

## So where does painting start and photography end?

Written by Pedro Meyer

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In the picture above we are in front of a painting that was presented at the Shanghai Biennial of Art in 2006. The painting is based on the perceptions associated with photography, to the extent that the men depicted in the painting appear in a pose usually associated with portrait photography. If we have any doubts about that, just behind these three Chinese gentlemen, you

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will find another painting depicting a man in the process of taking a photograph of precisely those same three men in the foreground of the painting. Now mind you, you are in fact looking at all of this through a photograph which is the one that is looking at the overall painting. We have the back and forth echoes between photography and painting that is the subject of this editorial.

A lot of modern art is based upon the use of photography as a reference. Quoting Francis Bacon: *“One thing which has never been really worked out is how photography has completely altered figurative painting.”*



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[Francis Bacon, Portrait No. 66](#) (1965), oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm. The painting is a close-up, high-contrast portrait of a man's face, rendered in a style reminiscent of Francis Bacon. The face is heavily textured with thick, expressive brushstrokes in shades of red, white, and brown. The eyes are closed or heavily shadowed, and the mouth is partially obscured by a bright yellow stroke. The background is a dark, mottled green.

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Original image generated by Midjourney v5.1, prompt: "A person carrying a large stack of white sacks on their head, walking down a street at night." The image is a photograph of a person carrying a large stack of white sacks on their head, walking down a street at night. The image is dark and grainy, with a strong orange light source illuminating the scene. The person is walking away from the camera, and the sacks are stacked high, reaching above their head. The street is paved and has some markings. In the background, there are other people and buildings, but they are less distinct. The overall mood is one of labor and movement in a nighttime setting.



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