

PRINCIPAL

Janet Lehr

Estab. 1972



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19TH and 20TH CENTURY MASTERS
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MILTON AVERY



Gray Mountain

Oil on Paper, 1962

23 x 35 inches

Signed and dated lower right Milton Avery 1962, and titled and dated on the verso

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Provenance:

Donald Morris Gallery, Michigan

Mr and Mrs William Kahn, Franklin Michigan

Ray Kerr, NY

Henry Schuman, NY

Vered Gallery, East Hampton and New York

Private collection

Exhibited:

Detroit Collects, Detroit Art Institute, Detroit MI

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NOTE:

MILTON AVERY

At Milton Avery's memorial service in 1965, Mark Rothko delivered the eulogy saying, *"Avery is first a great poet. His is the poetry of sheer loveliness of sheer beauty. Thanks to him this kind of poetry has been able to survive in our time. . . . There have been several others in our generation who have celebrated the world around them, but none with that inevitability where the poetry penetrated every pore of the canvas to the very last touch of the brush"*

("Commemorative Essay," (Mark Rothko Eulogy at Avery funeral 1965) Recorded in *Milton Avery* New York: Whitney Museum of American Art. 1982, p. 181).

Adolph Gottlieb wrote that Avery's last works, *"were as fresh as though he were a young painter" and yet displayed "the authority of an old master."*

Milton Avery moved to Connecticut in 1925. There he became increasingly aware of the French Modernists through work shown at the Hartford Atheneum and the Yale University Art Gallery.. Avery's conception of painting landscape owes much to the spirit of Cézanne. Summing up his approach in later years, Avery voiced the Modernists credo: "I do not use linear perspective, but achieve depth by tone and color – the function of one with another."

The importance of Cézanne was evident in Avery's work from at least the early 1940's when he became friendly with Marsden Hartley. Hartley's, deep admiration of Cézanne and of his own pilgrimage to Aix in the late 1920's resulted in at least one known view of 'Cezanne's mountain', Mt St Victoire 1927. Hartley found his own 'Mt St Victoire' in Mt. Katahdin, a mountain in Maine that he painted more than 18 times between 1939 and his death in 1943.

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These paintings are referred to as 'Hartley's Mt St Victoire paintings'. By 1940, Avery and Hartley were both showing at the Rosenberg Gallery, in New York City, where works by Cézanne and other French modernists were always offered. Intensifying Avery's relationship to Cézanne's work, was the Cézanne retrospective held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, in the spring of 1952. It was in 1952 that the Avery's decided to summer in Europe where they spent some time on a sketching trip to Aix-en-Provence, home of Mt. St. Victoire, where Avery, like so many artists before him, surrendered to the appeal of Cézanne's mountain.

André Masson (1896-1987) painted *The Red Lands and the Montagne Sainte Victoire* in 1948. Pablo Picasso, bought the Château de Vauvenargues in Aix-en-Provence, situated at the foot of the mountain, and installed a studio there between 1959 and 1962. When American dealer Sam Kootz paid him a visit, Picasso proudly proclaimed, "Cézanne painted these mountains and now I own them."

According to Sally Avery, their trip to the south of France resulted in Avery creating about twenty canvases. These were all based on two by four inch sketches and notes that were, once back in the studio, translated into various watercolors and gouaches. Some of these works on paper were then developed into oils, some on paper and others on canvas.(2) He continued to develop these sketches until the end of his career, evolving to more simplified forms and fields of pure tone built up by the handling of the paint as in *Grey Mountain 1962*, where Avery thinned the oil paints to a consistence of watercolor to create nuanced forms. *Grey Mountain* painted in 1962 is the ultimate *homage*, and the ultimate example of the refinement to which Avery took his paintings of Mont Sainte Victoire, and his reverent understanding of Cézanne.

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Avery's critical involvement with landscape has been described as a search, not unlike that of Cézanne, not only for pictorial unity but for the underlying unity of nature itself. In his landscapes...the unity of painting appears to coincide with a further unity: that of nature itself: hence as Michael Fried wrote, of Avery finding that special sense of space and mood.

Exhilaration of these pictures, in which a few loosely brushed interlocking shapes of flat color yield a conviction of solidity, permanence and order that is one of the triumphs of modern art. (3)

(1)Quotation from Ritter, "A Milton Avery Profile." P.28. See: Barbara Haskell, *Milton Avery* (New York. Whitney Museum of American Art: 1982), note 64, p. 185

(2)Telephone interview with Sally Avery July 28, 1989. Mrs Avery further commented that the Aix pictures were much admired and were immediately sold into private collections. Few, she added, have reappeared.

