

HANNAH HOFFMAN

Paul Thek

December 14, 2024 – February 1, 2025

Hannah Hoffman is pleased to announce our second location in Los Angeles at 725 N Western. Inaugurating the space is an exhibition of a single, late painting by Paul Thek.

Untitled (rooftops), 1987 comes from the last chapter of Thek's complex career which spanned nearly three decades between New York and Europe. Part of a community of artists and thinkers such as Peter Hujar, Tennessee Williams, and Susan Sontag, Thek refused the kind of success that accompanies a signature style, and instead created sprawling work across sculpture, installation, and painting. This particular painting comes from a series of city views from Thek's own East Village apartment, where he was confined during the last stages of terminal illness. These paintings have an intimate, mirror-like quality - in part because of the high contrast, reversible purple and yellow color palette, and in part because they are singularly local expressing Thek's inner life and the only skylines available to him.

During his life, Thek had a fraught relationship with galleries and commercial success. His idiosyncratic, earnest approach was not compatible with Pop or Minimalism, and most of his ephemeral installations throughout the 70s and 80s exist only as fragments. Thek rejected trends towards industrial fabrication and dematerialization, favoring evidence of the human hand. Painting represents a unique part of his oeuvre in that he pursued the discipline consistently and without destination. *Untitled (rooftops)* demonstrates his commitment to diaristic, emotional explorations of beauty.

While Thek's installations were often social in scale and nature, his paintings are distinctly private and contemplative. Thek once declared that "painters are priests," but was adamant that his later work is "agnostic" - embracing weakness, unafraid of kitsch, committed to color schemes and subject matter often "miss-seen."

In a way, our new location at 725 N Western continues the intimate tradition of Thek's paintings, providing a physical home for the contemplative calm Thek sought to articulate in the final year of his life.