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61 Deodar Road
London S.W. 15
2nd November 1963

Dear Mr Soby,

Many thanks for your letter, which I have just found on my return from abroad. It is very kind of you to allow us to reproduce your Study of a Baboon in colour.

A little new information about the Blake heads. The idea of painting heads of William Blake was suggested to Bacon by a young composer called Gerbrandt Schurmann, who had written some settings of Blake's poems and asked him to paint a picture for reproduction on the cover of his song cycle. He took Francis to see the life mask in the National Portrait Gallery and they bought some photographs, from which the pictures were painted. But in the end, the process of

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[1963]

Sender's name and address: Ronald Alley
61 Deodar Road
London S.W. 15

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1953

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Mr. J. T. Sobry
Bushy Ridge Road
New Canaan
Connecticut
~~U.S.A.~~ U.S.A.

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reproduction proved too expensive and the idea had to be abandoned. I got a fairly detailed account of this over the telephone from Schormann himself yesterday.

So sorry to hear about your wife's accident. I do hope she'll be better soon.

Then come and see us in London.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Ronald Alley

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

cc: Alfred & Dorothy (FYI)

Date September 27, 1963

To: Jim Soby

Re: Burden's Bacon sold to

From: Betsy Jones

Hamburger Kunsthalle by Marlborough

Dorothy didn't have lunch with Olive Dragazzi yesterday but I did. I asked her about the Bacon. Her guess as to why Burden wanted to sell it in the first place was that it was because neither he nor Mrs. B. liked it. The reason he changed his mind (too late, as it turned out) about selling it was that he was thinking of giving it to his nephew (son of Shirley Burden), who is getting married and who evidently has always liked the painting. Another reason for giving it to him was that he is a Catholic! (I know the church is supposed to be getting more liberal and tolerant, but...)

She said that after she returned from the Gape the lovely Mrs. Metcalf told her Burden might want to get the picture withdrawn and shortly thereafter he himself called her. She cabled right away and got back a quick reply that the Pope had already been sold to Hamburg for \$17,500. He immediately turned on Olive and blamed her for mishandling the sale. She says that she never sent a letter even in her own name without his approval. In one letter she states that they expect that Burden would have a chance to reject any offers he might consider unsuitable. However, as they placed the minimum at \$10,000, Marlborough probably assumed they wouldn't find \$17,500 unsuitable. In any case they did not tell him of the offer before the sale. He got his legal staff to comb the correspondence to see if he had any recourse, but they felt the wording would not give them a good case in court.

This all put him in a grumpy mood so that he decided not to buy a Pollock being offered by Castelli for \$120,000. (There's a good deal of pleasure in ~~the~~ thinking of all the Pollocks he probably "decided not to buy" over the years for a fraction of that price.)

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

May 24, 1963

Mr. Lawrence Alloway, Curator,
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
1071 Fifth Ave.,
New York 28, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Alloway:

I'll be glad to lend the Francis Bacon Study for Portrait IV as well as the Study of a Baboon to your Bacon show. The latter picture can go on to Chicago, but I don't think I can bring myself to send the Baboon our there, too.

I turned over most of my Bacon photographs to the Museum of Modern Art's publications dept. when I gave up working on my book on Bacon, but you can get photographs of both pictures from Miss Pearl Moeller at the Museum. At some point I want to try to do the book over again after I have met and talked at length to Bacon whom I've never seen. Do you know whether he is coming over for your show? I'm afraid there is no way of being sure he'll come, since he disappears in Africa or Greece at unpredictable intervals. But I'm in no hurry whatever about re-writing the book now that Roland Alley's complete catalogue of Bacon's works is being prepared. In this connection it might interest you to know that in Alley's most recent letter to me he tells me why Bacon got interested in doing the series of four portrait after Blake's life mask I was always puzzled because, though Bacon admires the poetry of Blake, he said once that the two painters he loathed most were Blake and Fuseli. It seems that Bacon began his Blake portraits because a composer, whose name Alley doesn't yet know, was setting some of Blake's poems to music and asked Bacon to do a cover for the album.

Still as to the Blake portraits, I'm enclosing a photograph of the Life Mask of Blake in London's National Portrait Gallery which Bacon apparently worked from. I also have a head-on photograph of the life mask but that's at the Museum. Please return the enclosed photograph at your convenience. As I'm sure you know, it takes forever to get photographs of works in the National Portrait Gallery. I spent a whole day there before they finally dug out the two photos I refer to. I thought the enclosed photo might interest you but the other one if even more closely related to Bacon's paintings.

Regards to you, and let me know if there is anything I can do to help. The show will be superb, I'm sure.

Sincerely,

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THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

1071 Fifth Avenue - New York 28, N. Y. - ENright 9-5110

May 28, 1963

Mr. James Thrall Soby
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Soby:

Thank you very much for your exceptionally kind and informative letter. I quite understand that the Study of a Baboon will be shown only in New York, and that the Study for Portrait IV will be available for both New York and Chicago.

It is extremely kind of you to send me the profile photograph of Blake's Life Mask. I will, of course, return the photograph to you, but I may take advantage of your kindness in supplying this document to me, to reproduce it in the catalogue, with full acknowledgement to yourself, of course. I plan to reproduce some of Francis' sources in the catalogue, and it would certainly seem appropriate to use this. I had heard from Ronald Alley about the circumstances that led Francis to this subject.

I will contact Miss Pearl Moeller at the Museum of Modern Art and ask her for photographs of your paintings. I will also ask her if I may have access to the Bacon photographs that you have turned over to the publications department.

I did not know that you had given up work on the book on Bacon, and, I must say, I am very sorry to learn this.

You should certainly meet him, and it seems strange that you never have. I had a letter from Francis this morning in which he says 'hope to see you in New York'. However, I will believe it when I see him here; I agree with you that he is much more likely to disappear South than to appear here.

Best wishes,

Sincerely,

Lawrence Alloway

Lawrence Alloway
Curator

LA:ah

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61 Deodar Road
London S.W. 15
28th April 1963

Dear Mr Soby,

Thank you very much for your kind letter and for sending the folder of Bacon photographs. I am somewhat relieved to say that there are no works among them that I didn't know about before, but several of the prints are much better than those in my files. So, with your permission, I should be glad to borrow the prints of Head I 1948, Study for Portrait IX 1957, Skull of Gorilla 1957 and Man Trapped 1954 for the time being. I shall post the others to you in a day or two.

A fifth Blake head has just come to light, slightly smaller than the others, which Bacon gave to his bank manager as a Christmas present in 1956. (As you may know, the bank manager played an important role in his life at that period; he got himself into financial difficulties, partly

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Sender's name and address: Ronald Allen
61 Deodar Road
London S.W. 15

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HAVE
TAKEN
YOUR
FOR



Mr J. T. Stry
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan
Conn.
U.S.A.

