

# CLASS 9 : GROUP DYNAMICS

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## SIX GROUPS, AND THE WOMEN IN THEM

### 1. Class title 1 (Morisot and Woolf)

#### 1z Female Impressionists

The inset picture shows **Virginia Woolf**, undoubtedly the most famous woman we will meet today. The larger one is by the Impressionist **Berthe Morisot** (1841–94), who I originally intended to feature also. But then I thought there were at least four women associated with the Impressionists: Morisot, **Mary Cassatt**, **Eva Gonzalès**, and **Marie Bracquemond**, and the less familiar artists might make the more interesting stories. In this case, Bracquemond.

### 2. Six Movements

So today we are talking about women as the minority members of artistic groups. I am going to look at six such groups: the **Impressionists**, the **Futurists**, the **Bloomsbury Group**, the **Dadaists**, the French composers' group known as **Les Six**, and the **Abstract Expressionists** in postwar New York. All of them—and this is important—either defined themselves voluntarily as a group, or accepted a definition proposed by an influential critic.

### 3. Title transformation

#### 4. Six Artists

But it is not the groups themselves that interest me, so much as the six individual women members shown here: **Marie Bracquemond** (1840–1916), **Benedetta Cappa** (1897–1977), **Virginia Woolf** (1882–1941), **Hannah Höch** (1889–1978), **Germaine Talleferre** (1892–1983), and **Lee Krasner** (1908–84). With the exception of Virginia Woolf, whose greatness towers above her group membership, I have chosen these five women because of their stories, which all involve the relationship between the individual woman and male members of the group.

#### 4z Female artists and significant male others

However, something else is going on. Each of the women in this class ended with a unique style of her own, but most did so by passing through the orbit of her husband or lover—Woolf and Talleferre being the exceptions. All emerged successfully on the other side, but in order to understand her journey we also have to look at the work of her partner. This is emphatically true of my first featured artist, **Marie Bracquemond**.

## A. MARIE BRACQUEMOND

5. Section title A (the image below)

6. Félix Bracquemond: *Terrace of the Villa Brancas* (etching, 1876)

What do you make of this picture? One woman drawing another, and perhaps about to paint her, in a lush summer setting with something of an Impressionist feel. The artist in the picture is Marie Bracquemond, her sister is her model, and the etching itself is the work of her husband, **Félix Bracquemond** (1833–1914). If it has an Impressionist feel, it is because Félix was friends with the Impressionists and showed some of his prints at their first exhibition in 1874. He was already well-known as a printmaker and ceramic designer, and even in many ways ahead of his time. Look at the striking informal asymmetry of this etching of *Notre Dame* or either of these two plates.

7. Félix Bracquemond: *Notre Dame* (etching, 1870)

8. Plates by Félix Bracquemond, 1872–80

I suspect that these designs are influenced by Japanese ceramics. For it was Félix Bracquemond who first discovered the Japanese prints used as scrap paper to wrap plates imported by the **Sèvres** porcelain factory where he worked, thus triggering the interest in Japanese art that was to bear fruit in the work of Van Gogh and Gauguin a decade or so later. Anyway, my point is that Félix was no slouch.

9. Marie Bracquemond: *Self Portrait* (1870) and *Pierre Bracquemond* (1878, both Rouen)

It is hard to speak of **Marie's** earlier development, since 90% of her work has essentially disappeared. These are two of the earliest I can find, portraits of herself and their son Pierre. Clearly, she was highly competent, though not ground-breaking. She had trained as an apprentice with the old master **Ingres**, but expressed dissatisfaction that “*he doubted the courage and perseverance of a woman in the field of painting. He would assign to them only the painting of flowers, of fruits, of still lifes, portraits and genre scenes.*” But she began having paintings accepted by the *Salon*, and got a job as an official copyist at the Louvre, and it was there that she and Félix met and fell in love. Félix taught her the technique of etching, but she felt the medium was too constricting, and produced only a few.

10. Marie Bracquemond: *Woman in the Garden* (1877) and *Afternoon Tea* (1880)

But then, in the later 1870s, something happened. Compare these two pictures of women in a garden. There are only three years between them, but her paint handling has become a whole lot freer and her color far richer. Exhibiting with the **Impressionists**, which had been little more than a gesture of collegial solidarity for him, planted a seed in her. Her mentors were now **Monet**, **Degas**, and **Renoir**. Here is another of about the same date.

