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# BEYOND THE PALE

## Lee Krasner and Jewish Culture

By Gail Levin

In 1978, while planning the show "Abstract Expressionism: The Formative Years" with Robert Hobbs, I insisted on giving prominence to Lee Krasner along with her male contemporaries. She was persuaded to show work she had produced while still studying with Hans Hofmann—work proving that she was a fully formed abstractionist before meeting her future husband, Jackson Pollock. My strategy worked, convincing critics of her status as a first-wave Abstract Expressionist.

Given my friendship with Krasner—I first interviewed her in 1970—time has been required to gain the critical distance necessary to write her biography. Among my first steps, here I explore her links with Jewish culture from childhood on, based on our frequent discussions of Jewish ethnicity. I argue that despite later estrangement from religious practice, she remained identified as a Jew, even though, at his insistence, she agreed to marry Jackson Pollock in New York's Marble Collegiate Church on October 25, 1945. Krasner, then 37, had lived with him since 1942, and later recalled that her father's recent death (November 17, 1944) had motivated her to marry.<sup>1</sup>

Lena Krassner was born October 27, 1908, in Brooklyn, New York, just nine months and two weeks after her mother, Chane (Anna), age 33, arrived from Shpikiv in Russia, not far north of Odessa in the Pale of Settlement, the area where the Russian Imperial government permitted Jews to live.<sup>2</sup> Her father, Joseph, age 38, had been in America for four years. In their shtetl (village), where some 530 of the nearly 3000 residents were Jews,<sup>3</sup> Joseph and Chane had earned their living helping a rabbi manage ritual observances. Krasner considered her mother's family more orthodox than her father's.<sup>4</sup>

A family photograph taken in Shpikiv showing a modern, well-dressed family group suggests motives other than poverty for their emigration. The massive Jewish flight from Eastern Europe around the turn of the century stemmed also from anti-Semitism, oppressive taxation, and enforced conscription of sons. Pogroms, violent attacks directed at Jews and other minorities, increased pressure to flee.<sup>5</sup> As conditions deteriorated in Russia, many Jews sought asylum in America, bringing with them their belief in social justice and political reform. Faced once again with harsh working conditions, a vocal and visible fraction became strike leaders and union organizers. Jewish militancy no doubt reflected disillusionment with the stories of a better life in America that had fueled emigration.

It was into a world teeming with impoverished and often radicalized Jewish immigrants in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn that Lena was born. Joseph, an orthodox Jew, pursued a disciplined study of religious texts and was said to be sensitive and introspective.<sup>6</sup> "I adored him," Krasner said, "But he was very remote."<sup>7</sup> His religious books fascinated Lena, with their elaborate decorations and Hebrew script. He also liked to tell the children stories, which she loved: "Marvelous tales! About forests. Beautiful, beautiful stories, always like Grimm. Scary things. . . . A foreign world to me."<sup>8</sup>

Lena's eldest sister, Edith, cooked for the family and took charge of the younger siblings.<sup>9</sup> The Krassners shared their modest quarters with Anna's younger, unmarried brother, William, who worked in a clothing factory. Dominating the traditional household, Anna, who experienced culture shock as she encountered modernity and secularism, enforced the observance of Jewish ritual. She never learned to read and write in English and remained fearful and superstitious.<sup>10</sup>

In Eastern Europe, the most prestigious life for a Jewish male was to be a religious scholar. Scholarly circles excluded women, who, in the absence of family wealth, were expected to provide support to make possible their husbands' devotion to study.<sup>11</sup> Their roles as breadwinners gave wives more power in practice, but little respect or prestige. By the nineteenth century, however, some Jews in Eastern Europe had rejected Orthodox restrictions, believing that reconciling Judaism with modern Western ideas and customs would bring them emancipation and equality.<sup>12</sup> Instead of discouraging girls from obtaining all but the most basic literacy, they stressed secular education for both sexes. The most observant Jews, however, faced with growing anti-Semitism, held tight to their traditional attitudes, transporting them to the new world.

