rather a loosely defined category of associated art forms that included folk arts, native tribal arts, Precolumbian art, and prehistoric art whose appeal lay in its raw expressive power without the refinement and overworked sophistication of formally trained, academic artists. The influence of such art forms, often referred to as “Primitivism”, had a profound effect on modern art throughout much of the twentieth century. Indeed during the 1930s, MOMA presented several exhibitions focusing on non-Western or Primitive arts, such as African or Precolumbian art, as ways of presenting the influence of these traditions on modern art. Again, d’Harnoncourt had played a small role in this interest. The 1930 exhibition *Mexican Arts* he organized for the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art was one of the first major exhibitions of its kind in the United States to highlight Precolumbian arts of Mexico. In addition, in 1937, four years before the Indian Arts show, MOMA presented a show (not involving d’Harnoncourt) entitled *Prehistoric Rock Paintings in Europe and Africa*. This show consisted of over 150 life-size drawings and paintings of Paleolithic rock art from Europe and Africa, organized by Leo Frobenius of the Research Institute for the Morphology of Civilization in Germany (Frobenius and Fox 1937). Prior to this show, few New Yorkers or any Americans had ever seen images of the now great and famous pictographs and cave paintings of southern Europe and northern Africa. In 1940, just three years later and one year before the Indian Art show, MOMA presented the exhibition *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* (again with no involvement of d’Harnoncourt), which established a clear connection between ancient Precolumbian and modern Mexican art. As art historian Robert Hobbs has observed, by 1940 there was a sense that the “triumph of



Figure 9. Jackson Pollock's *Mural*, 1943, installed at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, c.2007 (University of Iowa Museum: University of Iowa *Spectator*, Monthly News for University Alumni and Friends, March, 2010: <<http://spectator.uiowa.edu/2010/march/artandbeyond-photoshow.html>>).

North American painting had already occurred - but in Mexico, not the United States." (Hobbs 1978:14). By 1941, a foundation of intellectual interest and curiosity was clearly in place, particularly in New York City, to justify the presentation of the Great Gallery painting in the Indian Art show.

Enter a group of artists living in New York in the 1930s known as "The Irascibles" (Wikipedia, "The Irascibles", 2014). This group included artists such as Jackson Pollock and Adolph Gottlieb, artists best known for the development of Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s and 50s, widely considered by many artists and scholars today as the first truly great American art style. During the 1920s and 1930s, many of these artists attended or taught at The Art Students League, a private New York school that specialized in modern art training (Wikipedia, "Jackson Pollock",

2014; Wikipedia, "Adolph Gottlieb", 2014). Coincidentally, Lynn Fausett also attended the Art Students League, and served as its president between 1932 and 1936; he certainly would have known Pollock, Gottlieb and many of the others. All of these artists were intensely interested in the modern movements of the day, Surrealism, muralism, and Primitive art, and most of them visited the Indian Art show at MOMA between January and April 1941. Pollock and Gottlieb made multiple visits. Jackson Pollock was a true American westerner, born in Wyoming and raised in Arizona and California. He was already well-familiar with Native American art from his childhood, and it has long been recognized that his particular style of drip painting was influenced by Navajo sandpainting techniques, which he would also have seen at the MOMA show (Rushing 1995:119) (Figure 5). Adolph Gottlieb was a New Yorker, the Jewish son of

Austrian-Hungarian immigrants, but had lived in Arizona for two years in the 1930s, where he encountered ancient American rock art and ruins (Maurer 1994:36-37). By the early 1940s, these artists were actively looking to develop a new quintessentially American art style that incorporated the other modern styles, but broke away from the European tradition. D'Harnoncourt's Indian Art show was a significant catalyst for this movement (Rushing 1995:108-109), yet very little attention has been paid to the role that Fausett's Great Gallery mural played in these events, given its central position in the show.

The artist Richard Pousette-Dart, another member of the Irascibles and acquaintance of Pollock, was probably the first artist to use large-scale canvases for the developing Abstract Expressionist movement, canvases so large that they function as murals and visually engulf and overwhelm the viewer (like the Great Gallery!). In 1941, immediately after the close of the MOMA show, Pousette-Dart began work on his first large scale abstract painting entitled *Symphony No. 1, The Transcendental*. This large painting measures over 7 feet tall by 11 ½ feet wide, and is currently in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. However, this painting was not unveiled to the public until 1947 (Hobbs & Kuebler 1990:110). It was five years earlier, in 1942 (one year after the MOMA show closed) that Pollock produced his first large scale abstract painting entitled *Mural* for Peggy Guggenheim, a prominent New York art dealer and supporter of Pollock (Figure 9). Extremely large canvas paintings were nothing new in the history of art, but no one had ever painted *abstract* art on such a scale.

