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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	JTS	I.24

Bacon Photographs  
for Melville

S. Maylott, 31<sup>or 17</sup> <sup>7</sup>/<sub>n</sub> Arington Rd.  
Swindon. /1932

Late Gallery - 1945

Contemporary Art Society 1946

~~Worcester~~ - 1946

Arts Council, Soudon 1949

R. B. Fleming + Co., 1951

Africa House

Kingsway W.C.2 - Soudon

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Alfred Carlbach, 19<sup>55</sup>-<sup>56</sup>  
 The Whitehouse, Randolph  
 Crescent  
 London W.9

A → Eileen Tweedy, 19<sup>55</sup>  
 London

Charles Reynolds, 19<sup>55</sup>  
 London

Gerald Howson, 19<sup>C. 56-57</sup>  
 43 Warrington Crescent  
 London W.9

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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J. T. SOBY  
Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Conn.

Dec. 1, 1959

Mr. Robert Melville,  
10 Gower News Mansions,  
London W.C. 1, England.

Dear Robert:

The Museum of Modern Art has asked me to write a short book on Francis Bacon, and I badly need your help. There is so little material on him aside from your own admirable article in Horizon and Sam Hunter's in the Magazine of Art that the task may prove difficult, especially in that I understand that Bacon hates to write letters or answer questions about his career. Is this true and, if so, is there anyone in London who could do a sort of interview with him and ask him questions which I could write out, the interviewer being paid whatever fee seems fair? It's impossible for me to get to London before late spring, and the Museum wants me to do the book this winter.

I think offhand of such questions as which painters of the past he admires most and which contemporary artists in addition to Sickert, Matthew Smith and Sutherland. I also need to know about his trips to Africa; I gather he has been there several times. And many other questions, of course. I am not asking you yourself to do the interview, since I know how busy you are. But there must be someone close to Bacon who would have the time and perhaps enjoy talking to him. I've written the Marlborough Gallery and the Hanover Gallery for photographs, but I am extremely anxious to include in my text as much first-hand material as possible about this extraordinary artist. (Incidentally, Bacon seems to me much the finest painter in the Museum's current show, "New Images of Man.")

Do let me know at your convenience whether this plan seems at all practical to you and how I might carry it out. I have never met Bacon nor seen his studio, alas, so that I have no personal observations to help matters along.

Very best to you and thanks,

Sincerely,

P.S. I'm sending you a copy of my Miro book with my compliments.

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16/12/59

10 GOWER MEWS MANSIONS LONDON WC1 MUSEUM 1755

Dear Jim, This is just a note to tell you that I have received your letter & the copy of the questionnaire. I'm terribly sorry that I mentioned Marlborough's project to you because, whatever happens to that idea, it is very important that you should publish your study, and after all, nothing could be better for the international reputation of a painter than a monograph under the imprint of the Museum of Modern Art. Furthermore, I really mean it when I say that I don't want to write about Francis. (Anything I might want to say is unpublishable).

Harry Fischer is in Germany at present, and will not be back until after Christmas — so if I can find out where Francis is, I'll write to him.

p.6.



POST EAST  
for CHRISTMAS



MR J. T. Soby  
Brushy Ridge Road,  
New Canaan,  
Conn.  
U.S.A.

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Erica Brausew phoned me yesterday evening to say that she had heard from you & I have arranged to spend an evening with her immediately after Christmas to go through whatever Boeser documentation she has. I think she will be able to send you quite a lot of material.

Do please go on with your study. The task couldn't be in more capable hands, and I cannot tell you how much I look forward to seeing it in print.

With very best wishes to you both for Christmas & the New Year

Robert



POST EAST  
for CHRISTMAS



MR J. T. Soby  
Brushy Ridge Road,  
New Canaan,  
Conn.  
U.S.A.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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10 GOWER MEWS MANSIONS LONDON WC1 MUSEUM 1755

Dear Jim, Thank you very much for your letter. <sup>3/12/59</sup>  
 I can't tell you how delighted I am to hear that you are writing a book on Francis Bacon. Marlborough have asked me to do a book about him and probably think I'm working on it - but I'm not, & have no intention of doing so, and now I shall be able to say that there's no need for me to do anything about it. You have already written about him with great warmth & perception in 'Modern Art & the New Past' and I look forward eagerly to your more detailed study.

The problem of getting reliable information about him - let alone from him - is an acute one. At the moment, I think that

Harry Fischer of the Marlborough is more likely than anyone else to get answers to questions out of him. I have a lunch date with Fischer next week & will raise the matter with him. Meanwhile, if you will send Fischer a list of the questions to be answered, and at the same time send me a copy, I feel sure that between us we will be able to obtain a few facts.

