

Comparative Study

Visual Arts HL

Introduction:

This comparative study analyses the connections between surrealist artist Francis Bacon's *Study of a Head* (1952), *Self-Portrait* (1987), and contemporary artist Jenny Saville's *Shadow Head*, (2007–2013). Created in different periods, these portrait paintings all convey the beautiful nature of human emotions. This study aims to examine the similarity and differences in the colour, composition, and the cultural significance of the pieces. It will be supported by my painting, *Self-doubts* (2019).

Francis Bacon (1909-1992)

Introduction of Piece 1



1. Study of a Head

Year: 1952

Medium: Oil and Sand on Canvas

Size: 66 x 56 cm

Francis Bacon was an Irish artist most well known for his figurative paintings during the **post-war period**. Unlike most, Bacon was a self-taught artist inspired by Picasso's 1927 exhibition in his early years, thus beginning his career in art. His family constantly moving between Ireland and England throughout his childhood, and his father kicking him out of the house for his homosexuality at the age of 17, he suffered from isolation.

This piece was painted in 1952, closely after the end of World War II and the development of cameras, influencing Bacon's works. The **postwar art** mainly expresses the exploration of one's identity and the coping of the trauma after the war. His portraiture are mostly composed of a subject centred in the centre painted in a sombre colour scheme. During this time, Bacon's work focuses more on depicting the **alienation** or pain of human emotions, as well as the **depression of the aftermath of war**.



This was one of the many paintings of Spanish artist Diego Velázquez's *Portrait of Innocent X* (1650). He had originally painted 6 studies, the most famous one being *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953),

Aside from the war, Bacon's paintings became more expressive as he recalls post-impressionist Van Gogh's of *The Painter on the Road to Tarascon* (1888). He took on a **bolder and freer style**. He also began developing interest in photography and portraiture that made the subjects of his works varying from human to animals.

Francis Bacon (1909-1992)

Annotation of *Study of a Head*

Study of a Head is one of Bacon's most recognizable works from a body of works known as the "screaming popes" that were inspired by the subject of a pope.

Bacon's **mix medium** of sand and oil paint creates a rough texture, further conveying a haunting haze.

Overall, the main **colour scheme** is mainly sombre with the loud, vibrant yellow going across the painting in a line to centre the head of the figure. The use of complementary colours, yellow and purple, creates high contrast.

Bacon's inspiration of Van Gogh's **post-impressionism** can be seen in his bold and expressive brushstrokes of the figure. The beginning and end of a stroke can be identified easily from the wide tip and thinning end. This stylistic choice is most visible in the purple clothing of the figure.

It is a very visually powerful painting that captures the essence of the **post-war period**. The portrait's scream of pain and fear, the lack of context in the setting of the painting and the simple colour scheme deplores the loss of hope and identity the people at the time.



The **composition** of the painting is rather simple of a main close-up figure in the centre of the painting. The subject, Pope Innocent X, once was one of the most prominent and influential figures at his time is now depicted as a faded, screaming man in a dark room. His eyes shut with streaks of black tears, mouth dropped open in black and his face painted with a light turquoise but smeared by black from the background. The **audience's focus** is directed to the centre.

The **background** consists of three colours only—Tuscan sun yellow, cloud white and chalk black. The thin and thick lines illustrate an emptiness. Space is cut in half by the thick yellow line that mimics the golden chair in the Velázquez's painting in an abstract style. The curve on the right conveys a disturbing or distorted impression.



The **function/purpose** of this portrait painting seemed to be a demonstration of the state of horror post World War II. It serves as one of Bacon's recognisable work as he developed an interest in expressing emotions the painting portraits.

Francis Bacon (1909-1992)

Conceptual Framework of Study of a Head

AUDIENCE'S
WORLD

AUDIENCE

ARTWORK

ARTIST

ARTIST'S
WORLD

Mid 20th century Post WWII

World War II has left a great impact globally, especially in Europe and Asia. The ruins of office buildings and shelters, millions of people without family members or house, and the economic devastation led to a shift in the political and economic presence of the world. The rise of the USA and the Soviet Union quickly followed into the Cold War in 1947s.

People were left with fear, little money and loss of identity.

Bacon's portraiture of screaming popes in pain seems to be a cry from the despair of WWII. The emotions of loss, anger and oppression reach many people suffering the trauma of the war.

His first solo exhibition was held after the war, featured the paintings of the popes which expanded Bacon's fame internationally.



1952
Study of a Head
Oil and Sand on Canvas
66 x 56cm

Bacon drew inspirations from various artists. In the 1950s, he was greatly influenced by Van Gogh's *The Painter on the Road to Tarascon* (1888) and established his style of surrealism in figurative painting.

Bacon did not participate in the war due to his asthma that he suffered from during his entire lifetime. Despite his success in solo exhibitions prior, he experienced a downhill when he lost his childhood nanny Jeese Lightfoot, as well as the build-up of being a homosexual before its legalisation.