In effect, Jewish men "displaced their own anxieties upon women," according to historian Paula Hyman, who argues that the men "constructed a modern Jewish identity that devalued women, making them the Other within the Jewish community."<sup>13</sup> The men, who were experiencing emancipation and economic success, responded to anti-Semitism "by creating negative representations of Jewish women." This "coincidence of antisemitism and misogyny" reflects the efforts of both Jews and women to challenge their place in society and to assert their claims to equality. Ironically, Jewish women became what has been called the "oppressed of the oppressed."<sup>14</sup>

Brownsville's population grew after the extension of the Fulton Street El in 1889 enabled easy access to Manhattan for those, like Lena's uncle, who worked in the garment industry. Yiddish was the language most often heard in the shops and the open-air markets. *Cheders*, schools where young Jewish boys learned orthodox traditions and rituals, were plentiful. Girls, including Lena, attended a separate Hebrew school, where they learned basic reading and writing skills, primarily in order to pray.<sup>15</sup> Later she remarked:

I think it was in my show at the Whitney that Marcia Tucker pointed something out to me I had been totally unaware of, and that is that I started my painting at the upper right hand at all times and swung across the other way, which she related to my early training in Hebrew writing. I had never made the connection. She pointed that out to me. I was doing it for many, many years without being conscious of it in any sense. And so at all times I was preoccupied with a kind of writing which I nor anyone else could read, and I wanted it that way. I don't know why.<sup>16</sup>

Krasner appears to have accepted Tucker's suggestion that her early study of Hebrew writing influenced her series of abstractions known as "Little Images" (Fig. 1).<sup>17</sup>

Krasner told Eleanor Munro that she was conscientious and observant as a girl: "I went to services at the synagogue, partly because it was expected of me. But there must have been something beyond, because I wasn't forced to go, and my younger sister did not."<sup>18</sup> That "something" might have been her strong identification with her adored father; still, she disliked the segregation of the sexes in the synagogue, and remained resentful that orthodox Judaism did not allow women equality with men. "The beginnings were there in the synagogue, and I am told to go upstairs, I have never swallowed it to date," she insisted late in life.<sup>19</sup>

As a child she recited the daily morning prayer in Hebrew from memory. Later, after finally reading a translation, she referred to this prayer as "my own shattering experience." She explained that it "is indeed a beautiful prayer in every sense except for the closing of it...if you are a male you say, 'Thank You, O Lord, for creating me in Your image'; and if you are a woman you say, 'Thank You, O Lord, for creating me as You saw fit.'"<sup>20</sup>

By the time she entered elementary school, Lena's family had moved about two miles to East New York, to a two-family clapboard row house on Jerome Street. Joseph Krassner ran a fish, vegetable, and fruit stand at the nearby Blake Avenue Market. His work required him to rise at dawn and travel to Manhattan's wholesale fish market, buy fish packed in wooden crates, haul it by horse and wagon to the small retail stall, and try to sell out by late afternoon before the ice melted and the fish spoiled.<sup>21</sup> The business left the Krassners little free time, and their children had to help both at home and in the market. "Yes we were very poor. Everyone had to work. Every penny

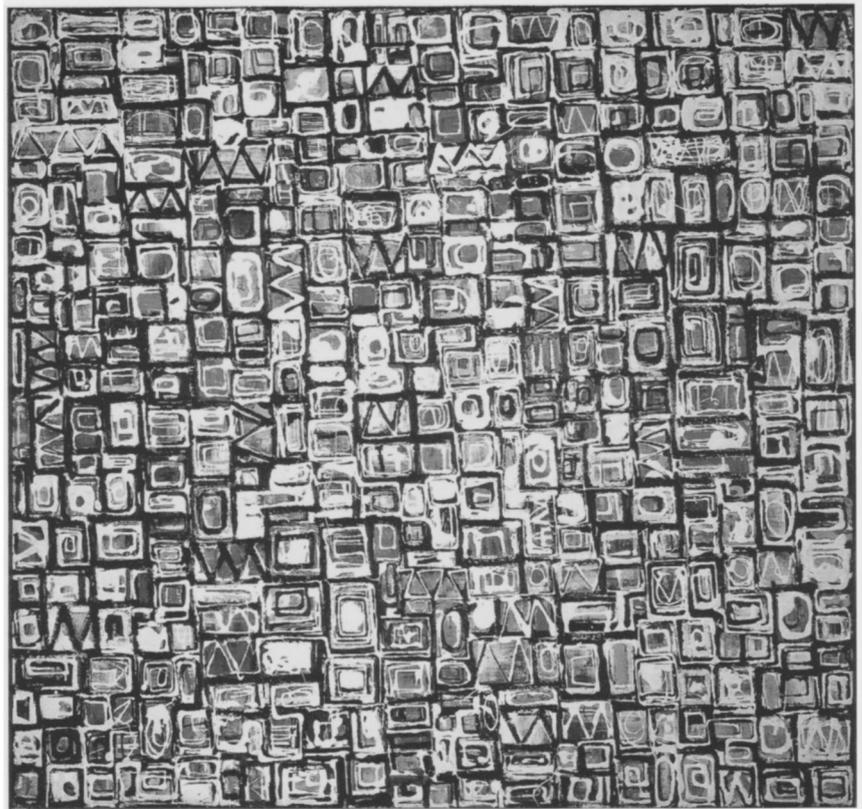


Fig. 1. Lee Krasner, *Painting No. 19* (1947-48), oil and enamel on masonite, 32 1/4" x 32 1/4". Private collection.