For what they are worth, I enclose an early article of mine which you may not have seen, and a broadcast about his Van Gogh variations, and a French critic's introduction to an I.C.A. show.

James Bonford, 'Laines', Aldbourne, Wiltshire, and Robert Sainsbury, 5 Smith Square, London SW1 are the biggest private collectors here, if you should have trouble over photographs.

How kind of you to send me your 'Miro'! I shall listen every morning for the postman until it arrives.  
 all my regards, Robert M. [Melville]

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Dec. 12, 1959

Dear Robert:

Mary, many thanks for your prompt and most helpful answer to my letter about Bacon. I do hope you're not giving up the idea of doing a book on him because of me; I would gladly give up my book if you'd care to write one. Actually we had heard in the Museum that a Bacon monograph was planned by Lund Humphries, and Monroe Wheeler wrote them to be sure we were not interfering with their plans. They replied that they had no such book in mind at the present time, so we went ahead. But it's not too late to change if you'd like to do the Marlborough book. Do be frank. You know far more about Bacon than I, of course, and you are right on the scene, whereas I can't get to London until late spring, as I wrote you.

Meanwhile, I think your suggestion that Harry Fischer ask Bacon some questions is a fine one. I am sending him the first list of questions today, and your copy is enclosed. I think the answers may be useful whether you do the book or I do it. There is astonishingly little biographical material on Bacon. I assure he dislikes material of this kind, but it does have its value, especially when included in the first book on him wherein the facts must be straight.

I'm delighted to have and have read with great pleasure your early article and the broadcast about the van Gogh series. (I wish to God we could do broadcasts of that kind in this country. Oddly enough an amazing number of our T.V. programs revolve around the art world, but these are invariably mystery stories involving forgeries, artists' eccentric behavior, thefts of masterpieces and such.)

I've rounded up as many photographs as possible of Bacons owned in this country. It's been difficult in that several dealers are now involved, and I'm not yet finished with the task.

I asked the Museum to send you my Miro book with my compliments last week. I hope it has an errata slip enclosed. All these years everyone, including Jim Sweeney, has said that Miro was born in Montroig. I repeated the error in my book and Miro didn't correct it when Pierre Matisse read him my text. But when he got here Miro said shyly or slyly - I can't decide which - that he was really born in Barcelona and that his father bought the ~~farm~~ farm in Montroig because of Miro's frail health as an infant. Oh, well ...

Very best to you and please let me know if you decide you'd like to do the book for Marlborough after all; I will understand completely.

Sincerely,

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21/1/60.

10 GOWER MEWS MANSIONS LONDON WC1 MUSEUM 1755

Dear Jim, This is a note to tell you that a lot of material will very soon be on the way to you from Erica Brausen & Harry Fischer. Erica has done an excellent job of collecting and dating photographs of works painted before and during the Hanover Gallery period, including a number of works which did not pass through her hands. Harry Fischer and I had a long conversation with Francis last night (at the Reform Club, of all places) and although the yield of fact was small I think you will find it better than nothing. H.F. will be sending our summary on to you. You will find that one or two questions that Francis couldn't

answer — how many paintings on the Innocent X theme; how many paintings so far executed — will be pretty well answered by the other documents you receive.

Your splendid Miro book arrived in time for Christmas — so I was able to treat it as a very handsome Christmas present. Thank you so very much. You write about him with immense sympathy and understanding. I find, by the way, that I'm always getting your 'Modern Art and the New Past' out of the shelves. You write in a way which gives me a kind of moral support.

All my regards Robert [Melville]

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J. T. SOBY  
Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Conn.

Jan. 13, 1962

Mr. Robert Melville,  
Arthur Jeffress Gallery,  
28 Davies St.,  
London W. 1, England.

cc. Miss Brausen  
Mr. Fischer

Dear Robert:

I was delighted to get your letter of Jan. 9 and to hear that you are preparing a catalogue of Francis Bacon's paintings in collaboration with Ronald Alley. My own book on Bacon is much more than half done, but I've been held up by an endless series of interruptions- constant meetings at the Museum in New York in this crucial year of our Fund Drive and, above all, a series of operations to get rid of some fatty tumors around (thank God, not on) my eyes. I'm certain now that my book will not be done in time for the Bacon retrospective in Europe which Mr. Fischer has planned for the early spring. I don't think it will be ready until fall. This is especially true in that I get more and more fascinated by the subject, now want the book to be much larger than originally planned and want it to include a fairly large number of plates of related material - Cimabue, El Greco, Daumier, van Gogh, press photos and film stills, etc. It all takes time, and I'm further handicapped in that blessed Frances Pemas at the Museum, who's seen my books through the press for years, has retired.

