Digitally-Enhanced Evidence: MoMA’s Reconfiguration of Namuth’s Pollock

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...the effect of photographic reproduction of works of art is of much greater importance for the function of art than the more or less artistic figuration of an event which falls prey to the camera.

—Walter Benjamin, “A Short History of Photography”

Form is only a snapshot view of a transition.

—Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution

The digitally-enhanced illustrations accompanying Pepe Karmel’s recent essay, “Pollock at Work: The Films and Photographs of Hans Namuth,” in Jackson Pollock, the catalog for the Museum of Modern Art’s 1998 retrospective exhibition, attest to art history’s persisting faith in the objectivity of the photographic image, and its continuing attempts to enlist the latest photographic technology in the name of art historical positivism. According to one critic, Jeanne Siegel,

Karmel’s catalog essay, based on Namuth’s photographs and films, offers a new and provocative perspective on Pollock’s art making process...a positive, more objective approach...and provides a concrete example of the potential of computer technology as a tool to rethink views of art in the future.

Siegel’s comments are not unfounded—Karmel’s essay is certainly “new and provocative.” For one, it is the first instance in which an art historian has used digital photographic technology hermeneutically. Yet, at the same time, Siegel’s overt enthusiasm prevents her from realizing that if Karmel’s digitally-enhanced images look to the future, they do so through the past. That is to say, if Karmel’s illustrations seem to be “positive” and “more objective” it is precisely because they are connected to a lineage of photographic objectivity that dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. Accordingly, Karmel’s essay should be seen less as a pioneering “example
of the potential of computer technology as a tool to rethink views of art in the future," and more as an updated, expanded version of Francis V. O'Connor's earlier essay, "Hans Namuth's Photographs as Art Historical Documentation," which begins with a comparison of Namuth's "visual records" to "Daguerre's famous 1839 view of a boulevard in Paris," and concludes with a discussion of one of Namuth's photographs in which the author sees "an uncanny resemblance between Pollock and Charles Baudelaire."³

Karmel's essay and illustrations tap into an evolutionary conception of photography, born in the second half of the nineteenth century, in which each new achievement on the path toward ever-increasing verisimilitude is perceived, in the words of Noël Burch, as "supplying a deficiency."⁴ As such, Karmel never leaves room for the possibility that photographic "objectivity" is not a given, but instead, something culturally and historically determined. In this essay I would like to explore the possibility that Karmel's digitally-enhanced illustrations are not simply the latest achievement on the road to ultimate veracity, but rather a reflection of what photographic objectivity looks like now. Further, Karmel's illustrations, it seems to me, are textbook examples of how new paradigms of photographic objectivity replace previous ones. The secret to their success (and I think it is fair to refer to them as a success, given the fact that Jackson Pollock was awarded the 1999 Alfred H. Barr Award by the College Art Association), has to do with their propinquity to what Walter Benjamin, in his unfinished Passagen-Werk, called "Ur-forms"—that is, cultural forms or images that "inter-mingle" the new and the old; that "strive to set themselves apart from the out-dated," yet at the same time, refer back to "the recent past."⁵ Whereas Benjamin examined, for example, the way in which early Pictorialist photographers attempted to legitimize their medium by making it look more like painting, I am interested in how Karmel elides the rupture between traditional and digital photography by visually connecting his digitally-enhanced images to pre-existing and pre-established forms of photographic evidence.

