

Francis Bacon The Disorderly Genius



By Bruno Sabatier
Owner, Galerie de Paris

It seems appropriate to me, within the scope of this column devoted to the history of art, to speak in first place of he who is surely one of the greatest cultural phenomenons of our time -- Francis Bacon.

Dawn Ades, of the University of Essex, and Andrew Forges, of Yale University, both of whom are world renown art historians, wrote in their remarkable book on the artist, "For almost 40 years, Francis Bacon has been regarded as one of the world's most important painters...He is known above all for his powerful depiction of the human figure captured at moments of extreme emotional tension."

Indeed, all the world's great experts recognize the primordial importance of Francis Bacon. Among them, Alan Bowness, director of the esteemed Tate Gallery: "Francis Bacon is surely the greatest living painter; no artist in our century has presented the human predicament with such insight and feeling. The paintings have the inescapable mark of the present; I am tempted to add the word alas, but for Bacon the virtues of truth and honesty transcend the tasteful. They give to his paintings a terrible beauty that has placed them among the most memorable images in the entire history of art. And these paintings have a timeless quality that allows them to hang naturally in our museums beside those of Rembrandt and Van Gogh."

Francis Bacon was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1909. He produced his first exposition in 1930 and now lives and works in London. His unrestrained thirst for life impels him to lead a very liberal existence, searching incessantly; his quest for plenitude through alcohol, drugs, and homosexuality, his tormented universe, all are found throughout Bacon's work, accentuated by his own definition of his art: "I think that art is a representation and I think that in abstract art, where there is no representation, there is nothing other than the painter's estheticism and his few sensations."

"On one hand, there is the will to represent and therefore to not be abstract; on the other hand there is the will to not illustrate and therefore create an image which would move away from a traditional form of representation."

Bacon has always been strongly opposed to

painting an illustration, to painting which tells a story or becomes narrative. "Illustrational form tells you through the intelligence immediately what the form is about, whereas a non-illustrational form works first upon sensation and then slowly leaks back into the fact."

Owing to his originality and realism, Francis Bacon's intimate, personalized work is beyond all classification. Because of his accomplishment and contribution to the history of art, he is considered, without any doubt, just as important as the Impressionist, Cubist, Surrealist, and Letterist cultural revolutions.

And in accordance with this considerable historical importance, collectors rival over Francis Bacon's original work, whose prices often reach beyond one million dollars. Investors are investing heavily in his work and one can say that this kind of investment represents today the most generating of profits.

Ron Stephenson has been named Southern Nevada chairperson of the 1986 Jerry Lewis Telethon to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), announced Jeanne Vance, president of the national voluntary health agency's Southern Nevada chapter.

"We're proud to have caring individuals like Ron Stephenson working closely with MDA and its supporters," said Ms. Vance. "Our Telethon team is dedicated to making this year's show another record-breaker." Telethon '85 was the most successful in the show's history and raised over \$33 million in pledges.

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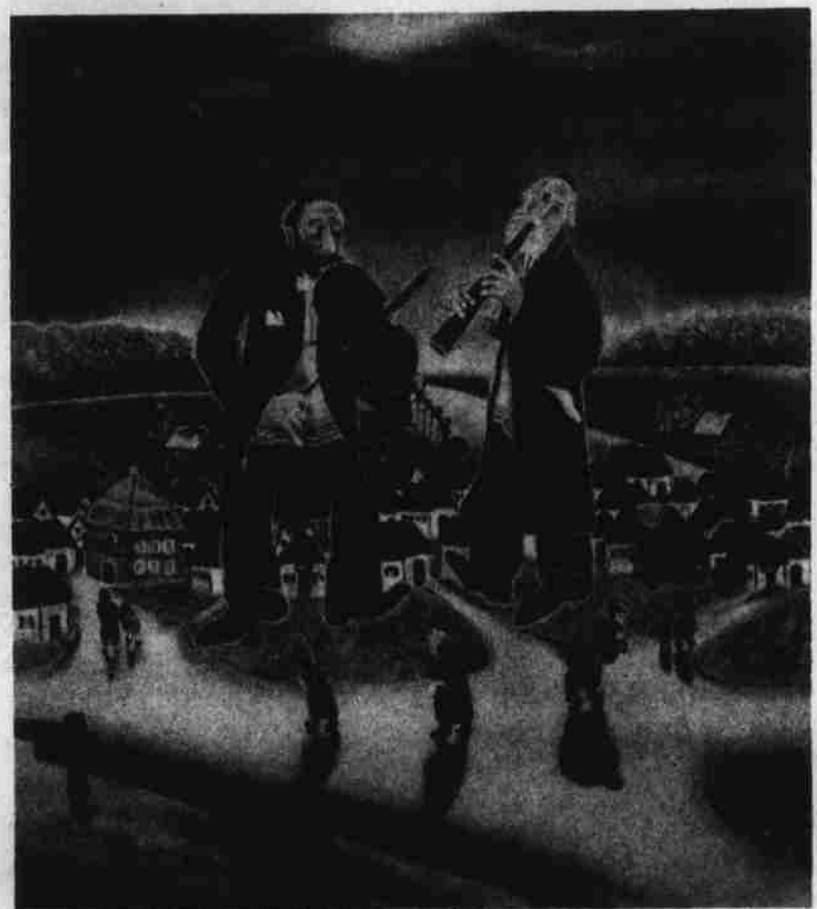
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