

MARO GORKY

FAMILIAR MOTIVES

Exhibition Dates: 12th March – 17th April 2015

“The spectator sees my formal portraits as figures that come forward from the surface of the canvas. With landscape, the opposite happens. The spectator steps behind the membrane of the painting to walk along its imaginary paths.”

Maro Gorky 2015



Maro Gorky's forthcoming exhibition will show a select series of recently painted works, both portrait and landscape paintings. Over the past thirty years, Gorky and her husband Matthew Spender, son of Stephen Spender, have rebuilt and resided in what was once an old ruin of a farmhouse, in the Tuscan village of San Sano in Avane. This house and the surrounding garden have become as much a creative endeavor as Gorky's painting. One can distinctly see the impression that the two artists have left on the landscape; upon approach to the farmhouse peacocks wander through a profusion of plants, morning glory clammers over the terraces, and the life-size marble and terracotta sculptures by Spender populate the olive groves. Inside the house, Gorky has frescoed the walls, wardrobe panels and even bathroom tiles with animals, plants and patterns as a lasting imprint of her brush.

Describing the setting of the Tuscan landscape as the inspiration for Gorky's painting would not accurately convey the deep-seated impact that the surroundings have had on her artwork. Rather, it is apparent that Gorky, Spender, the farmhouse and the natural surroundings, through maintaining a constant retrospective dialogue with one another over the years, have grown to become inextricably linked; a feeling that is evocatively manifested in Gorky's

paintings for this exhibition. From the early romanticized landscapes of undulating Tuscan hills, they move towards an abstracted discourse on colour and pattern, whilst retaining the vibrancy and warmth of the rural Italian environment.

Alongside the abstracted landscape paintings that Gorky is well known for, will be a series of recent portraits. Gorky paints portraits of people she has a relationship with, those in her family – her daughters and their children. These portraits retain Gorky’s familiar use of line, stained-glass colour and abstracted form, yet go beyond this to capture the personality of her sitters, who come forward to the surface of the canvas.



“There is immense value in painting. It is mystical and magical. I get a funny tingling feeling in the palm of my hands when I look at raw materials.” Gorky 2013

Maro Gorky was born in New York in 1943, the eldest daughter of the Armenian / American painter Arshile Gorky, one of the originators of Abstract Expressionism. Growing up surrounded by the heroes of Modernism, her first art tutors – before she had properly learnt to walk – were Andre Breton and Roberto Matta. Her father’s suicide when she was five years old, and the subsequent recognition of his epic legacy for American Art, set Maro Gorky on an artistic voyage that seemed both inborn and eternally restless.

‘Ms. Gorky’s landscapes are very satisfying to look at. Her stained-glass colour, crisp shapes and compositional majesty instil her syntheses of previous art with the force of an individual intently focused personality. You can’t ask much more of art.’ - ROBERTA SMITH, New York Times, 2006

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