

THE NATIONAL HERALD

**First NYC Solo Show for Alexandros Vasmoulakis at Hollis Taggart in Chelsea
By Eleni Sakellis**



Artist Alexandros Vasmoulakis at work in the Hollis Taggart gallery in Chelsea ahead of his first solo show in New York, opening November 17. (Photo by Eleni Sakellis)

NEW YORK – The first New York City solo show for Greek artist Alexandros Vasmoulakis, titled ‘Journeys’ opens November 17 at the Hollis Taggart gallery, 521 West 26th Street in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood. The show features new work created this year along with site-specific wallpaper installations one of which The National Herald had the opportunity to preview on November 15 as the artist was completing his dynamic work in the gallery.

TNH also met with Greek-American Paul Efstathiou, Director of Contemporary Art at Hollis Taggart, who said he first encountered Athens-native Vasmoulakis’ work in a group show and was immediately drawn to the artist’s work and the Mediterranean colors, though he did not know initially that the artist was Greek.

Efstathiou also told TNH that Vasmoulakis’ process is as compelling as the finished artwork, noting that once the artist completes a painting, he power washes it with a high-pressure water cleaner which reveals further texture and depth to each piece.



Artist Alexandros Vasmoulakis. (Photo: Courtesy of Hollis Taggart and the artist)

Vasmoulakis also recycles used monastery candles for his own homemade crayons to create his impressive paintings, imbuing them with a spiritual quality that is palpable for the viewer. Nearly all of his works are created using recycled candles, which he melts down and mixes with linseed oils and pigments.

Vasmoulakis paused in the creation of his work at the gallery to tell TNH that the handmade wallpaper was all prepared in his studio in Athens and then brought to New York so that the composition of the work is all done on site. He noted for the particular piece he was working on at the time of TNH's visit (around 4 PM) he had begun at 11 AM in order to finish for the opening of the show on Thursday.

As noted in the gallery's press release, "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," the press release continues.

“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 joined the Hollis Taggart gallery’s roster in 2020 and his dynamic work will be on view in the show through December 29. The opening reception is Thursday, November 17, 5-8 PM.



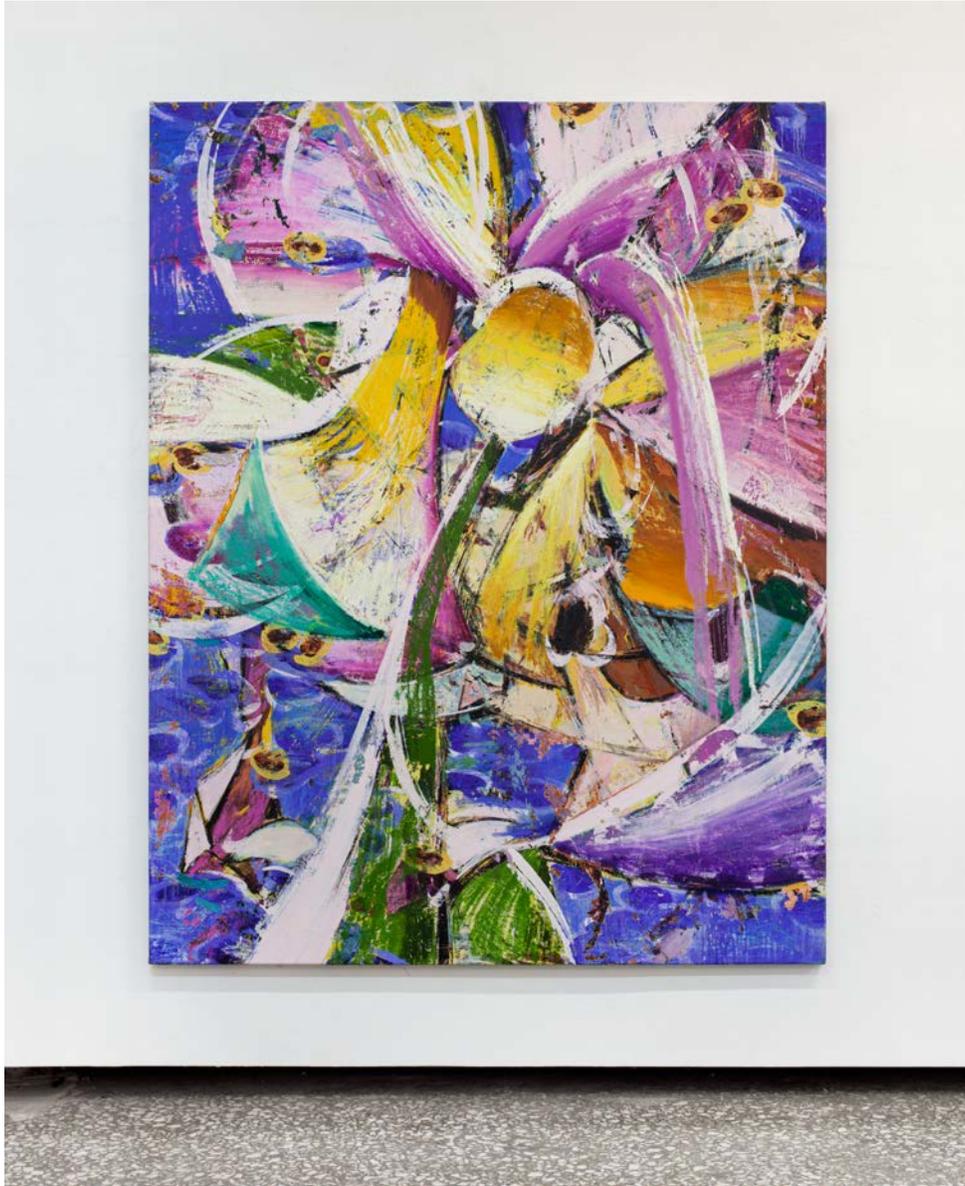
Left to right: Hollis Taggart gallery Director of Contemporary Art Paul Efstathiou and artist Alexandros Vasmoulakis in the gallery in Chelsea ahead of Vasmoulakis’ first solo show in New York, opening November 17. (Photo by Eleni Sakellis)

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.

More information about Hollis Taggart is available online: <https://www.hollistaggart.com>.

Learn more about Alexandros Vasmoulakis on his website: <https://vasmou.com>.



*Journeys (2022) by Greek artist Alexandros Vasmoulakis.
(Photo: Courtesy of Hollis Taggart and the artist)*