

PRESS RELEASE**Milton Avery****Still Lifes 1927-1960**Wednesday 31st October – Saturday 24th November

Monday – Friday 10am-6pm

Saturday 10am-1.30pm



"White Pitcher" 1929 Oil on board 18" x 30"



"White Pitcher" 1946 Oil on canvas 32" x 27"

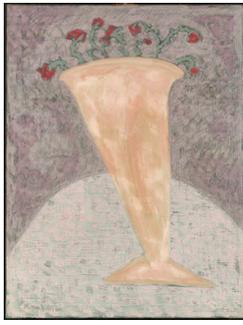
"Avery is first a great poet" Mark Rothko¹

Waddington Galleries is pleased to announce an exhibition of twenty-six still life paintings by Milton Avery that trace the artists development between 1927 and 1960.

Milton Avery was born in 1885 in Altmar, New York, the youngest of four children. Thirteen years later the family moved to Connecticut, where from 1904 Avery spent six years working as an assembler, lathe man and mechanic. Around this time he enrolled in a lettering class at the Connecticut League of Art Students, eventually studying life drawing that encouraged his commitment to becoming an artist. In 1924, whilst using a free studio space in Gloucester, Massachusetts, he met the painter Sally Michel who he followed to New York City and later married in 1926. In 1928 Avery was included in a show at the Opportunity Gallery along with Mark Rothko. It was the beginning of a friendship that over the next two decades saw Avery become a central figure among a group of American painters that included Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb and Barnett Newman.

In the exhibition a comparison between Avery's early work and his formative style can be made from *White Pitcher* of 1929 and *White Pitcher* of 1946. In the earlier painting the illusion of three-dimensional space is created by the contrast of light and dark, whereas in the later picture detail has been extracted and recognisable objects condensed into abstract shapes. The background or negative space begins to become part of a shallow picture plane of interconnecting silhouettes. The colours have been tonally heightened and harmonized through the addition of white paint, the flower petals given a lucid delineation by scratching through the pastel tone surface to reveal a dark green ground.

In the foreground of *White Pitcher 1926* a magazine bears the title *Creative Art*, a contemporary American publication that reproduced images of European modernism. Avery would later be seen as a bridge between European modernist painters such as Bonnard and Matisse and American abstract expressionism.



"Vase with Flowers" 1950 Oil on canvas 40" x 30"



"Vine" 1955 Oil on canvas 38" x 48"

In a similar subject painted in 1950 we can see how Avery has further developed the use of fields of colour. *Vase with Flowers* has become a bare motif, the vase shaped like an upturned trumpet, playing through pink, mauve, crimson and violet, the weight of cherry red flowers stooped on green stems.

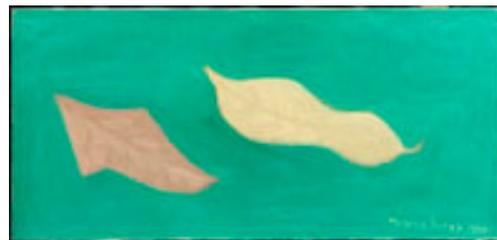
In 1949 Avery suffered a major heart attack and spent the summer convalescing at a friend's house in New York where he concentrated on small paintings of arrangements of Victorian objects such as *Still Life with Bottles 1949*. Physical limitations also led him to experiment with monoprints, a medium whose directness - like watercolour - he responded to with an assured spontaneity that would influence his mark-making in oil paint. This considered openness can be seen in *Vine 1955* which has attributes that show Avery glancing back at Matisse and glimpsing forward to Ellsworth Kelly, the frugality of the painted surface helping to reveal his refinement of image, at the periphery of being intangible whilst exposing the essence of its subject. His love of the natural world, quiet curiosity of translating its shapes and structures and delight in combining colour can be seen in the humble subject of *Two Leaves 1960*, a serene portrait of the ephemeral.

In 1962 the first book on Avery, written by Hilton Kramer, was published. Milton Avery died in New York in 1965. In 1982 the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, organised a major American touring retrospective exhibition with an accompanying monograph by Barbara Haskell.

Solo exhibitions include Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington DC (1944); The Baltimore Museum of Art (1952); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco (1980); Center for the Fine Arts, Miami (1987); National Gallery of Art, Washington DC (1990) and the Milwaukee Art Museum (2001-2002).



"Still life with bottles" 1949 Oil on board 18 x 24"



"Two Leaves" 1960 Oil on canvas 14 x 30"

¹Taken from a *Commemorative Essay* by Mark Rothko. Milton Avery by Barbara Haskell published by Whitney Museum of American Art

For further information or images please contact Leonie Holzwarth.