



Milton Avery: The Late Paintings

By Milton Avery

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Milton Avery's late paintings, created between 1947 and 1963, stand at the nexus of figurative modernism and Abstract Expressionism. Frequently viewed as the last of the great American figurative painters, Avery, as this book argues, provides a key to understanding the artists of the second half of the American century. This volume accompanies the first exhibition of Avery's art since the popular 1982 retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art; it is the first book on Avery in over a decade. A 1958 essay by the seminal critic Clement Greenberg provides a valuable period context, while the new text by Robert Hobbs includes an insightful connection between Avery's painting and the lyrical modernism of Wallace Stevens's poetry, which will intrigue lovers of American poetry as well as American art. This book, and the exhibition that it accompanies, were organized by the American Federation of Arts.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Invitingly quirky and rich in subtle hues, the landscapes and other canvases of Milton Avery (1885-1965) made him America's closest approach to Matisse. Avery's 1982 retrospective drew crowds and rave reviews, but his reputation has fallen: Was he too pretty? Was he apolitical? *Milton Avery: The Late Paintings* aims to restore his prestige, with big, handsome plates of his work (87 images, 52 in color). Intelligent text by curator Robert Hobbs links Avery's oeuvre to 1950s trends, to Ober-critic Clement Greenberg and to the poet Wallace Stevens; Hobbs also reprints Greenberg's own essay on Avery. The corresponding exhibit arrives at the Milwaukee Art Museum in November, and then moves to West Palm Beach, Fla.

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From Library Journal

In 1982, a retrospective of Avery's paintings drew crowds and accolades, but in the following decades his reputation dimmed in the shadow of Abstract Expressionism. Hobbs (art history, Virginia Commonwealth Univ.) intelligently offers what is both the catalog of the first exhibition since 1982 (held at the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Norton Museum in Florida) and an examination of Avery's role in 20th-century art. The subtle hues and startling color combinations of these somewhat formal paintings are the basis of an interesting link between the artist and the lyricism of his contemporary, poet Wallace Stevens. Hobbs includes critic Clement Greenberg's 1958 essay on Avery, which serves to clarify the role the artist played in the development of a style that linked abstraction and representation. As a self-proclaimed "major reassessment," this exhibition catalog provides a newer, more extensive vision of the artist and a careful distinction among the four major periods of his work, with its emphasis upon the simplified forms of the late works (1947-63) and the effort to fuse realism with abstraction. The entire work is generous and gentle, much as Avery himself appeared to the world. An interesting addition to the study of the art of the last century. Paula Frosch, Metropolitan Museum of Art Lib., NY

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From the Publisher

Exhibition Schedule: Milwaukee Art Museum: Nov. 30, 2001-Jan. 27, 2002; Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach: Feb. 8-May 5, 2002

Users Review

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