



PRESS RELEASE

Vestry St.
Floor 1, 6-8 Vestry Street
London N1 7RE

Exhibition Runs: 10 January to 21 February 2026
Opening Preview: Friday 9 January, 6-8pm

NOSTALGIA

Curated by Pascal Rousson

**ADAM DIX, DJ ROBERTS, NICK CURTIS, CHARLOTTE HOPKINS HALL, JAKE CLARK,
KEELERTORNERO, REBECCA SCOTT, PASCAL ROUSSON, PAUL SAKOILSKY, ANELYS WOLF**

The Nostalgia of Painting and Its Recurrent Death

The notion of nostalgia frequently surfaces in discussions of painting, particularly in relation to what has often been called the “Exquisite Corpse of Painting.”

The history of modern art has been persistently haunted by pronouncements of painting’s death, each era declaring it obsolete, only for it to reemerge in another form. Throughout the twentieth century, a sense of decay seemed to follow painting, as though the medium itself were a living body in perpetual decomposition.

The origins of this discourse may be traced to the invention of photography and to Paul Delaroche, who famously lamented that painting had died with the advent of the camera.

But this “Death” has never been final. Time and again, painting resurfaces, confronting the question of how to continue after the achievements of modernism, after the readymade, and after each theoretical declaration of its end. Even when the “Death of Painting” took again centre stage in the 1980s, the gesture already felt as old as modernity itself.

Johannes Hofer’s definition of nostalgia, derived from the Greek “νοσταλγία” (nostalgia), the German “Heimweh”, the French “le mal du pays”, and the English “homesickness” describes it as a psychosomatic condition rooted in the brain’s nerve fibres, which retain impressions of one’s homeland. Those afflicted with nostalgia, he writes, dwell obsessively on the idea of return. In a similar sense, painting, as a medium, may be understood as afflicted by nostalgia: a persistent longing for its own past, for the tactile, the observational, and the slow.

As a technology, painting is prehistoric, but in our present age of hyper-technology, it can be perceived as a redundant or anachronistic practice, an act inherently nostalgic. Figurative painting, or even the very gesture of painting, might be interpreted as a return to material presence and to the temporal. This re-engagement with fragments of the past, reshaped to reflect on the present, could still represent a form of resistance to the speed, dematerialisation, and ephemerality of the digital era.

Baudelaire's poem "A Carcass" offers a resonant metaphor for this process of decay and persistence:

"The forms disappeared and were no more than a dream,
A sketch that slowly falls
Upon the forgotten canvas, that the artist
Completes from memory alone."

Like the Carcass in Baudelaire's verse, the body of painting seems to disintegrate again and again. Even in its apparent death, it continues to preserve within itself what might be called the "Divine Essence" of the artwork, an enduring vitality that resists final extinction.

ENDS

Notes for editor

Opening hours: Thursday to Saturday, 12-5pm.

For more information / high res images contact: info@crosslaneprojects.com



Pascal Rousson: *Studio*, 2025, photograph

Vestry St. opened its doors in 2022 in Vestry Street, Hoxton in London in association with Cross Lane Projects. Visitors are invited into this uniquely intimate space to read, reflect, discuss, and view contemporary art in a salon-like setting. Located in a private residence on the road that bears its name, Vestry St. presents a programme of curated exhibitions and events by leading contemporary artists, both local and international.