



Gorky, ca. 1940  
Photograph: Gjon Mili

[Arshile Gorky Foundation](#)

[Gorky at the National Gallery of Art](#)

[Gorky at MoMA](#)

In 1995, *Arshile Gorky: The Breakthrough Years* was on display at the [National Gallery of Art](#), the [Buffalo AKG Art Gallery](#) and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

*Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective* was the first major retrospective of the artist's work since 1981. With a wide selection of paintings, drawings, and sculpture spanning Gorky's career, the exhibition was organized by the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#) and traveled to the [Tate Modern](#) and the [Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles](#) in 2009-2010.

The Arshile Gorky Foundation produced the documentary *Without Gorky* in 2011. The film explores the artist's life through the eyes of Agnes "Mougouch" Gorky (his wife), Maro and Natasha Gorky (his daughters), and Cosima Spender (his granddaughter, the filmmaker). Watch on [YouTube](#) and read a [review in Hyperallergic](#) by Hrag Vartanian, "In *Without Gorky*, the Artist's Family Opens Up About Their Pain."

The 2019 exhibition [Arshile Gorky: 1904-1948](#) at Ca'Pesaro International Gallery of Modern Art in Venice was the first display of Gorky's work in Italy. The installation was accompanied by the first screening of the short documentary [The Eye-Spring](#), directed by Gorky's granddaughter, Cosima Spender.

[Watch a discussion](#) between Saskia Spender (President of the Arshile Gorky Foundation) and Ellen Roberts (Harold and Anne Berkley Smith Curator of American Art at the Norton Museum of Art) when Gorky's painting, *Child Companions* (1945) was on loan to the museum via the Art Bridges program in 2021.

[Arshile Gorky: Beyond the Limit](#) was on display at Hauser & Wirth New York in 2021. The exhibition featured the newly discovered painting, *Untitled (Virginia Summer)*, which was [uncovered during conservation](#) on *The Limit* (1947).

In 2021, the Arshile Gorky Foundation published a [catalogue raisonné](#) as a fully-searchable database of Gorky's known paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, and textiles. The catalogue is available for free with registration.

View a Hauser & Wirth [online exhibition](#), *Arshile Gorky & Jack Whitten*, presenting the two artists' works side-by-side. The exhibition was inspired by a 2017 speech Whitten gave, which described experiencing Gorky's work as "witnessing something that comes from the deep soul of an artist."



Gorky working on Newark Airport's *Aviation* mural, 1936  
Photograph: unknown



Arshile Gorky (Armenian-American, 1904-1948)  
**Untitled (Gray Drawing (Pastoral))**, c. 1946-1947  
Charcoal and pastel on paper mounted on paper

Private Collection; L2024:103.3

“Abstract art enables the artist to perceive beyond the tangible, to extract the infinite out of the finite.” - Arshile Gorky

Arshile Gorky emigrated to the United States in 1920 after narrowly escaping the Armenian genocide. He enrolled in the New England School of Art in Boston, where he began to explore a wide range of Post-Impressionist, Cubist, and Surrealist styles. In 1946-1947, the painter experienced a series of personal tragedies, including a studio fire, an intestinal operation, a car accident, and conflicts in his marriage, which led to his use of darker palettes and enigmatic symbols. **Untitled (Gray Drawing (Pastoral))** and **The Opaque** were produced during this difficult time, but they also reflect an important moment in the artist’s career. His exploration of abstract vegetal and anatomical forms made a major impact on the later development of Abstract Expressionism, which would influence contemporary art for decades in the United States.

*On view January 22 – April 27, 2025*

Arshile Gorky (Armenian-American, 1904-1948)

**The Opaque**, 1947

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2024:103.3

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*On view January 22 – April 27, 2025*





Arshile Gorky (Armenian-American, 1904-1948)

**Untitled (Pastoral)**, c. 1947

Oil and graphite on canvas

Private Collection; L2023:74.9

Born and raised in the Ottoman Empire, Arshile Gorky escaped to the United States during the Armenian genocide in 1920. His exploration of Post-Impressionist, Cubist, and Surrealist styles greatly influenced the development of Abstract Expressionism. As the artist once said: "Abstraction allows man to see with his mind what he cannot see physically with his eyes." **Untitled (Pastoral)** was painted at the height of Gorky's career, just one year before his untimely death. The painting was re-discovered in 2010, when it was found behind another work from the *Pastoral* series during reframing. Because it was covered for sixty-four years, the painting is especially vibrant and almost appears new.

*On view October 25, 2023 – January 28, 2024*

Arshile Gorky (Armenian-American, 1904-1948)

**The Limit**, 1947

Oil on paper on canvas

Private Collection; L2022:75.8

Arshile Gorky narrowly escaped the Armenian genocide during World War I and emigrated to the United States in 1920. He enrolled in the New England School of Art in Boston, exploring a wide range of Post-Impressionist, Cubist, and Surrealist styles that greatly influenced the development of Abstract Expressionism. **The Limit** was painted at the height of Gorky's career, just one year before his untimely death. During COVID-19 lockdowns, Swiss conservators took on a project investigating signs of bright paint oozing to the surface of the painting. They soon found a missing work from Gorky's oeuvre, *Untitled (Virginia Summer)*, hidden underneath **The Limit**'s canvas. Art historians believe Gorky affixed **The Limit** on top of the earlier painting himself, leaving *Untitled (Virginia Summer)* concealed for 70 years after his death. Both paintings were displayed together for the first time in the exhibition *Arshile Gorky: Beyond the Limit* at New York's Hauser & Wirth last year.



Arshile Gorky  
*Untitled (Virginia Summer)*, ca. 1946-1947  
Oil on canvas



**Extra Resources:** Read more about finding a hidden painting underneath **The Limit** in [Smithsonian Magazine](#).

*On view November 30, 2022 – March 5, 2023*