

# HOLLIS TAGGART

## Hollis Taggart Announces Representation of the Brett Taylor Estate

**New York (June 6, 2023)**—Hollis Taggart is pleased to announce the addition of the Brett Taylor Estate to its growing roster. The gallery is committed to preserving and promoting a distinguished list of Estates. Taylor's work will be introduced in our summer exhibition *Of the Past and Present: Estates and Contemporary Artists at Hollis Taggart*, a comprehensive two-floor exhibition demonstrating the range of artists represented by the gallery, on view from June 29 through August 25, 2023.

“It is a great pleasure to represent the Brett Taylor Estate. Brett was a visionary, and created an amazing body of works in the 1960’s and 1970’s that even today have a very contemporary flavor. Reminiscent of the airy and colorful compositions of Henri Matisse, Taylor’s paintings are both whimsical and iconic at the same time. Taylor was an extremely talented and charismatic figure and established an art school in the Greek islands at the early age of 22. The sumptuous canvases will be on display in our upcoming exhibition entitled *Of the Past and Present*.”

In addition to being featured in *Of the Past and Present*, Taylor’s work will be presented in a solo exhibition on view from September 14 through October 14, 2023.

**Brett Taylor’s** (American, 1943–1983) innovative approach to painting—merging storytelling, Surrealism, and figurative abstraction—matured significantly during his undergraduate years at the Tyler School of Art. As the Vietnam War erupted in 1965, Taylor was preparing to leave the United States. He was not among the more than 30,000 war protestors, but instead was protesting the art world. His paintings had stood out as stylistically distinctive, and he was anxious to make an impact—not only by developing a new approach to painting but by developing an entirely new philosophical approach to teaching art. He became certain that the development of his own unique style would only find maturity in a climate insulated from the successive waves of -isms that were sweeping across the country.

Taylor successfully convinced the Tyler School to allow him to fulfill the obligations of his master’s thesis abroad. Having long been inspired by Greek mythology, Henry Miller’s travelogue, the Colossus of Maroussi, and the sensuous nineteenth-century Romanticism of the poet-painter e. e. cummings’s work *Xaipe*, Taylor was determined to find an idyllic environment on one of the islands in the Cyclades group of the Aegean Sea.

After exploring the many islands of the Aegean via ferries, by March 1966 Taylor and his wife settled on the unspoiled small island of Paros, at the center of the Cyclades. The island’s culture and unique environment provided a blank canvas conducive to forging a new life in art. There were perhaps a dozen foreigners living on the island among its population of less than two thousand. There were no telephones, no television, and no U.S. radio or newspapers. That also made Paros largely insulated from contemporary art movements.

For Taylor, just turning twenty-three, it was the perfect place to officially open the first art school in the Aegean in June of 1966—the Aegean School of Fine Art—which is still active today. Everyone who knew him—classmates, colleagues, faculty, and students—consistently cited his charisma as a powerful catalyst for his mission of creating a then new cross-disciplinary approach to art education. His notoriety as an out-of-the box teacher would continue to attract more international students.

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Taylor regularly predicted with accuracy his dénouement—that he would not reach forty. He left behind a uniquely exhilarating body of work, legions of students, and the distinction of being the only American expatriate artist to have lived permanently in the Aegean.

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