had to be dealt with," Krasner said later, adding that her parents demanded obedience and respect.<sup>22</sup>

At her school, P.S. 72, there were more girls than boys among its 1500 students, presumably because many neighborhood boys attended private *yeshivas* (religious schools). Here Lena was introduced to the idea of art, though she later said that she did not yet draw.<sup>23</sup> Her sister Ruth recalled, however, that Lena copied fashion advertisements from the newspaper: "She used to draw clothed women figures all the time. We were all aware of that—how marvelous it was to be able to put her pencil to paper and get a figure."<sup>24</sup> (It was one of the few nice things that Ruth ever recollected about her sister.) The only other art that Lena saw was in library books, including the illustrated fairy tales she loved.<sup>25</sup>

Brownsville during these years welcomed radical social movements and philosophies including anarchism, Socialism, and Communism. Women's activism, too, was acceptable among segments of the Jewish immigrant community.<sup>26</sup> Women led protest movements and rent strikes, and Jewish women worked hard to get out the vote, participating in the state elections of 1915 and 1917. In fact, the Jewish immigrant community in New York supported woman's suffrage more than other immigrant groups.<sup>27</sup> In 1916, the first birth control clinic in America, an experiment led by Margaret Sanger, opened briefly in Brownville.<sup>28</sup>

Lena's role models at home were her father and brother, both of whom she favored over her mother and sisters. Her brother Irving, who studied chemistry, introduced her to various cultural pursuits: books by Dostoevsky, Gogol, Gorki,



Fig. 2. Lee Krasner, *Self-Portrait* (c. 1928), oil on linen, 30 1/8" x 25 1/8". Collection Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Photo courtesy Robert Miller Gallery.

and Maeterlinck, and the music of Enrico Caruso, then the leading male singer at New York's Metropolitan Opera.<sup>29</sup> Irving, who never married, later collected art.

In 1921, Lena, now calling herself "Lenore," applied to study art at Washington Irving High School in Manhattan. That unique institution then claimed to be "the only school in greater New York offering an industrial art course for girls."<sup>30</sup> She was "told that they were filled and as I lived in Brooklyn I couldn't enter. It led to a good deal of complication as I had to go to a public high school."<sup>31</sup>

Krasner's parents did not try to dissuade her from her educational goals, as long as she made no demands on them, financial or otherwise.<sup>32</sup> Although still observant Jews, they had begun rejecting some orthodox restrictions. "I think my parents had their hands full acclimatizing themselves and putting their children through school. They didn't encourage me but as long as I didn't present them with any particular problems, neither did they interfere. If I wanted to study art, it was alright with them."<sup>33</sup> Her second choice was to study law, and she entered Girls High School in Brooklyn. Doing poorly, after six months she reapplied to Washington Irving. "This time I was admitted and so I started my art career. . ."<sup>34</sup>

Under her brother Irving's influence, imbibing the ideas of German philosophers Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche, she began turning away from Jewish belief. Nietzsche's dictum that "God is dead" affected her just as his

insistence that humanity "take responsibility for setting its own moral standards" inspired existentialists. Krasner may have taken license to leave religion behind from statements by Schopenhauer such as: "The power of religious dogma, when inculcated early, is such as to stifle conscience, compassion, and finally every feeling of humanity."<sup>35</sup>

The gender inequality Krasner so disliked together with her reading gradually eroded her faith. She recalled arriving home one Shabbat (Sabbath) while her parents entertained a friend over a cup of tea; she described herself as a young teenager coming in "like a charging banshee" and announcing that she was done with religion.<sup>36</sup> Afterwards, she remained identified as Jewish, but rejected religious practice.

