

A B A R C A   E N T E R T A I N M E N T   L L C  
L I M I T E D   S E R I E S   ·   P R O O F   O F   C O N C E P T

# THE ACTION PAINTER

*"The Controlled Accident"*

W R I T T E N   &   D I R E C T E D   B Y   R A U L   A B A R C A  
S H O O T I N G   S C R I P T   ·   J U L Y   2 0 2 6

Confidential · Not for Distribution · WGA Registration Pending  
raul@raulabarca.com · abarcafilms.com

FADE IN:

**1 INT. SOTHEBY'S ANTEROOM - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT****1**

CLOSE ON a canvas. Too close to read as art. Just surface, paint built up in layers, varnish gone amber with age. A HAND enters frame. Unhurried. Two rings. It stops just short of the canvas. Three inches from the surface. Close, but not touching. We hold there. PULL BACK to reveal LEE KRASNER. Alone in the storage room. She arranged it that way. The painting behind her: NUMBER 17A. Oil and enamel on canvas. Springs, Long Island, 1948. She speaks to it like it can still hear her.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)  
(barely above a whisper)  
You had no idea what you were  
doing.

A beat.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN) (CONT'D)  
Neither did I.

Something crosses her face. Not grief. Not pride. Something else. A KNOCK at the door.

AIDE (O.S.)  
Mrs. Krasner. Five minutes.

Lee reaches into her coat. Finds a cigarette. Lights it. Studies the painting through the smoke. In no hurry.

SMASH CUT TO:

**2 INT. ART STUDENTS LEAGUE - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT****2**

A different city. A different decade. Turpentine and chalk dust. Young men waiting to be told they're right. THOMAS HART BENTON, early forties, moves through the rows of easels like a man checking work he already expects to find wrong. He has opinions. He delivers them without apology. He stops at an easel. Studies the canvas. Behind it, YOUNG JACKSON POLLOCK, nineteen, watches him, waiting.

BENTON  
(studying the canvas, not the boy)  
This is technically competent.

A beat. Pollock waits.

BENTON (CONT'D)  
Technically competent is not a  
compliment.

He taps the lower left corner of the canvas with one finger.

BENTON (CONT'D)  
You painted what you thought it  
should look like. I want to know  
what it feels like when you  
close your eyes and think about

a wheat field in Missouri in  
August at four in the afternoon.

Pollock opens his mouth.

BENTON

Do not describe it. Paint it.

Benton moves to the next easel. Pollock stares at his canvas. Not defeat. The look of someone just handed a problem worth solving. Benton pauses at the door. Looks back at Pollock without turning all the way around.

BENTON (CONT'D)

(quieter, and meaning it)

You have something, Pollock. I  
don't know what it is yet.  
Neither do you. That's the  
interesting part.

He leaves. Pollock stands alone with his technically competent canvas. He picks up his brush.

CUT TO:

**3 INT. UNION SQUARE WORKSHOP - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT**

**3**

Five years later. A different energy entirely. Spray guns. Industrial enamel. A dozen young artists crammed into a loft that reeks of lacquer. DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS, forty, moves through the chaos like he started it on purpose. Because he did. POLLOCK, now twenty-four, stands at the back wall. Different from the boy at the Art Students League. Harder. More coiled. Still carrying Benton's problem. Still looking for the answer. Siqueiros stops. Looks at him across the room.

SIQUEIROS

(Spanish-accented, to the room broadly)

The accident is not the enemy.  
The accident is the  
collaborator. You are not  
controlling the paint. You are  
in negotiation with it.

He picks up a can of enamel. No ceremony. He throws it at the wall. The splatter stops two or three people cold.

SIQUEIROS (CONT'D)

(directly to Pollock)

You. Come here.

Pollock does not move.

SIQUEIROS (CONT'D)

I said come here.

Pollock crosses the room. Siqueiros puts a can in his hand. Pollock looks at the wall. Looks at the can. Looks at Siqueiros.

SIQUEIROS

Do not aim. Do not think.  
Negotiate.

Pollock looks at the wall one more time. Behind his eyes, something is unlocking that has been locked for years. Benton's problem. The answer arriving, finally, from a completely unexpected direction. He throws the paint. The splatter is extraordinary. Different from Siqueiros. More violent. More personal. The room goes quiet. Siqueiros watches him. Something between fear and thrill crosses his face.

