



Keith Cunningham The Lost Master

PRESS RELEASE

12.06.2025





HENI Unveils *Keith Cunningham: The Lost Master*, Offering Rare Collector's Opportunity

HENI is proud to release *Keith Cunningham: The Lost Master*, a selection of paintings from Cunningham's *Sky Studies* series - each piece unique, signed and dated - executed in either watercolour or pastel, alongside an exclusive collection of oils on canvas. The *Sky Studies* are available by application on [HENI Primary](#) from 12 June to 26 June 2025 at 17:00 BST.

Keith Cunningham (1929-2014) was a painter of striking talent and technical brilliance. A contemporary of Francis Bacon, Leon Kossoff, and Frank Auerbach, Cunningham trained at the Royal College of Art in the 1950s, where his talent drew praise from leading figures of the time, including John Minton and Sir Frank Bowling. Auerbach later described Cunningham's work as "full of nervous life." But unlike his contemporaries, Cunningham walked away from the spotlight.

The *Sky Studies* offer a compelling entry point for collectors, with the works ranging in price from \$500 to \$1,750 (plus applicable taxes), providing access to a more playful and vibrant side of Cunningham's practice. A 'Hidden Room' within the exhibition reveals Cunningham's Masterpieces in Oil.

Cunningham's deeply personal practice is only now being fully shown, placing him in direct conversation with some of the most significant artists of his generation. This is not just an exhibition — it's the long-overdue discovery of a hidden master.

A new HENI Talks film exploring the artist's life and legacy can be viewed on the [HENI Talks YouTube channel](#). Featuring thought-provoking insights on the significance of Cunningham's work from contemporary art giants - including Damien Hirst, Peter Doig, Sir Frank Bowling, Ralph Taylor and Hans Ulrich Obrist.

Sky Studies

Over several decades, Keith Cunningham created vibrant studies of the sky which engage with colour in a surprisingly contemporary visual language. Produced almost daily, like an intimate visual diary, these pieces record the constant change of clouds and light. A previously unseen group of *Sky Studies*, subdivided into **Watercolours** and **Pastels**, are on display and available to purchase.

