



EDVARD
MUNCH
(1863–1944)

*Nature is not only all
that is visible to the
eye... it also includes
the inner pictures of
the soul.*

DR. LAURENCE SHAFE
ART@SHAFE.UK
WWW.SHAFE.UK

Edvard Munch: Love and Angst was an exhibition at the British Museum from 11 April to 21 July 2019. The exhibition consisted mostly of drawings, engravings and lithographs

- In this talk I focus primarily on Edvard Munch's paintings rather than his drawings and engravings. I cover his life chronologically and interweave his life story with his paintings.
- This is one of the versions of his most famous painting, *The Scream* and the quote is from Munch "**Nature is not only all that is visible to the eye... it also includes the inner pictures of the soul**", which could be taken as the manifesto of Expressionism.

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Giulia Bartrum, *Edvard Munch: Love and Angst*, 2019, British Museum exhibition catalogue

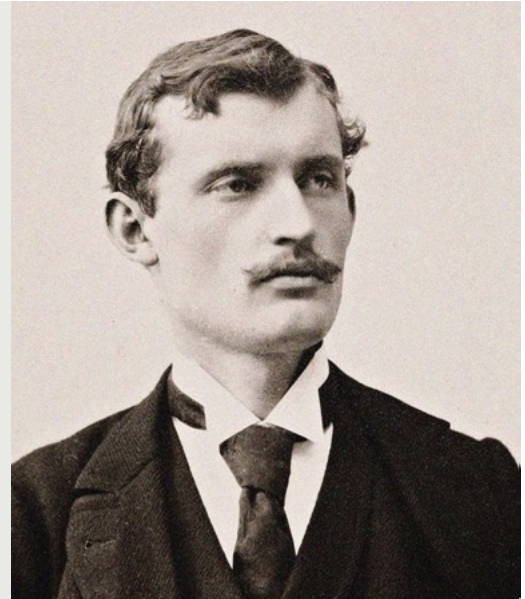
Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream*, 2019

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Edvard Munch (1863–1944), Self-portrait, 1882, 26 × 19 cm, oil on paper stuck on cardboard, Munch Museum, Oslo

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Self-portrait*, 1882, 26 × 19 cm, oil on paper stuck on cardboard, Munch Museum, Oslo

- Munch was a Norwegian painter whose childhood was **overshadowed by death, illness** and the dread of inheriting a **mental condition** that ran in the family. His **mother died when he was five** and his **much loved sister died when he was 13**. In Munch's words, his father was '**obsessively religious—to the point of psychoneurosis. From him I inherited the seeds of madness. The angels of fear, sorrow, and death stood by my side since the day I was born**'.
- This is his earliest self-portrait, aged 19. Munch said, "**A person himself believes that all the portraits of other people are good likenesses except the one of himself.**" (CLICK) But judge for yourself from this photo taken roughly at this time.

WIKIPEDIA EXTRACT

- Edvard Munch (12 December 1863 – 23 January 1944) was a Norwegian painter whose **childhood was overshadowed by death, illness and the dread of inheriting a mental condition** that ran in the family. His **mother died when he was 5** and his **much loved sister died when he was 13**. His **father was 'obsessively religious'** and poor even though he was a doctor. Munch studied engineering to satisfy his father but switched to art at the Royal School of Art and Design in Kristiania (today's Oslo). He began to live a **bohemian life** under the **influence of nihilism** (the belief that life is totally meaningless) and in 1886

he started to paint his own emotional and psychological state (what Munch called his '**soul painting**'). From this would presently emerge his distinctive style.

- Travel brought new influences and new outlets. In **1889, when he was 26, his father died** and he won a two-year scholarship to **Paris**. He learned a lot from studying the work of **Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh** and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, especially their use of colour.
- In 1892 in **Berlin** (aged 29), he met Swedish dramatist **August Strindberg**, whom he painted, as he embarked on his major series of paintings **The Frieze of Life**, depicting a series of deeply-felt themes such as love, anxiety, jealousy and betrayal.
- But it was **back in Kristiania** that his legendary work **The Scream** was conceived in 1893. According to Munch, he was out walking at sunset, when he '**heard the enormous, infinite scream of nature**'. That agonised face is widely identified with the **angst of modern man and dread of the state of the world**. Between 1893 and 1910, he made two painted versions and two in pastels, as well as a number of prints. One of the pastels would eventually command the fourth highest nominal price paid for a painting at auction.
- As his **fame and wealth grew**, his emotional state **remained as insecure** as ever. He briefly **considered marriage**, but **could not commit** himself. A **breakdown in 1908** forced him to give up heavy drinking, and he was cheered by his increasing acceptance by the people of Kristiania and exposure in the city's museums. His **later years were spent working in peace and privacy**. Although his works were **banned in Nazi Germany**, most of them **survived World War II**, ensuring him a secure legacy.

BIO:MUNCH

- **Edvard Munch** (12 December 1863 – 23 January 1944) was a Norwegian painter, whose best-known work, *The Scream* (1893), has become one of the most iconic images of world art. He was active throughout more than sixty years; from the time he made his debut in the 1880s, right up to his death in 1944. Munch was part of the Symbolist movement in the 1890s, and a pioneer of expressionist art from the beginning of the 1900s onward.
- Munch was born in a farmhouse 140km north of Kristiania (now Oslo). His father was a doctor and medical officer. His father was very religious and

poorly paid. Munch later wrote that his father was “**obsessively religious—to the point of psychoneurosis. From him I inherited the seeds of madness. The angels of fear, sorrow, and death stood by my side since the day I was born.**”