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through gambling. This was ~~incidentally~~ one of the reasons why he accepted the tempting offer of a contract from the Marlboroughs. I am hoping to get it photographed soon and then I'll send you a print. It is perhaps closest to Lady Caroline Atkinson's Study for Portrait II. Bacon told me that a composer — a friend of Alan Rawsthorne's — gave him the idea of painting the Blake heads; he was setting some of Blake's poems to music and asked him to produce something for the cover.

With kind regards and many thanks

Yours sincerely

Ronald Allen

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61 Deodar Road
London S.W. 15
18th May 1963

Dear Mr Soby,

Herewith the balance of
your photographs, with many thanks.
I also enclose the photograph of your
Blake head, as I have just obtained
an even better print of it from another
source.

You will be interested to hear that
"Study for Man with Microphones" seems
to be in existence after all, but has
been extensively reworked and more

dated with dubious and preposterous de Chiricos, as a result of all
your work on the artist.

It is a matter of great regret to me that we have never met, and
I do hope that the Francis Bacon exhibition may provide an opportunity
for the meeting.

I enclose Loan Agreement Forms for Study of a Baboon and Study for
Portrait IV. May I trouble you to complete these and return them to me
at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Alloway

Lawrence Alloway
Curator

LA:ah

MUSEUM

ENright 9-5110

May 19. I am so
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or less messed up. It is now in the hands of the Galleria Galatea in Turin as "Gorilla with Microphones". It looks on style as if it was re-worked about 1947-48 as the additions somewhat resemble "Head I" 1948.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Ronald Alley

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It is a matter of great regret to me that we have never met, and I do hope that the Francis Bacon exhibition may provide an opportunity for the meeting.

I enclose Loan Agreement Forms for Study of a Baboon and Study for Portrait IV. May I trouble you to complete these and return them to me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Alloway

Lawrence Alloway
Curator

LA:ah

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THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

1071 Fifth Avenue - New York 28, N. Y. - ENright 9-5110

May 21, 1963

Mr. James Thrall Soby
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Soby:

Thank you very much for your kind letter of May 19. I am so pleased that you are willing to lend your Study of a Baboon to the Guggenheim Museum. If you do not feel that you wish to lend to the Chicago Art Institute as well, I quite understand, but I hope that you may feel willing to part with it for additional two months. However, I do not want to try to persuade you.

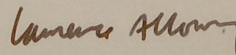
I did not not know about the fourth Study for Portrait of 1956. As we have secured the loan of the first three paintings in the William Blake Life Mask series, I would like enormously to show the final painting. If you would be willing to lend this painting to us as well, it would be a good opportunity to see all four paintings together. Thus, if you are agreeable, I would like to consider Study for Portrait IV as an additional loan, rather than as a replacement for the Baboon at Chicago. As I say, if you would prefer to have the Baboon back after the New York showing, I fully understand.

Thank you very much for telling me about the de Chirico painting that the museum is being cited as having authenticated. I will bring this matter to the Trustees' attention, and I am grateful to you for telling me of the matter. I am sure that you must have been inundated with dubious and preposterous de Chiricos, as a result of all your work on the artist.

It is a matter of great regret to me that we have never met, and I do hope that the Francis Bacon exhibition may provide an opportunity for the meeting.

I enclose Loan Agreement Forms for Study of a Baboon and Study for Portrait IV. May I trouble you to complete these and return them to me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Alloway
Curator

LA:ah

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THE TATE GALLERY
LONDON S.W.1
Tate Gallery 4444

JR/CB

19th July, 1962

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

My dear Mr. Soby,

It did indeed interest Ronald Alley and myself to learn more about the fate of the Bacon decorations designed for R. A. Butler, and it was most considerate of you to let us know.

Excellent news that your book is finished at last! We all of us tremendously look forward to seeing galleys. It is difficult enough to write on this particular subject even when one knows him pretty well and has ample opportunity of seeing him, and I can readily imagine what an ordeal it must have been having to work from documentary evidence alone.

I have asked Ronald Alley about the point you raise regarding your version of the "portrait" after Deville's Life mask of Blake, and he says that he entirely agrees with your interpretation of the position of the head. When he wrote that it was turned to the right, he had in mind the spectator's right, although this should perhaps have been stated more specifically.

Yours sincerely,

John Rothenstein
Director

...energy, to be so over, though I promised Robert I would.
You've taken on a terrific task, but it's badly needed
and will be of immense value,

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61 Deodar Road
London S.W. 15
16th February 1963

Dear Mr Soby,

So sorry to bother you. As you may have heard, I am trying to prepare a complete catalogue of Francis Bacon's paintings for publication this summer. I should be very grateful for your help in cataloguing your Study for Portrait No. 4 (after the Life mask of William Blake) 1956.

The information I have about it so far is as follows:

STUDY FOR PORTRAIT NO. 4 1956

Oil on canvas, 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 20 inches.

Coll.: Hanover Gallery; J. T. Soby 1956.

Exh.: The James Thrall Soby Collection, M. Knoedler & Co., New York, Feb. 1961 (no number, repr. p. 23); Lawrence Art Museum, Williams College, Williamstown, Spring 1962.

Repr.: Encounter, No. 43, April 1957, on cover (detail).

It would be very kind if you could tell me whether there is anything to add or correct. I have just written to Mr Faison for full particulars of the exhibition at Williams College.

We have a fairly adequate photograph of it, but should certainly be grateful if you would allow us to buy or borrow a really good print which does it full justice.

The Europe catalogue is to include reproductions of a dozen ^(of the most important of the) or so destroyed pictures and I am very anxious to include

complete, but I have never been able to do so. I once made a quite complete list of Bacons in American collections and sent it to Robert Melville. But it got lost in the mail, and I've never had the time or energy to do it over, though I promised Robert I would.

You've taken on a terrific task, but it's badly needed and will be of immense value,



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To open out here →

Sender's name and address: Ronald Alley
61 Decker Road
London S.W.15

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Mr. J. T. Selye
Binsky Ridge Road
New Canaan
Conn.
U.S.A.

the Study for Man with Microphones 1946 which you reproduced in your book "Contemporary Painters." Do you still have the original photograph and, if so, would you be kind enough to tell me its negative number? Unfortunately the Lefevre Gallery seems to have no record of this and I have been quite unable to trace a print of it in this country.

As you can imagine, the catalogue presents various unusual problems, not least what to do about the unfinished or abandoned canvases which have in one manner or another found their way onto the market. We shall probably have to have one appendix for them and another for the important destroyed pictures.

I do hope that your own work on Bacon is progressing well.

Yours sincerely
 Ronald Alley (RONALD ALLEY)

I once made a quite complete list of Bacons in American collections and sent it to Robert Melville. But it got lost in the mail, and I've never had the time or energy to do it over, though I promised Robert I would.

