

WADDINGTON CUSTOT

Press Release

March Avery: *In the Studio*

6 July – 17 September 2022

Private View: 5 July 2022, 6-8pm



"A little girl sees her mother cooking, she cooks. I saw my mother painting, so I painted...I think I was painting in utero."

Bringing together over fifty years of work, this new exhibition introduces UK audiences to the richly coloured, enchanting compositions of painter March Avery (b. 1932, New York, New York), in her first solo show outside of the United States.

With no formal training, March Avery has an instinctive approach to painting which is deeply personal. The artist, who will be 90 years old this year, regular paints six days a week, mostly from New York City, where she has kept a studio for several decades. Avery has followed a typical pattern of switching from oils to watercolours in the summer, her studio routine punctuated by trips outside of the city: to the Catskill Mountains, to Provence in southeastern France, or to Paestum, the ancient Greek city in modern day Italy. Brought together for this exhibition, Avery's paintings become documents chronicling a life lived, with family members, pets and summer houses reappearing as recurring characters. Her rich, illuminating use of colour renders everyday scenes bright and alluring, while simplified forms and flat, stained expanses combine to create transportative, atmospheric compositions.

Avery takes an exploratory, playful approach to colour and her paintings are a celebration of the transformational magic that happens when certain hues and shades meet one another. In *Young Forrest*, a powerful early canvas from 1970, the rich cobalt blue of a dense Cypress tree is rendered luminescent against a grey brown terrain and putty-coloured sky; *Hill Town*, 1975, picks out a hamlet of dark terracotta roofs in a mint green landscape. The more recent *Tall Pines II*, 2017 captures the water's edge at Cooper Lake in the Catskills, the clean lines of the trees cutting upwards ahead of an undulating horizon. Friends and family members are shown at different stages of life in Avery's work: typically introspective, they are, if not themselves sketching, often closely involved in their own personal pursuit: consumed by a shared board game, deep in conversation or absorbed by a book, each subject appears either unaware of our gaze or wholly comfortable in its glare.

Growing up in New York City, Avery was at the epicentre of artistic circles including some of the twentieth century's most celebrated painters; Mark Rothko, Adolf Gottlieb and Barnett Newman were close friends of her parents, the artists Milton Avery and Sally Michel, and they would visit frequently and holiday together. As a child in the 1930s, surrounded only by artists, March Avery considered no alternative to being a painter in her adult life, as she describes: "*I didn't know anybody who wasn't an artist. I thought everybody was an artist*".

As a child, March Avery would travel with her parents on their annual summer holidays, which typically stretched over two or three months, and were remarkably inexpensive: on one occasion the Averys rented an unfurnished house in Connecticut, which they furnished simply from a second hand man in town; on another, staying in a picturesque village in Quebec, the family subsisted on \$300 for three months. Every day was spent painting, or sitting for one another's compositions. March was a regular subject for her father's paintings, and she appears many times on the walls of the Royal Academy in summer this year where he has a retrospective just a few paces from Waddington Custot. Through this expansive exhibition London audiences encounter March Avery's exceptional achievements on the other side of the canvas.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Credit Line

March Avery: *In the Studio* is at Waddington Custot from 6 July – 17 September 2022 waddingtoncustot.com

About March Avery

March Avery (b. New York, NY, 1932) lives and works in New York City. Her work is represented in public collections including the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA; Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, ME; Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages, Stony Brook, NY; Newark Museum, Newark, NJ; New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN; Woodstock Artists Association & Museum, Woodstock, NY; among others.

About Waddington Custot

Waddington Custot was formed through the partnership of French art dealer Stephane Custot and long-time London art dealer Leslie Waddington, in 2010. Located in Cork Street since 1958, formerly as Waddington Galleries, the gallery has a rich heritage and an international reputation for quality and expertise in works by modern and contemporary masters, with a particular focus on monumental sculpture.

The gallery has cemented its reputation over several decades for high quality and well-researched exhibitions of significant artists operating in the mid-twentieth century and beyond. Today, Waddington Custot represents heavyweight contemporary and modern artists and their estates including Peter Blake, David Annesley, Patrick Caulfield, Ian Davenport, Fabienne Verdier, Barry Flanagan, Allan D'Arcangelo, Jedd Novatt, Pablo Reinoso and Robert Indiana. The inventory includes works by important modern European artists including Jean Dubuffet, Pierre Soulages, Joan Miró, Josef Albers, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Fausto Melotti, and Antoni Tàpies.

Gallery Contact

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Exhibition Listing Details

Exhibition: March Avery: *In the Studio*

Address: Waddington Custot, 11 Cork Street, London W1S 3LT

Dates: 6 July – 17 September 2022

Opening Times: Monday to Friday, 10am–6pm; Saturday: 11am–6pm

Admission: Free

Travel: Piccadilly, Green Park or Bond Street