

FRANCIS BACON INSTITUTE OPENS IN MONACO

Text by [Natalia Rachlin](#) | | Photography courtesy of [Francis Bacon MB Art Foundation](#)

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The new Francis Bacon MB Art Foundation in Monaco.

Visceral, haunting, gripping, and grotesque are just a few of the words that are used to describe the work of the British painter Francis Bacon, arguably one of the more polarizing artists of the 20th century. Yesterday marked what would have been Bacon's 105th birthday, so whether you love or

hate his work, it seems particularly appropriate that the newly minted Francis Bacon MB Art Foundation, a private nonprofit institute dedicated to the figurative artist, opens this week in Monaco.



The foundation is housed in a 19th-century villa.

Founded by property developer and devoted Bacon enthusiast and collector Majid Boustany, the foundation will place particular emphasis on the time when the British artist lived and worked in Monaco between 1946 and the early 1950s, drawing inspiration from the principality's light, landscapes, and casinos.

Also in focus will be Bacon's lesser-known early years, which he spent as an interior decorator in London, establishing himself as a furniture, rug, glass, wood, and mirror designer. "The geometry of some of his furniture and his experience with interior spaces and predilection for mirrors, tubular steel

furniture, and curtain hangings never left him and filtered into his paintings," says Boustany, who notes that the foundation's own interior palette was heavily influenced by the tonality used in the work Bacon executed during his stint in Monaco.



Bacon's easel stands next to a photograph of the artist taken in his studio in Reece Mews in 1977 by Carlos Freire.

The foundation, housed in an elegant 19th-century villa, will showcase a number of rare items from Bacon's furniture and rug design period, in addition to a unique photographic archive on the artist, a comprehensive collection of exhibition catalogues, a wide selection of the artist's graphic works, and an array of working documents from Bacon's various studios.



A round mirror—inspired by one in Bacon's studio—reflects marble-and-leather shelves and a bronze-and-wood vitrine housing the artist's roulette wheel.

"An extensive library on Francis Bacon has been built in the foundation headquarters, offering an essential resource to scholars, and some of the items on display in the foundation have never been exhibited," says Boustany. "In the intimacy of this house, art historians, scholars, and the general public will be able to further the knowledge on Bacon's work, life, and methodology."

Francis Bacon MB Art Foundation, 21 Boulevard d'Italie, Monaco; mbartfoundation.com