You've taken on a terrific task, but it's badly needed and will be of immense value,

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

Mar. 16, 1963

Mr. Ronald Alley,
61 Deodar Rd.,
London S.W. 15, England.

Dear Mr. Alley:

I found your letter here on my return from a vacation in Florida, hence the delay in answering. I'm delighted that you're doing a complete catalogue on Bacon's works. I found your notes on the Bacon pictures in the Tate show wholly admirable, and I'm sure you're the right person for this important job. I'll be glad to help in any way I can. My own book on Bacon has been postponed indefinitely. I had this short book for the Museum of Modern Art finished last summer, but Bacon and some of his friends were not satisfied with it and neither was I in the end. The chief difficulty was that I've never met Bacon and had to rely for first-hand information on London friends on his and mine. But things I had been told as gospel truth were often denied later by Bacon, and I finally realized that he and I would have to talk together and straighten things out. I offered to fly to London to see him last summer, but he had gone to Greece. Perhaps next summer or fall I can meet him in London. I shall certainly try. Meanwhile I think your complete catalogue is what is needed most.

I'll send you the photograph of my Study for Portrait No. 4 airmail as soon as possible. I got this photograph from Erica Brausen when I got the picture. It seems quite good, but the picture by have been re-photographed when our pictures were shown at Knoedler's in Feb., 1961 for the benefit of the Museum's library. If this is the case and the new photograph is better, I'll send that along, too, with my compliments. The information you have on the picture is completely accurate. The only other place the picture has been shown, so far as I can remember, was at the Williams College Museum of Art (this is now the correct name of the Museum, Lawrence Art Museum having been abandoned as a title last year; Lawrence was a botanist with no interest in art whatever, so I persuaded President Sawyer at Williams to change the title). I'm sure Lane Faison, an old friend of mine, will send you whatever additional information you need.

It may take me a little longer to locate a photograph of the destroyed Study for Man with Microphones of 1946. But since the Museum published my Contemporary Painters, they very likely have one. If so, I'll have them send one on to you. If not Sam Hunter may have one; I'll find out and send it along to you if it exists. If you need other Bacon photographs from the Museum of Modern Art, the person to write is Miss Pearl Moeller, who is in charge of all reproductions at the Museum. At one point in the Museum we planned to do a circulating show of Bacon's works. I have a files of photographs of works, all owned in this country which we planned to include in the show. It's not complete, but if it would be of help, I'd be glad to lend it to you. I once made a quite complete list of Bacons in American collections and sent it to Robert Melville. But it got lost in the mail, and I've never had the time or energy to do it over, though I promised Robert I would.

You've taken on a terrific task, but it's badly needed and will be of immense value,

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61 Deodar Road?

London S.W. 15

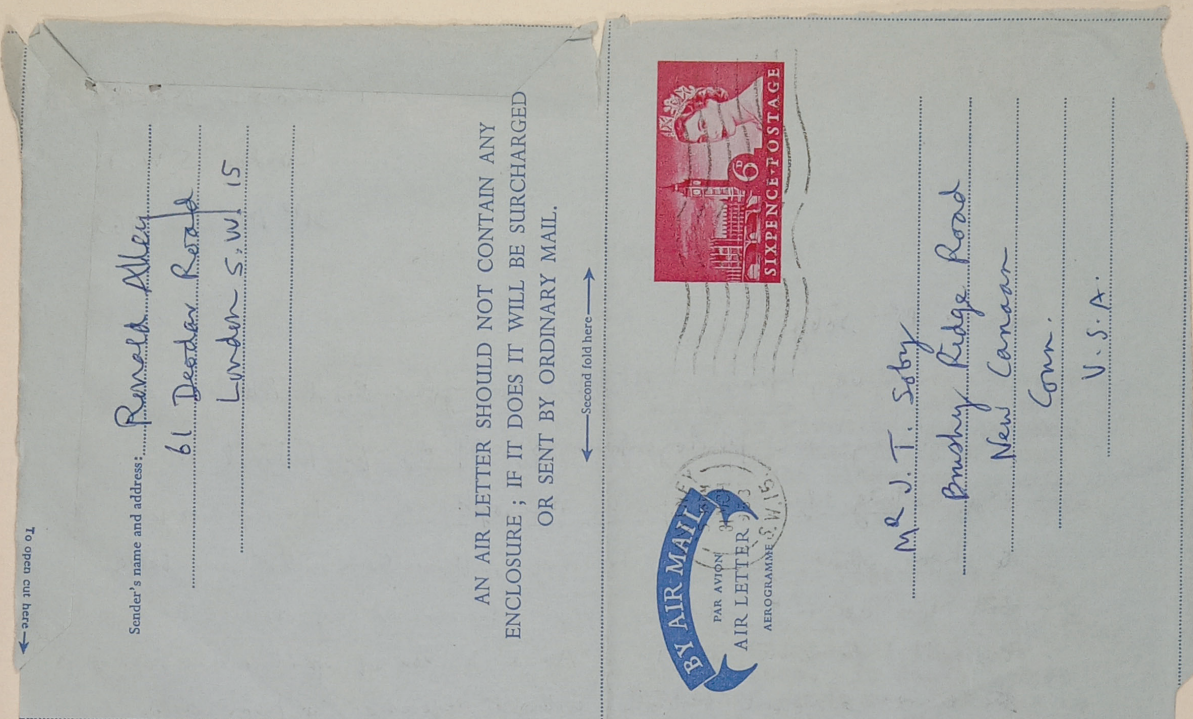
31st March 1963

Dear Mr Soby,

Very many thanks for your kind letter and for lending me photographs of Study for Portrait N° 4 and Study for Man with microphones. I am sorry to hear that you are having difficulties with your book but this doesn't surprise me: Bacon is very elusive and difficult to write about. As a matter of fact I am doing the oeuvre catalogue virtually without reference to him and shall only go to him when it is more or less complete (which will be any day now) so that we can try to sort out the remaining problems.

I think I probably know of all the Bacons that are in U.S. collections or that have passed through the hands of American dealers, but I should certainly be very grateful to borrow your file of photographs to check them against my lists. It is most kind and generous of you to offer to lend it to me. My photographs of several of the pictures which have passed through the Feigen and Martha Jackson Galleries are rather poor; if your prints are better, may I borrow them for the purpose

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P.S. We now know of at least fourteen surviving pre-war works.

of reproduction? I should return the others straightaway. Only three or four photographs at most would be involved, as the majority of my photographs are perfectly satisfactory.

Do you happen to have a record of exactly when you bought Study for Portrait no 4 and whether it was dated 1955 or 1956 on the invoice? There seems to be a little ~~confusion~~ about its date, as the Hanover records are marked both 1955 and 28.3.56. I am trying to arrange the works in the correct sequence within each year. But please don't go to any trouble over this.