(3)Michael Fried, "Milton Avery," 100th Anniversary Exhibition of the Art Students League (New York, Kennedy Galleries: 1975). p. 44.

GRAY MOUNTAIN

Gray Mountain is Avery's homage to Cezanne and Mt St Victoire, the mountain which Cezanne painted numerous times. Avery and the other American modernist painters were drawn to Cezanne's subject matter as well as to his style while European modernist painters, the Cubists and the Fauves, were clearly more attracted to his still lifes and figural works. . Cezanne's large body of landscapes had the most direct and meaningful appeal for the Americans.

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The European modernists, saw the studio and the dining table and identified it with the history of painting. But the American native tradition was rooted in landscape painting. The opportunity to work outdoors, studying the manifestations and variations of nature, had always been irresistible to American artists. Although American modernists may not have identified consciously with this tradition, the landscape nonetheless became the most significant means for their exploration of avant-garde painting.

Cezanne's many interpretations of Mont Sainte Victoire found their counterparts in Hartley's Mont Katahdin, Marin's Maine coast, Demuth's Bermuda trees and Avery's Gray Mountain and other Arcadian works. Avery himself explored Mt Victoire in a half-dozen paintings and works on paper, Gray Mountain being the Avery's last and most adventurous exploration, using a memorable series of technical explorations with thinned oil paint.

Gray Mountain is both a technical and theoretical masterpiece. Technically, the loosely brushed on paint seems as if it were watercolor. Avery adapted his watercolor technique of feathering, to the medium of oil creating a sensational pictorial space. The extraordinary effect of the various application techniques Avery used in *Gray Mountain* creates wonderful 'color' fields in what is in fact a monochromatic painting. Rothko was quick to acknowledge Avery's influence on his work. It is as the last of the modernists and the first of the color field painters that Avery ultimately made his most significant contribution to the history of American Art in the twentieth century.

In 2010 the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona presented "American Modernism", an exhibition curated by the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., from their collection.

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The exhibition included, among others, George Bellows, John Singer Sargent, Arthur Davies, Marsden Hartley, Joseph Cornell, Thomas Hart Benton, John Sloan, Edward Hopper, Milton Avery, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Cy Twombly, Richard Diebenkorn, Martin Puryear, and Robert Mangold, underscoring Avery's decisive role in American Modernism.

Milton Avery's works are in the permanent collections of museums in America and Europe including: [Addison Gallery of American Art](#); [Akron Art Museum](#); [Allen Memorial Art Museum](#); [Arizona State University Art Museum](#); [Art Institute of Chicago](#); [Boca Raton Museum of Art](#); [Brooklyn Museum of Art](#); [Butler Institute of American Art](#); [Cantor Arts Center, Stanford](#); [Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh/Carnegie](#); [Chrysler Museum of Art](#); [Cincinnati Art Museum](#); [Colby College Museum of Art](#); [Crocker Art Museum](#); [Dallas Museum of Art](#); [Delaware Art Museum](#); [Denver Art Museum](#); [Flint Institute of Arts](#); [Frederick R Weisman Art Museum](#); [George Walter Vincent Smith Museum](#); [Herbert F Johnson Museum of Art](#); [High Museum of Art](#); [Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#); [Indianapolis Museum of Art](#); [Jack S Blanton Museum of Art](#); [Joslyn Art Museum](#); [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#); [Lowe Art Museum](#); [Lyman Allyn Museum](#); [Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum](#); [Mead Art Museum](#); [Memorial Art Gallery](#); [Memphis Brooks Museum of Art](#); [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#); [Michael C Carlos Museum](#); [Middlebury College Museum of Art](#); [Minneapolis Institute of Arts](#); [Mobile Museum of Art](#); [Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts](#); [Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute](#); [Museum of Fine Arts Boston](#); [National Gallery of Art](#); [Neuberger Museum of Art](#); [Newark Museum](#); [New Jersey State Museum](#); [New Orleans Museum of Art](#); [Oakland Museum of California](#); [Oklahoma City Museum of Art](#); [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#); [Phoenix Art Museum](#); [Portland Art Museum](#); [Princeton University Art Museum](#); [Rhode Island School of Design-Museum of Art](#); [Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis](#); [San Diego Museum of Art](#); [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art](#); [Santa Barbara Museum of Art](#); [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#); [The Art Museum,](#)

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The highest price for a painting by Milton Avery at public auction is \$5,653,000.

and the highest price for a work on paper, \$305,000.



