



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Oral history interview with Sally Avery

Funding for this interview was provided by the Mark Rothko Foundation.  
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from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Sally Avery
<b>Date:</b>	1982 February 19
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.avery82
<b>Creator:</b>	Avery, Sally (Interviewee) Wolf, Tom (Interviewer)
<b>Extent:</b>	66 Pages (Transcript)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Digital Content: Oral history interview with Sally Avery, 1982 February 19, Transcript</a> <a href="#">Audio: Oral history interview with Sally Avery, 1982 February 19, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

This interview was conducted as part of the Archives of American Art's Mark Rothko and his Times oral history project, with funding provided by the Mark Rothko Foundation.

### Acquisition Information

Others interviewed on the project (by various interviewers) include: Sonia Allen, Ben-Zion, Bernard Braddon, Ernest Briggs, Rhys Caparn, Elaine de Kooning, Herbert Ferber, Esther Gottlieb, Juliette Hays, Sidney Janis, Buffie Johnson, Jacob Kainen, Louis Kaufman, Jack Kufeld, Katharine Kuh, Stanley Kunitz, Joseph Liss, Dorothy Miller, Betty Parsons, Wallace Putnam, Rebecca Reis, Maurice Roth, Sidney Schectman, Aaron Siskind, Joseph Solman, Hedda Sterne, Jack Tworokov, Esteban Vicente and Ed Weinstein. Each has been cataloged separately.

### Available Formats

Transcript available on line.

### Restrictions

Transcript available on the Archives of American Art website.

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## Biographical / Historical

Sally Michel Avery (1902-2003) was a painter and widow of Milton Avery. Sally Avery lived in New York and Long Island.

## Scope and Contents

An interview of Sally Avery conducted 1982 February 19, by Tom Wolf, for the Archives of American Art's Mark Rothko and His Times oral history project.

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## Scope and Contents

Avery discusses the friendship between Mark Rothko and the Averys, noting especially Rothko's admiration for Milton Avery's work. She describes Avery's influence on Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb, recalling several summers spent together and their close association in New York. She mentions Rothko's and Avery's involvement with the Opportunity Gallery, and the activities of the Club and the Ten. Avery speaks of Rothko's "myth paintings" and the origination of the idea with Barnett Newman and Adolph Gottlieb. The second half of the interview focuses on Milton Avery and his manner of working. She mentions an Avery portrait of Marsden Hartley and remembers his visits with them.

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## General

Originally recorded on 2 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 2 hr., 32 min.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Abstract expressionism
- Women artists
- Women painters

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Avery, Milton, 1885-1965
- Gottlieb, Adolph, 1903-1974
- Hartley, Marsden, 1877-1943
- Mark Rothko and His Times Oral History Project
- Newman, Barnett, 1905-1970
- Opportunity Club (New York, N.Y.)
- Rothko, Mark, 1903-1970

### Occupations:

- Painters -- New York (State) -- New York