Naturally I'd be very pleased to help you in any way I can and look forward to meeting you the next time you are in London.

Yours sincerely
 Ronald Allen

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

April 4, 1963

Dear Mr. Alley:

I looked up the invoice from The Hanover Gallery covering my purchase of the Bacon Study for Portrait No. 4. It is dated July 28, 1956, but no date for the painting itself is given on the invoice. However, both my wife and myself remember clearly that Erica Brausen told us that this picture was the latest one in the Blake series and that she had not had it long. So I would assume that the 28.3.56 date on the Hanover records is correct.

One confusing and probably meaningless footnote to the above. There is a Hanover Gallery sticker on the back of the picture. It says: "Study for Death (sic) Mask of Blake, No. 4." The typewritten "4" has been crossed out in pencil and "7" substituted. I know the change was not made here after I bought the picture. It doesn't make sense, since on August 14, 1956 Michael Greenwood wrote me: "You may be interested to know that the other three Bacon 'Blake studies' are in the collections of George Dix, Lucian Freud and E. & A. Silberman, nos. 1, 2 and 3 respectively, so that three of the series are now on your side of the Atlantic." Perhaps Lucian Freud was visiting here at the time and had brought his picture with him? Anyway, this seems to make clear that in August, 1956 there were only four works in the series: I have never heard of any done later than that and I think the "7", whoever scribbled it in, is meaningless.

I'll send the file on American Bacons to you soon as I can.
Kindest regards, haste,

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1961 DEC 29 AM 10:00

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= NEWCANAAN (CONN RTE STAMFORD CONN):

=DATE OF BLAKES LIFE MASK BY DEVILLE 1823=:

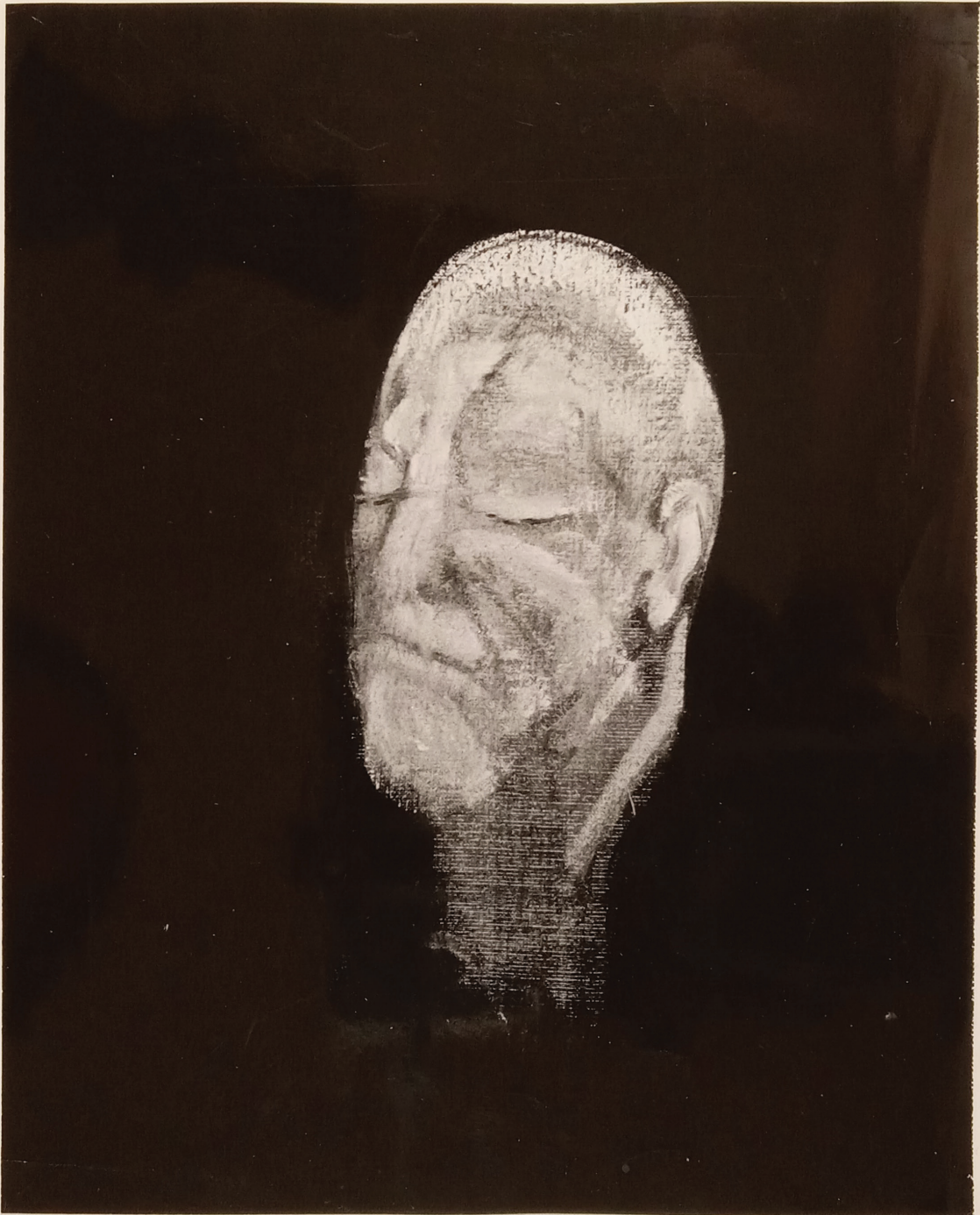
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Study of a Portrait (1955)
Francis Bacon
Oil on canvas, 24" x 20"

