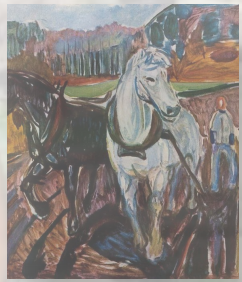




A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis
Bacon

Comparative Study

By: Autumn A. Beeler



Horse Team
(1919) - Edvard
Munch

In this Comparative Study, I will compare two Artworks of Francis Bacon and two artworks from Edvard Munch. I will focus on formal qualities in their work, such as Color and Line. I will also investigate, compare and contrast things such as artistic style, themes, and culture. Both artists have inspired my artwork. In themes and style, whether in school or for personal enjoyment of artwork. Especially with darker themes in work, gore-ish shapes/disturbing imagery, and stylistic choices. Though the artists have some obvious similarities, such as being both European artists in close proximity to each other, they worked in different art periods when they first went into art, and kept with them, even with an overlap in their periods of work. They both also carry some heavy themes of twisted or even lonely people or objects. This will be further discussed in the Comparative Study, as I dive further into their works and into their character.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Francis Bacon

Surrealist art was significant during the mid 1920's and lasted through the mid 1960's. The movement was sought to see the unconscious unlocking of the imagination. It was dedicated to express the imagination without conscious control to limit what they could make with reason and convention. It was particularly popular during the space of time between the first and second world wars. Some artists that are linked to this movement are artists like Duchamp, O'Keeffe, Dali, and Picasso.

Francis Bacon was a British painter from 1909 to 1992. Bacon experienced many hardships throughout his life. Bacon was an openly gay/homosexual man during a time where homosexuality was seen as an illness and was countered with hospitalization and imprisonment, Bacon suffered from abuse from family and those around him. His homosexuality was reflected in his artwork as he often created pieces of men 'making love', for lack of a better term, or interacting with one another, which was incredibly scrutinized. Bacon lived through the experiences of the second World War and is (now) considered one of the greatest post World War Two Artists. His art style was influenced by Picasso and Cubism in his beginning works, with more warped and geometric shapes, (especially in the face) then turned more towards Surrealism. Most of his work are large and depict a single person screaming or in pain, or dreary mood placed behind bars or in front of black backgrounds, enforcing his themes of pain and dreariness.

He wanted to capture the despair and sadness in the figures in his works. A majority of his portraits have disfigured or warped faces and hanging animal carcasses. His famous 'Screaming Pope' paintings were inspired by a painting made by Diego Velázquez, of Pope Innocent X, in 1650. A common theme throughout his body of work was to show the suffering we all feel while reflecting his tough past. As for the color scheme, mainly cool colors are rather prominent, however warmer colors like yellow are used often as a pop of color and to attract the eye. His work is worth Millions today.



Figure in a Landscape
(1957) - Francis Bacon

Analysis of Formal Qualities in Francis Bacon



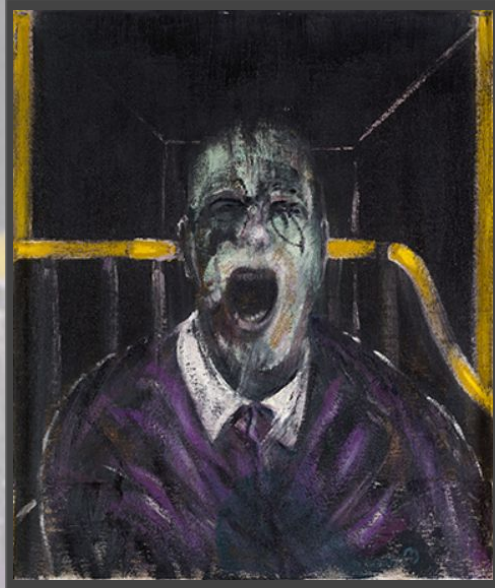
A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis Bacon

As for the color scheme, black, blue, white and yellow are rather prominent. This painting is called *A Study for a Head* painted by Francis Bacon in 1952. When looking closely at the work it can be seen that the figure is made up of quick and thick brushstrokes, using many subtle and contrasting colors to create contour in the work. The empty black space left between lines in the background gives the illusion of depth into the empty darkness that are prominent in his works.

An interesting detail is that although the shapes aren't clearly defined it is easy to make out where all the features are located and how they form facial features. This stroke of the paint is especially seen in the main figure. You can see where his nose, brows, glasses, folds in his clothing and even where his teeth are. It seems as though Bacon created images by adding light to them as opposed to darkening shapes, creating the contrast from the darkness in his works. His shadows were already present in the black background, he used colors in areas where light could show them, again making the illusion of depth.

