

Press release | 30 September 2026

DAVID NOVROS Painting

9 October 2026 to 21 February 2027

Press conference: Wednesday, 7 October 2026, 11 a.m.

Opening: Wednesday, 7 October 2026, 7 p.m.

The Hamburger Kunsthalle is devoting a large-scale retrospective to the painter David Novros (b. 1941 in Los Angeles, California), showcasing a fascinating body of work spanning more than six decades. To mark the artist's 85th birthday, more than 50 of his paintings, copper reliefs and works on paper – some of them monumental – will be on view across two floors of the Galerie der Gegenwart. David Novros explores in his work the impact of colour, form and surface in space. His art is expansive and immersive, ranging from site-specific murals to multi-panel paintings hung on museum walls. As they interact with the surrounding architecture, these wall-covering works make tangible the interrelationships between artwork, space and viewer.

During a trip to Europe in 1963, Novros saw for the first time a range of interiors adorned with large-scale wall paintings. He viewed the Alhambra in Granada, Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, works by Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca in Florence, Matisse's studio in Nice as well as the mosaics in Ravenna and prehistoric cave paintings in Spain. These immersive experiences – along with European art in general – would become a vital catalyst for his concept of painting as a form of expression that envelops people and shapes their space, exerting a profound impact on them. Novros resolved to create art that is accessible to all, making an equally powerful impression on viewers from diverse backgrounds, cultures and stages of life. Upon his return to the USA, this aspiration would prompt him to devote himself to mural painting. In 1964, Novros developed the concept of »painting in place«, a form of painting in which the wall is incorporated into the composition as the picture plane, so that the surrounding space becomes part of the image. He achieved this through the creation of large »portable murals«, thereby producing a distinctive, monumental oeuvre hallmarked by a painstaking exploration of the materiality of paint and the complex interplay of colours that unfolds in each individual piece.

Novros's works were first shown in 1966 in a double exhibition with Mark di Suvero at the Park Place Gallery and in the influential exhibition »Systemic Painting« at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. In 1970, he had the opportunity to create a mural in situ when Donald Judd enlisted him to paint a fresco for the second storey of his New York City home and studio in SoHo. This commission was followed by a number of site-specific murals, among them one at New York's Museum of Modern Art (1972, no longer extant), at Rice University in Houston (1973), at the Pennzoil Oil Corporation in Houston (1975, now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston) and in Gooch Auditorium at the University of Texas (1977).



David Novros (b. 1941)

Asturias 2, 2022

Oil on canvas, 342.9 x 457.2 cm in total
Collection of the artist, courtesy of
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

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Kunst, Bonn, 2026. Courtesy Paula
Cooper Gallery, New York

Photo: Steven Probert

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The works of this New York-based artist are primarily held in North American collections. Institutions lending works to the exhibition at the Kunsthalle include the Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Dallas Museum of Fine Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. The Hamburger Kunsthalle received the multi-part work *Four Seasons* (1974) as a gift from the Lafrenz Collection in 2021 and acquired the painting *Boathouse* (2014) in 2024.

Accompanying the exhibition is a comprehensive **catalogue** (DISTANZ Verlag, 138 pages, 98 illustrations, available in both German and English editions) featuring essays by the curators and an interview with David Novros. The catalogue is available in the museum shop for 40 euros as well as in bookshops (42 euros) and at www.freunde-der-kunsthalle.de. **Art education offerings** include guided tours for the public or by private arrangement as well as free audio tours for adults (German/English) and for curious visitors ages 8 and older (German), which are available through the Kunsthalle's app.

Prof. Dr. Alexander Klar: »David Novros's monumental paintings on the walls of the Galerie der Gegenwart transform our museum galleries into what he describes as »painted places«. *David Novros – Painting* is a one-of-a-kind project that is itself an artistic endeavour. Organising the largest European retrospective to date for this outstanding American painter was a compelling idea, as it enables the Hamburger Kunsthalle to bring his work back to the continent where the myriad historical connections between painting and place formed the source of his own vision.«

Toby Kamps: »David Novros is one of the leading exponents of a new form of reductive abstraction that emerged in New York City in the 1960s as part of Minimal Art. At the heart of his artistic approach is an expanded form of non-representational painting in which – as he puts it – »the self is absorbed into a painted world«. To achieve this immersion, he employs a finely tuned and often forcefully dynamic sense of scale, space, proportion and colour to produce works that offer what can only be described as a visceral experience.«

Ifee Tack: »With his »portable murals« and the concept of »painting in place«, David Novros has developed a form of painting that is conceived in spatial terms. His works take shape based on the interplay of structure, proportions, colour and the architectural environment, which serves not as mere backdrop but as an integral part of the work itself. In this sense, the viewer's movement through and along the physical space becomes an essential part of the experience: perspective, distance and position alter our perception of the work while enabling us to experience the specific location more keenly.«

The exhibition is being organised in close cooperation with the artist.

Curators: Prof. Dr. Alexander Klar, Toby Kamps and Ifee Tack

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