

Deaths

NICKSON—Graham.



The family of Graham Nickson deeply mourns his passing on January 28, 2025. He died peacefully at home from complications of Parkinson's Disease, an illness he fought for many years with courage and dignity. Born in Knowle Green, Lancashire in 1946, Graham attended London's Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, and then earned a master's degree with distinction at the Royal College of Art. Awarded a prestigious Rome Prize in 1972, he spent two years in Italy painting the sunrise and sunset almost every day, fully understanding the transgressive nature of his obsession yet taking from the experience an extraordinary sense of color and light. Awarded a Harkness Fellow-

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ship in 1976, Nickson relocated to New York, where he rented a loft in Soho and painted ambitious, large-scale canvases in high-keyed color — often bathers on a beach. He frequently worked for as many as 10 years on a single canvas, always keenly aware of the underlying geometry of his imagery and the fundamental value of incisive drawing. Nickson was an inventive, fearless colorist who liked to work directly from nature, and he found his imagery all over the world — from mystical Ayers Rock in Uluru, Australia, to the distant elevations of the Colorado Rockies. In addition to his monumental oil paintings, he also captured the transient experience of fleeting light and clouds in spellbinding watercolors. Nickson's work is represented in prominent US museum collections, among them The Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and many more. While fiercely committed to a lifetime of painting, Nickson took up a second career in 1989 as Dean of the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting & Sculpture. There he enriched the curriculum in so many ways: he established the MFA course of study, introduced the now famous Drawing Marathon, initiated the evening lecture series and a steady rotation of loan exhibitions. Nickson embraced the core tradition of drawing, painting, and sculpture from direct perception as foundational to the precepts of the School's atelier system. A teacher of unparalleled skill, Nickson is remembered today by thousands of students whose debt to him is incalculable. His Drawing Marathons are now legendary—intensive two week drawing or painting classes where Nickson's great well of art historical knowledge inflected every critique and dialogue. Self-contained and soft spoken, Nickson loved to quip, and then chuckle quietly, eyes sparkling with pleasure at the shared appreciation of gentle humor. Nickson is survived by his beloved wife, Dita Amory, a curator at the Metropolitan Museum, his lovely daughter, Serena Nickson, a talented young artist in her own right, as well as by his sister Wendy Duxbury and several nieces and nephews in Sweden and Spain. A Memorial is planned for the spring. Kindly send contributions to the New York Studio School, 8 West 8th Street, New York, 10011.

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