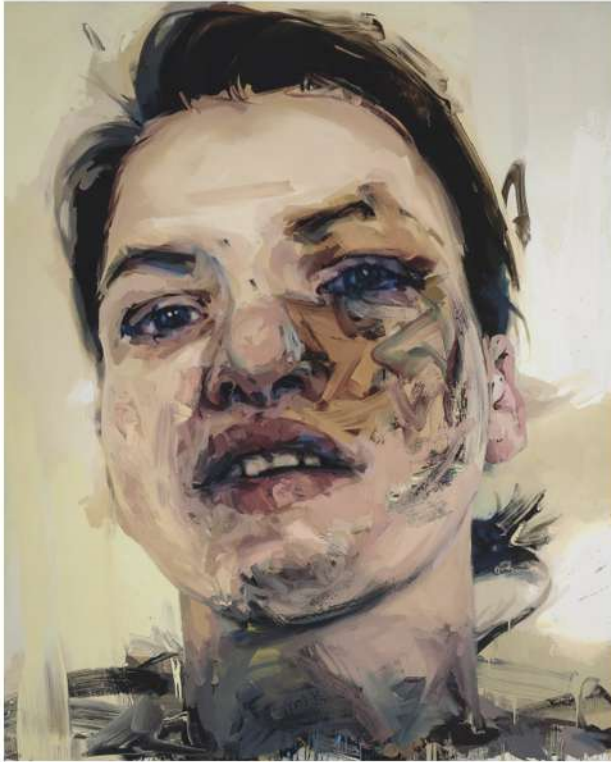
Mid 20th century Shifts in art movements

Most artists were left with the despair of WWII that kick-started abstract expressionism, lyrical abstract art and pop art.

The overwhelming and horrifying experience from the war has triggered many artists' creativity for postwar art. Notable artists were Francis Bacon, Alberto Giacometti and David Hockney.

Jenny Saville (1970-)

Introduction of Piece 2



2. Shadow Head

Year: 2007-2013

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 269.2 x 219.7 cm

Jenny Saville is a **British contemporary artist** known for her large scale paintings of the nude figure. In the late 1980s, she attended Glasgow School of Art and was offered a 6-month scholarship from the University of Cincinnati and travelled to America. It was the introduction to famous figures of overweight women.

Saville is also a member of the **Young British Artists group** that rose to fame in the late 1980s with their unconventional post-modern approach to art. **Post-modern** art focuses on the production, material and context of the art, rather than just the final visual piece presented in the exhibition. The group includes famous artists like Damien Hirst, Tracy Emin and Michael Landy. Saville's paintings present a realistic depiction of **women's bodies** and capture the raw emotions and expressions without the glorification in past artworks of female figures.



Jenny Saville: Oxyrhynchus, 2014

The *Shadow Head* is one of the paintings in her first solo exhibition, **Jenny Saville: Oxyrhynchus**, in 2014. The word Oxyrhynchus is an allusion to an archaeological site filled with ancient Egyptian manuscripts. It can be seen as a metaphorical expression of the art's rich history of the female body and figures painting, as well as a description of the unknown stories behind the figures in her paintings and the layering of her oil paints.

Jenny Saville (1970-)

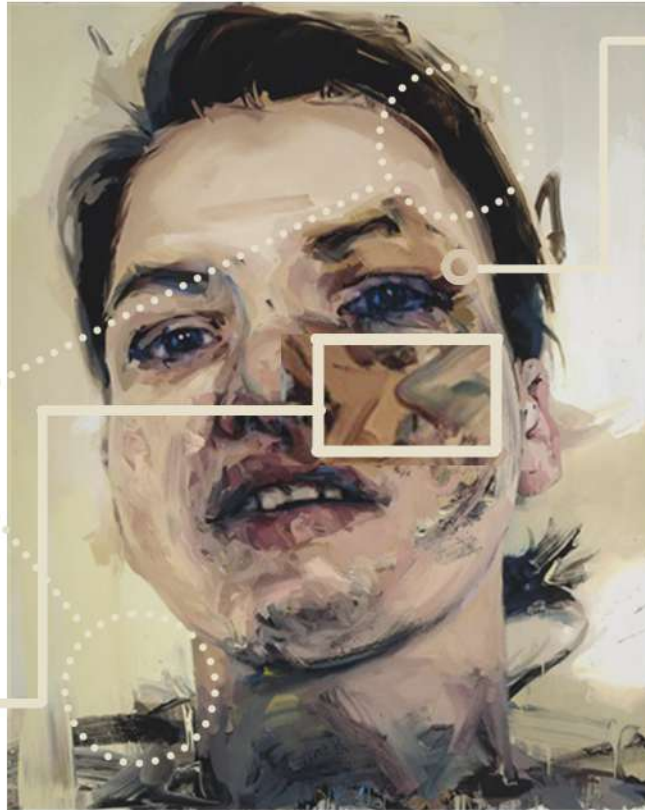
Annotation of *Shadow Head*

Saville's choice of a figure often contrasts to the traditional idea of the beauty of a woman throughout the history of arts. It represents the diverse impression of women. Saville's works were also often used as a demonstration of the rise of feminism, where women's beauty is not restricted to the traditional figures and bodies.

There seems to be a strong and direct light hitting the figure's face from the audience's position. The forehead gleams with the brightness, similar to the right of the **background**. Juxtaposing the lit face, the figure's neck is covered with shadowy, greyish tones.

Saville layers thick oil paint through her extremely **tactile and gestural brushstrokes** at the figure's cheekbone. With contrast to the remaining area, draws attention to the use of darker and earthy

The overall **colour scheme** of the painting expresses an atmosphere of calm that juxtapose the loudness of the brushwork. It is mostly earthy tones or neutral colours that suggest the nature of human emotions.



