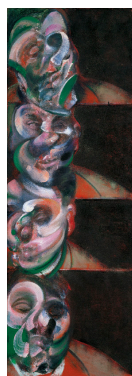


PRESS RELEASE

25 Savile Row
London W1S 2ER
T. +44 (0)20 7287 5013

GALLERY HOURS:
Tue-Fri: 10:00-18:00
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ENDLESS VARIATIONS

3 OCTOBER—15 DECEMBER 2023

From 3 October to 15 December 2023, Ordovas presents *Endless Variations*, the first exhibition dedicated to the work of two of the most important artists of the twentieth century: Francis Bacon (1909–1992) and Andy Warhol (1928–1987). The exhibition explores common interests and influences shared by the artists – each of whom was central to defining the art of their own generation – not least their use of colour, love of photography and serialisation of images. It includes rarely seen paintings, photographs and archive material related to both artists and is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue with an essay written by Martin Harrison, leading authority on the work of Francis Bacon and editor of the Francis Bacon catalogue raisonné.

At the core of the exhibition are seven paintings; four by Bacon and three by Warhol, the majority of which have rarely, if ever, been shown in London. These include *Self-Portrait* (four panels), the first seminal self-portrait by Andy Warhol, which was executed in 1963–1964, soon after he started to experiment with images taken in photobooths. It has since featured as the cover image of the catalogues for the major Warhol retrospective held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Pompidou Centre, Paris, in 1989–90, and is on public view in London for the first time in over 30 years having last been shown when that retrospective travelled to the Hayward Gallery. Francis Bacon's *Four Studies for a Self-Portrait* was executed in 1967 and is also based on a four-part photograph taken in a photobooth. Shown at the artist's legendary retrospective at the Grand Palais, Paris, which opened in October 1971, and which then travelled to the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf and the Galleria del Milione in Milan, it has only been seen once in public in the last 50 years. Another work based on a series of photographic portraits is *Three Studies for Portrait of George Dyer (on light ground)*, 1964, which was also included in the Paris retrospective in 1971.

While they were aware of each other's work, Bacon and Warhol belonged to different generations of artists; Warhol was central to the younger Pop art movement whose members were treated almost as celebrities, while Bacon and his peers had remained faithful to portraiture and oil painting, something that Warhol and his associates admired and respected but treated as somewhat passé. Nonetheless, both artists bucked the prevailing trend of Abstract Expressionism that had dominated Western painting since the 1950s. They were introduced in Paris in 1974 by David Hockney, who was being thrown a party by Claude Bernard. They

Francis Bacon, *Four Studies for a Self-Portrait*, 1967

Andy Warhol, *Self-Portrait*, 1963-1964

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met again in New York in 1975 at a luncheon organised by the socialite Lee Radziwill, Bacon having travelled to America for the opening of his retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. At the opening, Warhol remarked upon Bacon's radical and bold use of colour which he confessed to copying in his own portraits. On the same trip Bacon visited the Factory, Warhol's studio, and also had his portrait taken by the American artist on his Polaroid camera. In later interviews with the art critic David Sylvester, Bacon stated his admiration for Warhol's revolutionary serialisation of works which he found made those objects intrinsically interesting.

The artists' use of colour is also explored through Bacon's *Portrait of Henrietta Moraes*, 1969, which is shown in London for the first time in almost 30 years, and Warhol's *Five Deaths on Turquoise*, 1963, a painting from the artist's 'Death and Disaster' series which has never previously been shown in the UK. This theme extends to '*Study for Portrait of John Edwards*', circa 1984, which depicts Bacon's companion and muse on a bubblegum pink background; this painting remained in the artist's possession until his death and has never previously been shown in London. The portrait also explores themes of movement alongside Warhol's *Merce Cunningham*, 1963 - a rarely seen work which is on view in London for the first time.

Bacon and Warhol's love of photography was also shared with Peter Beard (1938-2020), the renowned American artist and wildlife photographer, with whom both had a close friendship. Bacon painted nine major portraits of Beard and used his photographs as inspiration for other works, while Warhol collaborated with Beard during the 1970s and 1980s and had a neighbouring oceanfront house in Montauk. Such was the strength of these friendships it is perhaps surprising that Bacon and Warhol did not meet more often. The exhibition includes two related works by Peter Beard (1938-2020); *Andy Warhol on his Birthday, Montauk Point, Long Island*, 1972/2004, and *Andy Warhol on his Birthday*, 1975/2005.

The exhibition also includes a range of archival and contextual materials including previously unseen photographs of Francis Bacon and George Dyer at Roland Gardens in 1967 taken by John Deakin (1912-1972), and photo strips of Francis Bacon, George Dyer and David Plante taken in Aix-en-Provence in 1966 and subsequently mounted by Bacon onto the back cover of a book which was last shown at the artist's retrospective in 2008-09 at Tate Britain, the Prado Museum, Madrid, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

PRESS ENQUIRIES

Matthew Paton | communications@ordovasart.com | +44 (0)77 1111 2425

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