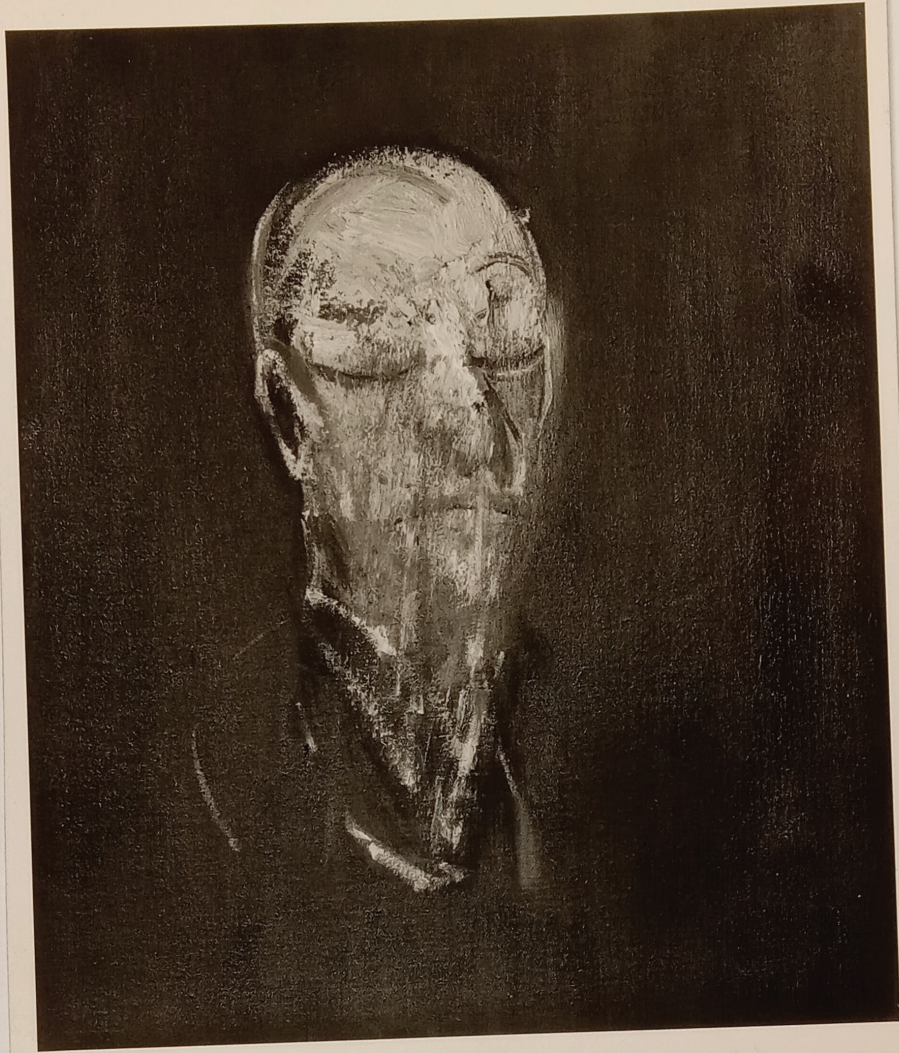
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~~McClellan Photo Co.~~

~~West Palm Beach, Fla.~~

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Francis BACON

J.T.S.

