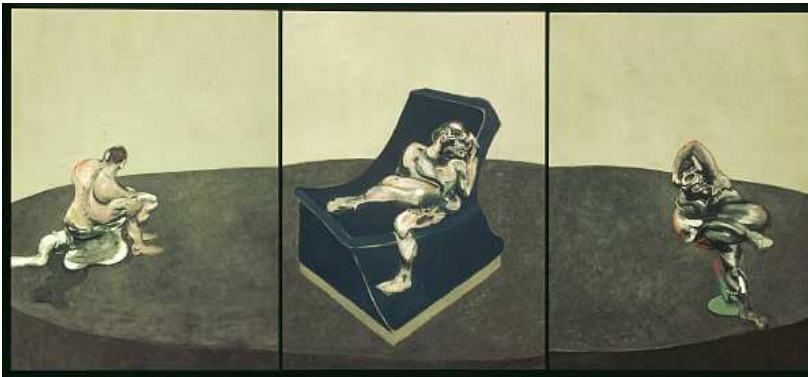


Task one, discuss and describe one piece of art from one of the galleries you visited and explain why you liked it.

The 'artists and their models' exhibition in Hong Kong features 58 selected masterpieces using a range of media for example paint, sculpture and installation from the Centre Pompidou, Paris and features works by masters of the first half of the twentieth century, Picasso, Matisse, Bacon, Soutine and Balthus among others. These outstanding portraits demonstrate both the diverse creativity in which portraiture and the figures have been treated with and provide a comprehensive overview of the various important movements in the history of Western Art from the poignant temperament of expressionism to the mix and match installations of pop art. The exhibition is coherent, clear and unpredictable. It is divided thematically into Muses, Formal distortions, Interior visions, Portraits of friends and Pop Pastiche.



THREE FIGURES IN A ROOM  
1964  
Oil on canvas  
Francis Bacon  
Musee National D'Art Moderne,  
Paris

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As a training artist myself, I was familiar with most of the artists and works on display. I have always

admired Anglo-Irish figurative painter, Francis Bacon for his use of often bold, grotesque and nightmarish imagery. Bacon once said "The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery" which is one of the reasons why I find his work so intriguing to study.

'Three Figures in a Room' was one of the pieces I found most appealing. The Triptych has three side by side canvases; this was particularly common during the middle ages and renaissance for altarpieces. The name originated from the Greek work "triptychos". In Bacons 'three figures in a room' the focal point is presented in three parts or sections.

The name itself leads one to believe that it involves the representation of 'three figures in a room' proving the narrative dimension created in the scene. However all three figures represent George Dyer, one of Bacons favorite models. The grotesqueness of the mutilated faces are counterbalanced by the precision of the trait and geometry of these huge canvases that make up the triptych. Other triptychs by Bacon include "Three Studies for Figures at the Base of Crucifixion" and "Three studies of the Human Head".

I am so fascinated with this particular piece not only because of the subject matter but also because of the reaction you have whilst viewing the piece itself. The painting has such a dynamic expressionistic quality about it that you can't help but feel a quality of inner experience and emotion. The emphasized distortion is immaculate. Composition, space, mark making, color, line and form have all been carefully taken into account.

The fleshy tones of the figures beautifully contrast with dark navy blue washes, a deliberate attempt to create a glimmer of realism. However the figures look far beyond realistic. In terms of line, the strongest lines are organic curves emphasizing the human characteristics of the figure. However there are hardly any lines which suggest energy or motion highlighting the distorted, tranquil nature of the piece. Light and dark tones are equally balanced between the backdrop and the foreground. The mark making is stunning, an emblematic feature of Bacons work.

Bacon has deliberately rejected traditional conventions of portraiture and painting and even though he has depicted the figures in a conventionally speaking, repulsive way, the piece itself in my eyes is still beautiful.