Pollock is perhaps best known for his vivid colors and spontaneous drip style of painting, and it was Pollock who gained the first serious critical attention with the new use of large scale. *Mural* is now widely regarded by scholars of 20th century American art as Pollock's single most significant work, the

work that first displayed his complete break from the previous European-influenced works of his early career, and the first of his works to present his radically abstract drip style of painting on a large canvas, which would come to define Abstract Expressionism (University of Iowa Museum of Art, "Jackson Pollock", 2014). This large painting originally hung in a narrow hallway in Guggenheim's house; it's now in the collection of the University of Iowa Figgie Art Museum. On close viewing one can detect images of dark rather abstract human-like forms dancing or floating across the background, reminiscent of the Great Gallery mural composition.



Figure 10. Adolph Gottlieb,
The Terrors of Tranquility, 1948.
(Hirsch 1994:116, Fig. 49).

In 1941 after the MOMA show closed, Adolph Gottlieb began work on a series of abstract paintings that he collectively called "Pictographs", supposedly inspired in part by rock art imagery he had seen in Arizona. He worked on this series throughout the 1940s. If

one looks closely at some of these paintings, it seems easy to see the more direct influence of Barrier Canyon Style figures. In *The Terrors of Tranquility* from 1948, (Figure 10), the large central rectangular figure with a featureless knob-like head is remarkably similar to the Barrier Canyon Style figures from the Great Gallery. The figure is outlined by a white dotted line, also seen in Barrier Canyon Style figures, and even the overall red tone of the entire painting is reminiscent of the red tones preferred by the Great Gallery artists.

Neither Pollock nor Gottlieb ever visited Horseshoe Canyon; the only images of the Great Gallery available to them at the time would have been either the MOMA mural, or the photograph in the accompanying catalog. In fact, the show attracted over 100,000 visitors while on view at MOMA, yet most certainly *none* of them, from d'Harnoncourt down, had ever seen or even heard of the actual Great Gallery, with the possible exceptions of Robert Jones, the WPA photographer from the Elzy Bird teams, who spent part of his time living in New York City, and Donald Scott, who lived in Boston. But we have no record of either one actually attending the show.

Given the design of the exhibition space and the placement of the mural, it seems inevitable that these artists would have been influenced to some degree by the Great Gallery mural. And this is a testament I think to d'Harnoncourt's almost sixth-sense intuition about just how important the Great Gallery was (and perhaps still is) to American art history. I think he understood (or at least promoted the belief) that the Great Gallery not only reflected aspects of current trends in modern 20th-century art, but was indeed itself the most American of all American art, which made it a perfect work both for the times and the for the ages. In an interview for the New York Sun reported in the January 1, 1941 edition of *The Art Digest*, d'Harnoncourt stated that "The Indian arts and crafts are the oldest and most American of any we have in this country" (*The Art Digest*

1941). This attitude seems particularly interesting for a couple of reasons. For one thing, we are talking about responses from New York art critics, artists, and museum professionals (starting with d'Harnoncourt) to a reproduction only, *not* the original work of art. Regardless of how one evaluates Fausett's painting on its own artistic merits or its accuracy as a reproduction, the New York audience did not have a point of reference, the real Great Gallery, against which to judge it (Fausett actually did take some artistic liberties in some of the details; it is not a photographically accurate document by today's standards). For such an unverifiable reproduction to generate such focus in such a major exhibition, in place of the real work, apparently attests to the power that the Great Gallery images exerted. But we are then left with another interesting dilemma. If one likes or appreciates the Abstract Expressionist style, then one must thank in part the original Great Gallery, Lynn Fausett and René d'Harnoncourt for their contribution to its development. However, if one does *not* like Abstract Expressionism, then one must blame in part the original Great Gallery, Lynn Fausett and René d'Harnoncourt for their contribution to its development. Either way, it does seem remarkable that despite its remote location and lack of public awareness, the Great Gallery may actually have played an incredibly pivotal role in the development of 20th century modern American art.

NOTES

1. Description of the exhibition design and gallery organization is based on the author's personal examination of MOMA curatorial archives containing original gallery plans and exhibition designs, conducted in June 2013.
2. The use of Navajo sandpainters to recreate a sandpainting in the exhibition required considerable negotiation between the curators and the Navajo Tribal Council, since it is generally forbidden to create such sacred imagery outside of an official Navajo ceremony. The term "authentic" was used to indicate the authenticity of the artists' hands, rather than an indication of the accuracy of the actual painting. By practice, sandpaintings created for non-Navajo public consumption were (and still are) subtly altered in minor form (a color or shape) so as to deny their spiritual potency, thereby rendering them something other than "authentic".

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