11. Marie Bracquemond: *On the Terrace at Sèvres* (1880, Geneva)

Félix didn't like this at all. He may have been innovative in his compositions, but his forms were still clear and precise. Marie was throwing away the draughtsmanship that he prized so highly, in favor of brushwork and color. And this was not just a matter of paint on canvas; look what she did with ceramics.

## 12. Pottery by Félix and Marie Bracquemond

I find it almost shocking that Marie was using paint and color in a medium where you would never expect it; Félix was more true to the ceramic art form, and produced work that was more likely to sell. But Félix resented her friendship with the likes of Renoir and Gauguin. He refused to show her work to visitors and put her ambition down to “incurable vanity.” It is probably due to him that so few of her works remain. I would not call her a genius; she is probably less important to the history of Impressionism than either Berthe Morisot or Mary Cassatt, though perhaps on a level with Eva Gonzalès. But she had been embraced by the group and seduced by their style, and at her best could produce work that would stand up to any comparison, such as the beautiful smoky atmosphere of this dinner-table scene from 1887.

## 13. Marie Bracquemond: *Under the Lamp* (1887, p.c.)

# B. BENEDETTA CAPPÀ MARINETTI

## 14. Section title B: Benedetta Cappa

I’m sure you would not be surprised to learn that this painting is by a woman; it has all those traditional “feminine” qualities of grace, order, and calm. It is by an artist you have probably never heard of (at least I hadn’t): **Benedetta Cappa** (1897–1977). But before going any further, I want to expose you to some **cognitive dissonance**: a man declaiming a half-abstract sound poem, and a five more paintings by five more artists. Watch, then try to describe the experience.

## 15. Marinetti: *Zang Tumb Tumb* montage

## 16. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti reciting (1911)

What did you see and hear? Those paintings were all about noise and jangle, machines, speed, and war. The man declaiming was the Italian poet **Filippo Tommaso Marinetti** (1876–1944), the founder of the **Futurist Movement** in 1909, and author of the *Futurist Manifesto*. Two of its articles read as follows:

## 17. Marinetti: *Futurist Manifesto*, articles 9 and 10

## 18. Carlo Carrà: *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti* (1911)

Note the phrases “contempt for women” and “fight against feminism.” Pure misogyny! You could hardly imagine a less inviting invitation for a woman to join the group. And yet within the next decade, Marinetti would fall head over heels for two of them. The first was **Luisa, Marchesa Casati**. Marinetti got his friend, the painter **Carlo Carrà** (1883–1966) to do his portrait for her, including a fulsome dedication at bottom left: “*to the great Futurist, Marchesa Casati.*” What exactly made a Futurist is hard to see; perhaps it is that she was almost masculine in her quest for self-promotion. A socialite, and fabulously rich, she became a fashion icon, and an inspiration for artists and designers for decades to come; Marinetti was far from the only man to worship her, and she was not going to tie herself to him.

### 19. Portraits of Luisa, Marchesa Casati

But she is not the heroine of this particular segment. The First World War changed the situation considerably. You would think it was the culmination of all the Futurists had been extolling. But several of them lost their lives in it, and by war's end the more strident tone of the survivors had been muted. It was around this time that Marinetti met the young artist Benedetta Cappa (1897–1977), who was a student of the Futurist painter **Giacomo Balla** (1871–1958). His painting of her shows, I think, something of her personality.

### 20. Giacomo Balla: *Benedetta* (1924), with Benedetta: *Speedboat* (1923)

Benedetta was also a poet, and had published a collection called *Psychology of a Man*; she would go on to write two more books, all of which explore feminine versus masculine qualities. So Marinetti had found someone who could speak his language, but also counter his *machismo* with ideas of her own. He was soon calling her his “equal, and in no sense a disciple.” They were married in 1923. Benedetta’s *Speedboat* painting from that year shows that she could adopt the old Futurist style of lines of force, and its preoccupation with speed, but apply them to the gentler image of a boat on a sunlit sea.

### 21. Cappa: *Rhythms of Rocks and the Sea* (1936) and *Peaks of Solitude*

Benedetta might have been an outsider to the super-macho Futurist group, but her continued presence resulted in the transformation of the group from within. Futurist paintings in the interwar years were generally softer than before, and dropped the jagged aggressiveness of the prewar phase.