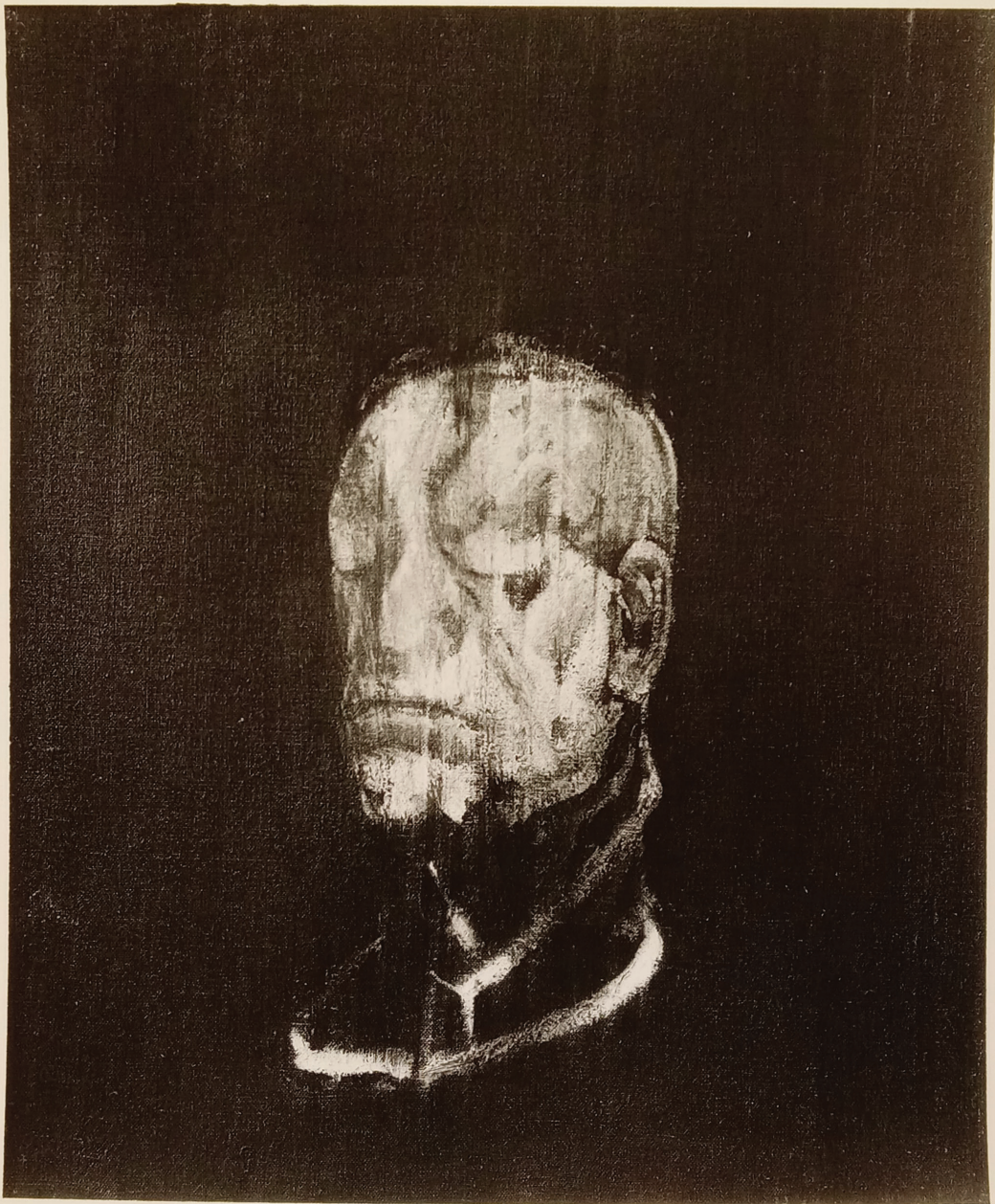
Study for Portrait :
Blake No 4 -

Collection : James Thrall Soby
U.S.A

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F. Bacon

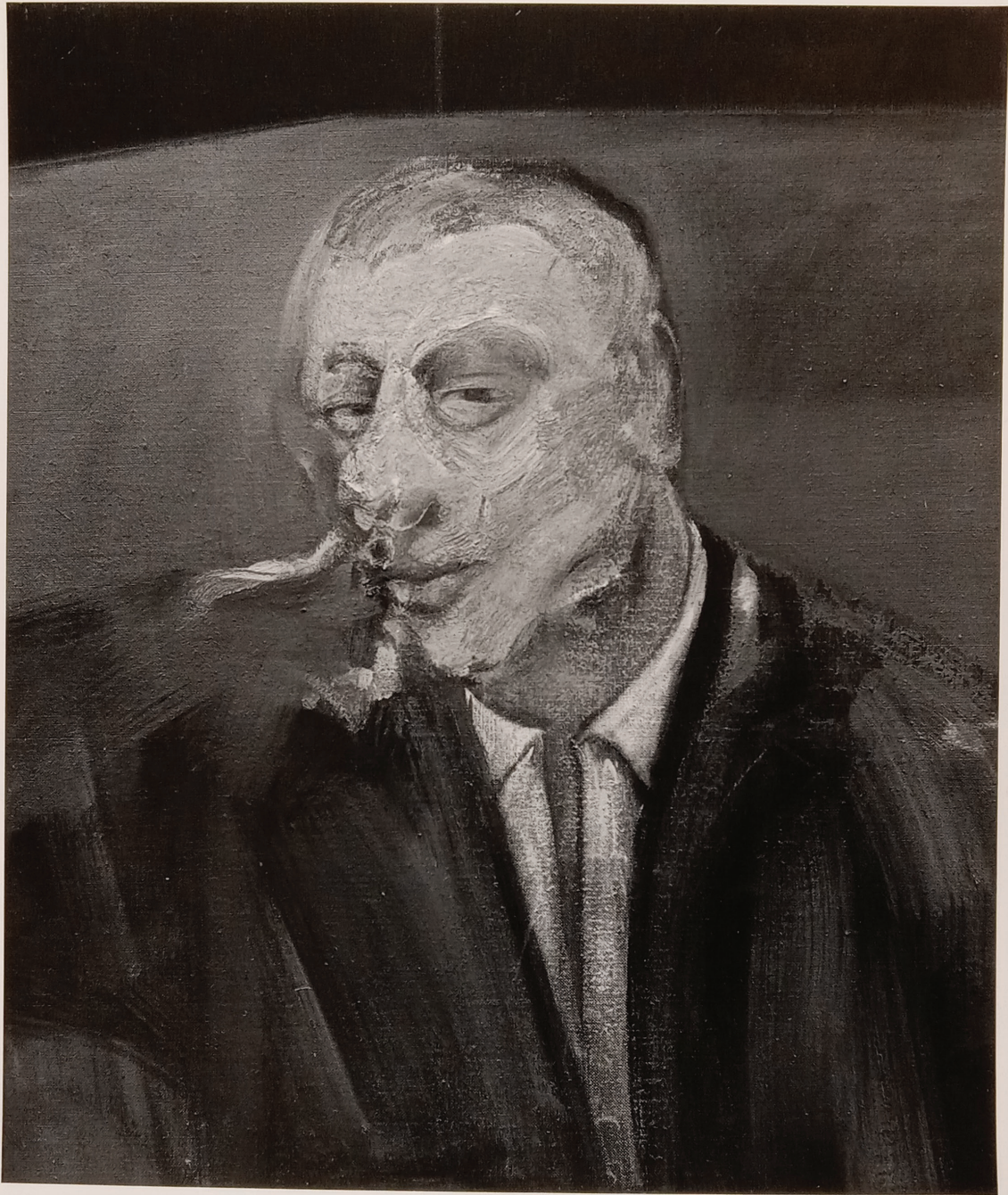
Study for Portrait (Wm. Bleek)

1412

Brenwasset
PHOTOGRAPHER OF FINE ART
1143 PARK AVE., N.Y.C.

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RICHARD FEIGEN GALLERY, INCORPORATED	
53 EAST DIVISION STREET	CHICAGO 10, ILLINOIS
ARTIST <i>Francis Bacon</i>	INVT. # _____
TITLE <i>Study for Portrait</i>	DATE <i>1958</i>
MEDIUM <i>Oil on canvas</i>	SIZE <i>24x20"</i>

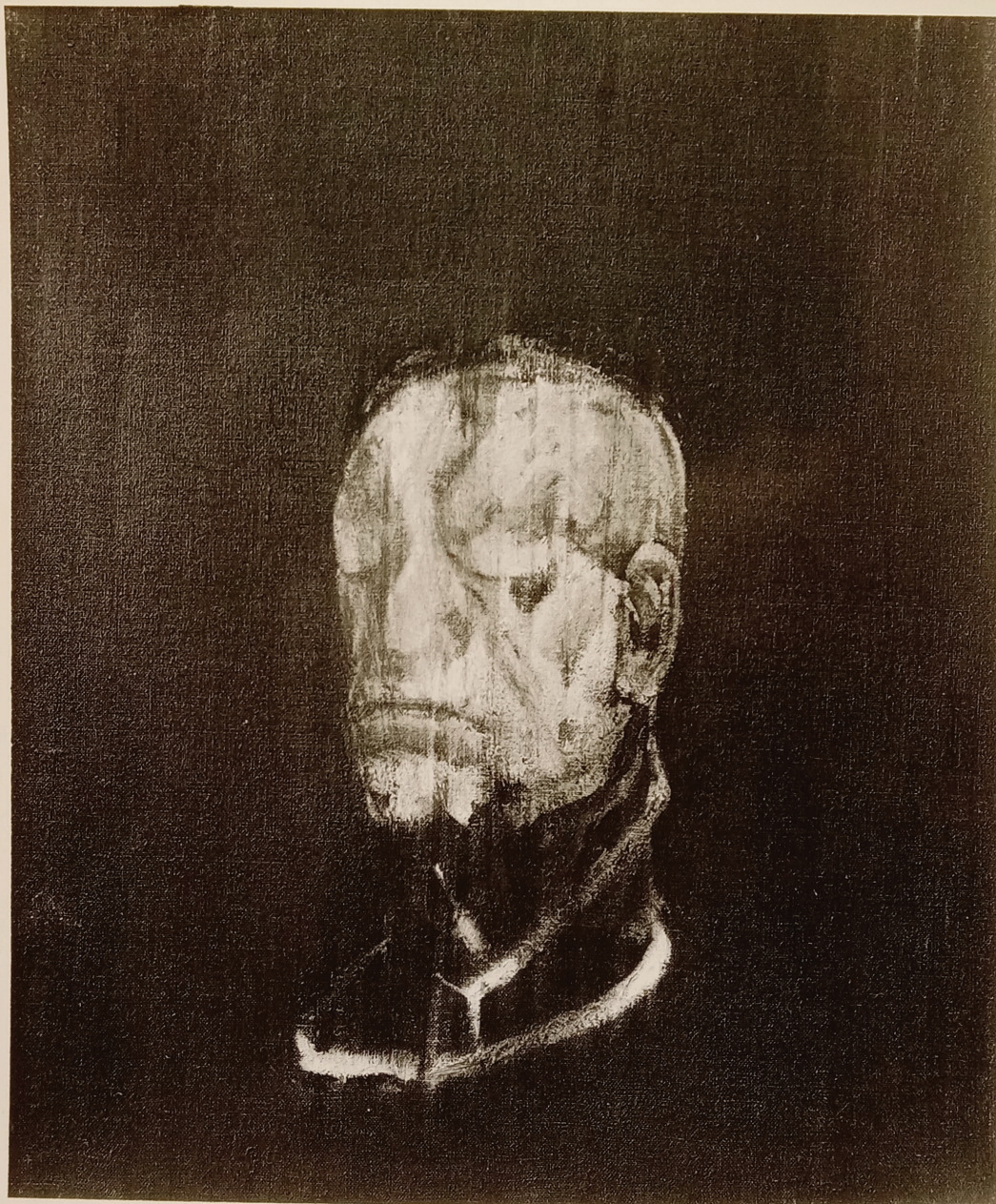
RICHARD L. FEIGEN & COMPANY
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World House?*

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Dur.

