

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Francis Bacon's first and last paintings to go on show in Monaco

Study of a Bull, from a "very private collection", has never been exhibited before

by MARTIN BAILEY | 23 February 2016



Bacon's first: Watercolour (1929) © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved, DACS 2016. Bacon's last: Study of a Bull (1991) © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved, DACS 2016. Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd

An exhibition on Francis Bacon in Monaco will include the artist's first and last paintings. The show, opening in July at the Grimaldi Forum, is being organised with the recently established Francis Bacon MB Art Foundation, set up by the Lebanese-born businessman Majid Boustany. He is a Swiss national now resident in Monaco, where he owns a stake in the Hotel Metropole. In the past few years Boustany has acquired 2,500 Bacon items, mainly documentary material but also some important early paintings.

Boustany bought Bacon's first work, entitled Watercolour (1929), after it sold at Christie's in 2013 for £183,000. It was painted just after Bacon's return to London from Berlin. The picture was first owned by Eric Allden, Bacon's probable lover at the time.



Francis Bacon in Nice, March 1979 © Eddy Batache/MB Art Collection

The last painting, *Study of a Bull*, was completed in 1991, a few months before Bacon's death in Madrid in April 1992. Partly inspired by Picasso's bull scenes, it has never been exhibited. The picture is being lent by a "very private collector", according to the exhibition's curator, Martin Harrison.

Although Tate Liverpool is holding its own Bacon show, the Tate is lending *Study of a Dog* (1952). The Monaco exhibition will include 60 Bacon paintings, alongside works by artists that inspired him, such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Giacometti, Léger and Soutine. After Monaco the exhibition will go on in a slightly different form to the Guggenheim Bilbao, where the focus will be on Bacon's links with Spain.

- *Francis Bacon: Monaco and French Culture, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco, 2 July-4 September*
- *Francis Bacon: From Picasso to Velázquez, Guggenheim Bilbao, 30 September-8 January 2017*
- *Francis Bacon: Invisible Rooms, Tate Liverpool, 18 May-18 September*