I would so like to send you all the photographs of Bacon's paintings which I now have from English and American sources. The difficulty here is that they are now arranged in my files, not according to chronological order but by subject and cross references to the text. Would it do if I sent you photostats, at our Museum's expense, of all the photographs I have, plus the really superb list of paintings which Erica Brausen made for me. This list goes only through October, 1958, but seems extremely complete. Perhaps Miss Brausen has a copy of the list; if not, I'll have mine photostated at once and send it to you. Just let me know.

I'm now at the point of working on the recent Bacons, only a few of which have made their way to this country and I, alas, haven't been in London for several years. When I've chosen from photographs the late works I've planned to use in my book, may I send you a list to see if you approve? I do hope so.

Melissa joins me in sending very best regards. And if you need the photographs rather than photostats of them, let me know and I'll put them in chronological order and send them to you.

Sincerely,

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	JTS	I.24

J. T. SOBY  
Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Conn.

Jan. 19, 1962

Mr. Robert Melville,  
Arthur Jeffress Gallery,  
28 Davies St.,  
London W I, England.

c. Miss Brausen  
Mr. Fischer  
Miss Hoeller

Dear Robert:

Your cable arrived this afternoon, asking me to go ahead with the photostats of the Bacon photographs. I'd go ahead with them at once, but I want to be sure first that you have received your copy of my letter of Jan. 15 to Mr. Fischer.

In this letter I strongly urged Mr. Fischer to have new photographic prints made from the Bacon negatives, all but a few of which are in London. I suggested that this would be quicker, cheaper (the current price for photostats in New York is \$1 each, which I'd be glad to pay, but which is about as high as the cost of new photographs) and more efficient for reproduction purposes. I didn't know when I suggested photostats that Mr. Fischer was planning an illustrated catalogue, with 100 full-page illustrations. This afternoon I discussed the whole problem with Miss Pearl Hoeller, who is in charge of all reproduction matters at the Museum of Modern Art. She tells me that we are not allowed by law to take photographs of original photographs without the express permission of the photographer who made the originals, in case this, I gather, primarily Carlebach in London, with whom the Museum has had previous dealings and who is quite rightly strict about reproduction rights on prints he has made. So that brings us down to a decision between photostats and having new prints made from existing negatives. I suggest the latter solution if at all possible, and I should think that Miss Brausen and Mr. Fischer could work it out, since both are deeply interested in Bacon's work.

Meanwhile, of course, we're losing time. I've lost so much time for all of you, thanks to these damned tumor operations on my face, that I feel most guilty. But I am working again full blast, and I hope I'll get my own Bacon book done before too long.

Let us know ~~soon~~ as soon as you can about the photostats or photos from existing negatives. I can have the photostats done very quickly in New York; but they'll be useless for plate purposes.

Very best regards,

Sincerely,

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James Thrall Soby Esq.,  
Brushy Ridge Road,  
New Canaan,  
Connecticut,  
U.S.A.

23rd January 1961

Dear Jim,

Thank you so much for your kind letter of 13th January. You will have received my cable by now, and I very much hope that you will be able to let us have the photostats in accordance with your wonderful suggestion. I consulted Mr. Fischer and Ronald Alley of the Tate before sending my cable. Our problem is that there are no other copies of many of the earlier photographs and that records of negatives are practically non-existent. So that unless we are able to show photographers the images, some of them will not be able to find negatives. A photostat copy of Erica's list together with your American list will be of inestimable value.

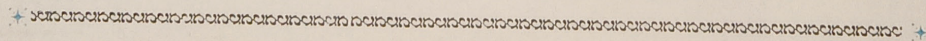
I am both relieved and delighted to hear that your Bacon monograph is three-parts done. I had heard an unhappy rumour that your illness may have caused you to put off the task indefinitely. It would naturally be quite impossible for you to part with your material at this point, and I can't thank you enough for so generously suggesting an alternative.

I spent the weekend in the country with Roland and Lee Penrose, and they both asked me to send you and Melissa their warmest regards along with my own.

*Margaret Curtis*  
(Secretary)

RM/mc

Dictated by Mr. Melville, and signed in his absence.



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W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

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SOBY=

BRUSHYRIDGEROAD NEWCANAAN (CONN)=

MANY THANKS STOP PLEASE SEND PHOTOSTATS SOON WITH NAMES  
AND REFERENCE NUMBERS OF PHOTOGRAPHERS ON BACK WHERE  
POSSIBLE STOP WARMEST REGARDS=

MELVILLE.

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THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

photostats, and I am only sorry that you have been put to so much unnecessary trouble. As you say, Miss Brausen and Mr. Fischer will have to get together on this problem.

