

Milton Avery: Home and Studio/A Sketchbook

A window into the working life of one of the foremost artists of the twentieth century



Image: Milton Avery's New York home and studio photographed by Gautier Deblonde, 2017
Courtesy The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation and Waqas Wajahat

Published by Victoria Miro, a special-edition, two-volume book includes a facsimile of an unpublished sketchbook completed in the South of France during Milton Avery's only visit to Europe in 1952, and a unique picture essay of the artist's New York home and studio by photographer Gautier Deblonde.

One of the foremost artists of the twentieth century, Milton Avery (1885–1965) is celebrated for his luminous paintings of landscapes, figures and still lifes, which balance distillation of form with free, vigorous brushwork and lyrical colour.

This two-volume book offers a window into Avery's working life. *Home and Studio* provides unique access to Avery's New York home, where he lived from 1959 until his death in January 1965. The apartment includes a studio where many of his important late works were completed. Avery's habit was to devote his summers to drawing and making watercolours – Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont were favourite locations – which would serve as the basis for the oil paintings he worked on during the winters back in New York.

Avery visited Europe only once, during the summer of 1952 when, accompanied by his wife Sally Michel Avery and their daughter March, he travelled to London, Paris and the French Riviera. *A Sketchbook* is a facsimile of a previously unpublished sketchbook that offers a revealing account of his experiences of Saint-Tropez, Saint-Rémy and Les Baux-de-Provence. It includes preparatory drawings for important works completed on his return, including *March on the Balcony*, 1952 (The Phillips Collection, Washington DC).

Milton Avery: Home and Studio/A Sketchbook is published by Victoria Miro, price £55.00. Available from the gallery and at victoria-miro.com.

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Illustrations: colour

Dimensions: 210mm x 130mm

Works by Milton Avery will feature in a gallery presentation devoted to portraiture at Art Basel Miami Beach (Booth H7), 7–10 December 2017.

About the artist

Born in Altmar, New York, in 1885, Milton Avery moved with his family to Hartford, Connecticut in 1905. After studying at the Connecticut League of Art Students, he worked in a succession of night jobs in order to paint during the daytime. Avery moved to New York in 1925 and in 1926 married Sally Michel, whose earnings as an illustrator enabled him to concentrate more fully on painting. His first exhibition in New York was in 1927, though it was not until 1935 that he had his first one-man exhibition, at the Valentine Gallery, New York. In 1944, his first solo museum exhibition opened at the Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, DC. In 1952, he visited Europe for the first time, travelling to London, Paris and the French Riviera. In the same year, a retrospective exhibition of Avery's work opened at the Baltimore Museum of Art. In 1960, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, presented a retrospective exhibition; a second retrospective was held at the Whitney in 1982. In 1962, *Milton Avery: Paintings 1930-1960* by Hilton Kramer, the first monograph on Avery, was published. Milton Avery died on 3 January 1965 in New York, aged 79.

Avery pursued an independent and steadfast course throughout his career. Always drawing imagery from the world around him, in particular the landscapes and people he loved, his art is as intimate and accessible as it is towering in its ambition and achievement. With his focus on simplified forms and use of colour as a primary means of expression, in the 1930s he profoundly influenced and won the devotion of fellow artists including future abstract expressionists Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb and Barnett Newman. Rothko in particular admired the 'gripping lyricism' of Avery's work. However, while seeking to express an idea in its simplest form, Avery never sought pure abstraction for himself. Above all, he is an artist who resists categorisation. 'I never have any rules to follow,' he stated in 1952, 'I follow myself.'

Avery's work is represented in museums and private collections worldwide, including: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Museum of Modern Art, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Tate, London; Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum of Art, Madrid, Spain; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.

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