



BOBBIE OLIVER

499 PARK AVENUE

2024 Exhibition

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Based in the western Catskills and New York City, artist Bobbie Oliver created the paintings in this exhibition at her upstate New York studio in the depths of winter 2019. Referencing the physicality and geographic place of their fabrication, these paintings use a palette of blues and greens, reflecting the rushing rivers and lush coniferous forests around her.

Oliver's exploration of abstraction focuses keenly on the tactility of paint, physically manipulating it through pouring and blotting its excesses away. She alters the density of the paint by diluting it in varying degrees and pouring it on the surface with dazzling effects. With this focus on the surface, Oliver challenges gravity in the way she orients drips and movements of the paint. In this process, the artist is closely attuned to how the paint sits on the surface of the pictorial plane and sinks into the canvas.

These large-scale works draw inspiration from disparate movements and artists, including and not limited to Chinese landscape painting, Japanese calligraphy, Italian painter Giorgio Morandi, Canadian-American painter Philip Guston, and Roman frescoes. Much like her influences, Oliver's work is concerned with the direct and gestural relationship established between the material and the artist's hand. In this way, the presence of gesture is important as it allows one to re-examine and look for relationships in accidents.

The specter of her hand invites audiences to make sense of the emotion and vulnerability in its making on their own terms. Oliver's artistic practice is loose, without a preconceived plan for the painting's resolution, instead inviting improvisation, often painting on multiple canvases concurrently and pressing them up among each other. They are resolved by the delicate richness in relationships, rhythms and densities of dichotomies and variances.



Untitled (Teal), 2019, acrylic on canvas, 78 x 66 inches



Triptych (for SM), 2012, acrylic on canvas, 87 x 99 inches (detail)

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Oliver's practice is also informed by her work with other artists as both student and teacher. In the late 1970s and 80s, she worked as an assistant to the sculptor Isamu Noguchi in his Long Island City studio. Noguchi's quietude, simple reverence for nature, and exploration of materiality inspired and reinforced her simple connection to nature. She also worked for the minimalist composer La Monte Young, deepening the integrity and simplicity of her presentations. Oliver went on to teach painting, drawing and contemporary criticism at the Rhode Island School of Design for over 20 years, chairing the Painting Department in her last years with the university.

A vehement abstractionist, her monochromatic paintings draw immediate comparison to the color field movement pioneered by artists of the New York School in the 1940s and 50s, inviting contemplation of a singular hue. Together, the variances of blue, green, and turquoise simulate a natural world of our wildest fantasies, with skies and waterways of increasing intensity and depth. The paintings impart the feelings of the changing climate and weather in the waterlike solvent apparent in the movement of the paint. Unlike the landscape of her upstate home and studio, the fields give way to dreams and aspirations for a better and kinder planet.

Born in Canada, Bobbie Oliver lived in London, England for ten years in her twenties and moved to New York in the 1970s. She's had over twenty solo shows and numerous group shows in her career. Her work is represented by Olga Korper Gallery in Toronto and by High Noon Gallery in New York. Oliver is the recipient of many distinguished grants, including the Canada Council Grant, Ontario Arts Council, the New York State Council for the Arts and the Pollock Krasner Award. She has been awarded residencies at the Edward Albee Foundation twice in Montauk and Civitella Ranieri Foundation in Umbria, Italy.

Sally Wright



Untitled (Lime Green), 2019, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 72 inches

Cover: *Untitled (Blue)*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 78 x 66 inches (detail)

499 PARK AVENUE / The Lobby Gallery

Park Avenue and 59th Street, New York, NY 10022

Gallery Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

499 Park Avenue, through its exhibition program, actively contributes to the cultural community as an expression of ongoing commitment to excellence in the visual arts and architecture.

We thank the artist Bobbie Oliver for the loan of these paintings.

ORGANIZATION Jay Grimm, Jay Grimm Art Advisory

ESSAY Sally Wright

DESIGN Kaitlyn Ward

ABOUT SALLY WRIGHT

As Executive Director of Catskill Art Space, Sally Wright oversees programs, operations and fundraising. Previously, Sally managed special events and corporate support at Dia Art Foundation for a number of years. She is on the board of Independent Curators International and studied Anthropology at Bates College. Sally lives with her husband and two children in Livingston Manor and New York City.

ABOUT JAY GRIMM ART ADVISORY

Jay Grimm is an independent arts professional with more than 30 years experience in the New York gallery world. For more information about this exhibition program, please contact jay@jaygrimm.com