Meanwhile, it would certainly be of the greatest possible assistance to Ronald Alley and myself if you could send us a copy of your list of American collectors.

It is splendid news that you are once more deeply involved in your Bacon book after your operation.

With warmest good wishes and many thanks,

Sincerely yours,

*Robert Melville*  
Robert Melville

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DLS LT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

MELVILLE JANUARY 23, 1962

ARTHUR JEFFRESS  
28 DAVIES STREET  
LONDON  
(ENGLAND)

Western Union

ARTHUR JEFFRESS  
GALLERY  
DEEPLY REGRET MUSEUM'S COUNSEL FORBIDS DUPLICATION  
OF BACON PHOTOGRAPHS WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT OF OWNERS  
28 DAVIES STREET LONDON W1 MAYFAIR 7896  
OF PICTURES AND OWNERS OF NEGATIVES. WARMEST REGARDS.

SOBY

CHARGE: Francis Bacon catalogue

Brushy Ridge Road,  
New Canaan,  
Connecticut,  
U.S.A.

bc: Mr. Monroe Wheeler  
Mr. James Thrall Soby  
Mr. Richard H. Koch  
De: Miss Pearl Moeller

25th January 1962

Thank you so much for your letter of the 19th, and your cable. I understand about the impossibility of obtaining photostats, and I am only sorry that you have been put to so much unnecessary trouble. As you say, Miss Brausen and Dr. Fischer will have to get together on this problem.

Meanwhile, it would certainly be of the greatest possible assistance to Ronald Alley and myself if you could send me a copy of your list of American collectors.

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With warmest good wishes and many thanks,

Sincerely yours,

*Robert Melville*

Robert Melville

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J. T. SOBY



James Thrall Soby Esq.,  
Brushy Ridge Road,  
New Canaan,  
Connecticut,  
U.S.A.

25th January 1962

Dear Jim,

Thank you so much for your letter of the 19th, and your cable. I understand about the impossibility of obtaining photostats, and I am only sorry that you have been put to so much unnecessary trouble. As you say, Miss Brausen and Mr. Fischer will have to get together on this problem.

Meanwhile, it would certainly be of the greatest possible assistance to Ronald Alley and myself if you could send me a copy of your list of American collectors.

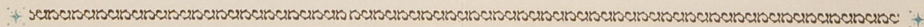
It is splendid news that you are once more deeply involved in your Bacon book after your operation.

With warmest good wishes and many thanks,

Sincerely yours,

*Robert Melville*  
Robert Melville

RM/mc



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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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J. T. SOBY  
Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Conn.

Jan. 27, 1962

Mr. Robert Melville,  
The Arthur Jeffress Gallery,  
28 Davies St.,  
London W 1, England.

Dear Robert:

As a personal matter, I want to tell you how sorry I was that Monroe Wheeler and I had to send you those two cablegrams on Wednesday last, his to Mr. Fischer, mine to you.

The Museum's lawyers insisted that we had to do so, since the whole matter of use of photographs is far more serious, legally speaking, than ever before. As you almost certainly know, about eighty percent of the Bacon photographs I have were sent me by Erica Brausen and only those of very recent works by Mr. Fischer. I felt duty-bound to tell the lawyers that relations between the Hanover Gallery and Marlborough were strained, to put it mildly, and that Mr. Fischer had said in a recent cable that Miss Brausen was being uncooperative. I find her reasons understandable in human terms, since she was the one who built up Bacon's reputation only to lose him to Marlborough. She might well object strongly to my turning over her photographs to Marlborough. The Museum lawyers therefore thought it doubly important not to go back on the Museum's firm policy of not releasing photographs for reproduction purposes without the express permission of the owners of the works of art in question and also of the owners of the works' photographic negatives.

I'm so sorry. If it's any help at all, here are the names of the very few photographs I have which carry the photographers' names on the backs: S. Maylott, 31 Faringdon or Parington Rd., Swindon; The Tate Gallery's own photographers, whoever they are; R.B. Fleming & Co., Africa House, Kingsway W.C. 2, London; Albert Garlebach, The Whitehouse, Randolph Crescent, London W. 9; Eileen Tweedy, London; Charles Reynolds, London; and Gerald Howson, 42 Warrington Crescent, London, W.9. In listing these photographers I've followed a chronological sequence, that is, the earliest photographs seem to be by Maylott, the latest (except for photos made by Marlborough) being Howson.

I hope this is some help at least. I feel so badly not to be of more help to you, who should have done the Bacon book in the first place. I expect to finish my own book this winter. The text isn't long, but there are numerous plates of Bacon's paintings and also of source material such as stills from films, works of art from the past he has admired, etc., etc.

Very best to you, love to Lee and Roland if you see them again.

Sincerely,