### 22. Benedetta Cappa Marinetti: Murals for the Post Office in Palermo (1933)

### 23. Benedetta Cappa Marinetti: *Vision of the Port* (1933)

Of course it is no surprise that the surviving Futurists saw a brilliant future in the Fascist regime of **Mussolini**, and this affinity brought Benedetta her most important commission yet, a set of murals in the new **Head Post Office in Palermo, Sicily**. They all deal with different forms of communication; the three shown here represent land, sea, and air. And here is an enlargement of the *Air* panel, together with her separate painting, *Vision of the Port*, that she elaborated into the *Sea* panel. Fascist commission though it might be, the vision here is one of energy and hope for a bright future; there is no militarism or even overt nationalism, and the colors of the right-hand panel are simply gorgeous. These compare very well to the many murals being created in this country for the WPA at around the same time.

## C. VIRGINIA WOOLF

### 24. Section title C: Virginia Woolf

The position of **Virginia Stephen** and her elder sister **Vanessa** in the **Bloomsbury Group** was different from that of any of the other women in this class. They were not guests in a group composed mostly of men, but in effect the hostesses of a group that met in their own house, or rather sequence of houses in

the Bloomsbury area of London, near the British Museum. The first manifestation of the group, the **Thursday Club**, was founded in 1905 by the sisters' brother **Thoby Stephen**, who gathered together a number of his friends from Cambridge to continue their intellectual exchanges.

## 25. Some members of the Bloomsbury Group

### 25z — the same, animated

I made a slide showing a few of other people associated with the group, but it was too complicated, so I have done an animated version, building it up section by section. There were no composers in the group, so the music is by Lord Berners, a contemporary and from a similar social class. including writers, painters, two art critics, a political scientist, and an economist. The Stephen sisters would have felt right at home, since their parents were both intellectuals, well connected to London literary and artistic life. Thoby died of typhoid at the age of 26, but the regular meetings continued under different guises, with the addition of occasional others such as **TS Eliot**, **EM Forster**, and **Katharine Mansfield**. Vanessa, who was a painter, married one of the art critics, **Clive Bell**. Virginia ultimately accepted the proposal of the political scientist **Leonard Woolf**, and together they set up a publishing enterprise, the **Hogarth Press**.

## 26. Paintings by Vanessa Bell

This is mainly about Woolf, but I do want to show a couple of things by her sister **Vanessa Bell** (1879–1961), plus her portrait of Virginia that I used as my section title. As you see, she paints in a light, luminous style, slightly abstracted and notably influenced by French **Post-Impressionists** such as **Gauguin**; after all it was another member of the group, **Roger Fry**, who coined this term.

## 27. Some books by Virginia Woolf

Most of Virginia Woolf's work was written after the Bloomsbury Group were not meeting so regularly, but *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* at least feature similar groups of creative people. I have presented excerpts from the novels in other courses, but given the emphasis in this course on women and gender identity in this course, I want to concentrate on two other works: the book-length essay ***A Room of One's Own*** (1929) and the highly experimental novel ***Orlando: a Biography*** (1928). And, for the same reasons as last week, I will present them mainly in videos. So first, the beginning and end of a brief online TED talk by **Iseult Gillespie**. She begins with a description of the essay; I've cut the section where she goes quickly through Woolf's other main books, then pick it up with her quick mention of *Orlando* and conclusion. I love the graphics!

### 28. Iseult Gillespie: "Why you should read Virginia Woolf"

### 29. Quotation from *A Room of One's Own*

### 29z — the same, read by Eileen Atkins

Woolf embarks on a highly imaginative survey of the history of literature to develop her thesis that a woman needs a room and money of her own in order to be able to write. Passages like this might almost be an executive summary of this entire course! I have put it together with a reading by **Eileen Atkins**; there are a few slight discrepancies.

### 30. William Stang: *Vita Sackville-West* (1918, Glasgow)

Was it Dorothy Parker who said that the Bloomsbury artists “lived in squares and loved in triangles”? The group included a fair share of homosexual and bisexual artists, and many of the others practiced open marriages. Virginia Woolf herself was bisexual; the great love of her life was a ten-year affair, and even longer friendship, with the aristocrat **Vita Sackville-West** (who was married to the politician and author **Harold Nicholson**). Her novel *Orlando; a Biography* was inspired by her love for Vita and her aristocratic heritage. She wrote in her diary: “*And instantly the usual exciting devices enter my mind: a biography beginning in the year 1500 and continuing to the present day, called Orlando: Vita; only with a change about from one sex to the other.*” I shall show a couple of excerpts from the 1992 film by Sally Potter starring Tilda Swinton. Here she is with a description of the story by **Nigel Nicholson**, Vita’s son.