Another observation to make is that no color is truly bright, even the white such as in the collar of this painting is dulled with the use of gray, and the yellow dulled to make the bars look rustic, but contrast enough to draw the eye. His paintings also seem to create a sense of dimension and empty space by adding slight lines to define where walls begin and meet, creating an interesting field of view. The lack of surrounding details forces all the focus on the main figure, and the despair and cry for help in these paintings.

Evaluation of Function and Purpose of the art of Francis Bacon



A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis Bacon

Most of Francis Bacon's work as an Artist was to reflect on his life and experiences/emotions. His work has been admired by many because of how he had mastered the use of oil paint. Many of his beginning works were exercises, taking inspiration from existing paintings and distorting the forms, to help express himself. His morbid paintings are what gained him most notoriety in the artistic field. Bacon's devotion to his art was odd, considering the common subject matter and the pain and unpredictableness of his personal life. But, because he destroyed many of his early works and paintings, we only a few examples can be recovered and are known today, which are mainly in American and European museums.



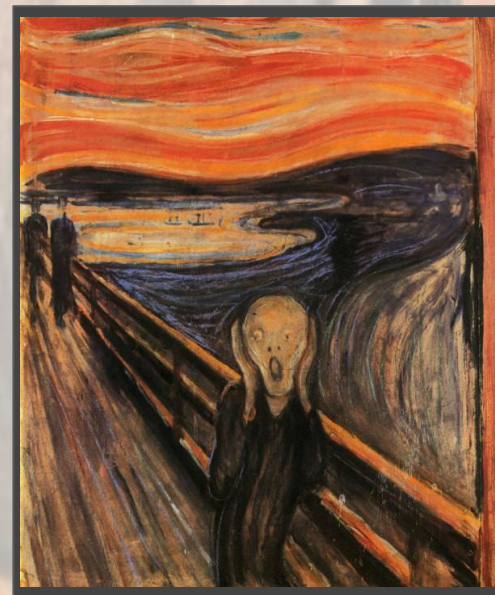
Figure in a Landscape
(1957) - Francis Bacon

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Edvard Munch

Modern art was significant during the mid 1860's and lasted through the mid 1970's. The movement was sought to see new views of things; to get a different perception of what we could make. The Artists were find new ways to see things, and stray away from the traditional style, and went to abstraction of works, creating a new perception. It was particularly popular during the space of time around the first World War.

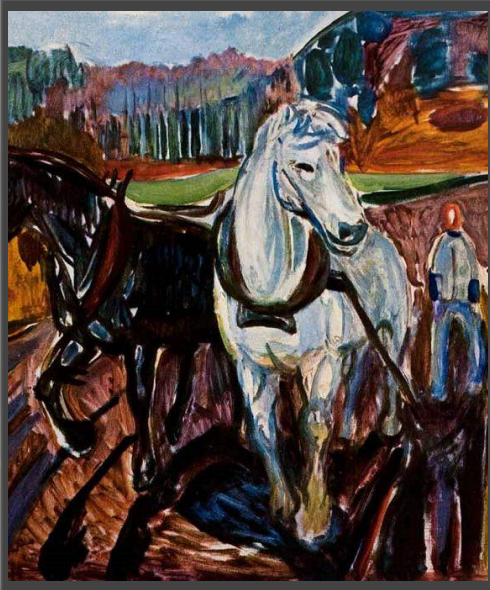
Edvard Munch was a Norwegian painter and Printmaker from 1880's to mid 1940's. Bacon a troubled man; and he preoccupied himself with things like illness and human mortality. Munch had experienced many hardships, such as his mother and favorite sister dying of tuberculosis and his Father becoming abusive after their deaths. His Father, Christian Munch, was a fundamentalist Christian and had believed that their deaths was from divine intervention on their family. His family moved homes frequently due to his father's occupation, and his weak immune system meant he was out of school often; and to entertain himself he took up watercolor painting.

Slowly, art became a steady career in his teenage years, giving him opportunity to explore new artworks to examine, like norwegian landscapes. A majority of his portraits have strange and abstract views and symbols, with somber and / or sad scenes. His famous 'The Scream' painting is a prime example of what his works consisted of themes like despair and worry and agony. A common theme throughout his body of work was to show the suffering we all feel while reflecting his tough past and childhood of himself and family. As for the color scheme, mainly cool colors are rather prominent, however warmer colors like red are used often as a pop of color and to attract the eye. His work is worth Millions today.



