

The background of the entire image is a painting of a landscape. It features a green field in the foreground, a row of dark, silhouetted bushes in the middle ground, and a sky with a gradient of purple and blue. The overall mood is serene and mystical.

# MARY SIPP GREEN

THE MYSTICAL NOW

FINDLAY GALLERIES



# MARY SIPP GREEN

## THE MYSTICAL NOW

At the beginning of her artistic career, she learned her craft in the studio, painting still-lives and portraits, and landscapes drawn directly from nature. Mary says, "I painted things as I saw them...very recognizable, very realistic..." Over time, she became increasingly engaged with the more abstract and spiritual aspects of landscape form. Mary says, "I felt there was more to say about something than its surface reality...I wanted to get more from a painting, and I wanted to go deeper. I was searching for a new direction."

Mary describes a day sometime in 1990 when she found that direction. She found herself once again, "walking a familiar meadow, a green field with a gray barn. That particular day, the field turned golden, with the flowering goldenrod, and in the light, the barn became purple." From this experience, her unique luminist approach to landscape emerged. Her trademark skies, with their layers of color that have a perception beyond the merely visible, came to life. Mary excels at depicting the land around her and revealing the most bespoke moments in time with her contemporary balance of expression and form. It is not the tangible qualities that are highlighted in her paintings; it is the softly washed memories of a place.

For the past several decade's Mary Sipp Green has found her home and studio in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts, and Findlay Galleries is pleased to have represented this exceptional landscape painter in our stable of contemporary artists since 2005. Today, Mary continues to develop her craft and create her unmistakable and unique landscape works. This exhibition is also dedicated to the Late Sister Wendy Beckett, a British religious sister and world-renowned Art historian who was a close friend to Mary Sipp Green and an avid supporter of her work throughout her career.

*This Exhibition is dedicated to the late **Sister Wendy Beckett***





**Menemsha**  
oil on linen  
30 x 64 in.  
FG© 138585

'What very great pleasure your work gives: such radiant light and beauty'

– **Sister Wendy Beckett** ( 1999)



**Road to Asciano**

oil on linen

22 x 30 in.

FG© 138397



**End of Day on Martha's Vineyard**

oil on linen

52 x 52 in.

FG© 138575





**At Twilight in Edgartown**

oil on linen

14 x 46 in.

FG© 139529



**Meadow on the North Shore**

oil on linen

40 x 48 in.

FG© 138584



**Salt Meadow - Menemsha**

oil on linen

38 x 46 in.

FG© 139872





Detail Image



**Lights along the River**

oil on linen

12 x 14 in.

FG© 138582





## Dedicated to the Late Sister Wendy Beckett

Sister Wendy Beckett (February 25, 1930 - December 26, 2018) was a South African-born British art expert, consecrated virgin and contemplative hermit who became an unlikely celebrity during the 1990s, presenting a series of acclaimed art history documentaries for the BBC and PBS. As a contemplative nun, she lived in solitude in a monastery in Norfolk, England, but her immense sensitivity to art was gained through her studies at Oxford University and from her numerous essays on specific artists and art movements. Her manner is simultaneously straightforward, comical, and inspiring.

In this small but powerful book, 'The Mystical Now: The Art and The Sacred,' she opens with a fine essay examining both paintings and their creators and the evidence that the 'sacred' can be found throughout art history. She celebrates the "transforming power of art, a meditation on the presence of the divine in our everyday lives."

What follows the opening illustrated essay is a veritable treasure trove of 65 artists, each represented by one painting and on the opposing page a short essay by Beckett on how the sacred is manifest in that particular work. It is the scope of artists that makes this thesis so interesting. Here are works by Diebenkorn, Klee, Mondrian, Picasso, Rothko, Odd Nerdrum, Matisse, Helen Frankenthaler, Jasper Johns, Joan Mitchell, Jean Rustin, Stanley Spencer, and other well known, established artists alongside the inordinately beautiful works by lesser-known but equally fine artists such as Sally Warner, Pia Stern, Mary Sipp Green, and Yoko Shiraishi, to name but a few. Sister Wendy Beckett has probably done more to bring the great art of history and contemporary times to the world through her highly acclaimed series than any other individual.