The painting is **composed** of the figure's eyes fixed at the centre, looking directly at the audience and immediately creating a connection. Her head is tilted slightly towards the left and back, her mouth slightly opened. Imagining the large scale of this painting, it almost seems like the figure is gazing down at the audience.

It can be seen that Cindy Sherman's **contemporary photography** influences this painting. She explained, "I want there to be an awareness of wearing this painted body, the artifice of it – a mixture of reality and fiction. I admire the way that Cindy Sherman, in the film stills, wears these myths of femininity. You believe them but also know that it is a fictional world that she's created." ["Now Contemporary Art Evening Auction."]



Cindy Sherman,
Untitled Film Still
#21, 1978

The **function/purpose** of this painting is focused on portraying the complex and multilayered aspect of human emotions and female identity. Drawing back to the title of Saville's exhibition, *Oxyrhynchus*, it demonstrates her view on the buildup of both the physical (oil paint and brush strokes) and metaphorical (emotions).

Jenny Saville (1970-)

Conceptual Framework of *Shadow Head*

AUDIENCE'S WORLD

AUDIENCE

ARTWORK

ARTIST

ARTIST'S WORLD

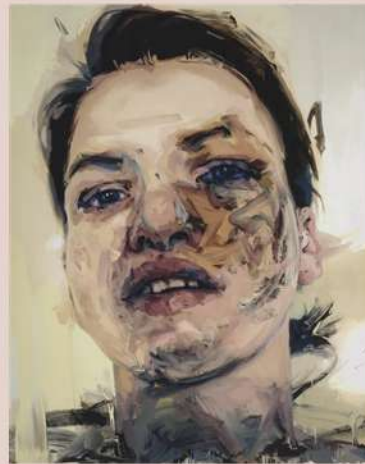
Early 21st century Rise of technology

With the development of technology, modern times are now bombarded with everyone's opinions, information and news. The world is entering a new era. Topics like feminism, motherhood and body image are all debated across the globe.

Studies of art and history of art are now also available online for analysis and/or comparisons.

The public is with full access to pieces of information at all times with a search engine. People begin to develop an attachment with social media and their online identity, pulling away from the emotions experienced in daily life and projecting it online.

Saville seems to be trying to create a connection to real emotions and the richness of humanity that is fading in value.



2007-2013
Shadow Head
Oil on Canvas
269.2 x 219.7cm

During this the 2000s, Saville has also entered a different phase of her life. She gave birth to two separate babies in 2007 and 2008 which, she describes, has “opened out a new way for me to create space and movement” (“Now Contemporary Art Evening Auction.”).

While most YBA members were most known for their experimental and non-conventional approaches to creation, Saville stuck to oil painting as her primary medium.

Early 21st century The rise of Contemporary Art

Contemporary art was build up from abstract impressionism. An artwork's value shifts the composition of the piece itself to the meaning behind it. It drew emphasis on abstract and depicts the most expressive way of presentation.

Saville was also a known member of the Young British Artists. The group includes Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas.

Francis Bacon (1909-1992)

Introduction of Piece 3



3. Self-Portrait

Year: 1987

Medium: Oil and Aerosol Paint on Canvas

Size: 35.5 x 30.5 cm

During the 1980s, Bacon enters his seventies. He strayed away from the early influence of expressionism and cubism, where his art matures and his style stabilises.

In his personal lives, his lover and muse, George Dyer, passed away due to overdose of drugs after a long battle with both drug abuse and alcoholism just two nights before the opening of his Paris Exhibitions. As Bacon matures in his portraiture paintings, a large collection of his **self-portraits** were created. He once explained, “people have been dying around me like flies and I’ve had nobody else to paint but myself ... I loathe my own face. One of the nicest things that Cocteau said was ‘Each day in the mirror I watch death at work.’ This is what one does to oneself.” (Brown)

The **themes** of his works remain closely linked to **death and decay**.



Three Studies for Self-Portrait, (1980) was another known self-portraiture of Bacon at this time. Linking back to *Self-Portrait*, a distinctive and nuanced style can be seen in all works. With the development of cameras and technology, Bacon has also started to paint from manipulation of photographs.

Francis Bacon (1909-1992)