The Scream
(1893) - Edvard Munch

Analysis of Formal Qualities in Edvard Munch



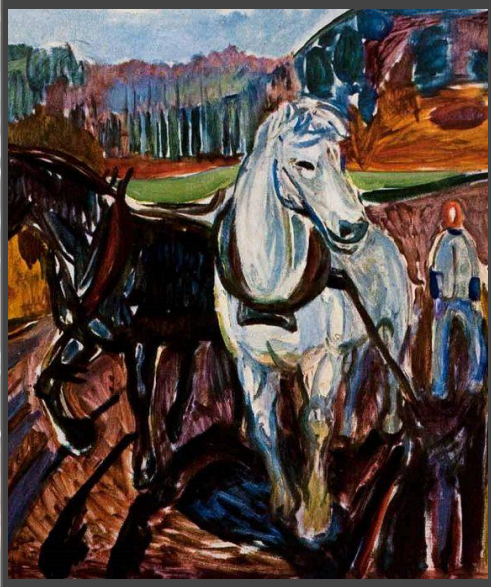
Horse Team
(1919) - Edvard Munch

As for the color scheme, Darker colors are rather prominent. This painting is called *Horse Team* painted by Edvard Munch in 1919. When looking closely at the work it can be seen that the figures are made up of quick and thick brushstrokes, using many subtle and contrasting colors to create contour and depth in the work. The Simplified shapes in the background gives the illusion of depth and focus like a camera lens into an otherwise simplistic scene.

An interesting detail is that although the shapes aren't clearly defined it is easy to make out where all the features are located in the main horse figures and how they form facial features. You can see where his nostrils, brows, eyes, mouth and even the muscle build of the horses. It seems as though Munch created these figures by layering light and contrasting colors, creating the harsh but smooth contrast from the darkness in his works. His shadows were already present in the harsh shadows of the horses, but he used colors in areas where we would not think to see vibrant color, like the blue in the shadow underneath the horses.

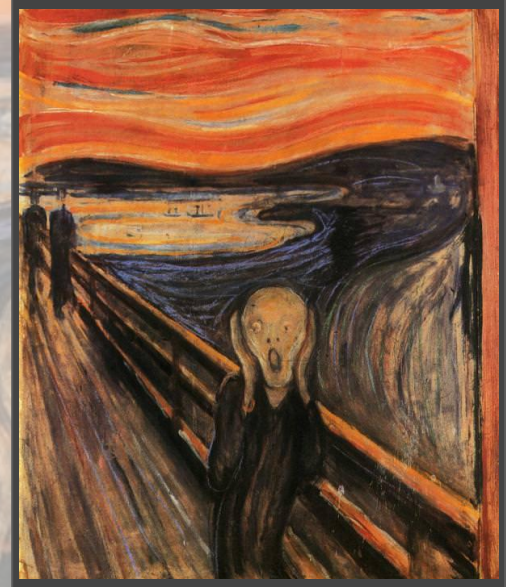
Another observation to make is that no color is clean, even the white, like in the white horse, is dulled with the use of blue in the coat of the animal, and the colours of the scenery like the grass and sky are dulled to make the surroundings look, in some ways, reserved and lonely and give off the sense of a sad existence. His paintings also seem to create a sense of dimension by adding curved lines to define where hills begin and end, creating an interesting field of view of a bumpy road. The lack of surrounding details forces all the focus on the main figure, similar to a camera lens.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Edvard Munch



Horse Team
(1919) - Edvard Munch

Similarly to Francis Bacon, Edvard Munch mainly focussed his work on reflecting his work on his life experiences and emotions. He never married, and he personally considered his work as his children, and hated to be separated from them. He lived alone and isolated himself, only being surrounded by his life's work. His work was extremely personal to him, and his work stayed with him in his home. When he died at the age of 80, the authorities went to his home and discovered on the second floor thousands of paintings, drawings, woodcuts, prints, etc collected in his home that had accumulated in his passion for art.