Namuth's still photographs, of course, have their own history.⁶ Before going any further then, we should briefly recapitulate the initial effect they had on the trajectory of Pollock scholarship. From the moment they were first widely seen in the May, 1951 issue of Artnews alongside Robert Goodnough's article, "Pollock Paints a Picture," Namuth's photographs began to shift the focus of critical attention away from the base materiality of Pollock's drips, toward Pollock's artistic persona. Barbara Rose has described this shift in the following terms:
Frequently, the “persona of the artist” depicted in Namuth’s photographs was referred to in quasi-religious terms. The photographs hypothesized, in effect, the long-standing myth of the artist as divino artista—a chosen individual or visionary who creates in a trance-like state of divinely inspired madness. Goodnough’s text, for example, presents Pollock as a devotional (if not monastic) figure whose “feverish” painting process commences only after he has disconnected himself from the “outside world.” Moreover, Goodnough argues that “Pollock uses metallic paint much in the same sense that earlier painters applied gold leaf, to add a feeling of mystery and adornment to the work and to keep it from being thought of as occupying the accepted world of things.” Months later, after seeing Namuth’s photographs of Pollock painting, critic Harold Rosenberg famously collapsed the two notions of act and actor into “the act-painting,” which, he claimed, was “of the same metaphysical substance as the artist’s existence.” In Rosenberg’s reading, Pollock’s biography and work coalesce, and his paintings become authentic testaments of his suffering and Passion. Thus, it seems, Namuth’s photographs indirectly paved the way for Christian-specific interpretations of Pollock’s drip paintings. Such interpretations exasperated Pollock’s widow, the painter Lee Krasner, to the point that in 1982 she quipped to one interviewer: “First it was Carl Jung and now… it’s Jesus!” To Krasner’s chagrin, these associations are still with us today. In fact, there was something undeniably hagiographic about the MoMA’s retrospective exhibition and concomitant scholarly symposium, “Recovering Pollock: Method, Meaning and Impact” (January 23–24, 1999). At the end of the symposium one ecstatic audience member came forward and, after having thanked the museum for celebrating Pollock’s heroic life and work, proceeded to compare the MoMA to St. Peter’s, and the museum’s chief curator, Kirk Varnedoe, to the Pope. While it might be argued that this is nothing more than an amusing anecdote, for me it remains a significant by-product of MoMA’s focused effort to resurrect Pollock through Namuth’s photographs. Further, it is a reminder of the extent to which photography’s positivist or scientific aspirations continue to be inextricably intertwined with its mysterious revelatory power and metaphysical side. In other words, the veracity of
each new form of photographic objectivity is still contingent on its almost magical ability to make visible what was once invisible, to materialize the immaterial. From here we could even go on to say that Karmel’s new digitally-enhanced illustrations do for Pollock’s paintings what photography did for the Shroud of Turin some one hundred years before. As the often-rehearsed story goes, on May 28, 1894 a city councilor named Secondo Pia took the first photographs of the Shroud of Turin. Later, in his darkroom, at the moment when the negative image took form in its chemical bath, Pia nearly fainted; he felt certain that he was looking into the face of Christ. What he saw was something unexpected; his camera, in essence, had miraculously rendered visible the invisible, and faint markings on the Shroud suddenly appeared with extraordinary clarity. Moreover, through photography hitherto discrete forms took on a recognizable image—a whole and complete human figure. Photography, in a sense, permanently altered the ontological status of the Shroud. That is to say, from this point forward it was thought of photographically. According to one shroud scholar, or *sindomologist*, Ian Wilson: “The clear implication was that the Shroud itself was, in effect, a photographic negative that had been waiting dormant, like a preprogrammed time capsule, for the moment that photography’s invention would release its hidden true ‘positive’.”

