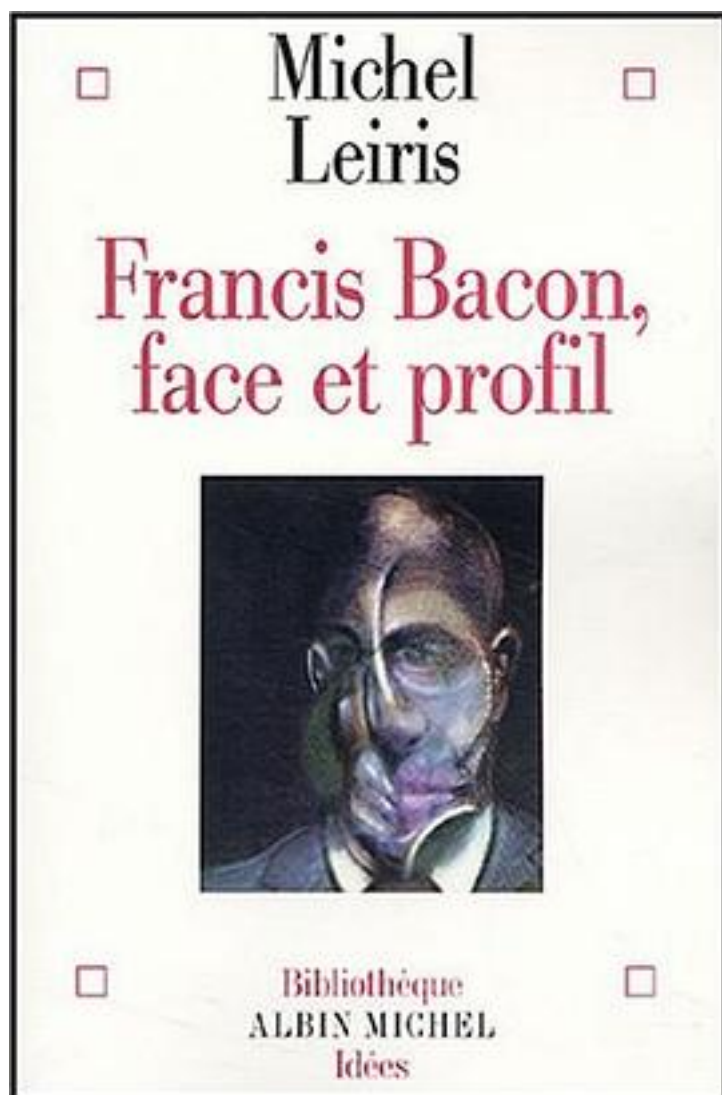


Francis Bacon, face et profil



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The painting of Francis Bacon (1909-1992) defines the shattered self-image of Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War, and his wracked human figures are now basic to the twentieth century's visual lexicon. Clearing away all moral scaffolding, Bacon made room for what he called "the brutality of fact" to implode onto his canvases, paring back his subjects to animal function and bloodlust. In Bacon the figure is almost always isolated and pitched against an unforgiving interior lit only by a bare light bulb (one could write an interesting history of the light bulb in art, tracking its trajectory from, say, Van Gogh to Vuillard's lamplight, to the desolate hanging bulbs of Bacon and Philip Guston). Francis Bacon had few better critics of his work than himself--as witnessed in this superb statement of intent to David Sylvester: "What I want to do is distort the thing far beyond the appearance, but in the distortion to bring it back to a recording of the appearance." But one of the few writers whose sensibility he trusted was the French author Michel Leiris. Leiris shared Bacon's feel for nerve-end acuity in art, as his great autobiography "Manhood" attests, and with Bacon's sanction, wrote the essay for Poligrafa's landmark monograph of 1987, which also included a selection of 240 key paintings made by Bacon himself. That volume, an essential text for Bacon fans and scholars, is here revised and reprinted for the first time.

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标签

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Leiris,Michel

Bacon,Francis

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