The Scream
(1893) - Edvard Munch

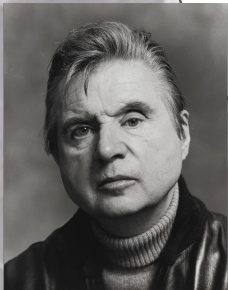
STYLE COMPARISONS OF FRANCIS BACON AND EDVARD MUNCH

Francis Bacon



- Main use of black as the backgrounds.
- Subtle Horror themes in works, disfigured forms with sometimes broken anatomy.
- Surrealist
- Hesitant use of paintings with mostly vibrant colors
- Use of gore and exposed meat; macabre visuals

Francis Bacon
by Dmitri Kasterine

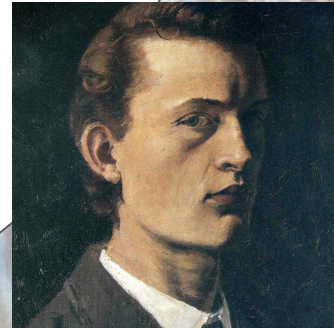


Edvard Munch



- Themes Of Despair And death.
- Dark Colors are prominent in works
- Reflection of events in their lives
- Contrast of Shadows In artwork Using vibrant Color.
- Worked during times of war
- Various mixed colors in work; especially for backgrounds
- Anatomical Stability and accuracy; leading to a more realistic look in most works.
- Overlay of Different colors in backgrounds and forms of the painting.
- “Modern Art”

Edvard Munch
Selvportrett
(Self-Portrait) 1881-82.



Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Francis Bacon

A Study for a Head is one of the artworks I am focussing on in this study; it was done by Francis Bacon on a canvas, using oil and sand. The painting shows a man in possible distress with his mouth wide open, broken glasses and pain in his expression. The man seems to be in some sort of bed in a dark hallway, possibly a mental hospital.

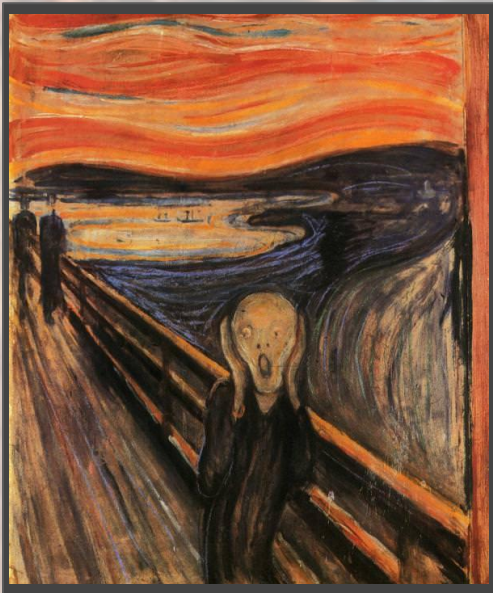
The overall emotions of this painting are fear, sorrow, and distress. In this painting, I get a sense that the man in the main frame of the painting is trapped, and can not leave. I speculate, personally, that this is a man in a mental hospital, not only due to the long hallways but due to the context of who Francis Bacon was; a gay man in the time where gay was seen as a disease.

The distress in this painting is severe in the man's facial expression. He's seemingly crying out for help, but is not getting it. The man seems well dressed (the white collared shirt and pullover sweater) but dishevelled. His glasses are broken and his clothes are wrinkled, and his hair is a mess. He seems to have been in some sort of altercation, but why? And with what? We may not ever know.



A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis Bacon

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Edvard Munch



The Scream
(1893) - Edvard Munch

The Scream is another one of the Artworks I am focussing on in this study; it was done by Edvard Munch on a Cardboard sheet, using oil paints, crayons and pastels. The painting shows a man in distress, screaming (as the name implies) with his mouth wide open, hands on the sides of his face and pain in his expression. The man seems to be on some sort of bridge, spanning across a river on what may be a park.

The overall emotions of this painting are fear, sorrow, and distress. In this painting, I get a sense that the man in the main frame of the painting is trapped, and can only scream. I speculate, personally, that this is an 'insane' man having a mental break, due to what I do not know. The people approaching in the back of the painting seem like there is nothing wrong, and that this is normal. Possibly this man is in another dimension, and nobody can see him. And he is only briefly captured in this image; the only remnant of his existence. Who knows, besides Edvard himself?

The distress in this painting is severe in the man's facial expression. He's seemingly crying out for help, but is not getting it. Or he is possibly terrified or shocked because of something. The man seems well dressed due to his nice black long sleeve. His chilling expression is the only real detail that can be internalized in this piece.