3

STUDY FOR PORTRAIT NO. 4, 1955
(AFTER THE LIFE MASK OF BLAKE)

BY

FRANCIS BACON

OIL ON CANVAS, *1955*

24 X 20 INCHES

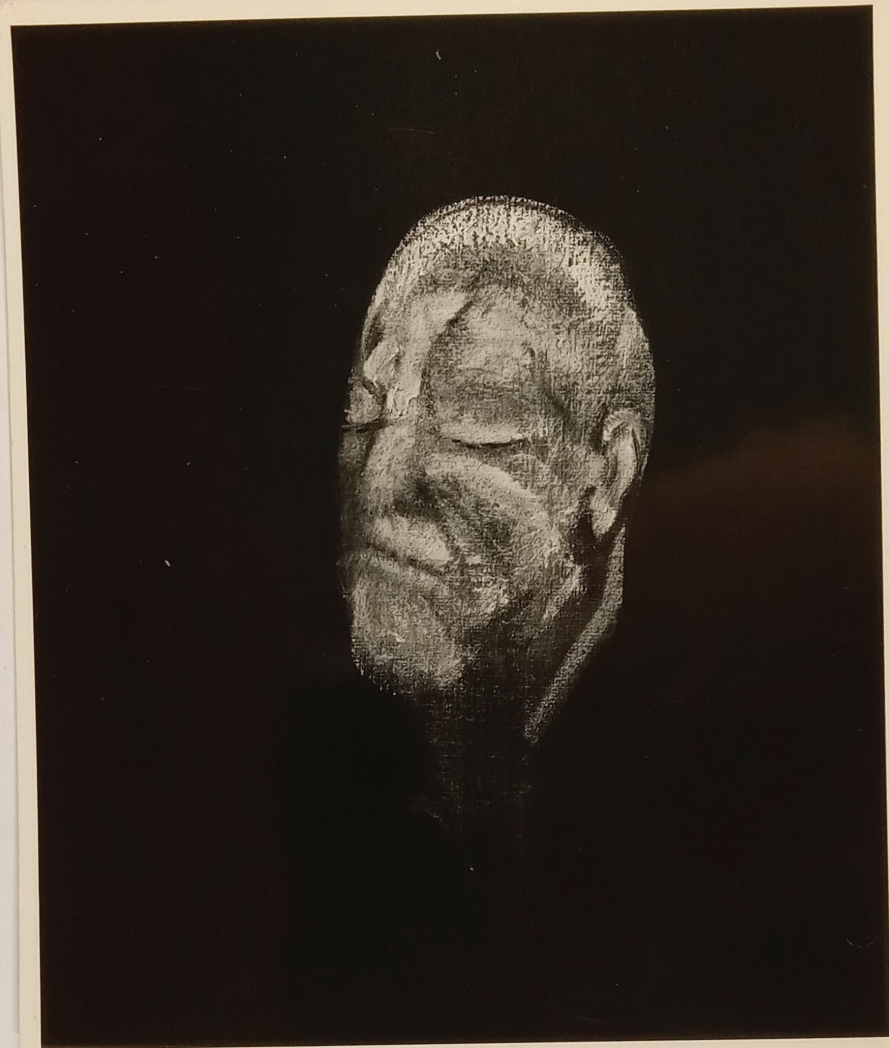
DURLACHER BROS.

hold to World House

Brentwasser
Photographer of fine Art
New York City

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Francis Bacon

J.T.S.

Study for Portrait

Blake no. I

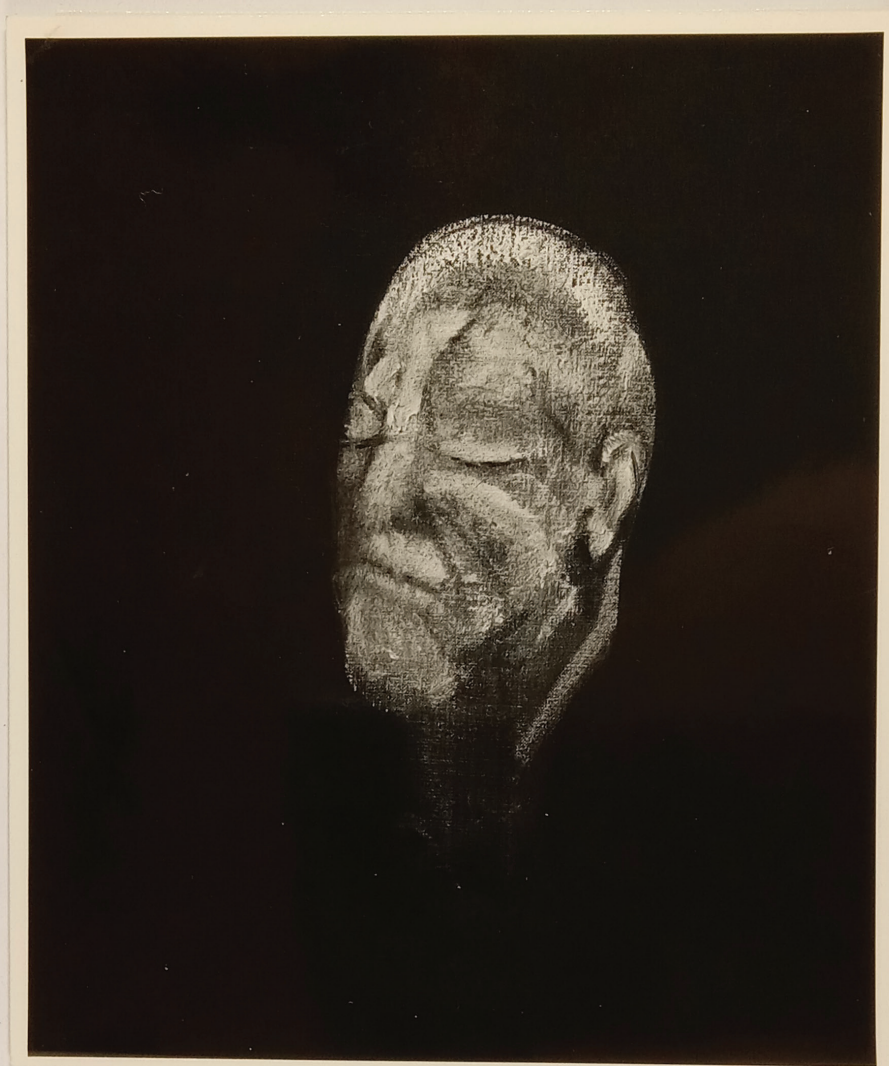
Jan. - Feb., 1955

coll. Sherman (?) N.Y.

