

UNIT

Unit presents new works from Damian Elwes which offer glimpses into the studios of Picasso, Kusama, and other giants of modern and contemporary art

“Damian Elwes is a contemporary art detective,” Fred Hoffman, art historian and curator.



Unit is thrilled to announce *Studio Visit* (8 July- 13 September), the latest solo exhibition by the acclaimed British artist Damian Elwes. This eagerly anticipated show continues Elwes' renowned exploration of iconic artists and their studios, delving deeply into the heart of human creativity, with 17 new artworks on display.

Damian Elwes' fascination with the studios of legendary artists like Francis Bacon, Edvard

Munch, Henri Matisse, Damien Hirst, and Frida Kahlo is both meticulous and imaginative. His latest exhibition, *Studio Visit*, is a rich tapestry of these creative spaces, each one meticulously researched and brought to life through his vibrant and immersive paintings. This unique series of 17 new paintings offers an intimate glimpse into the environments where these artists' masterpieces were conceived, capturing the essence of their creative processes.

Elwes' journey into the world of artists' studios began in Paris between 1986 and 1987, where he sketched the studios of contemporary artists. This early work not only affirmed the enduring relevance of painting during an era dominated by conceptual art but also allowed Elwes to map out an artist's thought process at specific moments in time. In *Studio Visit*, these spaces transcend their physical boundaries to become powerful symbols of creativity and intimate psychological portraits of their occupants.



A poignant element of the exhibition is Elwes' depiction of Keith Haring's studio in New York during the 1980s. It was at this time that Haring encouraged Damian to start painting. Elwes' portrayal includes touching details of their friendship. Among Haring's vibrant tools and artworks, two empty green chairs symbolise the deep conversations they shared, adding a layer of personal history to the exhibit.

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Studio Visit offers viewers a rare opportunity to step into the often-hidden spaces of artistic creation, preserving the legacy of these environments that might otherwise be forgotten or lost to time. Each painting is a testament to the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of artistic inspiration.



An essay from Fred Hoffman, acclaimed art historian and curator of Jean-Michel Basquiat's *Made on Market Street* (in collaboration with Larry Gagosian) at Gagosian Beverly Hills, accompanies the catalogue for the exhibition.

The exhibition will be on view in Unit's Hanover Square gallery from 8 July- 23 September, 2024.

There will be a private Press Hour in the presence of the artist on 11 July from 17:30-18:30. Damian is available for interviews both in-person and via email or telephone. Please contact richelle@unitlondon.com to request a time to speak with the artist.

Please access the *Press Kit* [here](#).

Image credits from top to bottom: *Kusama's Studio, New York, 2024*, mixed media on canvas; *Keith Haring's Studio, Cable Building/ New York, 2023*, oil on canvas; *Damien Hirst's Studio, Thames Wharf, London, 2024*, acrylic on canvas, 173.5 x 373 cm (images courtesy the artist and Unit).

About the artist

Damian Elwes (b. 1960, London) began his career in the 1980s as a graffiti artist in New York City. He was later convinced to turn to painting by the renowned street and pop artist, Keith Haring. Elwes' works were singled out by famed London gallerist, Robert Fraser, and were included in a 1984 exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh alongside pieces by Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Elwes eventually became drawn to representations of the artist's studio. He subsequently moved to Paris between the years of 1986-87 where he began seeking out studios for artistic material. In 2018, his solo exhibition at the Musée en Herbe in Paris attracted over 100,000 visitors. In 2019, Elwes paintings were exhibited alongside works by Eugène Delacroix at the Musée Delacroix in Paris. He was recently the focus of a full-length feature article in *Vogue Portugal's* April 2024 issue.

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About Unit

Established in September 2013, Unit is a global artistic platform for international artists. The co-founders, Joe Kennedy and Jonny Burt, have successfully launched and advanced the careers of numerous contemporary artists, and they remain firmly committed to their driving principles of equity, innovation, and accessibility. The gallery is forthright in its dedication to being an open and transparent institution at the forefront of an expanding and diversifying art industry. As a consequence of its boldly independent approach to the gallery model, Unit has become synonymous with a pioneering use of social media and digital content – bridging the gap between the physical and virtual spheres of modern experience and connecting people with the art they love.

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