Analysis of Formal Qualities in Edvard Munch

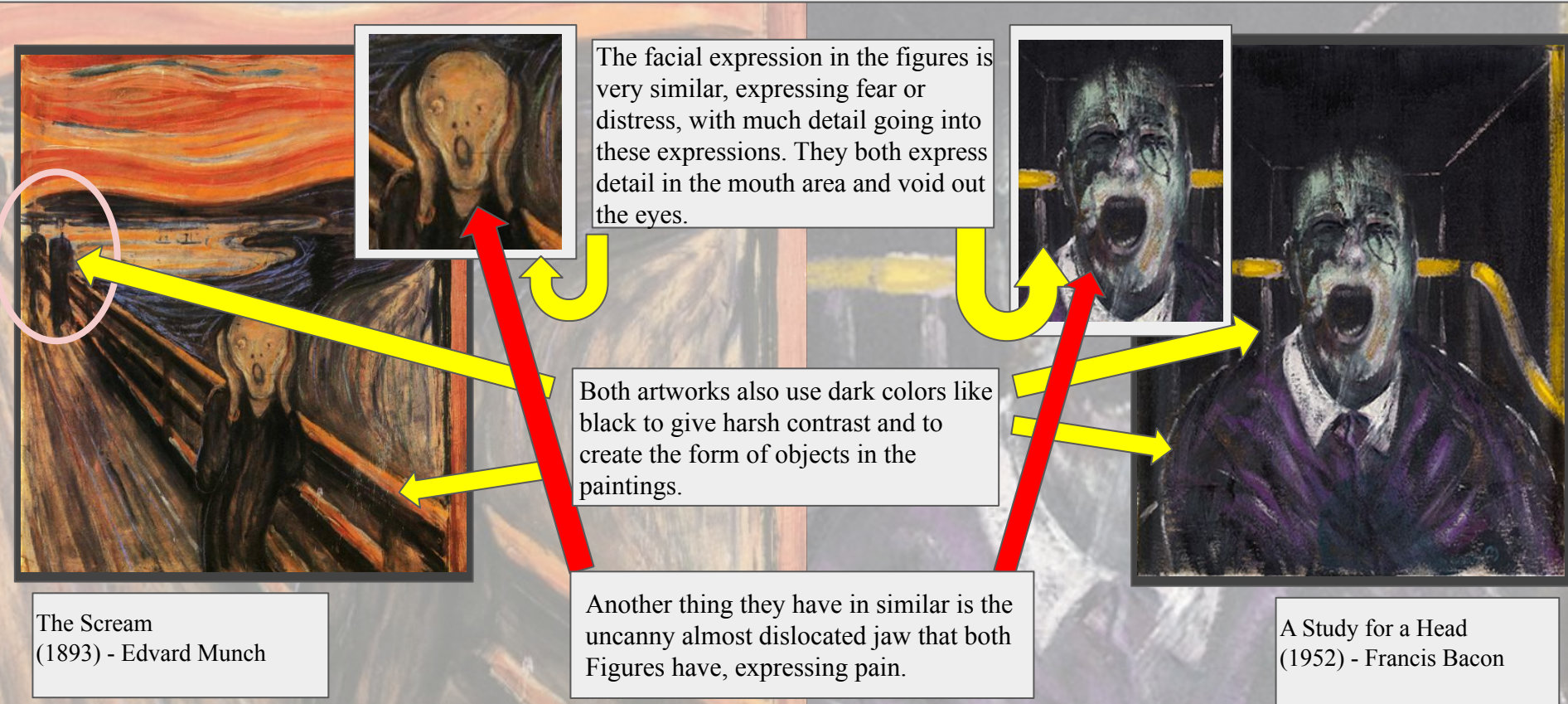
Horse Team is one of the Artworks I am focussing on in this study; it was done by Edvard Munch on a canvas, using oil . The painting shows a man with two horses pulling plows across a field. The horses are the most defined feature; the man and background being the least defined.

The overall emotions of this painting are serenity, peace, and boredom. In this painting, I get a sense that this is a reflection of the boring and trivial everyday life of a farmer. The colors are dull and muted, and there's little to no action and movement, most of it coming from the horse's trot to pull the plow. The colors and scene radiate a tired and almost boring energy. It's very calming and a freeze frame in life.



Horse Team
(1919) - Edvard Munch

Similarities in the Works of Edvard Munch and Francis Bacon



The facial expression in the figures is very similar, expressing fear or distress, with much detail going into these expressions. They both express detail in the mouth area and void out the eyes.