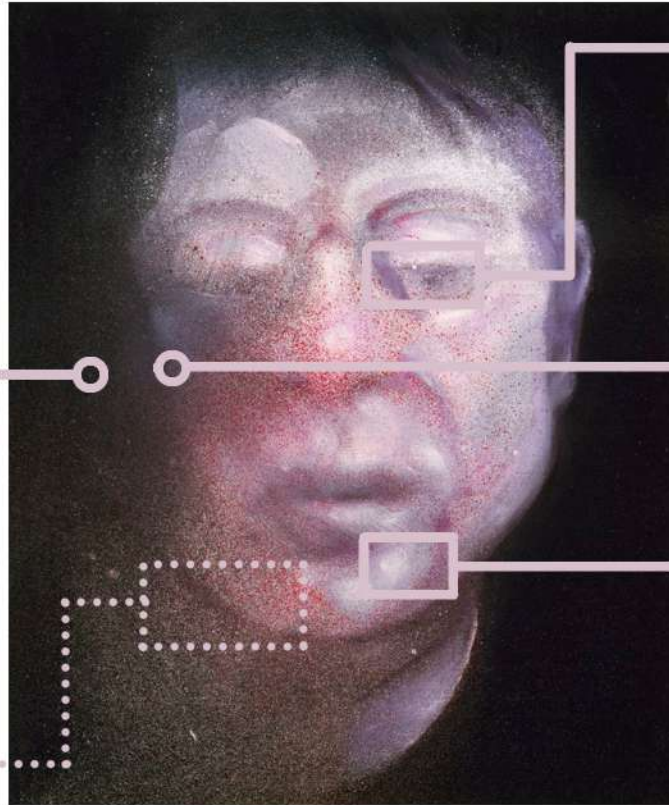
Annotations of Self-Portrait

Bacon uses **cool tone** colours of purple as shadows to contrasts with the **warm tones** colours of bright red and pink at the centre of the face. The facial features are painted with analogous colour to creates a melancholic hue against the monochromatic black background, illustrating a prominent emotion of sadness or his depiction of trauma.

The **background** is a minimalist and monochromatic colour of black to create a high contrast with the foreground figure.

A great sense of **depth** with regards to lighting is created.

Bacon has chosen to use **oil paint** in creating smooth tones and shades in the painting. The portrait is a **mix medium** piece with **aerosol paint**, also known as spray paint, in producing this fading or dissolving effect as well as bringing out the vibrant red dots. The two paints create contrast in soft and rough textures.



The **composition** of the figure is staring down at the bottom with half of his eyelid closed. The face seems to be in a neutral expression with a softness about it. It is composed at the centre of the painting. The mouth is relaxed and slight opened, and the left side of the face dissolves or fades into the black background.

However, opposing to the serene expression, the left of the figure's face is distorted. A different feeling of trauma is portrayed. Bacon manipulates photography to distort and experiment with unconventional expressions.

Straying way from his former expressive brushwork, this later style of Bacon's painting **softer and quieter**.

Bacon was regarded as one of the most influential artists of the time. He was believed to have inspired the contemporary art and many of the YBA artists.

The **function/purpose** of the painting seems to be more personal than for the public. In Bacon's later career, his life has also experienced a lot of trauma and life-turning events. This calm and silent figure seems to have lived through many stories and is now simply tired and used to all emotions in life. It seems to be Bacon's depiction of his inner world and consciousness.

Francis Bacon (1909-1992)

Conceptual Framework of *Self-Portrait*

AUDIENCE'S
WORLD

AUDIENCE

ARTWORK

ARTIST

ARTIST'S
WORLD

Late 20th century Globalisation and Digital age

The late 20th century entailed a drastic increase in globalisation and the introduction to technologies and social media.

Britain, at this time, was recovering from World War II and is rising in economy and culture. Gay rights in Ireland, campaigns against the use of nuclear for military and other issues began to push forward a change.

Amidst the loudness of the world's change, Bacon's life quiets down. His paintings suggest a sense of calmness and quietness. Bacon's focus was more on reflection with his retrospective exhibitions.

The audience of Bacon's portraiture seems to be more for himself. It is personal and full of his raw emotions.



1987
Self-Portrait
Oil and Aerosol Paint on
Canvas
35.5 x 30.5cm

Despite the many art movements around this period, Bacon never identified with a specific one. He develops his unique style and focuses on maturing his portraiture began experimenting with and landscape paintings.

Opposite to his rise in fame, Bacon drew away from a busy social life and settled in with new lover Edwards. He moved on from Dyer's death and to a state of happiness.

Late 20th century The rise of Contemporary Art

During this time, most of Bacon's retrospective and solo exhibitions were held and displayed. His figurative portrait paintings were believed to have influenced many contemporary artists, like Damien Hirst. His works continue to explore the themes of humanity and the nature of emotions.

Compare & Contrast

Colour & Style

Overview:

- The use of colour and tones in **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head**, **Self-Portrait**.
- The stylistic approach and choice of the artists.

Colour & Tones

- **Study of a Head** and **Self-Portrait** both use high intensity colours in the foreground figure to create a contrast and depth with a black background.
- **Shadow Head** uses a lower intensity and tonal values in the artist's use of colour. The background is similar to the colours in the foreground.
- **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** generously use tertiary colours in the foreground for a wide range of hue.
- **Study of a Head** primarily uses secondary colours in the foreground.

Similarities

- **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** all have colour dominance of warm-toned colours.
- **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** all have a minimalistic background for a clear focus on the figures.

Style

- **Study of a Head** and **Self-Portrait** are mixed medium. Bacon experimented with sand and aerosol paint to create a rough texture that contrasts with the smoothness of thick oil paint.
- **Study of a Head** and **Shadow Head** are painted with bold and expressive brushstrokes and is not blended. This creates a lively dynamic and atmosphere that reflects the profound emotions of the figure's expressions.

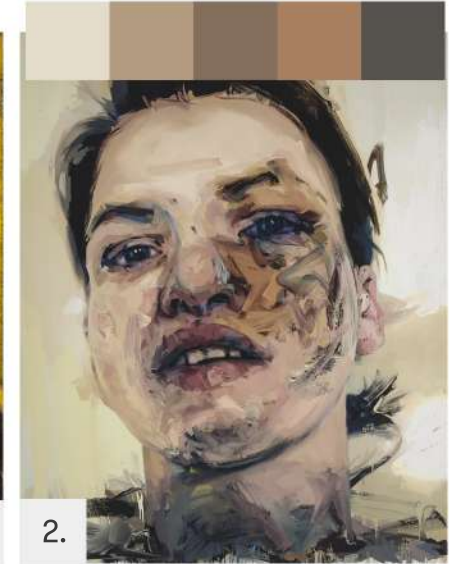
- Only **Shadow Head** is of a larger scale, towering over the audience.