For Karmel, the truth of Namuth’s photographs had been waiting dormant for the moment of Adobe Photoshop’s invention. Software in hand, his overriding goal became one of proving that Pollock’s dripped abstractions are, in fact, figurative. Borrowing two now-familiar terms from semiotician C.S. Peirce’s taxonomy of signs, we could say that both the photographs of the Shroud and Karmel’s digitally-enhanced illustrations of Pollock’s drip paintings are *iconic* images that (must) retain certain *indexical* qualities. An *icon*, according to Pierce, is a type of sign that stands as a proxy for its referent by way of likeness or visual resemblance; examples of icons include most images, diagrams or maps. An *index*, on the other hand, is a sign that has a physical, existential tie to the thing it signifies; e.g., a fingerprint, footprint or bullet hole. A photograph of the Shroud of Turin is iconic insofar as it resembles Christ, and indexical because it registers that bodily contact has taken place. Similarly, in Karmel’s illustrations, Pollock’s drips and stains become iconic because they resemble human figures, but indexical insofar as they remain authentic records of Pollock’s painterly performance. Indexical signs are inherently connected to the laws of causality, and as such, start the hermeneutic ball rolling back towards the originary acts that established them. Shroud scholars, for example, have used photographs of the Shroud to reconstruct each excruciating stage of
the Crucifixion. Justifiably, the French historian of photography, Philippe Dubois, has referred to photographs of the Shroud as the first examples of “crime photography.” Likewise, Karmel wants to use digital imaging technology to work backwards through Namuth’s films and photographs in hopes of returning to Pollock’s original painterly act. His objective (which has been a virtual leitmotif in Pollock scholarship since Thomas Hess’ 1964 article, “Pollock: The Art of Myth”) is to “distinguish the objective Pollock from the mythic Pollock.”

Initially, Karmel enlists digital photographic technology to transform a portion of Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg’s 1951 color film, Pollock Painting, into a series of overlapping black-and-white still photographs. Eerily, Pollock is cloned and replicated, patched-together and made to perform mechanistically (Figure 1). Looking at these images, I cannot help but think of what Noël Burch has called “the great Frankensteinian dream of the nineteenth century: the recreation of life, the symbolic triumph over death.” Karmel’s illustrations bolster the objective, empirical, and documentary aspects of Namuth’s film by presenting it in a format visually akin to the well-known chronophotographs of Eadweard Muybridge and Etienne-Jules Marey. A close examination, however, reveals that Karmel’s composite illustrations are, in fact, composites of Muybridge’s and Marey’s two different techniques for photographically capturing motion. While Muybridge used multiple cameras to take a series of photographs which he then presented separately, in chronological order (Figure 2), Marey exposed one photographic plate multiple times and attempted to show the temporal unfolding of an event within one continuous field (Figure 3). Karmel’s illustrations incorporate both modes; first, he breaks down Namuth’s film into a sequence of individual stills, and then re-assembles them to look as if they are occurring simultaneously. The end result is a Marey chronograph in which each sequential movement of the figure is still clearly demarcated, or a series of Muybridge chronographs within the space of one extended frame. As evidenced in these two images (Figures 2 and 3), the man at work and the highly skilled athlete were popular subjects for both Muybridge and Marey. Whereas Muybridge claimed that his chronophotographs were devoted to the general study of “animal locomotion,” Marey was more openly interested in proto-Taylorist notions involving the “human machine,” “the science of efficient movement” and the “physiology of work.” Thus, in making his digitally-enhanced illustrations look like Muybridge and Marey’s chronographs, Karmel recuperates, to use a Marxist term, the “use-value” of Pollock’s paintings by showing that they are the result not of
Figure 1. Murning from left to right: Jackson Pollock was a master at drawing a series of horizontal lines and vertical curves on the canvas. (Painting was lost.)

Film frame composition, from film by Hans Namuth (C) Cressida Digital Image, Courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art, New York)
Figure 3

Edward Judd, Memory Unfulfilled (Sensation), 1969-1990, gelatin silver print, 6 x 14 x 1/54 x 3/72 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
a random, meaningless activity, but rather a productive form of labor or highly skilled “athletic” performance—hence the first part of the title of Karmel’s essay, “Pollock at Work.”

