

PRESS RELEASE

Norman Hyams

ΠNEYMA PNEVMA

**Stavrakas Mansion, Chora Patmos, GR
The Patmos Trust**

Opening 12 August 2026, 7-10 pm

Exhibition continues until 24 August 2026

Opening times: 7–10 pm

Free admission

Following *No Rush*, the last show of Norman Hyams' work at Hannah Barry Gallery and the first since his death in the Autumn of 2024, *ΠNEYMA PNEVMA* is the first international exhibition of Hyams' paintings. Situated on Patmos, a remote Greek island eight hours from Athens, *ΠNEYMA PNEVMA* presents a series of paintings depicting the Dodecanese and surrounding sea, many selected from Hyams' studio in Shepherd's Bush, London, and previously unseen. Save for the repeated silhouette of a diver, perhaps a self-portrait, the sea and the islands are the sole subjects of the exhibition. Painting on a range of materials available to him – dried paint palettes, fruit crates, sponges and plates – a number of the works present as halfway between object and painting, the rough surfaces mimicking the rugged landscape and changeable sea.

ΠNEYMA PNEVMA, the title of the show, selected by the late Hyams' wife, Sacha, is an ancient Greek word translating as breath or spirit – a life-giving essence. Having returned to the island each year as a family, Patmos came to represent a second home where familiar routines and rituals were repeated year on year: teaching the children to swim, breakfasts of figs, honey and walnuts and lunches at the local taverna. Rising early each morning, Hyams would head down to Skala for a Greek coffee and watch the world go by, spending hours

sketching at the port or on the beach and observing the swells of the sea and people throughout the day.

ΠNEYMA PNEVMA begins with two untitled and undated works capturing the island at dusk, as many who descend from the ferry first encounter Patmos. Shrouded in blues and misty greys, the inaugural works set the tone for the exhibition. Almost melancholic, these darkest paintings in the exhibition appear to yearn back to a lost time or place. Having served as a remote penal colony under the Roman Empire, the island is simultaneously an idyllic destination and isolated place of exile. Steeped in history, the 11th century monastery of Saint John the Theologian is the epicentre of Patmos, marking the sacred site where it is believed the exiled Saint John received visions and wrote the Book of Revelation.

Hyams spent years capturing the various faces of the island and vast stretches of sea surrounding it. One particular view is repeated eleven times throughout the paintings: the island of Kastellorizo creeping in on the right of the frame, the same chalky yellow, blue and pink facades and domed rooftop mirrored across the various canvases. In many, the sky presents a typical sunset or nocturnal view, in others the view becomes abstracted – the sky a wash of pale pink adorned with purple spots which

replace clouds, or a solid yellow scene which scorches the canvas. Having never visited Kastellorizo, only hearing tales of Sacha's visit with their daughter Violet, the island with its colourful facades became fixed in Hyams' imagination.

Installed across the four rooms of Stavrakas Mansion in Chora Patmos, *ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ* presents a journey across the landscape but also into the interior world of the artist himself. One of the only human figures to feature in the exhibition, the silhouetted profile of a diver is repeatedly shown head-down and clinging to a single rock surrounded by sea. Similarly to the solitary nature of the first two works in the exhibition, this repeated image perhaps

exposes Hyams' interior world while painting. The more abstract works present memories and daydreams with dual perspectives and temporalities. Three paintings are circular in shape, referential of a view from a telescope or ferry window. Another three present the island framed by theatrical curtains, a motif which featured previously in past works shown in *No Rush*. Here, the comings and goings of the island appear like a choreography or play of which Hyams is a spectator rather than participant. Ever the observer, choosing to travel autonomously around the island by moped, whilst his family travelled by car, Hyams' paintings are self-reflective, beckoning you to continually re-see the landscape through a new lens.

Norman Hyams

1966-2024. Lived and worked in London, UK.

Solo exhibitions include *ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ*, organised by Hannah Barry Gallery, Stavrakas House, The Patmos Trust, Chora Patmos, GR (2026); *No Rush*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK (2025); *Islands*, Connolly, London, UK (2024); *Vermilion Tablecloth*, Newchild Gallery, online (2023); *Knowledge*, Turps Gallery, London, UK (2019); *serious pursuits - loops, sacks and tennis courts*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK (2018); *Ethos*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK (2017); *Norman Hyams*, RUN Gallery, London, UK (2007).

Recent group exhibitions include *LAS Begins*, LAS Gallery, London, UK (2025); *The Miniatures Challenge*, Canal Boat Contemporary, London, UK (2024); *On Paper*, Newchild Gallery, online (2023); *Close Corners*, Turps Gallery, London, UK (2023); *Looking Like Fire*, Sim Smith, London, UK (2023); *Cut Out - Series 1*, HM Electric Gallery, London, UK (2023); *Spring without End*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK (2023); *The Picture*, Brooke Benington, London, UK (2023); *A Very Long Wait*, Newchild Gallery, Antwerp, BE (2020); *Crowd*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK (2020).

Hyams graduated in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art, London (2006). His work is represented in the UK Government Art Collection and Simon Nixon Collection. In 2020 he was artist in residence at The New St Ives School, St Ives, Cornwall. He completed the Turps Painting programme in 2016, which takes place in the Aylesbury Estate in South-East London.



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