Washington Irving was just where Lenore wanted to be. It was conceived by the progressive educator William McAndrew, who sought to mix girls training for trades with those pursuing an academic curriculum, hoping they would learn from each other. In 1921, the *New York Times* described the large, all female student body as having "6000 pupils, almost wholly Jewish."<sup>37</sup> The commute from Brooklyn was about an hour each way. Greenwich Village, with its lively bohemian scene, was near the school. It was the heyday of the jazz age, flappers, free love, the new woman, and other thrilling new types. New York had galleries and museums to explore, starting with the vast Metropolitan Museum of Art. She learned to savor great art and to dance the latest steps with equal passion.

Although Lenore was taking "more and more periods of art,"<sup>38</sup> her determination and sense of purpose were not enough to win her art teacher's praise. In her senior year, after she decided to go to Cooper Union, a woman's art school, the teacher pulled her aside, she later recalled: "'The only reason I am passing you in art...is because you've done so excellently in all your other subjects, I don't want to hold you back'...In other words, I didn't make the grade in art at all."<sup>39</sup> Confident in her own abilities, Krasner remained resolute: "... I picked the best, or what I thought was the best I'd done in Washington Irving and used that to get entrance into Cooper Union. I was admitted."<sup>40</sup>

When Lenore's older sister Rose died suddenly of appendicitis, leaving behind her husband and two small daughters, Jewish tradition called for Lenore, the next oldest, to marry her brother-in-law and raise the children. She refused, believing she had another destiny—to be an artist. Her younger sister, Ruth, just sixteen, accepted the responsibility and married William Stein, who worked as a movie projector operator.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile Joseph and Anna, their children grown, relocated further out on Long Island to Greenlawn, near Huntington Station.<sup>42</sup> Needing to be close to Cooper Union, Lenore moved into the Stein household after all—though not as the new wife—gaining freedom to come and go as she pleased.

By the fall of 1928, Lenore had enrolled at the National Academy of Design. Among her teachers were two artists who represented successful models of assimilation, in contrast with her parents. They were the Russian Jewish immigrant, Ivan Gregorewitch Olinsky,<sup>43</sup> and Leon Kroll, the American-born son of an earlier wave of German-Jewish immigrants. Assimilation seemed essential to Krasner's vision for her future as an artist; her goals were not those traditionally expected of a Jewish

woman. The often quoted words of the Princess to Daniel Deronda (in George Eliot's 1876 novel) might well express Krassner's dilemma:

You are not a woman. You may try—but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl. To have a pattern cut out—this is the Jewish woman! This is what you must be; this is what you are wanted for; a woman's heart must be of such a size and no larger, else it must be pressed small, like Chinese feet...<sup>44</sup>

Krassner's determination to be an artist made her eager to move from copying plaster casts to life drawing. Anticipating the entry requirement for the life drawing class, she must have painted her *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 2) during the summer of 1928, working outdoors at her parents' home on Long Island.<sup>45</sup> She nailed her canvas to one tree and a mirror to another. Members of the committee claimed that she had merely pretended to be working *en plein air*, but she was promoted "on probation" on January 26, 1929.

At the Academy she met and then lived with the painter Igor Pantuhoff (who was not Jewish). He liked to dress, pose, and photograph Krassner. A few years later, the pair shared an apartment on West 14th Street with writers May Tabak and Harold Rosenberg, whom Krassner had first met while a waitress at Sam Johnson's, a night spot in Greenwich Village. Beginning in August 1935, Krassner and Rosenberg began working for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), initially assigned to assist the muralist Max Spivak, who was just two years older than Krassner.

Years later, when Barbara Rose asked Krasner if it was difficult to be a woman artist during the thirties, forties, and fifties, she replied: "I never got any very positive responses to my work." One bright spot, though, was Hans Hofmann, with whom she began studying in 1937.

When I met him, he said: "Zis is so good you would not know it was done by a woman."—meaning the highest compliment he could pay me. That was always there, maybe it will be for a long time. It's as old as Judeo-Christianity. In Western thought—not Eastern—the God image is a male concept and there isn't much room for the female. Those are facts not to be denied. I had some awareness of this way back, somewhere when I was studying at Cooper Union. But it didn't hit me too hard until the recent women's movement. Now, there is an attempt to get a number of women on the scene. For me, it comes a little late.<sup>46</sup>

Taking to heart the political activism of the community where she grew up, Krasner took part in organized protests against periodic firings and rehiring by the WPA. She participated in "Pink Slips Over Culture," the summer 1937 exhibition held at ACA Galleries, which supported leftist causes. In 1939, appointed to the executive board of the Artists Union, she got caught up in fierce debates over Stalinist versus Trotskyite politics. That year she also joined the American Abstract Artists.