- **Munch had an elder sister Johanne Sophie and three younger siblings. His mother was a talented artist but died 1868 of tuberculosis when Munch was five. His favourite sister Johanne also died of tuberculosis in 1877 when he was 13.** One of Munch’s sisters was diagnosed with mental illness at an early age and of the five siblings only one married but died a few months after the wedding. Munch wrote, “**I inherited two of mankind's most frightful enemies—the heritage of consumption and insanity**”.
- Munch drew from an early age and art dominated his interests but his father did not approve and Munch studied engineering and excelled in physics, chemistry and maths. When he left college he decided to become an artist against his father’s wishes. His father regarded art as an ‘**unholy trade**’. Munch wrote “**in my art I attempt to explain life and its meaning to myself**”. At this stage he admired the Norwegian landscape school. In 1881, Munch enrolled at the Royal School of Art and Design of Kristiania, one of whose founders was his distant relative Jacob Munch. He quickly became proficient at figure painting and his early work includes a portrait of his father and his first self-portrait.
- *Morning* 1884 is his first important work and shows his style the previous year. Included in the World Exhibition but critics branded Munch 'the painter of ugly things'. It marks a turning point from Impressionism to Expressionism. In 1889 his father died, and he became financially responsible for the family. He went to Paris and was influenced by Gauguin. In 1892 he painted *Despair* the precursor to *The Scream*, he exhibited in Berlin, but his paintings were considered so shocking the exhibition closed prematurely. He painted *The Scream* in 1893.
- Munch was mainly influenced by the French painter Paul Gauguin, Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh, French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin. Therefore, his work is a culmination of expressionism, impressionism, symbolism and modern art. Munch has influenced two great movements of 19th century in Germany – Expressionism and Symbolism.

- **1863 born** on a farm in Ådalsbruk in Løten (pronounced 'all-dals-brook lerson'), near Christiania (Oslo since 1925)
- **1868 (5) mother died** of tuberculosis.
- **1877 (14) sister Johanna died** of tuberculosis. Christiania became Kristiania.
- 1879 (16) enrolled at technical college.
- 1881 (18) enrolled at the Royal School of Art & Design Kristiania. One founder was a distant relative Jacob Munch.
- **1883 (20) first public exhibition.** He painted like Manet. One critic wrote "It is impressionism carried to the extreme. It is a travesty of art."
- 1886 (23) based on his sister's death, his first 'soul painting' and his break from Impressionism. It received negative reviews from the critics. His style continued to evolve and change.
- 1887 (24) only early nude, the others may have been destroyed by his father. His bohemian life of binge drinking and brawling led to arguments with his father who he depended on financially.
- **1889 (26) his father died leaving the family destitute**, so Munch assumed responsibility and obtained a large loan from a wealthy Norwegian collector. Munch held his first one-man show led to a **two-year state scholarship in Paris** where he studied under Léon Bonnat. In Paris he was influenced by Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and their use of colour to convey emotion.
- 1896 (33) created his first woodcuts.
- 1891-2 (38-9) he formulated his characteristic mature style in which colour is symbol laden, there is a shallow picture space and form and detail are simplified, see *Melancholy* (1891). He had a one-man exhibition in Berlin that caused enormous controversy. Munch was pleased with the publicity he said, "Never have I had such an amusing time—it's incredible that something as innocent as painting should have created such a stir". He met Swedish dramatist and leading intellectual August Strindberg, whom he painted in 1892. Many historians see this as a critical influence but Munch said his style was already fully developed when they met. He spent four years in Berlin and sold little but made some income from charging entrance fees to view his controversial paintings. Already, Munch was showing a reluctance to part with his paintings, which he termed his "children" (like JMW Turner).

- 1893 (40) *The Scream* exists in four versions: two pastels (1893 and 1895) and two paintings (1893 and 1910). There are also several lithographs of *The Scream* (1895 and later). With this painting, Munch met his stated goal of "the study of the soul, that is to say the study of my own self". In 1893 Munch started a series called *Frieze of Life—A Poem about Life, Love and Death*. Works include *The Storm*, *Vampire*, *Death in the Sickroom*, *Anxiety*, *Ashes*, *Madonna* and *Women in Three Stages*.
- **1896 (43) Munch moved to Paris.** Many of the Parisian critics still considered Munch's work "violent and brutal" but his exhibitions received serious attention and good attendance.
- **1897 (44) his financial situation had improved,** and he bought a summer house on a fjord he called the 'Happy House' He returned there almost every summer for the next 20 years. He returned to Kristiania and he critic begrudgingly wrote, "A fair number of these pictures have been exhibited before. In my opinion these improve on acquaintance."
- **1899 (46), Munch began an intimate relationship** with Tulla Larsen, a "liberated" upper-class woman. They travelled to Italy together and upon returning, Munch began another fertile period in his art, which included landscapes and his final painting in "The Frieze of Life" series, *The Dance of Life* (1899). Larsen wanted to marry but Munch wrote (in the third person), "**Ever since he was a child he had hated marriage. His sick and nervous home had given him the feeling that he had no right to get married.**" He fled from her considerable fortune in 1900 to Berlin.
- **1902 (49) the entire *Frieze of Life* was exhibited** for the first time in Berlin, "**it made a great stir—a lot of antagonism—and a lot of approval**". With good press coverage he gained the attention of two wealthy patrons Albert Kollman and Max Linde. However, his self-destructive behaviour led to a quarrel with another artist and an accidental shooting injured two of his fingers. Larsen attempted a reconciliation but left him and married a younger colleague.
- **1903-4 (50-51) Munch exhibited in Paris and may have inspired the Fauvists** who invited him to exhibit with them in 1906. His financial situation continued to improve with many commissions.
- 1906 (53) he painted a screen for an Ibsen play which was later sold but is now in the Berlin National Gallery.
- **1908 (55) Munch's anxiety,** compounded by excessive drinking and

brawling, had become acute. He suffered from hallucinations and later wrote, "My condition was verging on madness—it was touch and go". Following his recovery he created landscapes and scenes of people at work and play, using a new optimistic style—broad, loose brushstrokes of vibrant colour with frequent use of white space and rare use of black. His income improved and he was able to buy more homes and provide for his family.

