

WIU CENTENNIAL HONORS COLLEGE
Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day 2023

Abstract

Podium

Major: BFA Studio Art

Faculty Mentor(s): Keith Holz

Francis Bacon- Connection to Devastation

Mackenzie White

Abstract

The celebrated painter Francis Bacon's traumatizing childhood mixed with the effects of World War I, The War of Independence in Ireland (1919-21), The Irish Civil War (1922-23), and World War II, provided the grist for haunting paintings throughout his career. To focus inquiry, my research asks what was more influential to Bacon: his abusive childhood or the traumatizing effects upon him from these wars? This research focuses not only on the representational subject matter within his works and its direct relation to war-time propaganda, but also upon his up-bringing that created the possibility to create these paintings. The paper's main themes include Bacon's connection to the wars, his coming-of-age traumas, early biography, as well as outside influences on his art from both his family and close friends. A discussion of what informed these choices as well as theories accounting for why he might have utilized certain images provides the basis and shape for this inquiry.