SIQUEIROS  
(to himself, in Spanish)  
Dios mio.

TITLE CARD, quiet, bottom of frame: "My God."

CUT TO:

**4 INT. THE BARN - SPRINGS, LONG ISLAND - LATE AFTERNOON**

**4**

JACKSON POLLOCK, thirty-one, is on the floor of a barn, moving around a canvas laid flat on the boards. He tilts a can of Duco enamel at his hip. The paint falls in long arcs. He isn't watching where it lands. He already knows. This isn't chaos. It's a language he had to invent because the others weren't enough. LEE KRASNER stands in the doorway. Her coffee has gone cold. She isn't going anywhere. She isn't watching Pollock. She's watching what he's making. That's the difference that matters. She steps inside. Sets the cold coffee on the worktable.

POLLOCK  
(without looking up)  
Go inside, Lee.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)  
I am inside.

POLLOCK  
I can't work when you watch.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)  
Then you can't work.

He stops. Sets the can down. Turns and looks at her over his shoulder. The paint keeps dripping from the tilted can. He lets it.

POLLOCK  
What do you see.

Not really a question. He needs her to confirm he hasn't imagined it.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)  
(a long beat)  
I see it.

POLLOCK  
That's not an answer.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

It's the only one I have right  
now.

He turns back to the canvas. Lee crouches beside it, looking at it like she already knows what it's worth.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT) (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Jackson. This is the one.

Pollock looks at her. She is not given to this kind of statement.

POLLOCK

How many times have you said  
that.

Lee makes a small sound. Not a word. She looks back at the canvas. That is the answer. A silence. Something in him settles. Lee stands. Crosses to the worktable. Finds a notepad under a stack of paint-stained rags. Writes a name. Tears the page. Walks back and holds it out to Pollock without looking at him. He takes it. Reads it. Looks up at her.

POLLOCK

Who is this.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

The person who's going to show  
the world what's on that floor.

A beat.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT) (CONT'D)

You just paint.

She crosses to the door. Stops. Looks back at the canvas once more. Then she is gone. Pollock looks at the name on the paper. Looks at the canvas. Picks up the paint can. Outside the barn window, barely visible in the tree line, a CAR sits with its engine off. A MAN behind the wheel. Dark suit. Hata BbARrCiAm FlIoLwM.S Writing in a notebook. He has been there for a while. Nobody sees him.

CUT TO:

**13A INT. BETTY PARSONS GALLERY - NEW YORK CITY - DAY**  
**(1948)**

**13A**

A white room. Work on the walls.

BETTY PARSONS, thirties, holds the torn notepad page. Lee's handwriting on it.

Pollock stands in the middle of the room. Wrong clothes. Aware of it. Deciding it is her problem.

BETTY

You brought me a piece of paper.

POLLOCK

My wife brought you the paper. I brought the work.

He sets down a flat portfolio. Doesn't open it.

BETTY

Then open it.

POLLOCK

You first. Tell me what you've heard. I want to know what I'm correcting.

Betty looks at him. Doesn't answer that.

BETTY

I've heard you paint on the floor. That you don't use a brush. That it's a stunt.

POLLOCK

And you.

BETTY

I don't show stunts. I show work that will still be right in thirty years. So open it.

He crouches. Turns the portfolio to face her.

We do not see the canvas. We see Betty see it.

She is quiet a long time.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Who else has seen these.

POLLOCK

Lee.

BETTY

Besides Lee.

POLLOCK

Nobody who matters.

Betty pins the torn notepad page to the wall. Where a painting will hang.

BETTY

November. The whole front room. No group show, no sharing the wall.

POLLOCK

Lee said you'd say the front room.

BETTY

Your wife is right more than she is comfortable being.

Pollock ties the portfolio. Stands.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Mr. Pollock.

He stops.

BETTY (CONT'D)

The floor. The no brush. Keep doing it. Don't let anyone in a room like this one talk you out of it.

He leaves. Betty looks at the name on the wall. Lee's handwriting. She leaves it pinned there.

CUT TO:

**10A INT. A COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON (1944) [SHOOT IF TIME PERMITS]**

**10A**

Lee and RUTH, thirty, sit across from each other at a small table. Ruth is a painter. The person Lee talks to when she cannot talk to Pollock. Not famous and doesn't expect to be. This has made her perceptive about people who are.

