

Paul Neagu

Abstract - New Hyphen

Opening: Thursday, April 16, 2026, 7: 00 PM

Exhibition period: April 16 - May 17, 2026

Ivan Gallery is pleased to invite you on Thursday, April 16, at 7:00 PM, to the opening of the exhibition “Abstract - New Hyphen” by the artist Paul Neagu. The exhibition brings together works from the artist’s late period, featuring a selection of sculptures, paintings, and drawings alongside the performance *Hyphen-Ramp*, originally presented in 1976 at the Serpentine Gallery.

“The following year, the environment *Hyphen-Ramp* (one-room, at the Serpentine, December 1976) was a combination of imagistic concepts (paintings, sculpture, drawing, ritualistic riot) signalled another moment of conclusion in my work - that of public performance. The reason for this was that I had come to believe that the essence of true performance could not be confined within the boundaries of ‘theatrical’ arrangements, with audience and performers as separate categories, helplessly wishing for a common platform of understanding. With the same need for depth communication, the performer that I was and his gesture had to be felt from inside, so I discovered that this idea of the static and staring spectator gives a one track communication much too shallow for my ardent ambitions. Thus I decided to keep such impulses to myself and maybe show to the public only a formalised record. (Though to play around with documents, ideas, collecting films about performance or spontaneous gestures might be a different approach, as a cool and speculative business.)” Paul Neagu, “Gradually Going Ahead” *Artscribe*, no. 16 (January 1979): 48-50

The concept of the Hyphen, initially developed in the 1970s, was conceived simultaneously as object, symbol, and instrument of thought. Its function as a connective structure—linking matter and spirit, body and cosmos, object and language—is continued in New Hyphen. However, in this later phase, the Hyphen is not merely reiterated but fundamentally reconfigured: form becomes liberated, materiality more fluid, and the structure evolves into an open system of relations. Consequently, the symbol loses its previous stability, becoming dynamic and continuously in the process of becoming.

This transformation is explicitly articulated by the artist:

“New Hyphen — title given to the reinvented form of the hyphen; cancels out the diagonal element of the old hyphen; its fullest potential is explored in painted wall reliefs called ‘Ten right angles—Ten right angels’; stainless steel, painted wood, canvas stretched on a frame, leather on wood, leather and wax, marble, granite” (1989–1996)**

Considered one of the most important Romanian artists, Paul Neagu (b. 1938, Bucharest) had lived and worked in London since 1970 until his death in 2004. His complex artistic practice integrates performance, sculpture, drawing, painting, video and photography, inside his original, holistic, metaphysical view on art. Tactility underlines one of Neagu's

enduring aims: to refute what he perceived as the primacy of visuality within art. His ritualised performances often left a trail of sculptural objects and created immersive, sensory experiences. In 1970, by way of an exhibition in Edinburgh, he resettled in London, where his international outlook and rich, original work made him an influential teacher in art schools there for decades, with a decisive influence on a generation of sculptors, including Anthony Caro, Antony Gormley, and Anish Kapoor, among others. In 1972 he founded the Generative Art Group, which consisted of five fictitious members, each representing different parts of his psyche.

His works can be found in many public collections amongst which are The Arts Council of Great Britain, The National Museum of Arts (Romania), The Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Edinburgh), The Tate Gallery (London), The Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Kontakt Collection (Vienna) and his artistic practice is has been revisited and researched inside a comprehensive monograph published at JRP | Editions, in conjunction to the his first international retrospective presented at Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein in 2021, at Neue Galerie Graz in 2022 and National Museum of Art Timișoara in 2023.

The exhibition “Abstract - New Hyphen” is organized in collaboration with The Paul Neagu Estate (UK) and The Paul Neagu Estate (RO) and marks the artist’s fourth exhibition at Ivan Gallery, following the reenactment of the performance “Cake Man” in 2012, “Going Tornado” in 2014, and “Blind Bite” in 2015.

The exhibition can be visited from April 16 to May 17, 2026, Wednesday through Saturday, between 2:00 and 7:00 PM, and at other times by appointment.