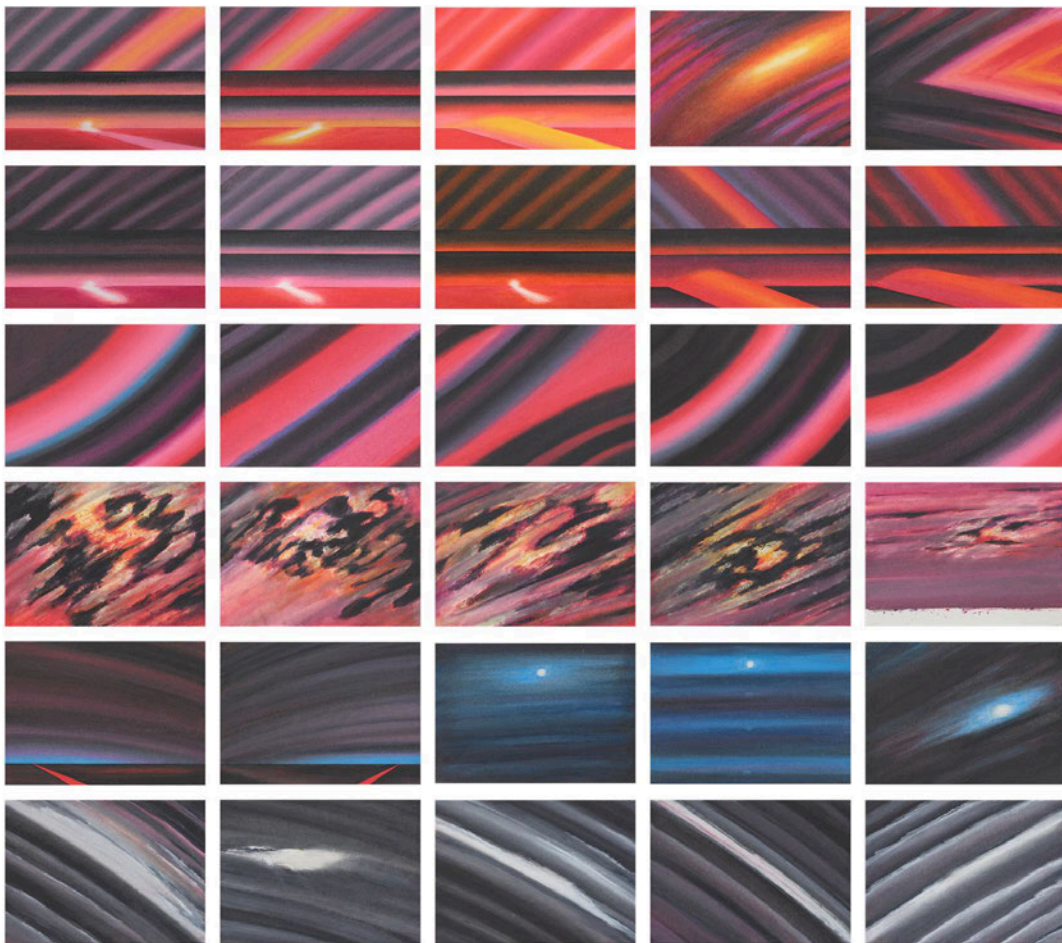
Watercolours

With loose, transparent washes and a lightness of touch, Cunningham's watercolours capture fleeting shifts in weather, colour and light. Their vivid colour palette may have reflected the influence of his travels in Spain, echoing the unearthly tones of painters like Goya, Zurbarán and El Greco, whose work Cunningham admired.



Pastels

By contrast, Cunningham's pastels are more minimalist and structured, leaning into abstraction and reflecting his background in graphic design. Stark contrasts, flattened planes and geometric shapes give these works a distinct visual rhythm, with their stylised compositions and explosive colour palette suggesting a controlled energy, balancing spontaneity with intention.



Oil Paintings

Striking for their psychological depth and material intensity, often heavy in palette and rough in texture, these works evoke the haunting atmosphere of the Old Masters Cunningham admired.

The selection of oils includes 24 works in various sizes produced between 1952 and 1960. The works come framed and have been signed by Keith Cunningham on the verso.

Available to access by all, but sold by appointment with the curator, a hidden room within the exhibition offers collectors and curious visitors a rare opportunity to experience some of the artist's most intimate and rarely seen works, presented in an atmosphere that closely mirrors the privacy in which they were created.

To enquire about the paintings, contact us [here](#).



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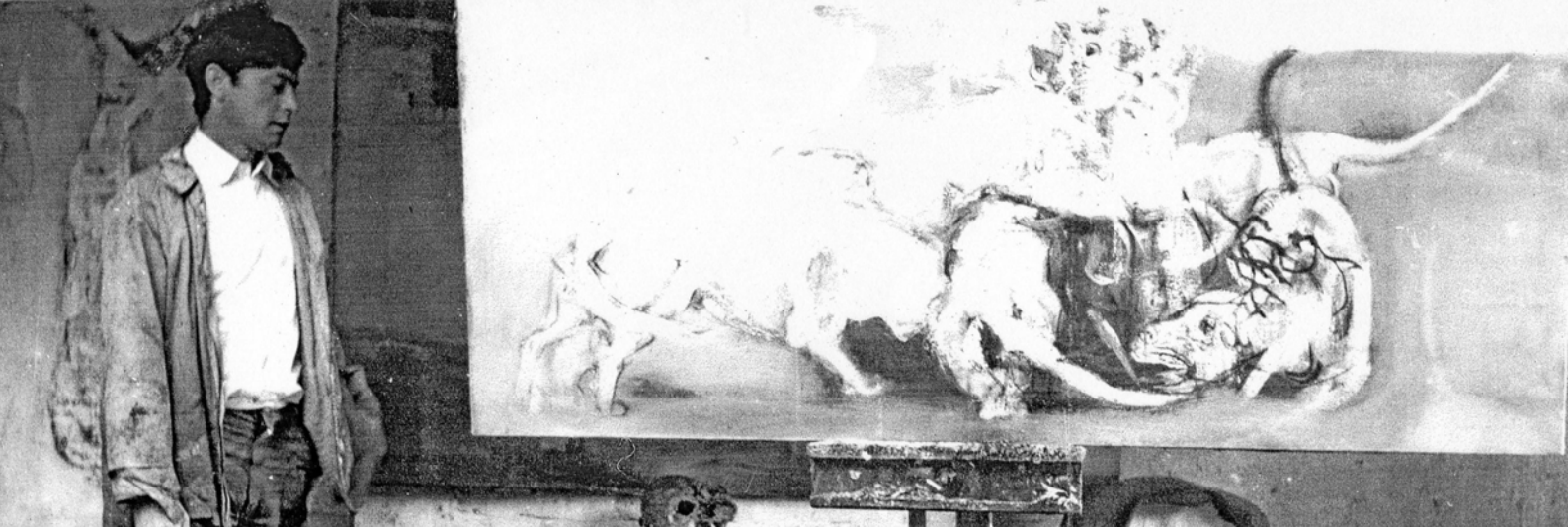
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About Keith Cunningham

Born in Sydney, Australia, in 1929, Keith Cunningham moved to London in 1949, studying first at the Central School of Art before earning a place at the Royal College of Art. There, he trained alongside Frank Auerbach, Leon Kossoff and Joe Tilson, key figures in post-war British art. Painter and teacher John Minton praised Cunningham as 'one of the most talented artists of his year' while Auerbach described his paintings as 'very distinguished' and 'full of nervous life'.