- **1912 (59) his first exhibition in America** in New York.
- 1914 (61) WWI divided his loyalties, he wrote "All my friends are German but it is France that I love".
- 1918 (65) given his poor health he was lucky to survive a bout of Spanish flu.
- **1920s and 30s he spent the last two decades of his life in solitude** on his estate near Oslo. Many of his late patrons celebrate farm life. He attracted a **stream of female models whom he painted nude**. He left his home to paint murals including the Freia chocolate factory. He continued to paint unsparing self-portraits.
- 1930s and 40s **his work was declared degenerate by the Nazi regime** along with that of Picasso, Klee, Matisse, Gauguin and many other modern artists. Many of his Jewish German patrons lost their fortunes and some their lives.
- 1940 (76) the Nazis invaded Norway and Munch was afraid his paintings would be destroyed.
- 1944 (80) he died in his house near Oslo and the **Nazis organised his funeral leading many to believe, incorrectly, that he was a Nazi sympathizer**. On his death his remaining works were bequeathed to the city of Oslo which built the **Munch Museum which opened in 1963**. The museum holds a collection of approximately 1,100 paintings, 4,500 drawings, and 18,000 prints, the broadest collection of his works in the world. His estate was bought by Oslo in 1946 and his house demolished in 1960.
- In April 2019, the British Museum held a new exhibition, *Edvard Munch: Love and Angst*, which comprised 83 artworks and include a rare original print of *The Scream*

REFERENCES

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Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Small Lake with Boat*, 1880

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Small Lake with Boat*, 1880 (aged 17)

- Munch drew **from an early age** and art dominated his interests but his **father did not approve**. His father was deeply religious and his concern was not concerned that it was a poorly paid career but regarded it as an '**unholy trade**'. He painted this landscape before he entered college.
- **To keep his father happy** he enrolled in a technical college to study engineering and excelled in physics, chemistry and math. He learned perspective drawing, but frequent illnesses interrupted his studies.
- In the end he decided he could not continue and **enrolled** at the Royal School of Art and Design despite his father's disapproval. For Munch **art was everything**, he wrote later, "**in my art I attempt to explain life and its meaning to myself**".

NOTES

- At this stage he admired the Norwegian landscape school.



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Christian Munch on the Couch*, 1881, 21.5 × 17.9 cm, Munch Museum, Oslo

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Christian Munch on the Couch*, 1881, 21.5 × 17.9 cm, Munch Museum, Oslo

- This is a later portrait of his father, Christian Munch, reading the newspaper. His father was poorly paid as a **military doctor** and failed to develop a private practice so the family were poor despite him being a doctor.
- His mother was a talented artist but died of tuberculosis when he was five and **her sister Karen moved in** to look after the five children and run the household.

NOTES

- **In 1881**, Munch enrolled at the Royal School of Art and Design of Kristiania, one of whose founders was his distant relative Jacob Munch. He quickly became proficient at figure painting and his early work includes a portrait of his father and his first self-portrait.
- **Eight years later, in 1889, his father died**, and he became financially responsible for the family. He went to Paris and was influenced by Gauguin and van Gogh. In 1892 he painted *Despair* the precursor to *The Scream*, he exhibited in Berlin, but his paintings were considered so shocking the exhibition closed prematurely. He painted *The Scream* in 1893.
- Munch suffered from **chronic asthmatic bronchitis** and had several serious cases of fever as a child.
- His favourite sister **Johanne died of tuberculosis in 1877 when he was 13**

and she was 14. One of Munch's sisters was diagnosed with mental illness at an early age and of the five siblings only one married but died a few months after the wedding. Munch wrote, "**I inherited two of mankind's most frightful enemies—the heritage of consumption and insanity**".

- In later paintings such as *The Dead Mother*, *Death in the Sickroom* and *The Sick Child*, he expressed his feelings related to his memories of the illness and death of his mother and sister.



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *From Saxegårdsgate*, c. 1882, Lillehammer Art Museum

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *From Saxegårdsgate* (pronounced 'sax-gorsh-garter'), c. 1882, Lillehammer Art Museum

- At this time he had not developed a singular style. This painting is **clearly Impressionist in style**. It conveys the cold bleakness of winter with its overcast sky, slushy snow and hunched up people. Munch was experimenting and **struggling to define his style during the 1880s and early 1890s**. His style varied from naturalistic to impressionistic until his signature style developed with *Evening, Melancholy* (1891) and *The Scream* (1893) which we will see later.



Edvard Munch (1863–1944),
Morning, 1884, 96.5 × 103.5
cm, KODE Art museums

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Morning*, 1884, 96.5 × 103.5 cm, KODE Art museums

1883–1885

- **Munch made his debut in December 1883, aged 20, at the large Industry and Art Exhibition in Kristiania, the old name for Oslo** [it was renamed Oslo in 1925, the old name and the name of one area of the city) and this **work, *Morning* was acclaimed by artists but many critics did not like it and branded Munch 'the painter of ugly things'**.
- For Munch this painting marks a **turning point from Impressionism to Expressionism**.
- In **March the following year**, he was recommended for a **scholarship**, which he received in September and in 1885 he travelled abroad for the first time.
- He first went to Antwerp, where he **exhibited a portrait of his sister Inger** at the World Exhibition in April and May. Afterwards, **he went to Paris** and studied the collections at the Louvre and visited the 'Salon', the annual exhibition of contemporary art.

NOTES

- The artist Eyolf Soot was Munch's travel companion, as were several other Norwegian artists. Munch exhibited at the Autumn Exhibition and received the Schäffer grant again." (Munch Museum)

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Kvinneakt* (*Female Nude*), 1887, drawing, pencil on paper, 45.3 x 35 cm, Norway National Museum, The Fine Art Collections



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Kvinneakt* (*Female Nude*), 1887, drawing, pencil on paper, 45.3 x 35 cm, Norway National Museum, The Fine Art Collections

- By then he was living a bohemian life of **heavy drinking and brawling** which led to arguments with his father who still supported him financially.
- His early work includes landscapes, the portrait of his father and his first self-portrait that we have just seen, but at **art school he quickly became proficient at figure painting**. Unfortunately, **only one nude, *Female Nude* survives from this period survives** as his others are believed to have been confiscated and destroyed by his father.