But given the fact that Karmel’s first round of composites were created with images “captured” from a video transfer of the original film (technically, they are “chronovideographs”), Pollock’s painterly performance also takes on nefarious overtones. Video, the contemporary medium of surveillance par excellence, has superseded photography as the most credible form of evidence. What was once the film Pollock Painting, becomes, in Karmel’s hands, Pollock: Caught on Tape. Consequently, the Pollock persona that emerges from Karmel’s first round of digitally-enhanced illustrations is far from objective; in fact, it runs the entire gamut of popular stereotypes of the modern artist which have been with us since the nineteenth century—from secularized Christ-figure, to worker, to criminal. And although these stereotypes are far from mutually exclusive, for the purposes of our discussion here, I would like to pursue the idea of the modern artist as criminal. In the second half of his essay it becomes apparent that Karmel wants to present Pollock’s painting process as a certain kind of act; namely, as a crime against figurative painting. Thus, after establishing Pollock’s modus operandi, Karmel begins to search for the corpora delicti in Pollock’s Autumn Rhythm (Number 30, 1950). In so doing, Karmel takes literally what Rosalind Krauss once proposed as a theoretical possibility: that we approach a classic Pollock drip painting as the “scene of a crime.” For Karmel, Autumn Rhythm is nothing if not the end result of Pollock’s attempts to cover his tracks, that is, to efface the truth that his abstractions are in fact figurative. Karmel (the detective) is able to stay one step ahead of Pollock (the criminal) through his employment of a mode of detection (Adobe Photoshop) that Pollock was apparently unable to anticipate. Karmel’s essay contains all of the essential elements of a successful detective story (whose development, it is worth noting, parallels modern art’s own) as defined by R. Austin Freeman—Introduction to the Problem, Clues, Discovery, and Proof. At times, it even reads like a crime report. For example, at one point he plots out: “…in the following nine seconds, Pollock adds a series of lines describing the contours of a figure…moving right, Pollock begins a second figure…20 seconds suffice to complete his second figure…” It comes as no surprise that Karmel describes one of Pollock’s figures as “X”-shaped. For Karmel, “X” marks the spot, literally. A more apposite title for his essay might have read: Jack the Dripper: Case Closed. Perhaps the larger question that needs to be addressed is: what is the relationship between Karmel’s detective work, and his spectacular
use of Namuth’s photographs as evidence, and the recent entrance of crime photography and police pictures into the art museum?^{24}