Both Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg, who were rivals,

would take an interest in Pollock, but neither would write about Krasner's art.<sup>47</sup> At least one critic has described Rosenberg as "a secular rabbi carrying on the Hassidic tradition of scholarly infighting in an assimilated world."<sup>48</sup> They were not the only Jewish men in the art world whom Krasner resented. In 1950 Barnett Newman, who was, like her, of Eastern European Jewish ancestry, called to invite Pollock to pose for the now famous group photograph, known as the "The Irascibles," taken for *Life* magazine by Nina Leen. Krasner answered the phone, but Newman asked to speak with Pollock, ignoring her.<sup>49</sup> In their attitudes towards Jewish women, Greenberg, Rosenberg, and Newman, consciously or not, adhered to the cultural model for gendered roles formed in Eastern Europe and perpetuated in Jewish immigrant culture.

"I had a running bout with Barney Newman about my objections to the role of women in Judaism," Krasner later explained.

We battled till he died; he said I misunderstood and I said I understood loud and clear but I objected. Then one time he asked me whether I had seen the plans for his synagogue. I asked why I should see them. He claimed that his design would settle the argument. "Well, where are the women in your synagogue," I asked. "You'll see! You'll understand!" he said. "Right on the altar! And I said, "Never. *You* can sit on the altar and get yourself slaughtered. I want the first empty seat on the aisle."<sup>50</sup>

In a 1973 television interview, Krasner blamed her lack of previous recognition on "the fact that she was a woman artist coming up in the 1950s and on the fact that she's Jewish."<sup>51</sup> She often spoke about the problem of "Jewish attitudes towards women" with me and with others, for example, her friend the author, Naomi Goodman.<sup>52</sup> Krasner attributed the failure of Newman, Rosenberg, and Greenberg to support her art to the fact that they were all Jewish men.

In an interview late in her life, Michael Cannell told Krasner: "Clement Greenberg has said of you: 'Lee should have had more faith in herself and more independence; but then that is the problem of all women artists.'" She responded: "Well he claims women artists couldn't paint, with the exception of his special friend Frankenthaler. But she was his close amour, so she could paint. Well, that's for the birds! Who could take that seriously? Either women can't paint, or some can. It isn't just who your amour is."<sup>53</sup> Helen Frankenthaler came from a much wealthier class of German Jews, while Krasner's poor immigrant Russian roots, as Greenberg's writing reveals, were too close for comfort to his own family background.<sup>54</sup>

Krasner and her family represented the legacy of The Pale to Greenberg, who wrote about it, noting that.. "The ghetto taught the Jew to keep his eye on the main thing. . . . The poor everywhere are impatient with etiquette, if not decorum, but none so much as the Jews. For them the only etiquette impervious to ridicule is that of ideas. Why deny that man lives by cruel competition in this particular world?"<sup>55</sup>

Even more telling, Greenberg participated in a symposium on American literature for the editors of *Contemporary Jewish Record* in 1944, causing him to write about his own Jewish

heritage. He pointed out that his “father and mother repudiated a good deal of the Jewish heritage for him in advance by becoming free-thinking socialists who maintained only their Yiddish, certain vestiges of folk life in the Pale, and an insistence upon specifying themselves as Jews—i.e., to change one’s name because it is too Jewish is shameful.”<sup>56</sup> Greenberg also wrote about “the Jewish self-hatred in myself, of its subtlety and the devious ways in which it conceals itself, from me as well as from the world outside, explains many things that used to puzzle me in the behavior of my fellow Jews.”<sup>57</sup>

Not coincidentally, most of the women who began promoting Krasner during the late 1960s and 1970s were Jewish, including the critic and curator Barbara Rose, the video artist Hermine Freed, the curator Marcia Tucker, the critics Emily Wasserman and Cindy Nemser, and myself as a curator at the Whitney Museum.<sup>58</sup> The strong desire to find female heroes felt by Jewish women (and others) during the emergence of second-wave feminism surely affected changing attitudes toward Krasner’s work. In the next two decades, the Jewish art historian Ellen Landau would make Krasner’s work the subject of her doctoral dissertation and a series of articles, eventually completing a catalog raisonné.

