

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart Announces First NYC Solo Show for Alexandros Vasmoulakis

With Paintings Created Using Remnants of Monastery Candles and a High-Pressure Water Cleaner, the Greek Artist Brings a Kaleidoscope of Mediterranean Color to Chelsea

October 20, 2022 – Hollis Taggart is pleased to announce the Greek artist Alexandros Vasmoulakis' first solo show in NYC. Featuring new work created this year as well as site-specific wallpaper installations, *Journeys* is also Vasmoulakis' first solo show with Hollis Taggart since joining the gallery's roster in 2020. Vasmoulakis' canvases are kaleidoscopic explorations of Mediterranean color that contain various influences ranging from spiritual art to mandala and the imagery of psychedelic and rave subcultures. *Journeys* will be on view from November 17 through December 29, 2022, with an opening reception on Thursday, November 17, from 5-8PM.

Vasmoulakis' vision and work are grounded in his Greek background, and specifically the visual tensions between the ancient and the contemporary present in his hometown of Athens. Considering the aesthetics of ruins as well as graffiti, the artist explores the beauty that can result from destruction, a central tenant in his practice. Inspired by influences ranging from Abstract Expressionism to botanical art, Vasmoulakis draws on these different movements and genres to produce dizzying canvases that, while entirely abstract, sometimes offer hints of organic forms. Within the kaleidoscope of color and pattern, the viewer may find the suggestion of a flower, the sun, the sea, or perhaps of a microscopic organism.

The splashes of color and hints of form in Vasmoulakis' compositions are enhanced by the depth created by his signature layering technique. Using a high-pressure water cleaner – the same kind used to clean graffiti from buildings – the artist carves into his paintings, resulting in complex surfaces that create enigmatic depths. Vasmoulakis' approach is spontaneous: he does not use a sketch or a plan and allows himself to be carried by the rhythm of his motions and the layers that are revealed as he excavates his canvases. In the words of anthropologist Rafael Schachter, who wrote the catalogue essay for the exhibition, Vasmoulakis is interested in “an artistic process in which creation and destruction go hand in hand and in which conscious control is surrendered.”

Vasmoulakis' meditative process and reliance on intuitive flow imbues his paintings with a spirituality that is enhanced by his use of homemade crayons, which he makes using the remnants of beeswax votive candles gathered from monasteries throughout the world. The artist creates nearly all of his works using these recycled candles, which he melts and mixes with linseed oils and pigments. Blending a range of techniques including painting, wallpapering, collage, and installation, Vasmoulakis' practice and the resulting works engage with the notion of transcendental and invite the viewer to engage with their depths.

Vasmoulakis' work was shown in three group exhibitions at Hollis Taggart: *Reunion* (Southport, 2021), *Perceived Realities* (NYC, 2020) and *Remix* (Southport, 2020). Recent solo exhibitions include the *Afterparty* at Eins Gallery in Limassol, Cyprus (2020), *Mind Mischief* (2017) and *The Eaters and The Eaten* (2016) at The Breeder Gallery in Athens, *My eyes are seeing you* at Art Expertise in Athens (2014), and *Figures* at Le Basse Projects in Los Angeles (2013). His work has also been included in a wide range of group exhibitions, including at Fondation Cartier (Paris), Antikenmuseum (Basel), Benaki Museum (Athens), and Bozar (Brussels), among others. Vasmoulakis was born in 1980 and lives and works in Athens, Greece.

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About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, and market trends and opportunities. The gallery's flagship location is in Chelsea, and it also operates a space in Southport, Connecticut.

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