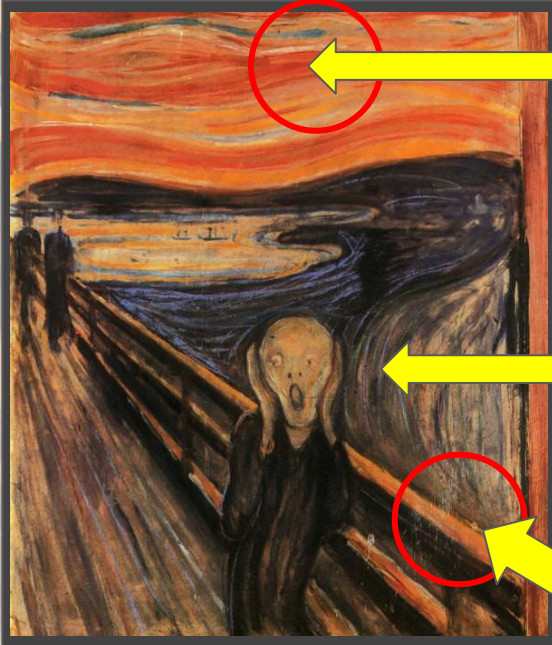
Both artworks also use dark colors like black to give harsh contrast and to create the form of objects in the paintings.

Another thing they have in similar is the uncanny almost dislocated jaw that both figures have, expressing pain.

The Scream
(1893) - Edvard Munch

A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis Bacon

Differences in the Works of Edvard Munch and Francis Bacon



The Scream
(1893) - Edvard Munch

Edvard Uses Much more Color in the backgrounds, and uses more reds than Bacon, who uses more yellows.

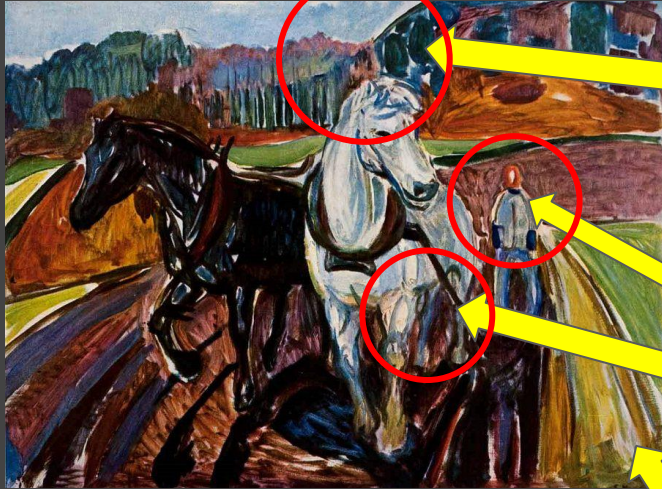
Edvard uses much more simplistic figures, whilst Bacon has more of a detailed look to his figures, and expresses more detail in his human figures in his more grand pieces.

Bacon Uses a majority of Cool colors, reflecting the cold in his work. Munch Uses Warmer colors in the majority of this work in particular.



A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis Bacon

Similarities in the Works of Edvard Munch and Francis Bacon



Horse Team
(1919) - Edvard Munch

Simple backgrounds that don't overtake the main figures.

Minimal detail everywhere except main figures, where eye and details of the face can be seen.

Both use the painting style of quick, long brush strokes. These are typically used as strokes of color or to add contrast/lighting.



A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis Bacon

Differences in the Works of Edvard Munch and Francis Bacon



Horse Team
(1919) - Edvard Munch

Munch has More use of Vibrant Colors, vivid whilst Bacon uses more muted toned colors.

Bacon has a more defined shading style, whilst Munch has a more blocky and stroke-defined shading, not as blended.

Munch uses shades of color to define figures. Bacon uses white to outline figures and key objects.



A Study for a Head
(1952) - Francis Bacon

Connections to Personal Art - Personal Work vs Francis Bacon

SIMILARITIES IN ARTWORKS

- Portrait-like paintings that emphasize intense emotions.
- Dark backgrounds with Bright **Color** to draw attention to key elements.
- Expresses Despair
- Uses self as inspiration or famous people/pictures as inspiration
- Uses large brush Strokes for large portions of color
- Lack of intricacy in Backgrounds allowing Faces to be more intricate and detailed.



“Screaming in Bed” By
Autumn Beeler



“The Blue Dahlia” By
Autumn Beeler



“A Study for a Head”
By Francis Bacon
(1952)

DIFFERENCES IN ARTWORKS

- Self work is more conceptual and influenced by famous works / photography i.e. the Black Dahlia
- Self work has less colorful splotches that blended into the skin and clothing of the main figure.
- Bacon uses light colors to contrast figures and objects to emphasize them.