### 31. Tilda Swinton as *Orlando* (1992)

As she was to do in *A Room of One’s Own*, Woolf turned to history for *Orlando*. The character starts off as a young page in the court of Queen Elizabeth (played in drag by **Quentin Crisp**). He survives into the reign of King Charles II, who sends him as Ambassador to Constantinople. There, he falls asleep for several days; he wakes to find he has been transformed into a woman. He will remain biologically female for the rest of the novel, but totally fluid in his amorous inclinations, loving now a man, now another woman. I have chosen scenes that illustrate Orlando’s gender fungibility, then two conversations, one with the Enlightenment writers Swift, Pope, and Addison, and one with an American, Shelmerdine (**Billy Zane**), whose views turn out to be as fluid as her own. I wonder if the conversation with the 18th-century writers is also a gentle satire of her fellow Bloomsburyites?

### 32. *Orlando*, montage

### 33. Class title 2

## D. HANNAH HÖCH

### 34. Section title D: Hannah Höch

**Hanna Höch** (1889–1978) was the only woman among the **Berlin Dada group** in the years immediately following World War One. Before I explain further, let’s discuss this picture: what is going on, what are its component parts, and what is its message?

### 35. Hannah Höch: *Indian Dancer* (1924)

What did you think? It is a **collage**, combining the head of film star **Renée Falconetti** (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*), a wooden mask from Cameroon that Höch had seen in an ethnographic museum, and a headdress of cutlery. A woman half hidden behind an unchanging mask, weighted by the commonplace objects of a domestic life. Though not strident, it is clearly a feminist work.

### 36. Raoul Hausmann: *Self Portrait*

**Dada**, which sprang up virtually simultaneously in Zurich, Berlin, Paris, and New York, was a medium expanding the boundaries of art to include non-art subjects and materials, including trash, and making use of the absurd as a form of discourse. Its practitioners proclaimed themselves anti-war, anti-government, anti-museums, and pretty much anti-women. Except that **Raoul Hausmann** (1886–1971), who founded the Berlin group in 1919, was already deep in a relationship with Höch. It was a stormy one, even becoming violent. She wanted him to leave his wife and marry her; he refused. Nonetheless, he wanted her to bear his children; she aborted them, twice.

### 37. Opening of the first Dada exhibition in Berlin

During the planning of the first group exhibition in Berlin in 1920, the other artists objected to the inclusion of Höch, but Hausmann insisted that she participate. Nonetheless, he wrote in his memoir that she “was never really a member of the club,” and another artist limited her importance to “the sandwiches, beer and coffee she managed somehow to conjure up.” But today we see Höch not as a mere hanger-on but an innovator in the quintessential Dada medium of **photomontage**. While Hausmann and Höch almost certainly invented the technique together, it was she who made the most of it, and continued working in the medium for her entire career.

### 38. Höch: *Cut with the Kitchen Knife... (1919, Berlin)*

Her entry for the exhibition was a large montage called *Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Epoch of Weimar Beer-Belly Culture in Germany*. It is obviously impossible to explain it from a single view, so I am turning to a rather good video in the SmartHistory series. The speakers are **Juliana Kreinik**, **Steven Zucker**, and **Beth Harris**.

### 39. Höch: *Cut with a Kitchen Knife...*, SmartHistory video

### 40. Höch: *High Finance (1919)*

Few Höch photomontages are as complex as this, but many of her works around 1919 or 1920 also have political themes, for example the *High Finance* shown here. At least one of the men has been identified, but as he is a mid-19th-century British chemist, **Sir John Herschel**, I am not sure that he has any relevance, apart from being an establishment figure, and elderly.

### 41. Höch: *The Beautiful Girl (1919)* and *The Bride (1930)*

A longer-recurring theme, lasting the rest of her life in fact, is the feminist one, examining the so-called *New Woman* of the new century, and asking whether she really was so different from her predecessors. What do you think is her message in these two? *The Lovely Girl* is virtually lost among automotive accessories, and her head is a light bulb. *The Bride (Pandora)*, has become tied to her husband, and encumbered with all sorts of new domestic duties. Höch herself moved to Holland after she had finally broken with Hausmann, and took up a three-year lesbian partnership. But when that ended, she moved back to Germany, and eventually married—but I suspect she did so on her own terms.

#### 42. Höch: *Grotesque* (1963)

Needless to say, Höch's work did not please the Nazis, who labeled it **degenerate**. However, she was not a Jew, so needed simply to keep her head down; she survived by moving to a small house in the country, and staying clear of exhibitions. After the war, though, she returned to her old media and themes, now with a sense of exuberance, even fun, and altogether brighter color.

