

## MILTON AVERY

### Selected Paintings

May 1 – June 13, 2015



*Garden Basket*, 1949. Oil on canvasboard, 24 x 17 ¾ inches.

**Milton Avery (1885-1965)** Milton Avery's unique brand of modernism blends simplified figures and natural forms with abstract tonal planes. Bridging the gap between realism and abstraction, he frequently used expressive, unnatural color in reduced, flattened, or distorted compositions, but never introduced elements that did not exist in the real world. His remarkable color sense and chromatic harmonies of striking subtlety and invention provided a model for succeeding generations of American colorists.

When he moved to New York City in 1925, Avery encountered a range of art not previously available to him while living in Hartford, Connecticut. He regularly went to museum and gallery exhibitions, where he absorbed the techniques of European modernism. In 1935, he began exhibiting with the prominent Valentine Gallery on 57th Street, which represented Henri Matisse and other leading European and American artists. Over the next seven years, his work displayed an increasing concern with abstraction and nuanced color.

In 1943, Avery had his first solo museum exhibition at the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington, DC. That same year, he joined the prestigious Paul Rosenberg Gallery in New York, which was associated with renowned members of the European avant-garde, including Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Ferdinand Leger, while also representing well-known American artists like Max Weber and Marsden Hartley. Two years later, with exhibitions of his work there and also at Durand-Ruel, another important gallery on 57th Street with origins in Paris, a critic wrote, "After remaining unnoticed for a good many years Milton Avery has of late become a sort of institution."

As Avery's focus on color and simplified shapes became increasingly intense in the 1950s, he continued to move towards denser, more subtly modulated areas of flattened color. By the end of the decade, in the wake of a reevaluation of Abstract Expressionism, his innovative use of abstract tonal planes and reductive shapes was recognized as a foundation of Color Field painting. A retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1960 was well received, and favorable articles appeared in several major publications, including Time magazine. Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb were among the many artists who acknowledged a profound debt to his work. After painting independently for forty years, Avery's achievements had finally established him as one of the leading painters of the twentieth century.

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DC MOORE GALLERY specializes in contemporary and twentieth-century art. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm. For more information, for photographs, or to arrange a viewing, please call 212-247-2111 or email Lily Zhou at [lzhou@dcmooregallery.com](mailto:lzhou@dcmooregallery.com).