## Mary Sipp Green | *Nightshift* (1991)

Nightshift was painted in the small mill town in New England where Mary Sipp-Green has her studio. It is a strangely lonely picture: no cars in the vacant lot, only one light visible in the mill where - we presume - people are at work. The silence is almost palpable, and the glimmer of the streetlight seems only to emphasize earthly spaciousness that is not only unfilled but seems painfully unfillable. In this solitariness, Sipp-Green becomes free to look upwards, and there discerns the true 'nightshift,' the uncanny movement of the night skies. She shows us unexplained streaks of ominous cloud and, hovering over the mill, glowing densities, scattered pinkly to the left, solidifying into purple on the right. There is a change going on overhead, and though it may literally only be a change of weather, what the artist intuitively has a deeper significance. The real shifts in our life patterns, she hints, may well take place in the night. Darkness and sleep are the time when we relinquish daytime dominance. At night, we lie down - that most vulnerable of positions - and allow the buried emotions of our dream-life to rise from the subconscious. In this, sleep has always been seen as a symbol of our prayer. Prayer is essentially beyond our control, as is our sleep. It is not sleep, of course, except in the sense that Scripture suggests: 'I sleep but my heart watches.' Prayer is a relinquishment of practical activity, a laying down of the desire for occupation or entertainment. Our sole occupation in prayer will be to wait on God, and that may entail the emotional blank that Sipp-Green depicts in her empty town. Yet the light tells us that this is, in fact, a scene of great activity; at night, the mill is fully at work. If prayer gives us no emotional satisfaction, that may be the means to offering it more purely to God, whose work it essentially is. With only one light, that of faith, we accept that He is at work. We look up with the artist to the far skies of faith, allowing the inexplicable movements there into our actuality. We shall never make ourselves holy, but in accepting our human darkness, we are opening ourselves to the Light of Him to whom 'darkness is not darkness,' in whose light we see light.

– **Sister Wendy Beckett** *The Mystical Now Art and The Sacred*, 1993





**La Sera**

oil on linen

30 x 26 in.

FG© 132973

**West Tisbury Fields at Sundown**

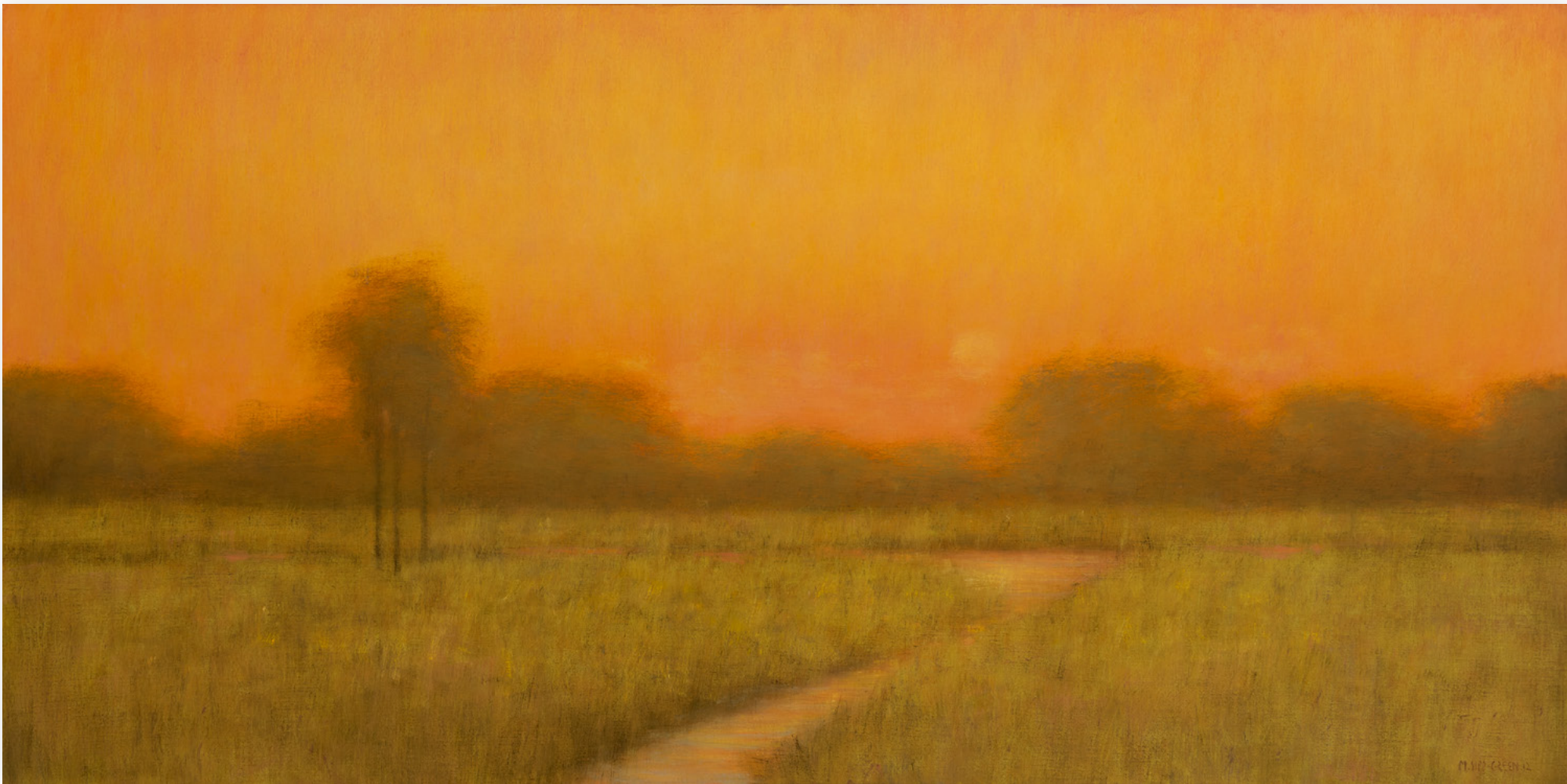
oil on linen

32 x 50 in.

