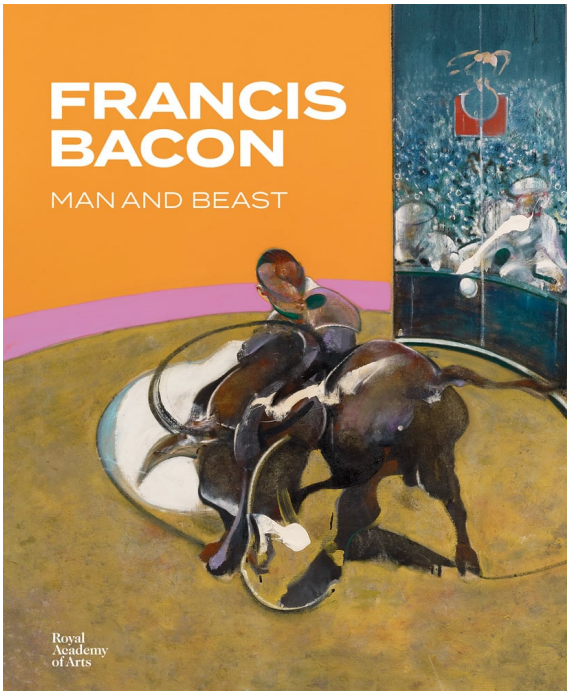
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Francis Bacon

Man and Beast

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- A major study of Francis Bacon's paintings of animals, revealing much about the human condition

Francis Bacon is considered one of the most important painters of the 20th century. A major exhibition of his paintings at the Royal Academy of Arts, planned for 2020 but postponed because of the pandemic, explores the role of animals in his work – not least the human animal.

Having often painted dogs and horses, in 1969 Bacon first depicted bullfights. In this powerful series of works, the interaction between man and beast is dangerous and cruel, but also disturbingly intimate. Both are contorted in their anguished struggle, and the erotic lurks not far away: 'Bullfighting is like boxing,' Bacon once said. 'A marvellous aperitif to sex.' Twenty-two years later, a lone bull was to be the subject of his final painting.

In this fascinating publication – a significant addition to the literature on Bacon – expert authors discuss Bacon's approach to animals and identify his varied sources of inspiration, which included wildlife photography and the motion studies of Eadweard Muybridge. They contend that, by considering animals in states of vulnerability, anger and unease, Bacon was able to lay bare the role of instinctual behaviour in the human condition.

Images below, left to right:
Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Fragment of a Crucifixion*, 1950. Oil and cotton wool on canvas, 140 x 108.5 cm. Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Photo Hugo Maertens
Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Study for Portrait (with Two Owls)*, 1963. Oil on canvas, 198.1 x 144.8 cm. Private collection. Photo Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd
Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Man with Dog*, 1953. Oil on canvas, 152 x 117 cm. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Gift of Seymour H. Knox Jr, 1955, inv. K1955:3. Photo Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd
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