

HAUSER & WIRTH

Dispatulo



Press Release

Online Exhibition

## Philip Guston. What Endures

[hauserwirth.com](http://hauserwirth.com)

Live date: Thursday 30 July 2020

Beginning 30 July, Hauser & Wirth will present 'Philip Guston. What Endures,' an online exhibition that responds directly to our present moment of overwhelming uncertainty by reflecting upon pain, endurance, and, ultimately, hope for the future, through the work of Philip Guston. Featuring works selected by Musa Mayer, the artist's daughter and President of The Guston Foundation, the exhibition includes thirteen important paintings made between 1971 and 1976, a time of social and political turmoil in the United States with many parallels to the current state of crisis in America and the world at large.

It was during this period of immense cultural unrest and critical rejection of his new work that Guston, guided solely by his own intuition and determination, pushed forward and committed to creative reinvention, refusing to be defined by adversity. The paintings that came out of this challenging time, including those on view in this presentation, are considered some of the most important works of the 20th century. They bear witness to an artist at the height of his powers, acutely responsive to his world.

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**‘There is nothing to do now, but paint my life: my dreams, surroundings, predicament, desperation, Musa—love, need. Keep destroying any attempt to paint pictures, or think about art.’**

**– Philip Guston**



Comprised of three virtual viewing rooms that together create a powerful narrative arc, ‘What Endures’ is a meditation upon the past, present, and the dream of a better future. The exhibition ultimately testifies to the transformative power of art and its ability to uncover the universal truth: love.

In the first section, titled *The Solace of the Past*, works on view find Guston exploring relics, ruins, and the timelessness of art as sources of inspiration in the present day. His smaller paintings of Roman ruins and gardens from 1971, and the larger ‘Relic’ (1974), are steeped in nostalgia and a longing for continuity. As Musa Mayer writes, ‘In these fragments, what endures from an earlier time is revealed.’

The exhibition continues with *The Rising Tide*, featuring a series of paintings from 1974 to 1975 that share a common sense of foreboding and encroachment as the sadness of the world threatens to engulf the artist’s solitary life in his studio. In ‘Afloat’ (1974), the younger heads of Guston and his wife Musa are half-drowned in a rising red sea. In ‘Head-Legs-Sea’ (1975), Musa’s head, still sunken, floats beside upturned legs and shoes. In ‘Lower Level’ (1975), a solitary figure stands witness as a group of legs are sunk in a pit or a mass grave. A red rain suggests blood. The discarded legs of these two works are clear precursors to the potent leg paintings of 1976 that recall the Holocaust.

In ‘Four Heads’ (1975), the artist emerges from a state of dread into another symbolic realm, where the marriage of creative minds becomes his subject. The red tide now resembles bedclothes. A painting hangs in the foreground, and the rightmost Musa-head suggests a book, perhaps a reference to her poetry.

The third and final section of the exhibition, *Deliverance*, is comprised of a single remarkable painting completed by Guston in 1976. In the transcendent ‘Both,’ (1976), the transformation is complete. Two heads of Musa rise from the horizon. The youthful Musa has yellow hair and upturned eyes, while the gray-haired Musa is half sunk into the blue sea, her brow furrowed. The storm appears to have ended, and the sea and sky are a peaceful blue. In a note found in his desk, dated September 28, 1972, Guston wrote: ‘There is nothing to do now, but paint my life: my dreams, surroundings, predicament, desperation, Musa—love, need. Keep destroying any attempt to paint pictures, or think about art.’

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As Mayer has written, 'In these strange, evocative, yet intensely personal images, the artist uncovers what is universal. In uncertain times, in the midst of overwhelming circumstance, it is love that endures.'

'Philip Guston. What Endures' is complemented by previously unseen filmed interviews with the artist and archival imagery from his studio.

### Catalogue Raisonné and Forthcoming Exhibitions

The exhibition follows the 26 June 2020 launch of The Guston Foundation website, [philipguston.org](http://philipguston.org), which includes a catalogue raisonné archiving all works through the artist's five-decade career. This extensively illustrated resource —intended for scholars and the general public alike — provides an in-depth look at the life and work of Philip Guston. The creation of the website and catalogue raisonné has been a seven-year project of The Guston Foundation, which was founded in 2013 by Musa Mayer.

In 2021, the first major retrospective exhibition in a generation on Guston's art and legacy, 'Philip Guston Now,' will debut at Tate Modern, London in February 2021 with subsequent presentations at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. An accompanying catalogue, also titled 'Philip Guston Now,' includes a curatorial essay by the National Gallery of Art's Harry Cooper, texts by Mark Godfrey, Alison de Lima Greene, Kate Nesin, and contributions by ten contemporary artists on Guston's ongoing influence. The catalogue is published by the National Gallery of Art and distributed by D.A.P.

### COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund

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Under the umbrella of Hauser & Wirth's new global philanthropic and charitable initiative #artforbetter, we are donating 10% of gross profits from sales of all works in the online exhibitions to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization.

To learn more about the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO please visit:

<https://covid19responsefund.org/>

#artforbetter

For additional information, please contact:

Irene Kopitov, Hauser & Wirth, [irenekopitov@hauserwirth.com](mailto:irenekopitov@hauserwirth.com), +16467401887 (USA)

Chloe Kinsman, Hauser & Wirth, [chloe@hauserwirth.com](mailto:chloe@hauserwirth.com), +447780904011 (Europe)

Andrea Schwan, Andrea Schwan Inc., [info@andreaschwan.com](mailto:info@andreaschwan.com), +1 917 371 5023 (USA)

Matthew Brown, Sutton, +447715 901047, [Matthew@suttoncomms.com](mailto:Matthew@suttoncomms.com) (Europe)

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Philip Guston  
Both  
1976  
Oil on canvas  
198.1 x 294.6 cm / 78 x 116 in  
Photo: Keldon Polacco

Philip Guston  
Untitled  
1971  
Oil on paper mounted on panel  
74.3 x 101.6 cm / 29 1/4 x 40 in  
Photo: Thomas Barratt

Philip Guston  
Lower Level  
1975  
Oil on canvas  
188 x 250.2 cm / 74 x 98 1/2 in  
Photo: Genevieve Hanson