[Full details](#)

1

Milton Avery

Title March and Sally outdoors
 Description signed Milton Avery and dated 1950 (lower left)oil on canvas30 b [More ...](#)
 Medium oil on canvas
 Year of Work 1950
 Size Height 30 in.; Width 40 in. / Height 76.2 cm.; Width 101.6 cm.
 Misc. Signed
 Sale of Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, May 21, 2014 [Lot 00012] American Art
 Estimate 2,000,000 - 3,000,000 USD
 Sold For 5,653,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)

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2

Milton Avery

Title Music Makers
Description signed Milton Avery and dated 1947 (lower left); also signed Milton Avery **More ...**
Medium oil on canvas
Year of Work 1947
Size Height 35.5 in.; Width 41.8 in. / Height 90.2 cm.; Width 106.1 cm.
Misc. Signed, Inscribed
Sale of Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, May 22, 2013 [Lot 00030]
American Art
Estimate 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 USD
Sold For 2,965,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



[Full details](#)

3

Milton Avery

Title The reader and the listener
Medium oil on canvas
Year of Work 1945
Size Height 30 in.; Width 40 in. / Height 76.2 cm.; Width 101.6 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, November 28, 2007 [Lot 00018]
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Estimate 700,000 - 900,000 USD
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4

Milton Avery

Title Sketching by the sea
Description Milton Avery (1885-1965) Sketching by the Sea signed and dated 'Milton/Avery/1944' ([More ...](#))
Medium oil on canvas
Year of Work 1944
Size Height 28 in.; Width 36 in. / Height 71.1 cm.; Width 91.4 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Christie's New York: Wednesday, May 20, 2009 [Lot 00010] Important American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture
Estimate 600,000 - 800,000 USD
Sold For 2,210,500 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



[Full details](#)

5

Milton Avery

Title Siesta
Description signed and dated 'Milton Avery 1946-47' (lower right) oil on canvas 30 x 40 in. (76 [More ...](#))
Medium oil on canvas
Year of Work 1946-1947
Size Height 30 in.; Width 40 in. / Height 76.2 cm.; Width 101.6 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Christie's New York: Thursday, May 22, 2014 [Lot 00058] American Art
Estimate 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 USD
Sold For 1,565,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)

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6

Milton Avery

Title Double wave
 Description signed Milton Avery and dated 1955 (lower left); also signed, titled, da **More ...**
 Medium oil on canvas
 Year of Work 1955
 Size Height 35.7 in.; Width 58 in. / Height 90.8 cm.; Width 147.3 cm.
 Misc. Signed, Inscribed
 Sale of Sotheby's New York: Thursday, November 20, 2014 [Lot 00033] American Art
 Estimate 1,500,000 - 2,500,000 USD
 Sold For 1,565,000 USD [Currency Converter](#)



[Full details](#)

7

Milton Avery

Title The Mandolin Player
 Description signed and dated 'Milton Avery 1946' (lower right) oil on canvas laid down on board **More ...**
 Medium oil on canvas laid on board
 Year of Work 1946
 Size Height 36 in.; Width 28 in. / Height 91.4 cm.; Width 71.1 cm.
 Misc. Signed
 Sale of Christie's New York: Thursday, May 22, 2014 [Lot 00011] American Art
 Estimate 800,000 - 1,200,000 USD
 Sold For 1,445,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)

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8

Milton Avery

Title March playing the cello
Description signed Milton Avery and dated 1943, I.I [More ...](#)
Medium oil on canvas
Year of Work 1943
Size Height 52 in.; Width 34 in. / Height 132 cm.; Width 86.4 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Sotheby's New York: Thursday, May 19, 2011 [Lot 00010]
American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture
Estimate 800,000 - 1,200,000 USD
Sold For 1,426,500 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



[Full details](#)

9

Milton Avery

Title The Orange Shirt
Description signed and dated 'Milton Avery 1950' (lower left)oil on canvas36 x 28 in.
(91.4 x [More ...](#)
Medium oil on canvas
Year of Work 1950
Size Height 36 in.; Width 28 in. / Height 91.4 cm.; Width 71.1 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Christie's New York: Wednesday, November 19, 2014 [Lot 00025]
American Art
Estimate 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 USD
Sold For 1,205,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)

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10



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Milton Avery

Title Card game
 Medium oil on canvas
 Year of Work 1944
 Size Height 32 in.; Width 44 in. / Height 81.2 cm.; Width 111.8 cm.
 Misc. Signed, Inscribed
 Sale of Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, November 28, 2007 [Lot 00096]
 American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture
 Estimate 600,000 - 800,000 USD
 Sold For 1,077,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)

The highest price for a work on paper by Milton Avery at public auction is \$305,000.