Also, we might ask, is it possible that Karmel falsifies evidence in order to “get his man,” that is, to find figures? Can Karmel’s second round of composites be thought of as more than transparent illustrations? Are they texts in which truth is produced? Karmel’s boldest move, which seems to have been conceptually prefigured to some extent by John Baldessari’s *White Shape* (1984), is to excise Pollock from Namuth’s still photographs altogether (Figures 4 and 5). The idea of photographic objectivity, as Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have demonstrated, was born in the mid-nineteenth century out of the desire, if not moral imperative, to eliminate “subjectivity” through the abolition of “human intervention between nature and representation.”^{25} Karmel’s tacit goal is haunted by that of his predecessors: he removes Pollock in order to remove Namuth. That is to say, by extricating Pollock, Karmel thinks he can eliminate the *stylistic* biases inherent in Namuth’s photographs—what Rosalind Krauss has described as the “compositional meaning… built into them by means of camera-angle, framing, or the control of values through exposure or printing.”^{26} To this end, he directs the computer to flip upright and straighten out sections of *Autumn Rhythm* seen obliquely in Namuth’s original photographs—a process that he refers to as “perspective correction.” The ideological importance of this maneuver should not be overlooked. Pollock’s paintings, which are shown on the floor in Namuth’s photographs, are in Karmel’s illustrations moved to a fronto-parallel viewing position. Hence, Karmel’s “perspective correction” is also a perpetuation of modernist art history’s attempts to sublimate Pollock’s paintings. Moreover, it announces the very shift from *indexicality* to *iconicity.*^{27} Next, Karmel merges “corrected” sections of *Autumn Rhythm* together in an attempt to show the painting at successive stages of its development, just after each new figure has been added. This is equally noteworthy, for it transforms Pollock’s painting into a text that must be read from left to right, in two-dimensions, as a series of black lines on a white background. In Karmel’s hands, Namuth’s photographs become “Pollockgraphs” which automatically record the objective Pollock’s “true” intentions. However, Karmel unabashedly admits that his pieced-together, digitally-enhanced composites of *Autumn Rhythm* distort temporality, and consequently, do not “correspond exactly to the actual appearance of the painting at any one time.”^{28} Pollock, in other words, never saw his own painting as it appears in Karmel’s illustrations. To what then, we might ask, do Karmel’s illustrations “correspond?” The answer, of course: they correspond to a long-standing tradition of scientific attempts to inscribe the body as a legible text.
Figure 4. Jackson Pollock, the section of Autumn Rhythm visible in Hans Namuth's photograph of Pollock completing the original configuration at the left end of the painting, "flipped up" into the picture place by digital processing. (Composite Digital Image Courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art, New York)
Figure 5. Jackson Pollock, Autumn Rhythm in an intermediate state, after the completion of the configuration at the left end. (Still photography, Composite Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York)
For Karmel, preserving the time and space depicted in Namuth’s photographs is secondary to his goal of arresting Pollock’s figures before they are lost under skeins of paint. Like the early nineteenth century portrait photographer, Karmel labors to make his subjects (Pollock’s figures) sit still in front of the camera. Perhaps a more specific comparison can be made between Karmel’s and Francis Galton’s faith in photographic composites. At the end of the nineteenth century, Galton used photographic composites to visually support his pseudo-scientific theories about eugenics (inherited characteristics). For Galton, composite photography enabled the identification of criminal and biological “types.” Karmel also uses composite photography to isolate re-occurring figural “types;” he even goes so far as to claim that all of Pollock’s figures look alike—they share, to wit, a “family resemblance.” (This, one could say, is Karmel’s way of wrestling an empirical Pollock “style” out of Namuth’s still photographs. Style, along with the concepts of artistic “intention” and “oeuvre,” is essential for the continued institutionalization of Pollock.) In his essay, Karmel argues that Namuth’s “corpus as a whole” reveals more than his “individual images,” and downplays the inevitable blurring that occurs at the edges of his Autumn Rhythm composites. Needless to say, those drips of paint which are not constitutive of isolatable figures are considered unimportant. Similarly, in 1879 Galton claimed:

Composite pictures are … real generalizations, because they include the whole of the material under consideration. The blur of their outlines, which is never great in truly generic composites, except in unimportant details, measures the tendency of individuals to deviate from the central type.

But perhaps the most interesting connection between Karmel and Galton’s composites is the fact that in order to make their studies appear more objective, empirical, and scientific, they had to create photographs that look “artistic,” out of focus, Pictorialist even. This, in turn, leads to other questions specific to Karmel’s composites: If we acknowledge that they are works of art in their own right, shouldn’t more credit be given to Mary Lynne Williams and Bonnie Rimer, the graphic designers who created them for the exhibition catalog? Is not the MoMA’s exhibition a retrospective of their work, too?

By basing his entire reading of Pollock on digitally-enhanced black-and-white photographs, Karmel is actually practicing a variety of art history perfected in the late nineteenth century by the famous Italian patriot, critic and connoisseur, Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891). Although it is not widely known, Morelli used photographs of works of art to
elevate his brand of formalism to a kind of positivism—to what he called “Scientific Connoisseurship.” According to his most devoted disciple, Bernard Berenson:

Morelli was the first critic who made systematic use of photographs, and the overwhelming superiority of his work from the point of view of connoisseurship is so great that even his bitterest opponents have been obliged to adopt most of his conclusions.33