After graduating in 1956, Cunningham exhibited at the Royal Academy and the influential Beaux Arts Gallery, and for three consecutive years was selected to show with the prestigious London Group.

Though praised by critics and collectors alike, Cunningham chose to retreat from the public art world, ceasing to exhibit entirely by 1967. When Cunningham passed in 2014 at the age of 85, he left behind an extraordinary body of work spanning large-scale oils, delicate pen-and-ink drawings, and lyrical sky studies in pastel and watercolour.

Cunningham walked alongside giants but chose obscurity. Upon his death he entrusted his life's work to his wife, designer and Central Saint Martins professor Bobby Hillson. With immense care and reverence, she began to bring his hidden legacy into the light.





Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1997

cs2783

Watercolour on paper

22.4 x 31.8 cm (unframed)

32.8 x 42.3 cm (framed)

Signed and dated by the artist on the verso



Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1995

cs2666

Watercolour on paper

22.4 x 31.8 cm (unframed)

32.8 x 42.3 cm (framed)

Signed and dated by the artist on the verso





Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1998

cs2867

Watercolour on paper

22.4 x 31.8 cm (unframed)

32.8 x 42.3 cm (framed)

Signed and dated by the artist on the verso



Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1995

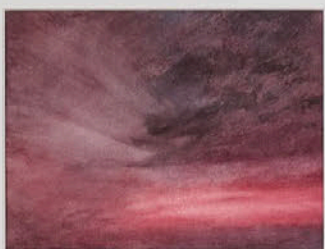
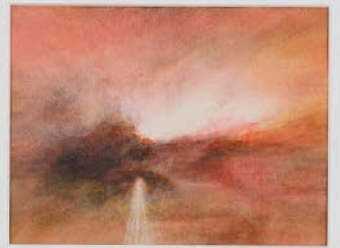
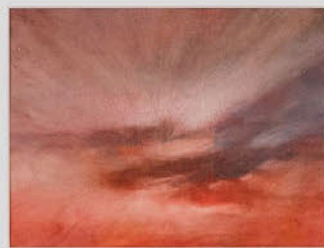
cs2661

Watercolour on paper

22.4 x 31.8 cm (unframed)

32.8 x 42.3 cm (framed)

Signed and dated by the artist on the verso







Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1985

cs0743

Wax crayon on paper

10.6 x 14.8 cm (unframed)

21.2 x 25.4 cm (framed)

Signed and dated by the artist on the verso



Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1985

cs0578

Wax crayon on paper

10.6 x 14.8 cm (unframed)

21.2 x 25.4 cm (framed)

Signed and dated by the artist on the verso



Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1985

cs0540

Wax crayon on paper

10.6 x 14.8 cm (unframed)

21.2 x 25.4 cm (framed)

Signed and dated by the artist on the verso



Keith Cunningham

Untitled, 1985

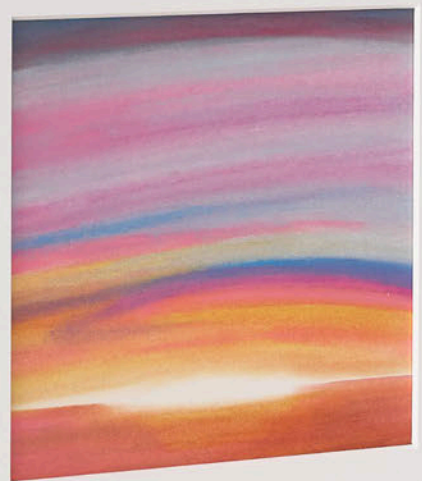
cs0443

Wax crayon on paper

10.6 x 14.8 cm (unframed)

21.2 x 25.4 cm (framed)