RUTH

How is he?

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

He's working.

RUTH

That's not what I asked.

Lee looks at her coffee.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

He's drinking. He's working. The same as always except the work is getting better and the drinking is getting worse and I don't know which one is driving the other.

RUTH

Does he know how good it is?

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

He knows. That's part of the problem.

RUTH

What's the rest of it?

A beat.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

Peggy. The contract. The mural. He's becoming something and the becoming is very loud and I'm not sure he knows how to be inside it.

RUTH

What about you?

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

What about me.

RUTH

Lee. Your work.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

My work is fine.

RUTH

Is it being shown?

Pause.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

Not this season.

RUTH

Not last season either.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

I know that, Ruth.

RUTH

I'm asking if you do.

Lee looks out the window at the street.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

What I know is that there are  
two of us and one show and I'm  
not going to compete with him  
for the same inch of wall.  
That's not strategy. That's just  
how things are.

RUTH

He wouldn't see it as  
competition.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

I know he wouldn't. That's not  
the point.

Ruth says nothing. Lee turns back from the window.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

The work is good, Ruth. I know  
the work is good. That's enough  
for now.

RUTH

Is it?

Lee picks up her coffee. Drinks it. Sets it down.

LEE (THE ARCHITECT)

It has to be.

CUT TO:

Lee stands before a painting waiting to go up. Number 17A. A man stops beside her. GERALD SIMMONS. Government cultural affairs. The kind of title that explains nothing and means everything. He is in no hurry to get anywhere.

SIMMONS

Mrs. Krasner.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

I don't know you.

SIMMONS

No. But I've known your work for some time. Particularly the advocacy. The estate. The exhibitions abroad.

She is very still.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

The exhibitions.

SIMMONS

The European tours. Fifty-one, fifty-three, fifty-eight. The Congress for Cultural Freedom shows.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

I worked to get them seen. That's different from what you're describing.

SIMMONS

Of course.

A beat. He looks at the painting.

SIMMONS

Number 17A is a remarkable piece to have in circulation.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

It's a remarkable piece regardless.

SIMMONS

There will be considerable interest from European buyers. We've taken note.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

We.

SIMMONS

The cultural affairs office. We track significant works as they move through the market.

She looks at him now. Really looks.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

What do you want to know?

SIMMONS

Nothing you haven't already answered.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

Then we're done.

SIMMONS

Mrs. Krasner. The Amsterdam venue. Nineteen fifty-three. Do you remember who coordinated the shipment on the American side?

She looks at him.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

No.

She goes. Simmons watches her. He doesn't move. Doesn't write anything down. He just watches.

CUT TO:

**5 INT. SOTHEBY'S ANTEROOM - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT**

**5**

Lee finishes her cigarette. Drops it. Steps on it once. She looks at the painting. A KNOCK.

AIDE (O.S.)

Mrs. Krasner. They're ready for you.

Lee picks up the 1949 Life Magazine from the table beside her. Jackson's face on the cover. She tucks it under her arm.

LEE (THE GUARDIAN)

(to the canvas, quietly)

Good.

She opens the door and walks into the light.

CUT TO:

**6 INT. SOTHEBY'S - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT**

**6**

Lee walks through a corridor into the light and noise of the auction. We see her from behind: the coat, the posture, the Life Magazine under her arm with Jackson's face turned out. She does not slow down. She does not look around. She walks into it the way you walk into something you built.

CUT TO BLACK.

AUCTIONEER (V.O.)

(over black)

We'll open the bidding at forty million dollars.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

The CIA secretly funded Abstract Expressionism exhibitions across Europe for seventeen years. The artists were never

told. Lee Krasner managed Pollock's estate until her death in 1984. Number 17A sold in 2015 for \$200 million. The most expensive American painting ever sold. She knew it would.

THE ACTION PAINTER

A Limited Series · Created by Raul Abarca

FADE OUT.

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY RAUL ABARCA  
PROOF OF CONCEPT · "THE  
CONTROLLED ACCIDENT"

© 2026 ABARCA ENTERTAINMENT LLC  
ESTIMATED RUNTIME: 4:00 - 4:30