Photography may have helped Morelli make more accurate attributions, but he never seems to have realized that, as Joel Snyder and other scholars have demonstrated, a camera does not see as we really see, and a photograph is not a perfect verisimilitude of reality.34 There are three main differences that separate the photographic image, or “photographic seeing,” from the human experience of sight, especially when it comes to photographs of works of art. First, photographs flatten perceived objects, emphasize two-dimensionality and obliterate textures and other physical elements such as brush stroke or thickness of applied paint. Secondly, a photograph, once taken, fixes the distance and angle from which the thing photographed can be viewed. And finally, black-and-white photographs translate colors into tonalities, and in so doing, create linear outlines where there are none. In short, black-and-white photographs of paintings facilitate a type of formalism based predominantly on delineated forms, or in the terminology of Gestalt psychology “good” and “indivisible” bodies. It is not for nothing, therefore, that Morelli’s method focused on the examination of delineated body parts, which he then tried to connect back to the whole of an artist’s corpus, or “body” of work. Morelli, of course, has also been compared to a detective.35 He believed it was the connoisseur’s job to discover instances when the artist idiosyncratically betrayed himself and unintentionally left something behind. We might even go so far as to say that Morelli, who was also trained as a medical doctor, initiated a new epistemological paradigm at the end of the nineteenth century, a kind of forensic aesthetics that persists to this day and calls for ever more sophisticated modes of detection. Now, however, the art historian-cum-detective has been largely supplanted by the restorer/conservator. Not surprisingly, James Coddington, MoMA’s Chief Conservator, and Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Chief Conservator of The Menil Collection, Houston, were given center stage at the MoMA’s aforementioned “Recovering Pollock” symposium. When their X-ray photographs proved inconclusive, they were forced to rely on investigative methods similar to those of Paul Kirk, the forensic scientist who, in 1951, developed the first criteria for blood stain pattern analysis.36
In “Isochromatic Photography and Venetian Pictures,” Bernard Berenson, whose confidence in new technology rivals Karmel’s, muses on the archaic technology available to his predecessor:

Morelli, however, as a student, gave somewhat disproportionate attention to the study of drawings and of the Tuscan painters, interesting himself much less in the Venetian school. It could scarcely have been otherwise until three or four years ago. The old system of photography was, even at the hands of its best operators, incapable of rendering the values of colors—only fit, at best, to give an accurate notion of outline. Drawings consequently were photographed pretty satisfactorily by the old system, while paintings as a rule came out wretchedly. This was less true of the Tuscan because in their works the line is of much greater importance than the color.37

Berenson, of course, is right: as the black-and-white camera neglects, so does Morelli. But as Morelli neglects, we could add, so does Karmel. In both cases, the very limits of “photographic seeing” make possible their similar hermeneutic processes. But the last half of Berenson’s passage—where he suggests that the mechanical limitations of early photography also dictated which works of art Morelli chose to study, and conversely, that Morelli applied his method only where it would work—is of particular interest to us here. For it counters simplistic notions of technological determinism by reminding us that technology is not an autonomous entity that speeds forward, liberating truth in its wake, but rather is something called upon to help us find what we are already looking for. Once found, the once elusive object of our quest becomes, in turn, the “proof” which is used to validate the enlistment of technology in the first place. Karmel is not only guilty of applying his new technology only where it will work, in order to find only what he is already looking for, but also for consciously taking matters one step further. Digital technology enables Karmel to eliminate whatever gets in the way of him finding what he is looking for. Near the end of his essay he writes:

Here the power of computer software finds further uses: in digital comparison of the photographic composite and the completed picture, the computer can be directed to suppress all the features they have in common... Dark lines present in the canvas but not in the photograph appear as black.38

Karmel’s admission leaves us wondering, naturally: How much did Karmel “direct” the computer “to suppress” so that he might eventually see figures? Ultimately, this is not as important as the more fundamental question: Why must he see figures at all?

If we were to pose this question to a cognitive scientist or psycho-neurologist, he or she would invariably answer: resolving visual arrays
into figures is something that we all do naturally, it is part of our perceptual hardware. To take an oft-cited example, if we are shown a triangle missing the midsections of its sides, we will complete it in our minds. We instinctively repair fragments into wholes and search for continuous contours and closed curves. Our eyes prefer practically any closed form to a borderless scatter of points.39 But this, I am convinced, is only part of the answer. As I have tried to suggest in this paper, complete figures also enable “closed” narratives. Karmel needs to see figures so that he can tell the kind of “objective” stories that are necessary for the continued institutionalization of Pollock, and the perpetuation of MoMA’s version of modernist art history. More precisely stated, seeing linear figures enables Karmel to re-establish a bloodline running from Pollock back to European modernism, i.e., to the drawings of Miró and Picasso.40

