

THE FAMILY AVERY

ADAA “THE ART SHOW”

FEBRUARY 26–MARCH 1, 2020

PARK AVENUE ARMORY, NEW YORK, BOOTH C10



Milton Avery [1885–1965]. *Dancing Trees*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 34 x 48 in. (86.4 x 121.9 cm)
© 2020 The Milton Avery Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Although the paintings of Sean Cavanaugh sometimes flirt with the photographic—so convincing is their illusionism—they are, for all their veracity, as abstract as the art of his forbears: his grandfather, Milton Avery, grandmother, Sally Michel, and mother, March Avery. One might say that the primary concern of the Avery family art enterprise, while individually arrived at, is the transformation of the raw data of the physical world into its abstract equivalents. This way of thinking about artmaking dates back at least to the time of Paul Cézanne: first the artist receives his or her impression of the motif (be it the landscape outside of Aix-en-Provence or the hills near Woodstock, New York); then, suspicious of the mere aping of reality, the artist searches for a visual language—constructed of line, shape, and color—that can translate the original sensation into a commensurately intense feeling for the spectator. For the Averys, this process has always been nearly somatic, something like breathing in and out, even if the means of bridging the gap between apprehending the world and turning it into art has changed with the times. Milton, for instance, began as a plein-air painter, who, along with his gifted wife Sally, made studies—usually in pencil or watercolor—that later served as reference points for oil paintings; their daughter March followed suit, but in addition to on-site drawings and watercolors, she employs photographs as memory-aids in the making of her work; her son Sean, in turn, bases his oil paintings on the photographs he takes as his starting point, whether in Hawaii, Montana, or the south of France. What binds three generations of Avery artists, irrespective of medium or working method, is their bedrock belief in art as modernist alchemy, the miraculous turning of subjective experience into objective poetic fact.

—Kenneth E. Silver



YARES ART
yaresart.com