## E. GERMAINE TAILLEFERRE

#### 43. Section title E: Germaine Tailleferre

**Germaine Tailleferre** (1892–1983) was a member of a group of French composers in the early twenties known as **Les Six**. Before going into any further detail, let's listen to four brief excerpts from a ballet they all wrote together in 1921: **Les mariés de la tour Eiffel** (The Wedding Party on the Eiffel Tower). The scenario, such as it is, is on the screen; I'll list the composers simply by number, 1 to 4.

#### 44. *Les Six: Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel, selections*

#### 45. Scene from *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*

Can anybody guess which one of those was a woman? I played it mainly to show the remarkable group identity; all four excerpts sound much the same. The four composers were, in order: **Georges Auric** (1899–1983), **Darius Milhaud** (1892–1974), **Francis Poulenc** (1899–1963), and finally Tailleferre. The ballet was actually a commission for Auric, who could not finish it in time, so roped in his friends.

#### 46. Jacques-Émile Blanche: *Le groupe des Six* (1922)

Although titled *The Group of Six*, this painting by **Jacques-Émile Blanche** (1861–1942) is deceptive. The woman front and center is not Tailleferre, but a pianist, Marcelle Meyer; Germaine Tailleferre is squatting on the ground behind her. One of the original Six, **Louis Durey**, is not included at all—but I can't remember ever hearing any of his music. Of the others, **Francis Poulenc** turned out to be a major name, **Arthur Honegger** and **Darius Milhaud** somewhat behind him, and **Georges Auric** somewhat behind them. Of the others, I have never heard of **Jean Wiener** (another pianist), but I have very much heard of the poet, artist, filmmaker, and relentless self-promoter **Jean Cocteau** (1889–1963). The absurdity of *Les mariés* was his idea, and we also met him in the second class as the librettist of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*.

#### 47. *Les Six* LP cover, with Cocteau drawing

Cocteau, who wanted to be the Monsieur Everything, was envious of the fame of the Cubists and Surrealists, and wanted an *avant-garde* group of his own. So he gathered together a number of composers a year before in a group called **Les nouveaux jeunes** (roughly "The New Generation") so that he could have his own group of his own to lead. Tailleferre was not included in his circle. She was included later, when the critic **Henri Collet** publicized the group was as *Les Six*, adding her name to



Cocteau's five. Reading between the lines of comments from Cocteau and others, I get the sense that she was included because she kept appearing on the same programs, but that she occupied a sort of in-between status: "Yes she is one of us... but not really." Here is a movement from her String Quartet of 1917–19. At the beginning and end, you hear the same chirpiness we got from the others of *Les Six*, but it gets a lot darker in between; the affinity I hear is to her teacher Maurice Ravel, rather than her brash young colleagues. I also like it that this quartet is played by an all-female group.

[48. Tailleferre: \*String Quartet\*, second movement](#)

[49. Summary of artists featured so far](#)

This is a chart of all five of the artists we have looked at so far, and their relationship to the group that did or did not accept them. Green represents the male members of each group; red the female interlopers. **Tailleferre** was there from the beginning, sort of, but she soon went her own way. **Marie Bracquemond** was accepted by her group, the **Impressionists**, but this caused a rift between her and her husband. **Benedetta Cappa** was introduced to the **Futurists** by *her* husband; his colleagues resisted at first, but she remained to transform the movement in later years. **Hannah Höch** was also forced upon the group, the **Berlin Dadaists**, by her lover, but she too was never fully accepted and went her own way. The exceptions are **Virginia Woolf**, who did not have to apply for entry to the **Bloomsbury Group**, as they were all family friends and met in her house, and **Lee Krasner**, whom we'll get to in a moment.

[50. \*L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud\*, album cover](#)

So what did Germaine Tailleferre write when she went her own way? Wikipedia lists just under 190 compositions. I would like to end with one work from 1958 that she didn't write, and one from 1978 that she did. Let me explain. In 1958, she got a major commission, to score the forthcoming movie *Elevator to the Scaffold* by the *Nouvelle Vague* director Louis Malle—a work that would come to be hailed as the foundation stone of *film noir*. But as she was working on the score, jazz trumpeter **Miles Davis** (1926–91) came to town and called upon Malle, who played him the rough cut of the film. Davis quickly called in favors from a few friends, and with the minimum written on paper, basically improvised the score for the entire film in a single night.