Milton Avery

Title Female Artists by Sea
 Description signed and dated 'Milton Avery/1944' (lower right)watercolor
 Medium watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper
 Year of Work 1944
 Size Height 22.5 in.; Width 31 in. / Height 57.2 cm.; Width 78.7 cm.
 Misc. Signed
 Sale of Christie's New York: Thursday, December 05, 2013 [Lot 0000000000]
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 Estimate 250,000 - 350,000 USD
 Sold For 305,000 USD PREMIUM

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Milton Avery

Title Visitor by the sea
Medium watercolor and pencil
Year of Work 1945
Size Height 22.8 in.; Width 31 in. / Height 57.8 cm.; Width 78.7 cm.
Misc. Signed, Inscribed
Sale of Christie's New York: Thursday, December 01, 2005 [Lot 0009] Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture
Estimate 100,000 - 150,000 USD
Sold For 284,800 USD PREMIUM

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Milton Avery

Title Ringed sun
Description signed Milton Avery and dated 1960 (center right); also signed Milto [More ...](#)
Medium oil on paper
Year of Work 1960
Size Height 17.5 in.; Width 23 in. / Height 44.5 cm.; Width 58.4 cm.
Misc. Signed, Inscribed
Sale of Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, May 21, 2014 [Lot 00009] American Art
Estimate 150,000 - 200,000 USD

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Sold For 269,000 USD
Premium [Currency Converter](#)



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4

Milton Avery

Title Southern Sea
Medium watercolor and gouache
Year of Work 1950
Size Height 22.5 in.; Width 31 in. / Height 57.2 cm.; Width 78.7 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, November 28, 2007 [Lot 00090]
American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture
Estimate 125,000 - 175,000 USD
Sold For 265,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



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5

Milton Avery

Title Beach sitters
Medium watercolor and pencil on paper laid on board
Year of Work 1944
Size Height 22.5 in.; Width 31 in. / Height 57.2 cm.; Width 78.7 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Christie's New York: Thursday, May 19, 2005 [Lot 00030]
Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture
Estimate 100,000 - 150,000 USD
Sold For 262,400 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



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6

Milton Avery

Title Orange hat
Description Milton Avery (1885-1965) Orange Hats signed and dated 'Milton/Avery/1944' (lower left [More ...](#))
Medium gouache and pencil on paper
Year of Work 1944
Size Height 22.5 in.; Width 30.7 in. / Height 57.2 cm.; Width 78.1 cm.

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Misc. Signed, Inscribed
Sale of Christie's New York: Wednesday, December 2, 2009 [Lot 00019]
Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture
Estimate 150,000 - 250,000 USD
Sold For 242,500 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



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7 **Milton Avery**
Title Loungers by the pale green sea
Medium watercolor and pencil on paper laid on paperboard
Year of Work 1945
Size Height 22.2 in.; Width 30.7 in. / Height 56.5 cm.; Width 78.1 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Christie's New York: Thursday, May 19, 2005 [Lot 00029]
Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture
Estimate 80,000 - 120,000 USD
Sold For 210,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



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8 **Milton Avery**
Title Bather
Description Milton Avery (1885-1965)Bathersigned and dated 'Milton Avery 1952' [More ...](#)
Medium gouache and watercolor
Year of Work 1952
Size Height 30.5 in.; Width 22.2 in. / Height 77.5 cm.; Width 56.5 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Christie's New York: Wednesday, May 21, 2008 [Lot 00001]
Important American Paintings, Drawings And Sculpture
Estimate 60,000 - 80,000 USD
Sold For 193,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)

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9

Milton Avery

Title Indoor sketcher
Medium gouache
Year of Work 1944
Size Height 31 in.; Width 22.5 in. / Height 78.7 cm.; Width 57.2 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Christie's New York: Thursday, May 25, 2006 [Lot 00128]
American Paintings
Estimate 100,000 - 150,000 USD
Sold For 186,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)



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10

Milton Avery

Title Small Figures in a Big Sea
Description signed Milton Avery and dated 1959 (lower left)oil on paper [More ...](#)
Medium oil on paper
Year of Work 1959
Size Height 20 in.; Width 26 in. / Height 50.8 cm.; Width 66 cm.
Misc. Signed
Sale of Sotheby's New York: Thursday, November 29, 2012 [Lot 00005]
American Art
Estimate 40,000 - 60,000 USD
Sold For 158,500 USD Premium [Currency Converter](#)