Similarities

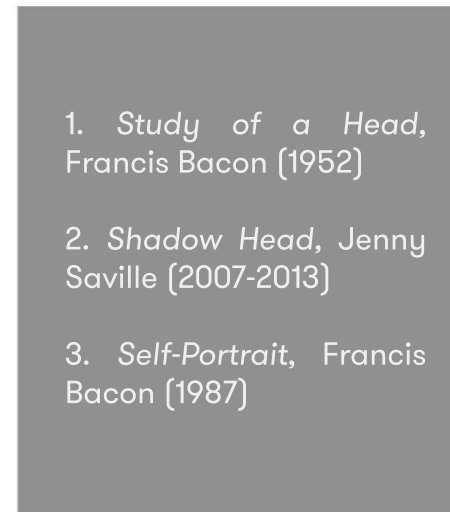
- The primary material of **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** are oil paint. The portrait paintings were created with layering of oil paint. Evidence of influence of expressionism and conceptual art can be seen in all portraits.



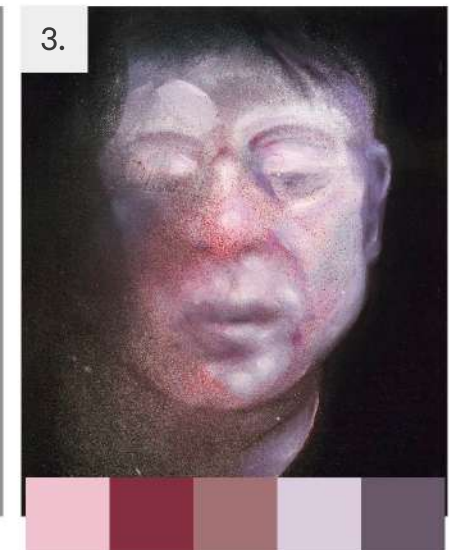
1.



2.



3.



1. Study of a Head, Francis Bacon (1952)

2. Shadow Head, Jenny Saville (2007-2013)

3. Self-Portrait, Francis Bacon (1987)

Compare & Contrast

Subject & Composition

Overview:

- The composition in **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head**, **Self-Portrait**.
- The subject of the portrait analysis of their expressions.

Subject

- **Study of a Head** is the portrait of the Pope Innocent X. His face is distorted from the screaming of despair and pain.
- **Shadow Head** is a portrait of an unidentified female. Her expression seemed relaxed and at ease that stares right into the audience.
- **Self-Portrait** is a self portrait of Bacon. His eyes half shut and looks below the frame, suggesting a sense of tiredness or calmness.

Similarities

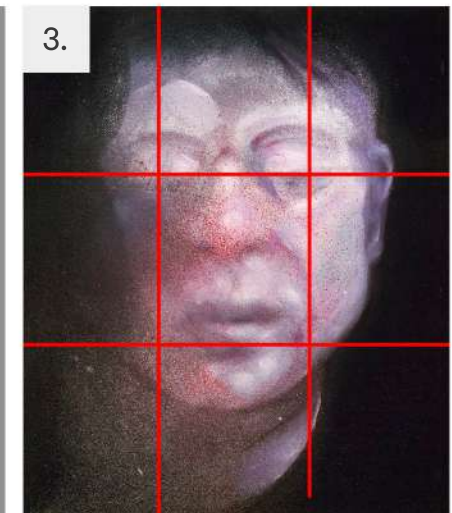
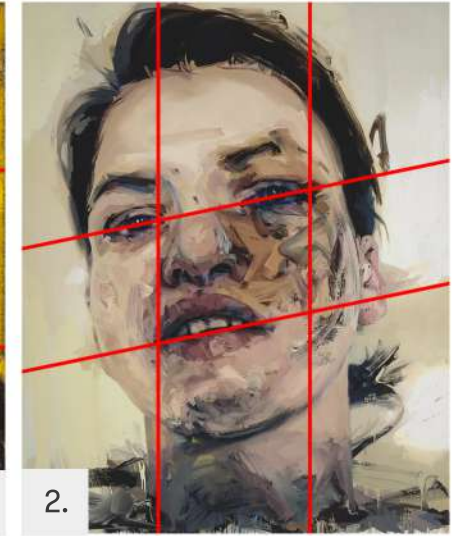
- **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** all uses human subjects to depict their perception of the complex human emotions. The subject is still.
- **Study of a Head** and **Shadow Head** are both directing at the audience.

Composition

- The subject of **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** are both painted closer to the frame with less space in the background.
- Dividing the pieces in to rules of three, only the structure of **Shadow Head** is slight tilted down left with the figure's head.
- The larger sparse background area in **Study of a Head** includes the a background of a chair and room.

Similarities

- **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** are all composed with a figure in the centre of the canvas. The audience's focus is clearly drawn to the portrait.



1. Study of a Head, Francis Bacon (1952)

2. Shadow Head, Jenny Saville (2007-2013)

3. Self-Portrait, Francis Bacon (1987)

Compare & Contrast

Motive, Context & Source

Overview:

- The motive and context in **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head**, **Self-Portrait**.
- The sources of the portraiture were also analysed.

