

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ATTRIBUTED: Francis Bacon
17th October to 16th December 2024

The Century is thrilled to announce the opening of an exhibition featuring the Ravarino Collection, a renowned and debated selection of works attributed to Francis Bacon. The exhibition will be displayed in the Century's club lounge, a members-only space, but it will be open to the public by special appointment Tuesday evenings. Art pieces will be available for purchase. This exhibition will be held shortly before the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition, *Francis Bacon: Human Presence*.

Francis Bacon, one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, is renowned for his unsettling images of the human figure, characterised by a distinctive style that conveys a sense of anguish, isolation, and the darker aspects of the human psyche. Borrowing inspiration from Surrealism, photography, film, and the Old Masters, Bacon's unique approach has left an indelible mark on the art world.

In 1978, at a party in Rome, Francis Bacon met Cristiano Ravarino, a young Italian man with whom he developed a close relationship that lasted until the artist's death in 1992. During their time together, Ravarino claims that Bacon generously gifted him numerous drawings, pastels, and sketches. These works, ranging from small pencil sketches on novel pages to large mixed-media collages, revisit the themes and motifs that define Bacon's more famous paintings, including popes, crucifixions, screaming figures, and distorted faces.

The Ravarino Collection first came to public attention in 1994 and has since been exhibited extensively in Italy, the UK, Europe, China, and Argentina. However, the collection has not been without controversy. Two questions dominate: whether Bacon ever really drew, and if he did whether he created the Ravarino Collection.

Bacon's assertion that he painted fully-formed images straight to canvas has long been a part of his artistic mythos. Yet, evidence has surfaced since 1992 suggesting that Bacon did, in fact, engage in drawing, both as preparation for his paintings and as standalone works given to friends. Notably, art critic David Sylvester, a close associate of Bacon, shifted his opinion to acknowledge the possibility of Bacon's drawing practice.

Despite significant circumstantial, expert, and legal evidence supporting the authenticity of the Ravarino Collection, the Francis Bacon Estate has steadfastly refused to authenticate the works, even labeling them as forgeries in a UK court. Nevertheless, Ravarino has been acquitted of counterfeiting charges, and other legal cases have been dismissed before reaching trial.



The Century is proud to exhibit a selection of these raw and unsettling works. The collection continues to divide opinion and as a result we can't say definitively that these works are by Francis Bacon, just that they are attributed to him. We nonetheless believe the evidence is compelling, and we invite you to view the works and decide for yourselves.

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

Venue:

The Century
61 - 63 Shaftesbury Avenue
London W1D

Dates: 17th October to 16th December 2024

Opening Hours:

The collection is open to view to members during Century opening hours which is Tuesday to Friday: 8:30 am to 6 pm

The collection is open to view to members of the public via special appointment on Tuesday evenings from 5 to 7 pm. Appointments need to be made by email suzette@centuryclub.co.uk

Admission: Free

For more information, please contact suzette@centuryclub.co.uk

About The Century:

The Century, ensconced in the vibrant heart of Soho, is a members club that celebrates the enduring spirit of creativity and innovation.

Established in 2001, the club soon became known as a gathering place for artists, writers, musicians, and other creatives. Spanning three buildings and covering 24,000 square feet, its spacious yet intimate atmosphere fosters a space where members can connect with like-minded individuals and share their work in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. Dedicated to presenting groundbreaking and thought-provoking art on these walls, the club showcases works from both well-known and emerging artists. Located in the heart of London, The Century strives to offer exhibitions that challenge and inspire our audience.

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<https://centuryclub.co.uk/francisbacon/>

Exhibition catalogue to be published shortly.

Please join us for the opening reception on the 17th October, where we will celebrate the launch of this extraordinary exhibition with a special preview of the collection.



Champagne was always Francis Bacon's favourite drink and this exhibition is proudly sponsored by Laurent-Perrier.