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Sick Child*, 1885-86, first version, 120 × 118.5 cm, National Gallery of Norway



Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*, 1907. 4th in the series, 137 × 139 cm, Tate Modern

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Sick Child*, 1885-86, first version, 120 × 118.5 cm, National Gallery of Norway

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Sick Child*, 1907, 4th in the series, 137 × 139 cm, Tate Modern

1886–1888

- Munch **exhibited four paintings at the 1886 Autumn Exhibition**, including one of his main works, this one, *The Sick Child* (exhibited as *Study*). Representations of **sickbeds were popular** at the time, and Munch's aunt Karen and her maid, Betzy Nielsen, modelled. The painting took over a year to complete but its **sketch-like execution created great indignation among the critics**.
- We don't know who is represented in *The Sick Child* but it is very likely that it is his **favourite sister Johanne Sophie**. She **died of tuberculosis in 1877 when he was 13 years old and she was 14 years old**. **Munch also had tuberculosis and may have felt guilt** that he was the one to survive.
- Over the following years he produced six versions and this (CLICK) is the fourth in the series which is now in the Tate. He scrubbed out versions and retried many times until he was satisfied. The painting is not an attempt to represent external reality, but his state of mind and this style led to perhaps the best known of his work, *The Scream*, in 1893. (CLICK)
- He wrote about this painting, that it was such a difficult struggle that its completion marked a **major breakthrough in his art**. He explained: "**I started**

as an Impressionist, but during the violent mental and vital convulsions of the Bohémian period Impressionism gave me insufficient expression—I had to find an expression for what stirred my mind ... The first break with Impressionism was *The Sick Child*—I was looking for expression (Expressionism)."

THE SICK CHILD

- We don't know who is represented in *The Sick Child* but it is very likely that it is his **favourite sister Johanne Sophie**. She **died of tuberculosis in 1877 when he was 13 years old and she was 14 years old**. Munch also had **tuberculosis and may have felt guilt** that he was the one to survive. The woman is probably his **aunt Karen** who brought up the children after his mother died of tuberculosis when he was five. His father was very poor even though his father was a doctor as they lived on his military pay when his private practice failed.
- The model was Betzy Nielsen, aged 11/12, whose brother had broken his leg and she was extremely distraught. Munch was attending with his father who was a doctor and Munch asked her mother's permission to draw her. She recounted the story in 1954 when she was eighty.
- Munch said, "**It was a breakthrough in my art. Most of what I have done since had its birth in this picture.**"

NOTES

- His father was very religious, Munch wrote "**My father was temperamentally nervous and obsessively religious—to the point of psychoneurosis. From him I inherited the seeds of madness. The angels of fear, sorrow, and death stood by my side since the day I was born.**"
- Munch drew from an early age although he father disapproved, and he went to college to study physics, chemistry and maths in which he excelled. However, he decided to leave college to become an artist. He painted in many styles and an early version of this work was his first 'soul painting' and his first break with Impressionism. The painting received a negative reaction from the critics and from his father. Critics complained it was just a sketch and one critic wrote '**no other painting in the history of Norwegian art has provoked such outrage and indignation**'. Munch was undeterred and organised his own solo exhibition which was better received.



Edvard Munch, *Spring*, 1889, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Spring*, 1889, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design

- *Spring* is a picture of great emotional depth. We can see that Spring has started to arrive, the flowers are beginning to bloom, a **gentle breeze** wafts the curtains and a **weak sun** shines through the window. The girl's face turns from the light and her **downcast eyes** suggest that as spring arrives **her death is near. Death was Munch's silent companion** and had been since his childhood with the death of his mother and his beloved sister. He also suffered from tuberculosis and death was a common theme of his work although he lived until he was 80.
- In 1889 he was 26 and **starting to establish himself** as an artist. In April and May **1889**, he organised his **first solo exhibition** in the Student Society in Kristiania, showing **63 paintings and 46 drawings**. This was the **first ever solo exhibition held in the Norwegian capital** and led to a **two-year state grant in Paris**.
- So, from 1889 to 1892 he lived mostly in France where he was **influenced by Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec** and their use of colour to convey emotion. It was a productive and troubled period during which he started a series of paintings he called "**Frieze of Life**" which included "**Despair**" (1892), "**Melancholy**" (c. 1892–93), "**Anxiety**" (1894), "**Jealousy**" (1894–95) and "**The Scream**" (1893).
- **In December 1889 his father died**, leaving Munch's **family destitute**. He returned home and because his **wealthy relatives would not help** he

arranged a large loan from a wealthy Norwegian collector and assumed financial responsibility for his family from then on. Christian's death depressed him and he was plagued by suicidal thoughts: "**I live with the dead—my mother, my sister, my grandfather, my father...Kill yourself and then it's over. Why live?**"

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<https://byronsmuse.wordpress.com/2018/03/10/edvard-munch-spring/>



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Evening Melancholy*, 1891, 72 x 98 cm, private collection

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Evening, Melancholy*, 1891, oil, pencil and crayon on canvas. 73 × 101 cm, Munch Museum, Oslo

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Evening Melancholy*, 1891, 72 x 98 cm, private collection

- On his return from Paris he wrote, "**No longer shall I paint interiors with men reading and women knitting. I will paint living people who breathe and feel and suffer and love**".
- The inspiration for this painting was an **unhappy romantic affair that Munch's friend**, Jappe Nilssen (pronounced 'yaper nilson'), was involved in. The melancholy man's mood is represented by the undulating shoreline and skylines that extend toward the left. Critics suggest that there are also erotic allusions, perhaps in the presence of the moon reflected on the water.
- During the summer, he **holidayed with his family** in the small coastal village of Åsgårdstrand (pronounced 'os-gosh-stran'), south-west of Kristiania. The landscape is the beach at Asgardstrand's. In subsequent years, many of his images were from this area.
- *Melancholy* was exhibited in 1891 at the Autumn Exhibition in Oslo. It has been described it as the **first Symbolist painting by a Norwegian artist**. Munch painted more than one version of the composition in 1891 and there is another version completed in 1892–93 is in the National Gallery, Oslo.

NOTES

- 1891-2 (38-9) he formulated his characteristic mature style in which colour is symbol laden, there is a shallow picture space and form and detail are simplified, see *Evening Melancholy* (1891). He had a one-man exhibition in Berlin that caused **enormous controversy**. Munch was pleased with the publicity he said, **“Never have I had such an amusing time—it's incredible that something as innocent as painting should have created such a stir”**. He met Swedish dramatist and leading intellectual August Strindberg, whom he painted in 1892. Many historians see this as a critical influence but Munch said his style was already fully developed when they met. He spent four years in Berlin and sold little but made some income from charging entrance fees to view his controversial paintings. **Already, Munch was showing a reluctance to part with his paintings, which he termed his “children” (like JMW Turner).**

SYMBOLISM

- An artistic and poetic movement or style using symbolic images and indirect suggestion to express mystical ideas, emotions, and states of mind. Mallarmé described Symbolism in a letter to his friend as, **'to depict not the thing but the effect it produces'**. The natural world was rejected in favour of imaginary dream worlds populated with mysterious figures from literature, the bible, and Greek mythology. The work of symbolist artists and writers was also fuelled by new psychological content, particularly erotic and mystical. Common themes included: love, fear, anguish, death, sexual awakening, and unrequited desire. Famous Symbolists include Paul Gauguin, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones and George Frederic Watts.

1890–1891

- “In 1890, Munch spent time with the Danish poet Emanuel Goldstein and the Norwegian painter Kalle Løchen. In Paris, he also met Frits Thaulow, Thorolf Holmboe, Jørgen Sørensen, Jonas Lie and Jappe Nilssen. Munch spent the summer in Åsgårdstrand and Kristiania, and showed ten pictures at the Autumn Exhibition. He received the State grant for artists again, and travelled to Le Havre, where he contracted rheumatic fever and was admitted to hospital. In December, five of his paintings were lost in a fire, one of which was the first version of *The Day After*.
- In 1891, Munch left Le Havre for Paris and Nice. On his way back to

Norway, he stopped in Paris and Antwerp, before spending the summer in Åsgårdstrand and Kristiania. He received the State grant for artists for the third time, and travelled to Paris via Copenhagen. By December, he had returned to Nice. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson protested at Munch's being awarded a state grant for the third year running. The National Gallery purchased its first Munch painting, *Night in Nice* (1891)." (Munch Museum)



The Scream, 1910, tempera on panel, 83 cm × 66 cm, Munch Museum



The Scream, 1893, oil, tempera, pastel and crayon on cardboard, 91 cm × 73.5 cm, National Gallery of Norway

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Scream*, 1893, oil, tempera, pastel and crayon on cardboard, 91 cm × 73.5 cm, National Gallery of Norway. Perhaps the best known version.

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Scream*, 1910, tempera on panel, 83 cm × 66 cm, Munch Museum. This version was stolen in 2004, but recovered in 2006.

Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893, oil, tempera, pastel and crayon on cardboard, 91 cm × 73.5 cm, National Gallery and Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway. Munch created four versions, in paint and pastels, of which this is the most famous and the only one in oils. He also created a lithograph stone from which several prints survive. Both of the painted versions, this one and one in tempera on cardboard have been stolen, but since recovered.

- In 1893 Munch started a series called *Frieze of Life—A Poem about Life, Love and Death*. Works include this one *The Scream* and *The Storm, Vampire, Death in the Sickroom, Anxiety, Ashes, Madonna* and *Women in Three Stages*.
- The idea for the painting was inspired by a walk. He recorded in his diary (entry headed "22 January 1892") the following,
 - **"I was walking along the road with two friends – the sun was setting – suddenly the sky turned blood red – I paused, feeling exhausted, and leaned on the fence – there was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city – my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety – and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature."**

- *The Scream* exists in four versions: two pastels (1893 and 1895) and two paintings (1893 and 1910).
- (CLICK) This is the version in the Munch Museum. There are also several lithographs of *The Scream* (1895 and later). With this painting, Munch met his stated goal of "**the study of the soul, that is to say the study of my own self**".
- The original German title given by Munch to his work was *Der Schrei der Natur* (*The Scream of Nature*), and the Norwegian title is *Skrik* (*Shriek*). The agonised face in the painting has become one of the most iconic images of art, seen as symbolising the anxiety of modern man.
- The road, which overlooks Oslo, has been identified. There is a slaughterhouse and a mental asylum nearby and Munch's sister Laura Catherine, was a manic depressive and a patient at the mental asylum.

NOTES

- He later described his inspiration for the image:
 - "One evening I was walking along a path, the city was on one side and the fjord below. I felt tired and ill. I stopped and looked out over the fjord—the sun was setting, and the clouds turning blood red. I sensed a scream passing through nature; it seemed to me that I heard the scream. I painted this picture, painted the clouds as actual blood. The colour shrieked. This became *The Scream*."
- 1893 (40) *The Scream* exists in four versions: two pastels (1893 and 1895) and two paintings (1893 and 1910). There are also several lithographs of *The Scream* (1895 and later). With this painting, Munch met his stated goal of "the study of the soul, that is to say the study of my own self". In 1893 Munch started a series called *Frieze of Life—A Poem about Life, Love and Death*. Works include *The Storm*, *Vampire*, *Death in the Sickroom*, *Anxiety*, *Ashes*, *Madonna* and *Women in Three Stages*.

1892

- "In February **1892**, Munch moved into the house of the painter Christian Skredsvig in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat **outside Nice**. After a **trip to Paris**, he spent the **summer in Kristiania** and Åsgårdstrand. **Munch held a major solo exhibition** in Tostrupgården by the Parliament building. The painter Adelsteen Normann, who was a member of the exhibition commission of Verein Berliner Künstler in Berlin was impressed by Munch's exhibition and

invited him to exhibit in Berlin. **Following a fierce debate, the exhibition closed after one week. Munch immediately sent the exhibit on to Düsseldorf and Cologne**, and he also rented space in the Equitable Palast and showed it again in Berlin. In December, he settled in Berlin, where he painted the Swedish author August Strindberg, among others.

1893–1895

- Munch remained in Berlin for several years. While there, he absorbed strong impulses from the literary and intellectual community that frequented the Zum Schwarzen Ferkel tavern. Members included August Strindberg, the Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland, the **Norwegian music student Dagny Juell (pronounced 'dagnee you-el')** and her husband, the Polish author Stanislaw Przybyszewski ('shiber-shes-ski'). Like the bohemians in Kristiania, this group was interested in the creative and destructive powers of love, and in femininity and masculinity. They were also very interested in intellectuals such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.
- In 1893, Munch's 'scandalous exhibit' was shown in Copenhagen and several German cities. He spent the summer in Åsgårdstrand and September with his aunt Karen and his sisters at Nordstrand. In December, Munch showed 50 paintings in Berlin, of which six were grouped in a series he called *Die Liebe*. *The Frieze of Life* started to take shape. In 1894, the first book about Munch was published. It was titled *Das Werk des Edvard Munch*, and was written by Stanislaw Przybyszewski, Julius Meier-Graefe, Willy Pastor and Franz Servaes. During the autumn, Munch started making his first etchings.
- **In March 1895**, Munch exhibited his work together with Axel Gallén-Kallela at Ugo Baroccio's gallery on the Unter den Linden boulevard in Berlin. In June, Julius Meier-Graefe published a folder of eight of the etchings. Munch travelled home via Paris and Amsterdam and held a solo exhibit at Blomqvist Kunsthandel in Kristiania. Henrik Ibsen saw the exhibit and Sigbjørn Obstfelder spoke about Munch in the Norwegian Student Society. The National Gallery purchased *Self-Portrait with Cigarette*. **In December, Munch's brother Andreas died from pneumonia.**" (Munch Museum)



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Anxiety*, 1894, Munch Museum

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Anxiety*, 1894, 94 x 73 cm, Munch Museum, Oslo

- Another work from *The Frieze of Life*. Munch said, "**For as long as I can remember I have suffered from a deep feeling of anxiety which I have tried to express in my art.**"
- The faces show despair and the dark colours a depressed state. It shows heartbreak and sorrow and looks like a funeral procession. However, it could be a typical Sunday afternoon stroll on Oslo bridge in which case Munch is making a comment on the human condition.
- **Eight years later, in 1902, *The Frieze of Life* was exhibited at the 1902 Berlin exhibition to much acclaim and he quickly became known to the whole art world and his success led to a brief period of happiness in a life otherwise fraught with pain, misfortune, mental distress and excessive drinking.**

EXPRESSIONISM

- **Expressionism** is a term that was not firmly established until 1913. It is difficult to define precisely and is often applied broadly to artists such as Matthias Grünewald and El Greco and it also applies to dance, sculpture, cinema, literature, music and architecture.
- **Edvard Munch (1863–1944) was a leading figure of the Expressionist movement** although, as we have seen, he also used symbolism such as the moon and its reflection in the sea.

- Important precursors of Expressionism were the German philosopher Friedrich **Nietzsche** (1844–1900), especially his philosophical novel ***Thus Spoke Zarathustra*** (1883–92); the later plays of the Swedish dramatist August **Strindberg** (1849–1912), the American poet **Walt Whitman** (1819–92) *Leaves of Grass* (1855–91); the Russian novelist **Fyodor Dostoevsky** (1821–81); Norwegian painter **Edvard Munch** (1863–1944); Dutch painter **Vincent van Gogh** (1853–90); Belgian painter **James Ensor** (1860–1949); and Austrian psychoanalyst **Sigmund Freud** (1856–1939).
- It developed in reaction to the dehumanizing effect of industrialization and the growth of cities.
- **Artists that rejected the ideology of realism with its cultural dominance and institutional support and emphasized the importance of the personal, subjective and emotional.**
- In the UK artists such as Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Leon Kossoff and Lucian Freud have been described as Expressionist.

SYMBOLISM

- Applies to painting, literature, music and theatre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- There is often a sense of artificiality heightened by an **emphasis on colour and line** and on the ways in which different parts of the painting relate to one another within an overall framework.
- **Paul Gauguin** (1848–1903) work was often based on literary themes, myths and legends, but also on personal fantasy and dream.
- The physical universe became a kind of language that invites a privileged spectator to decipher it, although this does not yield a single message so much as a superior network of associations. Symbolist symbols are not allegories, intended to represent; they are instead intended to evoke particular states of mind.
- Symbolists included **Edvard Munch**, Gustave Moreau, Gustav Klimt, Odilon Redon, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Henri Fantin-Latour and Félicien Rops.

REFERENCES

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expressionism>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_\(arts\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_(arts))



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Death in the Sickroom*, 1893

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Death in the Sickroom*, 1893

- Munch's sister **Sophie had died 16 years previously** (in 1877) and in 1893 he retrospectively painted **the family around her**.
- (CLICK) She is sitting in a chair with her back to us. To her right is their **uncle Karen** who moved in after his mother died to look after the children. In the background is his **father Christian** with his hands clasped in prayer. In the centre the male figure is probably **Edvard and his sister Laura**, who suffered from a mental illness, is sitting in the foreground with her hands in her lap. The third sister **Inger** stands staring straight at us. The younger man on the left is thought to be Munch's younger brother **Andreas** the only one to marry but who died a few months after his marriage.(CLICK)
- The mood is amplified by the lack of contact between the figures, the dark clothes and the sick green of the walls. They are arranged like figures on a stage set, rigid in their grief, locked within their thoughts and unable to communicate. The room is bare, a bed with a framed picture above, a table alongside it with bottles, a wicker chair with its dying occupant hidden from view and a steeply sloping floor heightening the dramatic tension.
- He produced two paintings of the scene and a lithograph three years later.

NOTES

- EdvardMunch.org, "Reverting to the theme of the death of Sophie, Munch produced a work very different from *The Sick Child*. Now the whole family is shown, and the emphasis shifts from the experience of the dying girl to that of

the mourning relatives. The child sits facing diagonally to the rear, largely invisible both to us and to all the mourners except her praying father; she is already absent from their lives. What we do see of her is partly transparent, as though she were already beginning to dematerialize. Each of the mourners reacts differently and there is no intercourse among them; confronted with the loneliness of death, each retreats into his or her lonely self. The younger sister Laura, in the extreme foreground, is the only other figure seated, in a profile pose of sorrowful meditation. Possibly her position echoing that of her sister indicates that she too was destined to suffer at an early age from an incurable illness, though mental instead of physical. Or perhaps the whole scene behind her pictures her distorted memory of the terrifying event. The painting is very much in Munch's version of the synthetist style - flattened areas enclosed by strong contours. The receding floorboards converge towards different vanishing points approximately on a horizontal axis, thus flouting naturalistic perspective. This has the effect of both flattening and widening the room."



Dagny Juel-Przybyszewska



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Madonna*, 1894

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Madonna*, 1894, 90 × 68 cm, Munch Museum

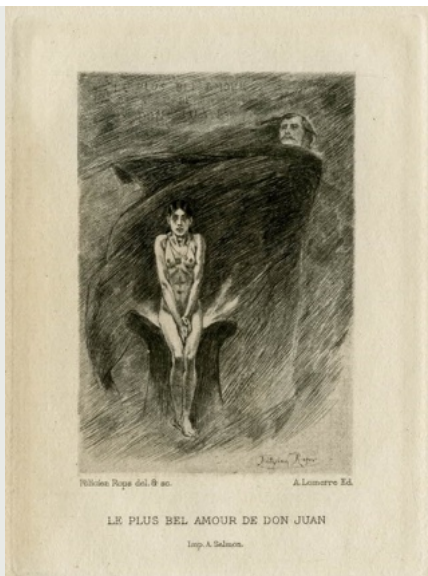
- It is not clear if the figure represents the Virgin Mary as he also called it *Loving Woman*. Munch is not known as a Christian and painted few religious paintings.
- (CLICK) Despite the religious associations of the halo, the painting might be intended as a tribute to the **beauty and perfection** of his friend Dagny Juel-Przybyszewska (pronounced 'dagnee you-el shiber-shes-ska'), the model for the work, and as an expression of his worship of her as an **ideal of womanhood**.(CLICK)
- One art historian described the painting as a "**strange devotional picture glorifying decadent love. The cult of the strong woman who reduces man to subjection gives the figure of woman monumental proportions, but it also makes a demon of her.**" The usual golden halo has been replaced by a red halo of love mixed with pain.
- Munch painted several versions of the composition, showing a bare-breasted half-length female figure, between 1892 and 1895, using oils on canvas. He also produced versions in print form. **This version is the earliest** and is in the Munch Museum. It was stolen in 2004 and recovered two years later.

NOTES

- Dagny Juel-Przybyszewska was a Norwegian writer famous for her relationships with prominent artists. She started a close relationship with Munch when they were both living in Christiania. Dagny chose to continue her studies in Berlin, possibly because she could be with Munch, who had travelled there in the

autumn of 1892, after the Union of Berlin Artists had invited him to stage a November exhibition of his work. The scandal that resulted from the exhibition made Munch a notable figure in Berlin, and he decided to stay there.

- She posed for Munch a number of times and had a three-week affair with August Strindberg. In 1893 she married the Polish writer Stanisław Przybyszewski ('shiber-shes-ski'). Together they had two children. She had an affair with a friend of her husband (and others) and he shot her in a hotel room in Tbilisi, Georgia in 1901, three days before her thirty-fourth birthday.
- Two other versions are owned by the National Gallery of Norway and the Kunsthalle Hamburg. Another one is owned by businessman Nelson Blitz, and one was bought in 1999 by Steven A. Cohen



Félicien Rops, *Le Plus Bel Amour De Don Juan (The Most Beautiful Love of Don Juan)*, 1886, engraving, British Museum



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Puberty*, 1894-95, 151.5 x 110 cm, National Gallery, Oslo

Félicien Rops, *Le Plus Bel Amour De Don Juan (The Most Beautiful Love of Don Juan)*, 1886, engraving, British Museum

- Munch produced a series of paintings and lithographs on the **subject of puberty combined with feelings of depression and anxiety**. A young naked girl sits with her legs pressed together and with a dark, ominous shadow behind her. The painting is often interpreted as a symbol of anxiety and fear of her awakening sexuality.
- **Munch had lost his virginity to his cousin's wife when he was 22 and afterwards never found sex a happy experience as it had become associated with guilt.**
- (CLICK) Munch may have been inspired by this earlier work by Félicien Rops (pronounced 'fay-lee-ci-en, Rops rhymes with shops), *The Most Beautiful Love of Don Juan (Le Plus Bel Amour De Don Juan)*.



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Love and Pain Vampire*, 1894-5

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Love and Pain Vampire*, 1894-5

- This is one of a series he produced on the subject of female vampires. Critics have seen this painting as "**a man locked in a vampire's tortured embrace – her molten-red hair running along his soft bare skin,**" Munch himself always claimed it showed nothing more than "**just a woman kissing a man on the neck**". It was first called *Vampire* by his friend the critic Stanisław Przybyszewski (pronounced 'stanis-law shiber-shes-ski'), who wrote "**a man who has become submissive, and on his neck a biting vampire's face**".
- In 2008 a version sold at **Sotheby's for £24.3 million** (\$38.2 million), a world record for a Munch painting at the time.