FG© 139528







**Morning along the river**

oil on linen

30 x 60 in.

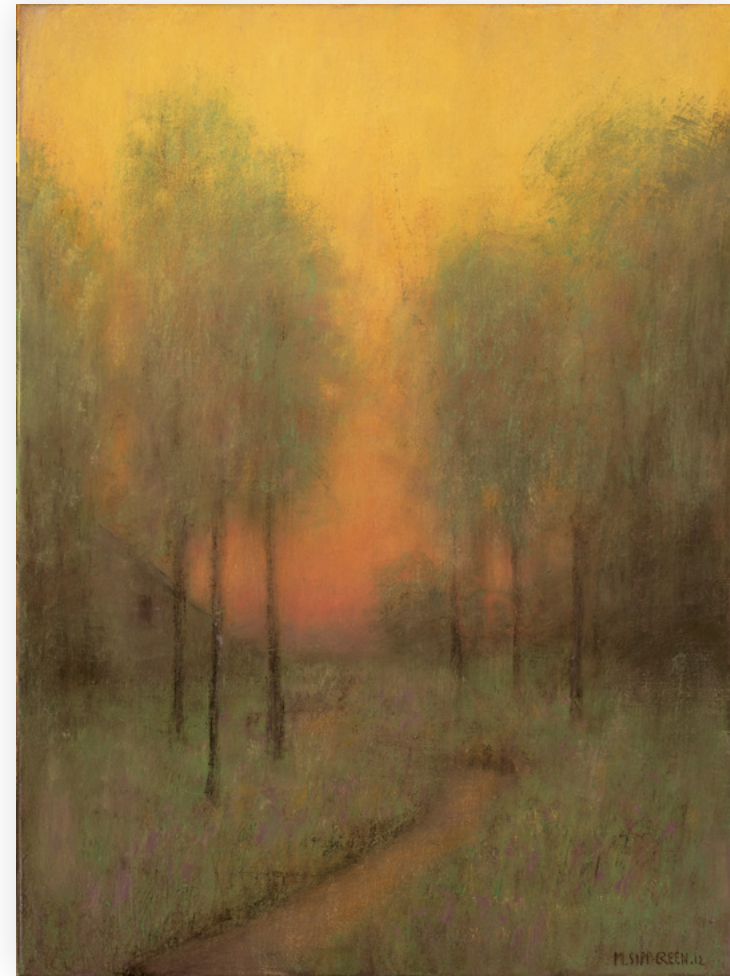
FG© 135207

**Road to Cottle Cove**

oil on linen

23 x 17 in.

FG© 135394







**Summer Twilight in West Chop**

oil on linen

36 x 50 in.

FG© 138405

**Snowfields**

oil on linen

36 1/4 x 60 in.

FG© 132976







Detail Image



**A Pale Light at  
Daybreak**

oil on linen

46 x 60 in.

FG© 139871



**Prairie Mountain**

oil on linen

20 x 50 in.

FG© 133774





### The Artist's Process

When I first approach the canvas, I will usually have some sense of the color scheme and overall composition; an almost architectural strategy for building the painting. Each painting begins with preliminary sketches and color notes recorded on site. Still, the work itself takes shape in my studio, after a meditative interval of temporal and spatial distance that allows memory and emotion to guide the work. To achieve a diffuse quality of color in these paintings, I use many layers of paint, allowing each to dry before the next is applied. In this way, the colors come to resonate with one another and produce an overall depth of hue even as each remains visible as its own separate plane. However, this very deliberate technique is only one part of the creative process, a sort of skeleton key to the final product. Along the way, the surface of the paint is often refigured in unpredictable ways, and there is much that has to be scraped, sanded, destroyed, and reapplied before the essence of a place, its mood and atmosphere, finally emerges onto the canvas. This is indeed a process in every sense of the word.



**Road through Squibnock**

oil on panel

9 1/2 x 12 1/4 in.

FG© 138588



**Quiet Morning in Makonikey**

oil on panel

9 x 12 1/2 in.

FG© 138587





Detail Image



**Springtime in Stockbridge**

oil on linen

28 x 34 in.

FG© 139873





**Last Light**  
oil on linen  
38 x 56 in.  
FG© 136074



**In Tisbury at Twilight**  
oil on linen  
36 x 50 in.  
FG© 139870



It is with great pleasure and gratitude that this exhibition of my paintings is dedicated to the memory of art historian and writer, Sister Wendy Beckett. Our enduring friendship began in the early 1990's when she included my painting 'Night Shift' in her book 'The Mystical Now: Art and the Sacred.' Her letters of encouragement and praise are some of my most cherished keepsakes.

– **Mary Sipp Green** *(December, 2020)*

'You have a gentle poetry that comes from within, as though you are really concerned more with the 'spirit' of a place than it's full materiality, even though you clearly recognize that reality as being the only 'way in' But you do go in, and you take us with you: that's a joy'

– **Sister Wendy Beckett** *(February 1990)*



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