Motive & Context

- **Study of a Head** and **Self-Portrait** were portrayal of the artists' personal experience with death or the aftermath of death.
- **Shadow Head** celebrates birth and the beginning of life.
- **Study of a Head** was created in the postwar era and represents the aftermath of World War II on the ones living.

Similarities

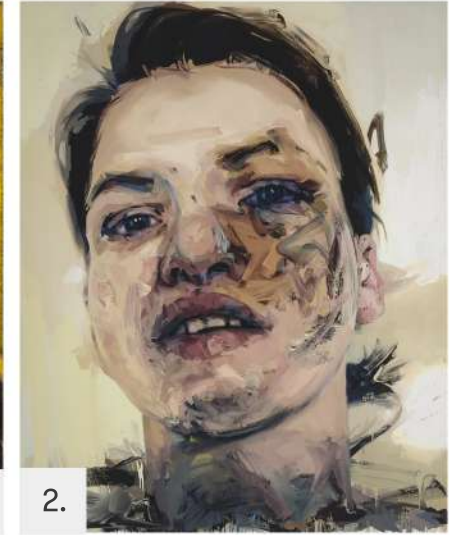
- **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** all focus on conveying inner human emotions, rather than exterior qualities.
- **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** are figurative portraiture the artists' depiction of a personal experience with a specific emotion.

Source

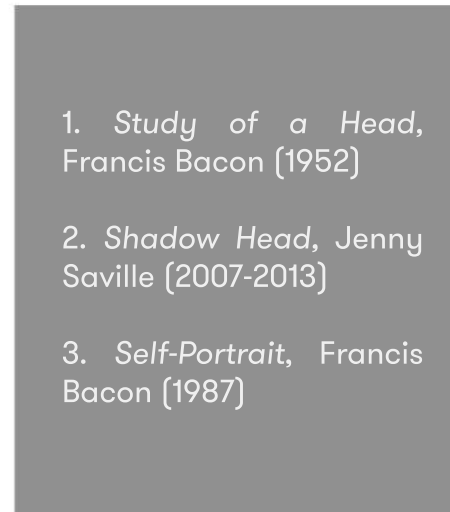
- **Study of a Head**, **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** all painted from a secondary resource than from life.
- **Shadow Head** and **Self-Portrait** are painted from photography.
- **Study of a Head** is painted from another painting of portrait, and is a distorted interpretation, rather than a mastercopy, the art became a mastercopy itself.



1.



2.



3.

1. Study of a Head, Francis Bacon (1952)

2. Shadow Head, Jenny Saville (2007-2013)

3. Self-Portrait, Francis Bacon (1987)



1. **Study of a Head**, Francis Bacon (1952)



Painted from another painting of portrait

A portrait of the Pope Innocent X

Theme of aftermath of World War II on the ones living

His face is distorted from the screaming of despair and pain

Secondary and primary colours

Mixed medium

Personal experience with death or the aftermath of death

Vibrant and high intensity colours in the foreground

Figure is directing at an audience
 Bold and expressive brushstrokes
 Theme of human emotions
 Colour dominance of warm toned colours
 A figure in the centre of the canvas
 Layers of oil paint
 Minimalistic background
 Human subjects

Lower intensity and tonal values of colours

A celebration birth and the beginning of life

Larger scale painting

The structure is slight tilted down left with the figure's head.

Theme of motherhood and womanhood

A portrait of an unidentified female

Great use of tertiary colours

Painted from photography

Painted from above the shoulders

The figure's eyes half shut and looks below the frame, suggesting a sense of tiredness or calmness.

Great use of analogous colours

A self portrait of Bacon



3. **Self-Portrait**, Francis Bacon (1987)

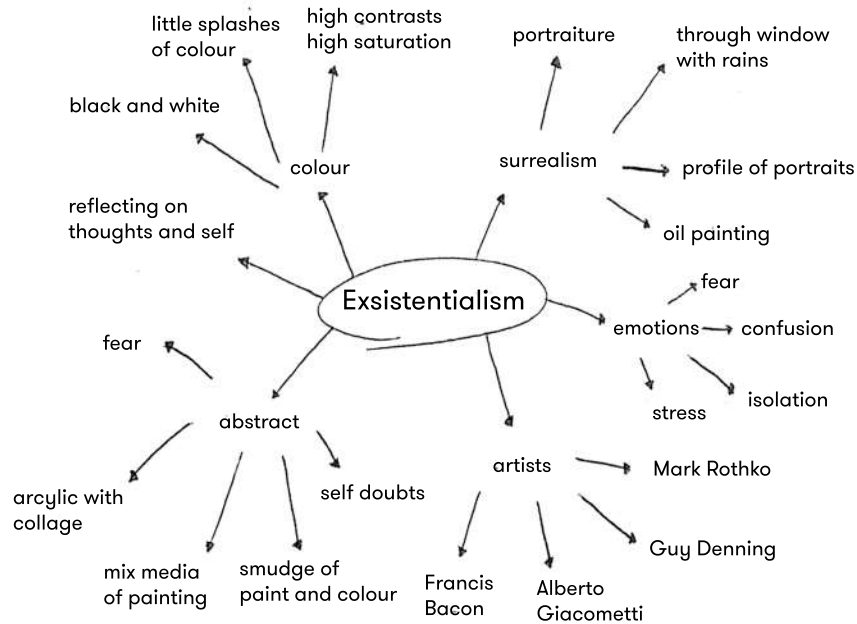
2. **Shadow Head**, Jenny Saville (2007-2013)



Overview of Comparisons & Contrasts

Candidate's Own Work

Planning & Research



Concept

My initial plan was to portray the **theme of existentialism**. In school, the more knowledge I have learnt, the less I realised we know. There are so many phenomenons beyond human explanation and things we can not understand. We do not understand dreams, what happens before the big bang and many more. It was not an easy thing to accept. The confusion with university applications also left me wondering about my future, my career, my life.

