

The logo for Whitechapel Gallery, consisting of a solid blue rectangle with the text "Whitechapel Gallery" in white, sans-serif font centered within it.

Whitechapel
Gallery

**James Richards selects from the
V-A-C collection:
To Replace a Minute's Silence with
a Minute's Applause**

23 Jun - 30 Aug 2015

Large print labels and interpretation
Gallery 7

James Richards selects from the V-A-C collection: To Replace a Minute's Silence with a Minute's Applause

Francis Bacon's *Study for a Portrait* (1953) is at the heart of a new installation by British artist James Richards in this presentation from the V-A-C collection, Moscow.

Born in Dublin, Francis Bacon (1909–1992) moved between London, Berlin and Paris in the 1920s. Before emerging as one of Britain's most significant painters, Bacon was an interior designer, translating his keen eye for interiors into the staging of his portraits. Painted at a time when he had gained widespread acclaim, this figure, one of a series of studies of a suited man, is both commanding and vulnerable. Sitting on a throne-like chair and set against a midnight blue background, he is framed and confined by a second dark frame.

Known for his sensorial installations James Richards chooses this major work from the V-A-C collection as a starting point for his immersive sonic environment of public silences – acts of mourning or remembrance and suspenseful interruptions in films. Singers inhale and pause before breaking into song while church bells fill the gallery with ambient sound. The curtain surrounding the work and carpeted floor add to the feeling of enclosure and tension while also deadening the acoustic space. Richards says, ‘the overall atmosphere is intended to be very vocal, oral – to ignite a pressing feeling of closeness of non-verbal communication. I’m looking to create a sense of clamminess in stark contrast to the shape-shifting figure in the painting.’

The V-A-C collection brings together important modern and contemporary art from around the world. The V-A-C Foundation supports Russian artists in creative partnerships.

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