Krasner once commented to Barbara Rose: “I don’t suppose I know what’s meant by ‘feminine’ subject matter, any more than I understand, what’s meant by ‘masculine’ subject matter. I’m sympathetic to the women’s movement, but I could never support anything called ‘American art.’”<sup>59</sup>

The lens of Jewish immigrant culture may offer further understanding of Krasner’s art and life. Recalling her comments about the family’s intense poverty, for example, we may view her involvement with collage as an aspect of her thrift and desire not to waste resources, a habit that continued until her death, long after it was necessary. Thus, I would argue that this concern was a major motivation for her recycling of cut-up fragments of both her own earlier work and of Pollock’s discards (see for example, color plates 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9).<sup>60</sup> Given the expensive paper that Pollock purchased, used, and sometimes discarded, Krasner had ample motivation to recycle it.

For her mature works as a painter, Krasner recalled the marvelous stories of the old world told to her by her father. Stories about the romance of Russia had fueled her imagination as a child, sometimes frightening her. Krasner recounted a time when, about five years old, she was standing alone in a dark hall and thought she witnessed something leap over the banister. Thoroughly terrified, she exclaimed: “half man,



Fig. 3. Lee Krasner, *Prophecy* (1956), oil on cotton duck, 58 1/8" x 34". Photo courtesy Robert Miller Gallery.

half beast.” This childhood memory was an enigma that resurfaced during the psychoanalysis of her adulthood and found its way into a painting she called *Prophecy* (1956; Fig. 3). This was the painting that remained on her easel when she left Pollock to go to Europe, fleeing his infidelity, only to return after his fatal car crash. The imagery took the form of a monster with a staring eye, possibly reminiscent of Krasner’s Russian grandmother Pesah, who was said to have had the power of the evil eye.<sup>61</sup>

Although Krasner broke with organized Jewish religious practices, her roots in Jewish culture went deep. Her politics and her intellectual life were not so distant from that of Rosenberg or Greenberg or Newman. She continued to support liberal political causes and to give to Jewish charities—from the Israel Emergency Fund of the United Jewish Appeal to the Women’s Campaign for UJA-Federation—and carefully preserved the documentation in her papers.<sup>62</sup> Even when she became wealthy, she lived simply. She arranged to bequeath her entire estate to the

Pollock-Krasner Foundation to provide funds for needy artists, reflecting the core Jewish value—*Tsedakah* or righteousness and justice toward others, community responsibility, and mutual aid.<sup>63</sup> It is also true that she had come to see artists as her community. Perhaps it was art that had taken the place of religion. ●

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#### Notes

I wish to thank Helen Harrison, Director of the Pollock-Krasner House and all of those who participated in the symposium, “The Art and Life of Lee Krasner: Recollections, Cultural Context, and New Perspectives,” April 12–13, 2007, at Stony Brook, Manhattan, including Barbara Rose for showing her film, *Lee Krasner: The Long View*. I also thank the Department of Art History and Art Criticism at Stony Brook, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its support, and my research assistant, Karen Cantor.

1. Eleanor Munro, *Originals: American Women Artists* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 113. This interview is notable in that Munro coaxed Krasner to add detail beyond the stories she usually repeated to interviewers. Krasner often said similar things in conversation to me.
2. Her mother entered Ellis Island with only one “s” in the spelling of their surname, while her father chose to double the letter after his arrival. Lee would later drop the second s. She began to call herself “Lenore” in