[51. Miles Davis: \*L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud\*, trailer](#)

I have no idea how Malle paid off Tailleferre, but the story interests me for two reasons. It is a sad footnote to the career of a woman who somehow always found herself marginalized. And it is absolutely impossible to imagine how her musical style could have worked for Malle's gritty film. So let me end with something that shows what she absolutely did best. In 1978, accepting a commission from the Ministry of Culture, she took a Piano Trio that she had written in the 1920s, and wrote a couple of new movements to replace the original middle movement. Here is the opening of the second of them; it is as beautiful a piece of writing as you could ever desire.

[52. Germaine Tailleferre: \*Piano Trio\*, third movement](#)

## F. LEE KRASNER

53. Section title F: Lee Krasner

54. Lee Krasner: *Vernal Yellow* (1980, Ludwig Museum, Cologne)

Humor me. Assume you know nothing about **Lee Krasner** (1908–84)—perhaps you don’t. You come upon this painting by an American woman in a gallery in Germany. You read that she was in her 70s when she painted it. Don’t you want to know more? I certainly would. I love the color and the vibrant energy. So let’s say I go to a website that gives me a survey of her work in a slide show, like this:

55. — all the works below

56. Lee Krasner: *Self Portrait* (1930, Jewish Museum, NYC)

57. Lee Krasner: *Still Life* (1938, NY Met)

58. Lee Krasner: *Untitled* (1942)

59. Lee Krasner: *Shattered Light* (1954, pc.)

60. Lee Krasner: *Palingenesis* (1971, pc.)

61. Lee Krasner: *Vernal Yellow* (1980, Ludwig Museum, Cologne)

62. — all the works above

Tell me what you see; I’ll go back on anything you ask me to. I personally love the charm of the second picture of the set, in which she is obviously playing with cubism, but doing it in her own way. After that, she gets increasingly preoccupied with the picture surface, until that work at the very end recaptures some of the balance between color and space. So what happened to her between the early 1940s and late 1960s? The reason I’m featuring her in this class, of course, is that she became part of the **Abstract Expressionist** movement.

63. Greenberg and Rosenberg

Not that Abstract Expressionism was a movement in the sense that Futurism or Dada were. So far from being a label created or at least embraced by the artists themselves, the term was the coinage of influential critics such as **Harold Rosenberg** and **Clement Greenberg**, each of whom had his own horses in the race, and a rather different vision of what was involved. But the art world is a small place; the artists knew or knew of each other, knew what others were doing, and cannot but have been affected by some spirit of competition.

64. Lee Krasner: *Shattered Light* (1954, pc.)

However, an even more important point of Lee Krasner’s story is her relationship with her damaged-genius husband **Jackson Pollock** (1912–56) and her gradual emergence from his shadow. This picture from 1954, a year before Pollock’s death, might almost be *by* her husband, except that it is executed with a brush rather than dripped paint. The reason that I started without mentioning Pollock is that I wanted to suggest that Krasner might have been a leading artist in her own right, without what I cannot help seeing as this marital detour.

### 65. Comparison between Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, and Helen Frankenthaler

There were actually three significant female painters among the Abstract Expressionist group. All three were married to artists, but their situations were largely different. **Helen Frankenthaler** (1928–2011) was one of the great innovators in the second phase of Abstract Expressionism; during her marriage to **Robert Motherwell**, their two careers continued in parallel without significant overlap, and both continued to enjoy fame after their divorce. Although **Elaine de Kooning** (1918–89) and **Lee Krasner** both continued their own painting throughout their marriages, they both acknowledged their husband as the greater genius and were active in supporting his work. The main difference is that whereas Elaine met **Willem de Kooning** when she was only 20 and in effect became his student, Lee Krasner was 26, four years older than Pollock, and already a somewhat established painter. But she committed herself to him entirely.

### 66. Ed Harris and Marcia Gay Harden in *Pollock* (2000)

All of which should explain why I am ending this class about women with a movie about a man: the 2000 biopic *Pollock*, starring and directed by **Ed Harris**, with which I want to end. I had hoped it would show more of Krasner as an artist, rather than just the long-suffering partner, but of course she is not the title character. So just remember Lee Krasner as a painter in her own right, as we watch **Marcia Gay Harden** meeting, loving, and ultimately losing her patience with her alcoholic genius of a husband.

67. Harris: *Pollock* (2000), montage of scenes (almost 12 minutes)

68. Class title 3 (Krasner in London)