Of course, arguing that Pollock’s work evolved from “drawing into painting” or connecting Pollock to the European avant-garde is nothing new. Relying on photographic evidence to do so, however, is. With this in mind we might end our discussion by considering the extent to which Karmel’s essay and illustrations are simply symptomatic of the drive informing MoMA’s exhibition as a whole. No less than three consecutive rooms of the retrospective were dedicated to Namuth’s films and photographs: the first, to the MoMA catalog containing the essay in question (Karmel’s digitally enhanced illustrations were literally part of the exhibition; the now familiar process of the exhibition-cum-book was fully inverted by MoMA, to the book-cum-exhibition); the second, to a continuous loop of Namuth’s film Pollock Painting; and the last, to an “authentic” reconstruction of Pollock’s studio in Springs, Long Island with Namuth’s still photographs inexplicably displayed on its walls (as if Pollock had looked at Namuth’s photographs of himself painting as he painted).41 To my mind, this unprecedented foregrounding of the evidentiary aspects of Namuth’s photographs belies MoMA’s overarching anxieties about the “death” of painting, the datedness of artistic modernity, and the status of the art museum in a “post-medium” age.42 Namuth’s films and photographs, which have long been accepted as part of the modernist canon, are now being used to justify that canon, if not the very existence of another nineteenth century invention—the modern art museum. Photography, which once threatened to bring about the museum’s “ruins”, is being transformed, with Adobe Photoshop’s help, into something that promises to preserve its future. The only question that remains to be answered is: ten years from now, will Pepe Karmel be remembered as the art historian who finally
proved that Jackson Pollock’s drip paintings are in fact figurative, or rather, as the first “digital connoisseur?”

NOTES

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12. For a related discussion of museums, modernity and religion see Jean Clair’s *Paradoxe sur le conservateur; procédé de, De la modernité conçue comme une religion* (Can, France: L’Échoppe, 1988).

13. Quoted in David Van Biema, “Science and the Shroud,” *Time* 151, no. 15 (April 20, 1998): 56. This idea has since sparked a controversy surrounding the possibility that the Shroud is not simply like a photograph, but *is* a photograph, or at least a kind of proto-photograph invented in the Middle Ages. For more on this see Mike Ware, “On Proto-photography and the Shroud of Turin,” *History of Photography* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 261–269.


15. For more on this see George Didi-Huberman, “The Index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain),” *October* 29 (Summer 1984): 63–81; especially his observation, “in the very place where figuration abolishes itself—as in the stain—it also generates itself.” (p. 67) See also, J. Ronald Green’s
provocative discussion of the “virtual index” in, “Maximizing Indeterminacy: On Collage in Writing, Film, Video, Installation and Other Artistic Realms (as well as the Shroud of Turin),” Afterimage (May/June 2000): 8–11.
23. Ibid., 124.
26. See Rosalind Krauss, “Reading Photographs as Text,” in Pollack Painting, ed., Barbara Rose (New York: Agridine, 1980) n. p. In her article, Krauss reiterates Jean Clay’s earlier claim that Namuth borrows pictorial strategies from the nineteenth century painter, Edouard Vuillard. For me, however, Namuth’s photographs and films are more closely related to the popular stylistic and thematic conventions of film noir, Paul Falkenberg, who collaborated with Namuth on the color film, also
29. Admittedly, this comparison can only be taken so far since Karmel’s method, which he describes as a “merging” of elements from discrete photographs, is not one of complete superimposition, as is Galton’s.


41. The attempt to authenticate the artist’s work through recourse to the reconstruction of his studio within the museum setting has become something of a trend. The Whitney Museum of American Art did the same thing for their Richard Pousette-Dart Retrospective, "The Studio Within," April 29–September 13, 1998.