- high school, then "Lee" informally during the late 1930s, but was still referred to as Lenore Krassner in the press through the middle of 1945. By 1948, she is known and appears in reviews as "Lee Krasner."
3. See Victoria Khiterer, "Shpikov" in *One Hundred Shtetls of Ukraine. Historical guide*, Issue 2, (St. Petersburg, 2000):451-66 (in Russian). These statistics are at The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People Jerusalem (CAHJP), document HM2/7771.1.
  4. Bryan Robertson and B.H. Friedman, *Lee Krasner Paintings, Drawings and Collages* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1965), 5.
  5. 77,544 left in 1904 alone, almost double the number that fled in 1902. In 1905, at least 92,388 left Russia for America; in 1906, 125,234; in 1907, 114,932; and in 1908, when Krasner's mother and siblings left, they were part of a total of 71,978. Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews 1870-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), 270. Spurring the exodus, for example, in the spring of 1903, in Kishinev, in southern Russia anti-Semitic propaganda by local journalists stirred rioters to attack Jews, looting and destroying shops and homes. Next day, looting turned to savagery—women raped, the synagogue destroyed, 49 people tortured and killed, and nearly 6000 injured. See Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. III (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1920), 69-75. See also, "Jewish Massacre Denounced," *The New York Times*, April 28, 1903, 6.
  6. Barbara Rose, *Lee Krasner* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1983), 13.
  7. Munro, *Originals*, 104.
  8. *Ibid.*
  9. Author's interviews with Krasner's relatives are the source for these previously unpublished details of her family.
  10. Deborah Solomon, *Jackson Pollock: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 111.
  11. See Tova Cohen, "Reality and its Refraction in Descriptions of Women in Haskalah Fiction," in Shmuel Feiner and David Sorkin, *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), 151.
  12. These were the followers of the Jewish intellectual and literary movement known as *Haskalah* (secular enlightenment).
  13. Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History The Roles and Representations of Women* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1995), 134-35, 137.
  14. Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990), 34.
  15. Lee Krasner to Dorothy Seckler, Interview. Nov. 2, 1964, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Hereafter, AAA.
  16. Lee Krasner quoted in Barbaralee Diamondstein (New York; Rizzoli International, 1979), 204. Krasner also discussed this issue with me in 1977. See my "Lee Krasner," in Robert C. Hobbs and Gail Levin, *Abstract Expressionism: The Formative Years* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1978, repr. Cornell Univ. Press, 1978), 86.
  17. See also, for example, Robert Hobbs, *Lee Krasner* (New York: Abbeville, 1993), 45; Ellen G. Landau with the assistance of Jeffrey D. Grove, *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 108. Barbara Rose, *Dialogue: Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock* (New York: Robert Miller Gallery, 2006), n.p.
  18. Munro, *Originals*, 104.
  19. *Ibid.*, 105. Krasner told this story to more than one interviewer, but this is the most complete version.
  20. Lee Krasner to Dorothy Holmes, Oral History Interview, 1972, AAA.
  21. Solomon, *Jackson Pollock: A Biography*, 110.
  22. Munro, *Originals*, 103.
  23. Lee Krasner to Dorothy Seckler.
  24. Ruth Krassner Stein, quoted in Solomon, *Jackson Pollock: A Biography*, 111.
  25. Robertson and Friedman, *Lee Krasner: Paintings, Drawings and Collages*, 5.
  26. See Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History*, 112-13.
  27. *Ibid.*, 113.
  28. Neil M. Cowan and Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *Our Parents' Lives: The Americanization of Eastern European Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 170, 172, 183. The clinic attracted many Jewish women before the government closed it clinic and arrested Sanger for violating postal obscenity laws.
  29. Munro, *Originals*, 104. See also Robertson, *Lee Krasner: Paintings, Drawings*, 5-6.
  30. "Public School Notes," *The New York Times*, 7 October, 1922, 25.
  31. Lee Krasner to Dorothy Seckler.
  32. Lee Krasner to the author, summer 1977, and again many times in the course of conversation.
  33. Cindy Nemser, *Art Talk: Conversations with 15 Women Artists*, (New York: Scribner's, 1975), 83.
  34. Lee Krasner to Dorothy Seckler.
  35. Arthur Schopenhauer, "Religion—A Dialogue," in Will Durant, ed., *The Works of Schopenhauer*, (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1955), 467-68.
  36. Munro, *Originals*, 105; Nemser, *Art Talk*, 83.
  37. Rollin Lynde Hartt, "New York and the Real Jew," *The New York Times*, June 25, 1921, 659. From the size of the graduating class, 600 students seems more accurate.
  38. Nemser, *Art Talk*, 83.
  39. Lee Krasner to Dorothy Seckler.
  40. *Ibid.*
  41. Ruth Krassner's age at her marriage is incorrectly cited as fourteen by Jeffrey D. Grove in "Chronology: Lee Krasner 1908-1984," in Landau, *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 300-01, when he also lists Ruth's year of birth as 1910 and implies that she married as late 1927 or early 1928.
  42. Grove, "Chronology," in Landau, *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 301, claims that Krasner's parents moved to Huntington, when they actually first went to Greenlawn. Confirmed by the author's interviews with Krasner's nieces.
  43. Ivan G. Olinsky is identified as a Jew in Isaac Landman, ed., in collaboration with ... Louis Rittenberg ... [et al.]; *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. (New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, c1939-43). Olinsky did not advertise his Jewish identity, and when he returned from studying in Europe, on Sept. 12, 1910, immigration agents at Ellis Island noted with skepticism that for ethnicity, he "claims U.S.A."
  44. George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (1874-76; repr. Ware, Great Britain: Wordsworth Editions, 1996), 523.
  45. Landau, *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 25-26, CR3, dates this *Self-Portrait* "c. 1930"; however, Krasner's records at the National Academy show that by Jan. 26, 1929, she had won admission to the Life Class on probation, so this work had already been submitted.
  46. Lee Krasner to Barbara Rose, "American Great: Lee Krasner," *Vogue*, June 1972, 120.
  47. Rosenberg and Greenberg typically mentioned Krasner as either Pollock's wife or his widow. For an exception, see Clement Greenberg, *Art News*, Summer 1957, in John O'Brian, ed., *Clement Greenberg, The Collected Essays and Criticism: Affirmations and Refusals, 1950-1956*, vol. 4 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), 24, where he refers to Krasner in a list of eleven painters dismissed as producing "late Cubism," which was "the end of something, not the beginning."
  48. Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *Art Czar: The Rise and Fall of Clement Greenberg* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2006), 137, referring also to Mary McCarthy's review in *Partisan Review* of Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New* (New York: Horizon, 1959).

