

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
980 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK NY 10021
GALLERY HOURS:

T. 744.2313
F. 772.7962
Tue - Sat 10:00am - 6:00pm

ARSHILE GORKY: *PORTRAITS*

Wednesday, March 20 – Saturday, April 27, 2002

“Vartoosh dear, my Armenian portraits you understand well, I am sure. For eyes are the soul of portraiture, the prime communication between artist and those who view his work.”

Arshile Gorky to his sister Vartoosh, October 11, 1946

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce the first exhibition devoted to the portraits of Arshile Gorky. One of the most influential of a generation of artists that changed the history of American Art, Gorky is most well known for his work that fused American Abstraction with European Surrealism. This exhibition will present a much more personal side of the artist's oeuvre: paintings and drawings of friends, family and the artist himself.

While there is not one style that encapsulates all of the works, they incorporate the influences of the masters of Fayum, Ingres, Cézanne and Picasso. However, most evident in all of the paintings is an archetypal portrait type, more specifically an idealized Armenian figure. Many of these paintings were not originally intended for public exhibition and they were painted and repainted over a series of years. In this sense, they served as mementos, not only of the present but also of Gorky's lost childhood and homeland. This is most strikingly realized in the series of works devoted to a photograph of the artist and his mother taken in 1912. It is a subject that Gorky returned to frequently, producing many drawings and two stunning paintings that will be on loan to the exhibition from the National Gallery of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition with an essay by David Anfam and an introduction by Matthew Spender.

For more information please contact the gallery.

980 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK NY 10021 T. 212.744.2313 F. 212.772.7962

INFO@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM