

Expressive art essay

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My expressive essay concerns the portraits of two artists, Francis Bacon and Pablo Picasso. Two such portraits are "self portrait" 1971 by Bacon and "weeping woman" 1937 by Picasso. I believe that both these paintings have been strongly influenced by their own life experiences. Francis Bacon was born on the 28th of October 1909 and he died on the 28th of April 1992. Bacon was born in Dublin, to parents of British descent. Captain Anthony Edward Mortimer Bacon, his father, was a veteran of the boer war he then became a race horse trainer. Christina Winifred Firth, his mother, was an heiress to a Sheffield steel business and coal mine. Bacon had four siblings- an older brother, Harley, two older sisters, Lanthe and Winifred, and a younger brother, Edward. Bacon was a figurative painter known for his bold, graphic and emotional raw imagery. He began painting in his early 20s but he never considered it a profession until his mid 30s. Before this time he drifted, earning a living as an interior decorator and a designer of furniture and rugs. Later in his life Bacon said he had put off being an artist because he spent too long looking for work that would sustain his interest. Bacon became more popular in 1944 with "three studies for figures at the base of a crucifixion" released in the mid 1960s. Bacon mainly produced portrait heads of friends. His artistic output often saw him focus on single themes for sustained periods- including crucifixion. Following the 1971 suicide of his lover George Dyer, Bacon's art became more personal, inward looking and preoccupied with themes and motifs of death. Despite his existentialist outlook on life expressed through his paintings, Bacon always appeared to prefer the finer things in life, spending a vast amount of time eating, drinking and gambling in Londons Soho with Lucian Freud, John Deakin, Daniel

Farson, Patrick Swift, Jeffrey Benard, Muriel Belcher and Henrietta Moraes. After Dyers death Bacon began to distance himself from this crowd and became less involved with rough trade to settle in a relationship with his eventual heir, John Edwards. Since his death in 1992, Bacons reputation has steadily grown he was the subject of two major Tate retrospectives during his lifetime and recieved a third in 2008. Bacon was a self-taught painter who destroyed a large part of his output, so much so that virtually none of his early work has survived. Firstly I am going to analyse Francis Bacons portrait " Self Portrait" 1971. I feel that Francis Bacon's Self portrait is a dark, cold and harsh reflection of how he sees himself. He hasn't made the self portrait realistic but expressive of his emotional state. It suggests to me a man that is so twisted in emotions, so distorted from the reality of himself that he has this twisted sad view of himself. When I look at this picture I do not see a man who is at the height of his career but a man who is torn apart by something in himself. Perhaps this was triggered by the death of his lover dyer (who died that year while in Paris together to attend the retrospect of Bacons work). The painting its self is oil on canvas, the brush strokes are very expressive. The colour choice is dark in intensity yet made harsher by the use of white, with a touch of blue to really enhance it atmospherically. The white with the icy blue gives it a cold ghostly edge while his eye's are completely black just mirroring the cold. This makes him very detached from the viewer, putting them on edge. This artwork is like looking in to the soul of the artist, giving the artwork a sense of vulnerability because looking into the soul of someone is to be at a personal level with someone, it is an invasion of space but the subject matter can't do anything about this

intimacy. Some say “ the blacks of the eyes are the windows to the soul”. Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga in Spain on the 25th of October 1881. His father was an artist and a professor of art. His mother was part Italian. She claimed that Picasso's first spoken word was " pencil." As a child, it was obvious that picasso was a talented artist, in fact, when his father realized what a great artist the young picasso was, he felt too embarrassed to call himself an artist and declared that he would never paint again. Instead, he gave all his paint brushes and other materials to his son. As a young man picasso studied art in Madrid at the Academia de San Fernando, but didn't finish the course. Instead, he moved to Paris in 1900 where at first, life was hard. It is said that he would sometimes burn paintings to heat up his lodgings. Picasso eventually settled into life in Paris and although he was Spanish spent the majority of his life in France, and became a French speaker. This explains why his paintings have French names. From 1901 he began to sign his paintings 'picasso.' He married twice and fathered four children with three woman- Picasso was known as a relentless womanizer and a charmer. His first wife Olga Khokhlova was a Russian ballerina. Picasso painted her many times, the most famous painting of her is one of her sitting in an armchair painted in 1917. Picasso re-married many years after Olga's death. He married Jacqueline Roque in 1961. Roque worked in the medovra pottery on the french Riviera- this was the pottery where picassos ceramic works were produced. Roque and Picasso remained married for the rest of Picasso's life. Picasso's work is divided into periods. The Blue period (1901-1904), The Rose period (1905-1907), The African period (1908-1909), The Analytic cubism period (1909-1912), The Synthetic cubism period (1912-

1919), The Classicism and Surrealism period (1918-1936). Picasso also created sculptures. One of his most famous sculptures is a fifty-foot high shape in Chicago. Nobody knows what the shape is intended to be. This sculpture is referred to as The Chicago Picasso. It was revealed in 1967 and Picasso refused to be paid for it, preferring to make it a gift to the town of Chicago. Picasso died on the 8th of April, 1972, aged 92. He produced more works of art than any other artist. Following his death, many of his works were placed in a museum in Paris named Le Musee Picasso. There are two more museums dedicated to Picasso- one is in his birth place, Malaga, and the other is in Barcelona where he lived for some of his youth. One of the worst atrocities of the Spanish Civil War was the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica by the German air force. Picasso responded to the massacre by painting " weeping woman" 1937. The woman's features are based on Picasso's lover Dora Maar.