Meanings & Techniques



“Screaming in Bed” By Autumn Beeler



“The Blue Dahlia” By Autumn Beeler

The portraits of both my work and Bacon’s both reflect pain, dreariness, despair and sadness. And both artists depict the figures in their work in intense pain or screaming. Bacon’s art would also depict men in acts of love, depicting his sexuality and lack of representation and acceptance. Whilst not the same, similarly personal artworks reflect issues not well represented, such as violence and toxic femininity and LGBTQ issues. This is seen in also in the use of **Color** and the **surrealist** art style. These decisions are important as they reflect the dreary nature of the message. The **focus** of the pieces are on the faces or the skin, having these parts highly detailed or brightly colored. This was used as a way to reflect the uncomfortable-ness that is tended to happen when these topics are brought up. The use of **Color** is to reflect the dreariness and sadness in the topics and ideas.

The main **colors** used in both artists are mainly cooler colors, blues and purples or varying lightness-darkness. Warmer colors like yellows and pinks are used as a sort of highlights, or contours / **Contrasts**. Self portraits of both artists reflect a warped and estranged self view, and a view of self that is twisted, and ‘ugly’. Most artworks of both artists have the **focus** of the works facing the audience. Examples include faces and chest. These are to have the viewer forced to see the disturbing topic(s) of the work, and force the topic(s) to be into the mind and talked, or at least talked about. The Surrealist art style is to enhance the disturbing / uneasiness feel these topic(s) Have on a certain population of people that perceive these topics as ‘unholy’ or ‘wrong’.

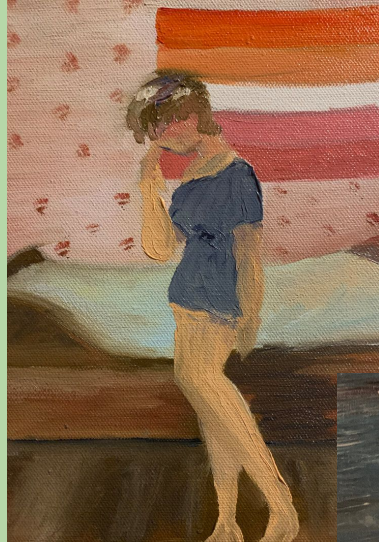


“A Study for a Head” By Francis Bacon (1952)

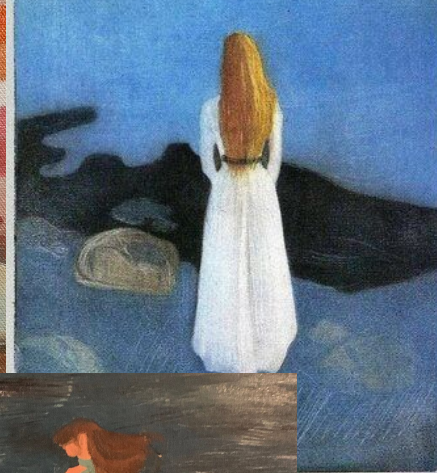
Connections to Personal Art - Personal Work vs Edvard Munch

SIMILARITIES IN ARTWORKS

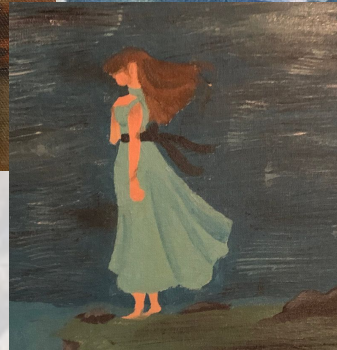
- Both use unsaturated colors / Pastels
- Main figures are Females
- Uses colors that Will strongly contrast one another
- Soft and rounded Edges on figures And objects.
- Contrasting colors To emphasize Highlights and shadows.