399v

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	JTS	I.26



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Study for Portrait 1955 (Jan/Feb) ^{No 4 I}
(After life mask of William Blake)
~~Study~~ ~~Portrait~~ ~~No 4 I~~
Exh. Herson Gallery 1955 (June/July)

acc. Folkman N-5

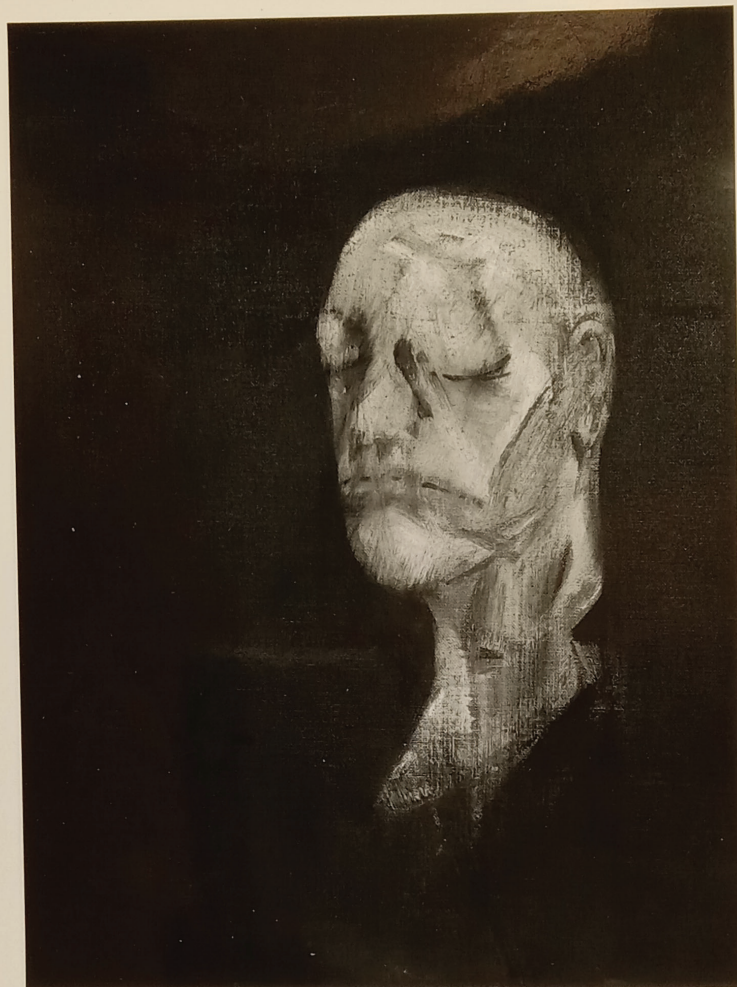
85

F.B.

39922

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STUDY FOR PORTRAIT II.
1955

after life - mask of William Blake
life mask of W. Blake 1823
Newton Portrait July

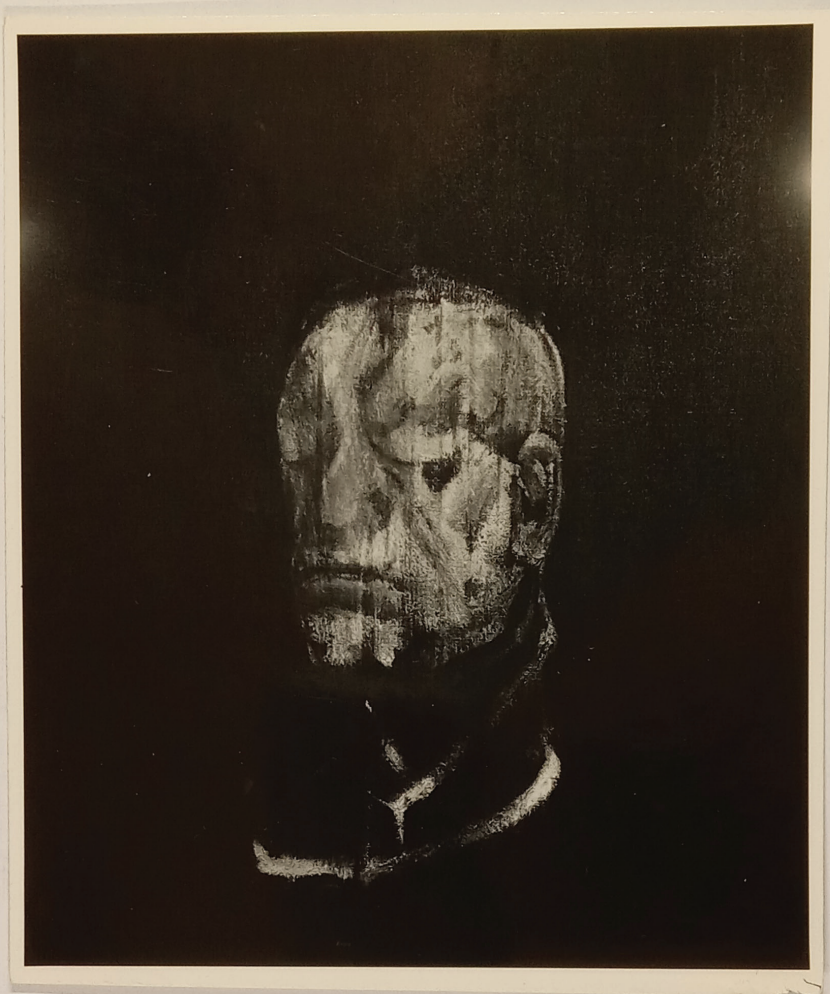
Afterlife
Lucien Freud

86

39744

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	JTS	I.26



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4PL68
Study for Portrait 1955 (Jan/Feb)
(after life mask of William Blake)
No. III
Exh Hanon Gallery 1955 (June/July)
coll. George Brice
coll.
F.B.
87

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J. T. S.

Life
~~Death~~ Mask
Blake
by J. S. Deville

~~1809~~ 1823

Profile

RETURN TO SOBY



William Blake

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Bacon ~~JKE~~ - Black
series