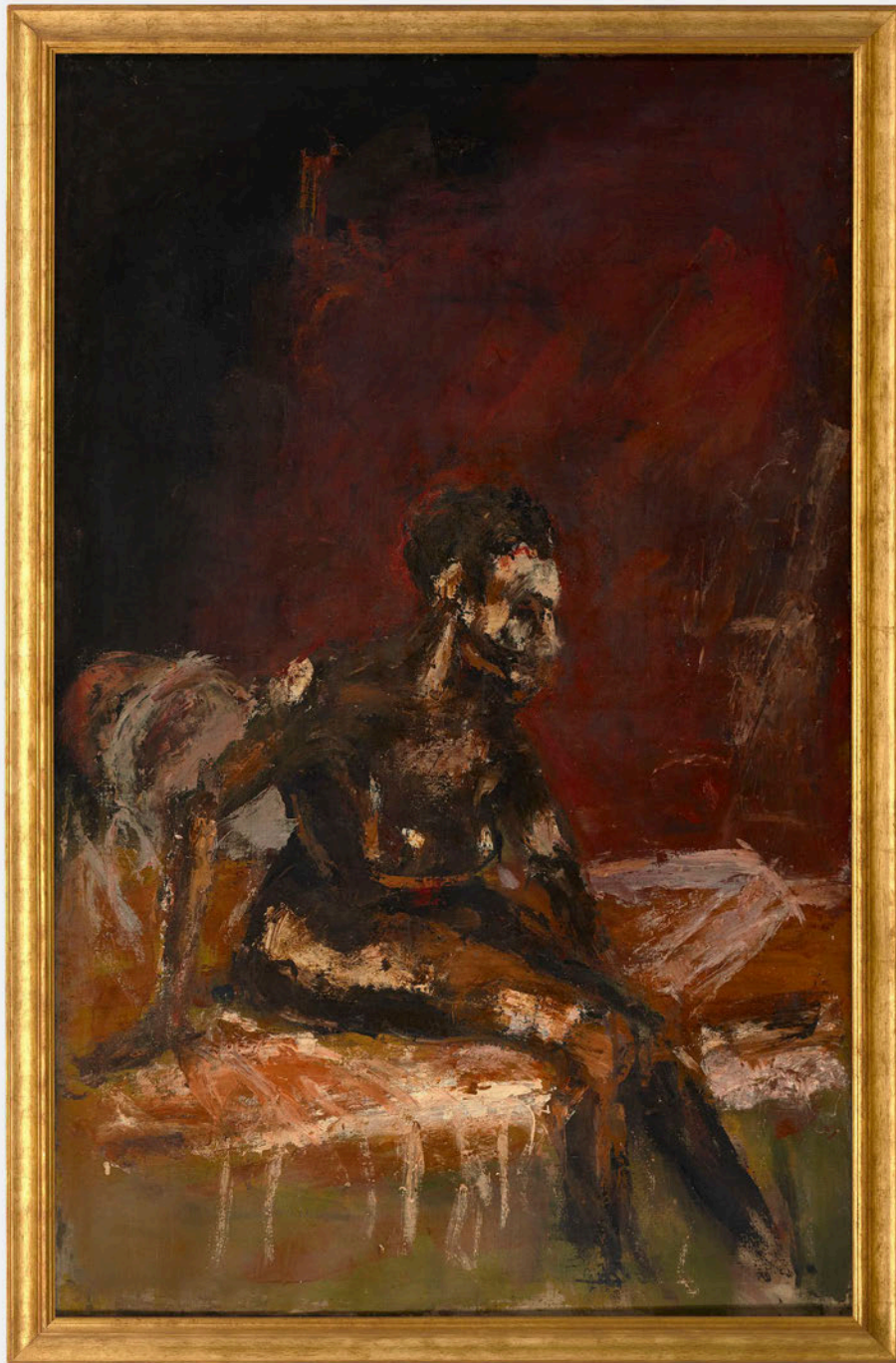
Signed and dated by the artist on the verso







Keith Cunningham
Dog, 1953
Oil on canvas
62 x 51 cm (unframed)
75 x 62 cm (framed)
Signed by the artist on the verso



Keith Cunningham
Woman on a Sofa (Beryl), 1955
Oil on canvas
168 x 106 cm (unframed)
182 x 125 cm (framed)
Signed by the artist on the verso





Keith Cunningham
Old Man, 1953
Oil on board
67.7 x 55.5 cm (unframed)
95 x 82 cm (framed)
Signed by the artist on the verso



Keith Cunningham
Two Hanging Chickens, 1956
Oil on canvas
91 x 69.5 cm (unframed)
107 x 84 cm (framed)
Signed by the artist on the verso

About HENI

HENI works with world-leading artists and estates across various sectors including print-making, releases of original artworks, book publishing, films, exhibitions, news and research. Our mission is to make art accessible to everyone by giving people the chance to learn about and collect art.

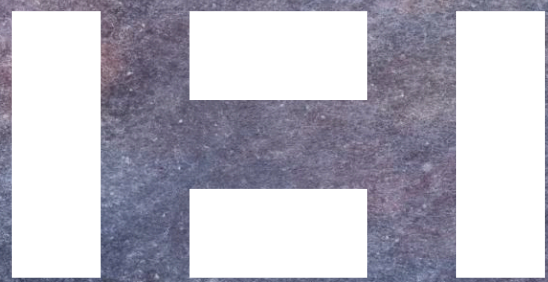
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HENI Primary

HENI Primary enables artists to release original works of art on a dedicated digital platform, bringing the traditional fine-art experience online. The platform focuses on the primary sale of original artworks, which have traditionally been handled exclusively by galleries and directly by artists' studios.

heni.com/primary

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