49. This photograph was itself a response to an open letter written by 28 artists to the president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, protesting a juried exhibition intended to increase the museum's collection of contemporary art. Krasner was not invited to sign the letter.
50. Munro, *Originals*, 105. Krasner told this story to more than one interviewer, but this is the most complete version.
51. Lee Krasner interviewed by Carol Jenkins, November 14, 1973, NBC news archives, cartridge 003, p. 0369.
52. Naomi Goodman to Lee Krasner, letter of March 1, 1979, Lee Krasner Papers, AAA, reel 3773, frame 275.
53. See Michael Cannell, "An Interview with Lee Krasner," in *Arts Magazine*, 59, no. 1 (Sept. 1984): 87-PG#, reprinted in Wendy Slatkin, *The Voices of Women Artists* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 245.
54. Helen Frankenthaler's father was a judge in the New York State Supreme Court.
55. Clement Greenberg, "The Jewish Dickens: A Review of *The World of Sholom Aleichem* by Maurice Samuel," *The Nation*, October 16, 1943, in John O'Brian, ed., *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism: Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), 156.
56. Clement Greenberg, "Under Forty: A Symposium on American Literature and the Younger Generation of American Jews," *Contemporary Jewish Record*, February 1944, in O'Brian, ed. *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 1, 176-77.
57. Clement Greenberg, "Self-Hatred and Jewish Chauvinism: Some Reflections on 'Positive Jewishness,'" *Commentary*, November 1950, in O'Brian ed., *Clement Greenberg, The Collected Essays and Criticism: Affirmations and Refusals, 1950-1956*, vol. 3, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), 45.
58. For a discussion of Jewish women and feminist art of this same era, see Gail Levin, "Censorship, Politics, and Sexual Imagery by Jewish-American Feminist Artists," in *Nashim*, (Fall 2007). Even Eleanor Munro tells me that she is part Jewish.
59. Barbara Rose Papers, The Getty, Box 3, folder 25, Krasner-Rose interview, 93.
60. For other theories about Krasner's collages, see Ellen Landau, "Channeling Desire: Lee Krasner's Collages of the Early 1950s," *Woman's Art Journal*, vol.18, no. 2,(Fall 1997/Winter 1998), 27-30.
61. Landau, *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 154-56.
62. See the Lee Krasner Papers, AAA, reel 3775, frame 933 for the Israel Emergency Fund in 1968 and reel 3776, frame 627 for the Israel Emergency Fund in 1969 and reel 3773, frame 261, for the Women's Campaign for UJA-Federation in 1979. She also supported such causes as the Civil Rights movement (reel 3775, frame 947) and various political campaigns, from Allard K. Lowenstein (reel 3771, frame 430) to Eugene McCarthy.
63. The Abstract Expressionist (Jewish) artist Adolph Gottlieb, who died in 1974, and his wife, Esther Gottlieb, earlier left their estate to a foundation which aids mature artists. In the Orthodox home in which Krasner grew up, an essential feature would be the tzedeka box, often placed next to the Sabbath candles, for donating money for the community. This ancient Jewish tradition sometimes took the form of a family donating money to Tzedakah on Friday, just before the Shabbat candles are lit. The Hebrew word tzedek means justice.



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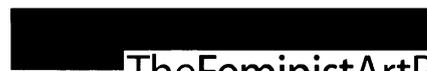


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