

Everything you need to know about francis bacon

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Francis Bacon was born in 1909 in Dublin, Ireland to English parents. His mother was heiress to a coalmine and steel business and a family nurse tended young Francis. He was a sickly child and was often dosed with narcotics to ease his discomfort. His family moved frequently from house to house which gave him a feeling of detachment, he would later claim. Though shy as a child, he reportedly enjoyed playing dress up. With his effeminate manner and his dress up fixation, he often managed to enrage his father, causing alienation between the two.

It was told late in his life that his father had ordered the family's Irish groom to beat him with a horsewhip when he was a child. His only formal education was an 18-month stint spent at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, which he left in 1924 (Wikipedia. org). At a fancy-dress party at the Firth family house at Cavendish, Suffolk, he appeared dressed as a Roaring Twenties flapper, complete with beaded dress, lipstick, high heels, a long cigarette holder and an Eton crop.

At the age of 13 he was banished from Straffan Lodge after his father found him standing in front of a large mirror wearing his mother's underwear. The incidents seem to indicate that he arrived at his sexual orientation early in life and did not deviate from it. His sexual proclivity influenced his entire life and was evident in his art from the beginnings of his career. Bacon spent his later youth drifting and found himself kept by an older friend of his father. He may have briefly studied art at this time.

At the tail end of the Roaring Twenties, during the Weimar Republic's dying gasps, he was left in Berlin. He moved then to Paris, surviving on three pounds a week from his mother's trust fund. The end of the decade found

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him back in London as the world economy sank into a depression of mammoth proportions. He began a career in design of furniture but found art to be more to his taste and talent. He was, however, at times desperate enough to seek employment as a gentleman's companion.

He had developed a taste for good wine and good living and was not overly particular from whence the good life came. Bacon did not spring on the art scene so much as he crept onto it, but his work was collected by a small following that saw something in the technique and the torturous subject matter which graces his canvas. He was reviled early on by the critics and even accused of being behind the times in the art world, painting in a technique long gone from popularity. The first public display of his oils was in a group exhibition in London's Mayor Gallery in 1933.

The following year he mounted a solo exhibition at London's Sunderland House. After the 1934 show he stopped painting and destroyed many of his works (Leninimports. com). By 1944 he began to paint again, frantically working in what seemed to have been an attempt to make up for lost time. He borrowed from such diverse sources as Velasquez and Van Gogh and developed a recognizable style in his figure painting. During the 1950s he matured and did what was arguably some of his best work, often employing friends and lovers to pose for him.

His work became expressionistic in style and his canvases were filled with angst-ridden figures in tortured poses, rife with distorted images of tortured animals and humans. His first major show was held in 1949 at the Hanover Gallery, London. 1953 saw his work exhibited outside of England. This work was riveting and garnered Bacon wealth and fame. He suddenly became

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legendary. The decade of the 1950s found him the darling of the international art world and his celebrity gave him carte blanche to publicly do what he had been doing in private for most of his life.

As a paradox it is said that Bacon's private life and his public art are both traditional and iconoclastic (queer-arts. org). As an example it is noted that he painted in a conventional manner, applying paint to canvas in the accepted method, albeit preferring to work on the unprimed backside of the canvas for a rougher textured surface. He demanded that his extraordinary works be framed in traditional gilt frames seen on the works of Old Masters when exhibited in galleries. Yet at this same time his work was fraught with lack of conventionality and was a slap in the face of modern mores.

He painted his homosexuality in an era when it was not acceptable and American Family Values was more than just a meaningless Republican Party mantra. He threw his broken relationships onto the canvas and let the art world see his most intimate thoughts. He was both an Edwardian gentleman and a flaming 20th century homosexual, throwing convention to the winds. He was denigrated publicly by Margaret Thatcher and adored by the socialites of the era. She called him, ' that artist who paints those horrible pictures.

' Perhaps she was right, in that his work is both violent in style and contains clear reference to his relationships with men, but that does make it less than art, and taste is an individual matter. Anyone not seeing his homosexuality played out on canvas simply is not looking. His death in 1992 at the age of 82 marked a turning point in the art world. There is no one on the art scene that does it the way he did. His sexual proclivity and his oeuvre were

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intertwined as he permitted his private life to influence his art from the beginnings of his career and he let the world have a long look at both.

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