I wanted to experiment with oil painting and use the figurative portraitures. From the feeling of an existential crisis, I drew a rough mindmap of the emotions, composition and style I wanted to paint. I loved how powerful emotions are created through facial expression and paintings. Inspired by both Bacon and Saville's portraitures, I decided to paint one myself. It is my depiction of the feeling of loss.

I took inspirations from the portrait painting of Bacon's *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953), similar to Bacon's creation inspired by Velázquez's painting, and created a transcription with acrylic paint. I really enjoyed it. Bacon managed to capture intense and powerful emotions in his expressive brush strokes. It looked like a cage, locking the distorted figure of the pope stiff on the chair.



Transcription, 42.0 x 59.4cm

The original painting was 153cm x 118cm, so I decided to transcript a section of it, with A2 paper. The section I painted was of the pope's expression. I did not exactly recreate the painting, but rather just went with the creative flow as I painted it. The brush strokes did not align, but that was how expressive the painting is. There is a sense of freedom and liberation. Something about the unplanned and bold brushstrokes of black paint allowed me to express my emotions. I enjoyed this transcription. It must've been somewhat liberating for Bacon as well, despite the feeling of existentialism in the painting.

Candidate's Own Work

Planning & Experimentation

Whilst planning, I decided to look back into 2 large scale portrait oil paintings I had experimented before. *Exploration* (2018) and *Vanishing Point* (2019) to examine the colour, style and composition in *Self-doubt*.



Vanishing Point

Oil Paint on Canva
80 x 120cm

I wanted to have a grand and large scale painting, like most of Saville's works that overwhelmed many. More neutral colours were applied with highlights of pink and nude tones. Different from *Exploration*, *Vanishing Point* was heavily influenced by the theme of trauma. From the research on Bacon, I tried to implement his style of creating daunting atmospheres through the darker values of colours and expressive brushstrokes.

Similarities

- The theme of trauma is similar to Bacon's works *Study of a Head*.
- An unsettling feeling is conveyed through the brushwork.
- The subject is staring straight at the audience similar to Saville's *Shadow Head*.
- A monochromatic black plane background like *Self-Portrait* and *Study of a Head*.

Exploration is a self-portrait that emphasise on the hue, value and tone of the skin, like Saville's paintings. The subject's head is slightly tilted towards the right and the face is neutral in expressions. From Bacon's *Study of a Head*, I decided with a similar composition with regards to the position of the subject. This was my first time working with oil paint; I did not fully use the thickness of oil paint and painted thin layers.

Compare & Contrast

- The dominant pink-purple tones are analogous colours like Bacon's *Self-Portrait*.
- The highlight of the skin tones and flesh is similar to Saville's *Shadow Head*.
- Composition of the spacing is emptier like *Study of a Head*.
- The subject is similar to *Shadow Head*'s tilted head, but is rather flat overall.



Exploration

Oil, Acrylic Paint on
Canvas,
80cm x 100cm

If the painting were to reflect my inner turmoil or doubts, it would be a self-portrait since we are often our biggest enemies.

I drew some drafts for the composition to see how I want the painting to be orientated and portrayed: the direction of the subject, the flow of the composition and the structure. In the end, I chose this plan because I wanted to keep the composition portrait as minimalistic and centred, similar to Saville and Bacon's paintings.



Candidate's Own Work

Process & Final Work

Process

I have also chosen to paint with oil paint because I love the flexibility and richness of the paint. It is very thick for layering and creating a visual and textural surface. I wanted to convey the profound emotions like Saville's *Shadow Head* and Bacon's *Study of a Head*. Since I have had most of my paintings created with a brush, I decided to experiment with a palette knife, a technique often used by Saville, to create the vigorous and tactile brushwork. The uniformed horizontal scrapping of the oil paint gave a sense of direction of the audience's and also resembled the distorted subject in Bacon's *Self-Portrait*.

I decided first to use a brush to paint a thick layer of oil paint to identify the facial features and positions. Then, taking a diamond knife, applying highlight, light nude, or shadow, dark brown, paint to press and drag it horizontally towards the right.



Self-doubt

Year: 2019

Medium: Oil Paint on Canvas

Size: 40.5 x 53.5 cm

In the modern ages, we are all overwhelmed with informations, misinformations and opinions. When we are left alone, we reflect on memories, thoughts, emotions, and the choices that we made leading up to that moment. We drown ourselves into our minds. The mind that remembers and fabricates stories. We then start to question things. "Why did I do that earlier?", "What did she mean when she said that?", and "Where am I going tomorrow?". Drawned in our own thoughts and questions, this portrait is an expression of feels fear and self-doubt.

