



THE ART NEWSPAPER

A brush with... Matthew Krishanu

An in-depth interview with the artist on his cultural experiences and greatest influences, from Jean-Michel Basquiat to Gwen John

Artist interview // Podcast [\(Click here to listen\)](#)

Hosted by **Ben Luke**. Produced by **David Clack** and **Aimee Dawson**

29 March 2023



Portrait of Matthew Krishanu

Photo: David Levene

In the first episode of this new series of *A brush with...* Ben Luke talks to Matthew Krishanu about his influences—including writers, composers, film-makers and, of course, other artists—and the cultural experiences that have shaped his life and work.

Krishanu, who was born in 1980 in Bradford, UK, is one of Britain's most distinctive painters. He draws on specific photographic images, including those of his family and his childhood in Bangladesh, yet his paintings are richly ambiguous, as he complicates his source material through emotion, memory, geopolitics, references to art history and literature, and the poetics of paint itself.

The Art Newspaper, March 2023



Matthew Krishanu's *Pink Christ* (2020)
Courtesy Tanya Leighton and the artist. Photo: Peter Mallet.

He discusses the transformative experience of seeing Jean-Michel Basquiat's work, the ongoing influence of El Greco, his response to the work of Gwen John and the art in the caves of Ajanta in India, and his oeuvre's intimate connection with literature, film and music. Plus, he gives insight into his studio life and answers our usual questions, including the ultimate: what is art for?



Matthew Krishanu's *Skeleton* (2014)

Courtesy Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London. Photo: Peter Mallet.



Matthew Krishanu's *Ordination* (2017)

Courtesy Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London. Photo: Peter Mallet.