“Young Woman on the Beach” By Edvard Munch (1896)



“Not a Phase” By Autumn Beeler



“Standing on the Edge” By Autumn Beeler

DIFFERENCES IN ARTWORKS

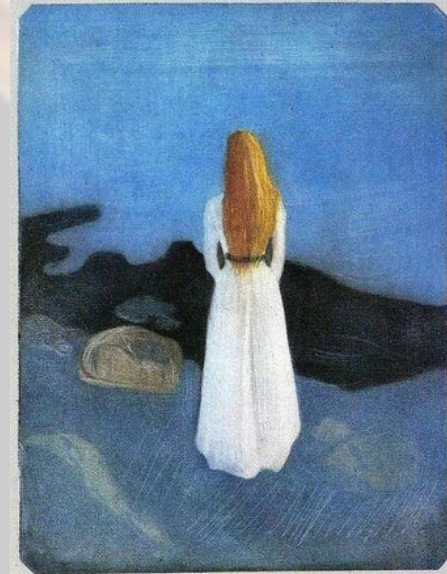
- Munch’s work has a more ‘fuzzy’ appearance.
- Personal work has more emphasis on personal meanings.
- Personal work has ties to LGBTQ material
- Figures in Munch’s work is more defined
- Many of Munch’s pieces use more cool tones

Meanings and Techniques

Both artists use soft **colors** and a certain **focus** point, as well as **themes** that reflect the hardships and pain experienced in their or a population's life. The themes can be seen in not only amount of times these themes appear in their work (For Munch a recurring topic of death, particularly of a female figure, stemming from the death of his mother. And for me personally, the recurring topics of both LGBT (mainly wlw relationships) and also Toxic femininity.) but also the main figures of these pieces, and their characteristics.

For both artists, **color** is used as **contrast**. Munch uses mainly warm colors in his works and for main important figures in them. In some works, he will use cool backgrounds of blues to have the figure more eye-catching. In personal works, this is seen in the contrasts of cool cutting through warm (such as the blue on the pinks and oranges) and the light blues of skin colors and woods. Both artists' focus points mainly consist of Women or feminine figures. These figures are supported by color and contrasts (previously mentioned). The figures also relate to not only the meanings, but the personal lives and 'traumas' of the artist. For Munch this was the death of his mother, and for myself this was the trauma of coming out as LGBTQ to family or non-accepting people.

"Young Woman on the Beach" By Edvard Munch (1896)



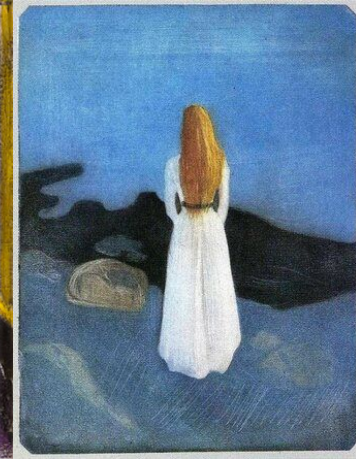
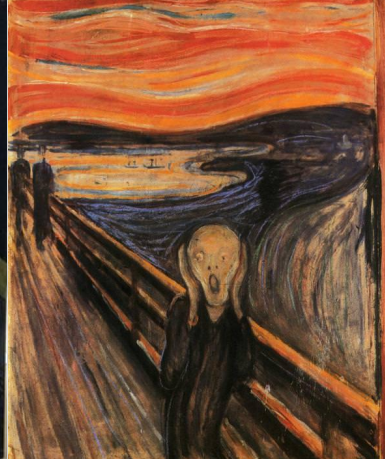
"Not a Phase" By Autumn Beeler



"Standing on the Edge" By Autumn Beeler

Connections of Three Works

All three artists use **color**, **focus figures**, and **contrast** in their works. In terms of color, all three artists use a main color in a single piece (whether warm or cool tones) and use the opposite tone of color to have parts of the piece “pop” in a sense. Such as with Bacon and the Yellow bars, contrasting the cool tones of the skin and dark purple of the clothing. It’s also seen in the light brown hair of the girl in Munich’s piece. The hair pops against the cool blue water and cliff side, as well as her white gown. These colors bring **contrast**. Contrast is seen in these works through not only the cool tones vs warm tones, but also the hues and **luminosity** of these colors. Such as in both Bacon’s and my personal work with white streaks or lighter colors used to outline a figure and define their shape. For Munch this is seen in, again, the gown the woman is wearing. A final similarity I will talk about is the similarity of **focus figures**. All three artists include the previous similarities on these figures. This is to make these figures a focus, and to make them eye catching and not blend in with the background of the piece. This is to keep the viewer engaged and focus on the main point or theme of the pieces.



Picture Links

<https://www.francis-bacon.com/artworks/paintings/figure-landscape-miss-diana-watson>

<https://www.francis-bacon.com/artworks/paintings/study-head-0>

http://www.all-art.org/art_20th_century/bacon1.html

<https://www.edvardmunch.org/the-scream.jsp>

<https://www.edvardmunch.org/horse-team.jsp>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist-munch-edvard.htm>

<https://www.edvardmunch.org/link.jsp>