Candidate's Own Artwork

Annotations of *Self-doubt*

Similar to Bacon's *Study of a Head* and *Self-Portrait*, the **background** is a monochromatic black plane that creates high contrast to the foreground.

The prominent use of **colour** in the painting is warmed toned colours in the subject's face and hair. The cool-toned clothing juxtaposes it. The colours are saturated.



The **composition** of the figure is placed in the centre of the painting. The horizontal palette knife strips of the thick oil paint create a lively atmosphere; it flows from down-left to up-right with the oil paint.

This painting is drawn from a photograph and with a single light source to create darker shadows against the face.



Thick and an abundance of **oil paint** is used to create a ridged surface. It creates a rich dynamic in the texture in the uneven layers. The strokes of the **palette knife** and the **brushwork** can be seen as influenced by the figurative portrait paintings.

This technique was a new and difficult technique with controlling the angle and pressure applied to the knife that affects the texture it creates. The first few times, I applied too much pressure and scraped some paint off of the canvas. When repeating the method, I overmixed the paint and lost some colour tones.

The **subject's** facial features are recognisable but not distinctive. The expression is relaxed, and there is little tension. It is not distorted but seems to be fading into the background or away from the centre. Her head is also tilted left down towards the audience.

The **function/purpose** of this piece is to convey the feeling of lost and existentialism. I wanted to focus more on the use of paint, colour tones and stylistic approach to painting this self-portrait.

Overview of Comparisons & Contrasts

Self-doubts,
Candidate
(2019)



Vibrant and high intensity colours in the foreground

Exploring the emotion of existentialism and loss of identity

The subject's head is tilted down

A movement to the painting

Bold and expressive brushstrokes

Female subject

Layers of oil paint

Lower intensity and tonal values of colours

A portrait of an unidentified female

The subject's head is tilted up

Larger scale painting

Exploring the identity of motherhood its relationship with womanhood

The eyes are directing at an audience

The subject fades into background

A high contrast, monochromatic black background

Self portrait

Bacon's experience with death or the aftermath of death

Exploring another aspects to the state of solitude

Mixed medium of sand and oil paint

The subject's face is centred and has a natural expression.

Figurative oil paintings
Portrayal of human emotions
Colour dominance of warm toned colours
A human subject in the centre of a minimalistic background

Silliness to the painting

Close-up of the figures

2. **Shadow Head,**
Jenny Saville
(2007-2013)



3. **Self-Portrait,**
Francis Bacon
(1987)



Candidate's Own Work

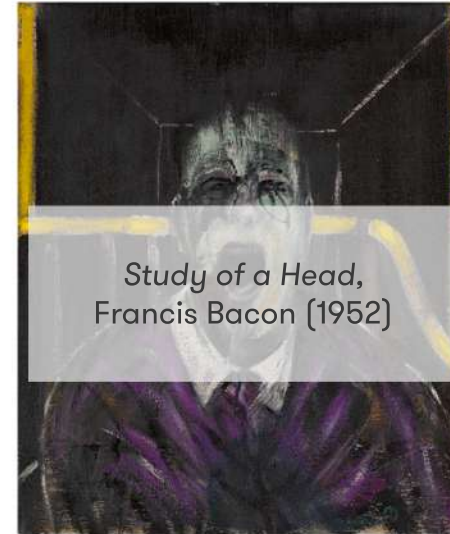
Overview of Motives and Themes

Overview:

Emotions are extremely beautiful and powerful, deeply embedded in our facial expressions. A portrait of a person can convey so much about who they are and how they are feeling. Bacon illustrates his personal experience with loss and death into his expressions, Saville paints the figures to empower the inner beauty of woman and man, and I want to be able to communicate different themes with different styles.

Portraiture sounds so simple, yet it is so complicated to be able to have a unique style that emphasis a raw of emotions. Whether it is grief, pride, joy, anger, despair, hopelessness; artists capture the reflection of one's inner feelings and projects it onto the portrait. Many artists create a strong connection to their audience through the manipulation of art materials or the subject of a painting.

Self-doubt is a very new and experimental painting for me. I had only worked with oil paint once before and had never used a palette knife before. I am happy with the colour dynamic and composition of the portrait but could refine my technique in the layering of oil paint and working with a palette knife. The oil paints bands ended a little too abrupt, and the facial features could have been more distinctive for a more profound depiction of loss.



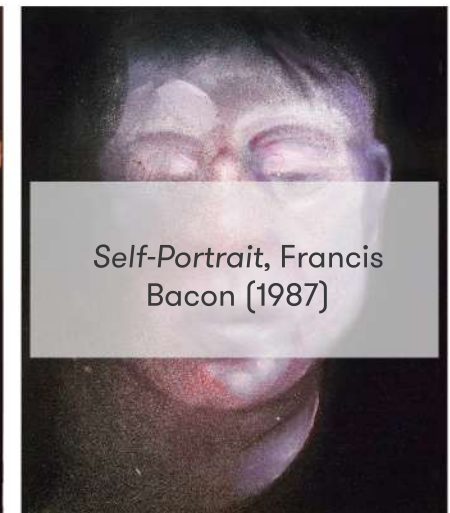
Study of a Head,
Francis Bacon (1952)



Shadow Head, Jenny
Saville (2007-2013)



Self-Portrait, (2019)



Self-Portrait, Francis
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