Hans Heyerdahl (1857-1913), *The Champagne Girl*, c. 1879-82, 16.2 x 10.2 cm, Drammens Museum



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Day After*, 1894-95

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Day After*, 1894-95

Hans Heyerdahl (1857-1913), *The Champagne Girl*, c. 1879-82, 16.2 x 10.2 cm, Drammens Museum

- **One of Munch's masterpieces** along with *The Scream* and *Dance of Life* which we will see later.
- When this was bought by the National Gallery, Oslo in 1909 it **shocked the public**. One critic denounced it as a **drunken prostitute**. This is unlikely as although he did paint prostitutes they tended to be unattractive or even grotesque. This woman has the appearance of the madonna we saw earlier.
- (CLICK) One important **Norwegian precedent** for the depiction of a dissolute woman would undoubtedly have been known to Munch, **Hans Heyerdahl's painting of *The Champagne Girl***, which was also strongly attacked when exhibited. In which case, if Heyerdahl shows the evening before Munch shows the morning after.
- Until his later years Munch showed little interest in still-life. Here he uses the still-life composition of bottles and glasses on the table to suggest that the woman has had a visitor the night before.

The Girls on the Bridge, 1899,
136 × 125 cm



The Girls on the Bridge, 1899, 136 × 125 cm, National Museum, Oslo

- This became one of his most popular painting and he produced 18 versions. A century later, the view is essentially unchanged with the elongated pier continued by an upward sloping road, the curvature of the sandy shoreline interspersed with patches of green, and the old house itself surrounded in summer by foliage and overshadowed by the often portrayed three linden trees that have now grown together
- One sold at Sotheby's in **2016 for £44 million**. The current highest price for a **Munch is \$120 million for a version of *The Scream*** sold by Petter Olsen to Leon Black at Sotheby's, New York in May 2012.

NOTES

- "Perhaps more than any of Munch's painting, *Girls on the Bridge* has gained a wide measure of **justly deserved popularity**. The theme engaged and held Munch's interest through many versions in paint and print, from the waning years of the nineteenth century to his old age. Despite its poetic strain, *Girls on the Bridge* is a literal translation of a scene at Åsgårdstrand (pronounced 'os-gosh-stran'). A century after its original conception, the visitor to this spot at Oslo Fjord will find essentially unchanged the elongated pier continued by an upward sloping road, the curvature of the sandy shoreline interspersed with patches of green, and the old house itself surrounded in summer by foliage and overshadowed by the often portrayed three linden trees that have grown together as if to share a common crown. Framed by a white wooden fence, all

these features are literal truth, not poetic fancy. In reflecting them, Munch turned his back on a picturesque little harbour on the invisible side of the bridge, fully furnished with small craft and all the banal trappings of a motif hunter's delight. Having selected his subject with care, he adhered to it closely. Without inhibiting the transmutation from model to formal analogy, the chosen scene, on the contrary, led the artist to the perfect solution.”
(edvardmunch.org)

Kiss IV, 1904



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Kiss IV*, 1904, 46.7 x 46.4 cm, woodcut, Museum of Modern Art, New York

1902–1903

- “Munch spent most of 1902-03 in Germany. He exhibited regularly and made connections with collectors and personalities in arts and culture. He gradually came to be a recognised and debated artist, who also exhibited in cities such as Vienna and Paris.
- In 1902, Munch bought his first, small Kodak camera. In an exhibition entitled *Presentation of a number of images of life*, Munch exhibited *The Frieze of Life* at Secession in Berlin in 1902. At this time, *The Frieze of Life* consisted of 22 works.
- During the summer in Åsgårdstrand, Munch received a gunshot injury to his left hand in connection with his breakup with Tulla Larsen. He returned to this event repeatedly in subsequent years. He returned to Berlin and also visited the ophthalmologist Max Linde in Lübeck. Munch's art made a strong impression on the art collector and critic Gustav Schiefler, whom he met at the end of December. Schiefler later catalogued Munch's prints.
- In 1903, Munch rented a studio in Paris and met the English violinist Eva Mudocci.

1904–1906

- Munch spent much of the winter of 1904 with the Linde family in Lübeck, only

interrupted by short trips. He entered a contract with the Berlin publisher and art dealer Bruno Cassirer for sole rights to the sale of prints in Germany for three years, and a contract with Commeterer's art house in Hamburg for the sale of paintings and the organisation of exhibitions for the next three years. Count Harry Kessler invited Munch to Weimar, where he met Friedrich Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche in the philosopher's home. Munch was commissioned to produce a frieze for the children's room in Linde's house, but on completion Linde refused to accept the frieze, which he found unsuitable.

- In 1905, a grand Munch exhibit was held in the Manes Exhibition Hall in Prague. Munch spent the spring in Åsgårdstrand and the summer in Copenhagen. Munch is introduced to the architect, painter and interior designer Henry van de Velde in Herbert Esche's home in Chemnitz. Later, Munch travelled to Weimar to paint a posthumous portrait of Friedrich Nietzsche on commission from the art collector Ernest Thiel in Stockholm.
- Munch made short trips to Berlin in 1906. During the summer, he produced drafts for the stage sets for Max Reinhardt's production of Ibsen's *Ghosts* at Kammerspiele, Deutsches Theater in Berlin. Afterwards, he started working on drafts for the stage sets for the production of *Hedda Gabler*. Later that year, he spent time in Bad Kösen, where he painted *Self-portrait with a Bottle of wine* (1906).” (Munch Museum)



The Brooch Eva Mudocci, 1903

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Brooch Eva Mudocci*, 1903, 61.3 x 47.1 cm, lithograph, National Museum, Oslo

- **One of Edvard Munch's most beautiful and highly praised female figures.** Eva Mudocci (Rose Lynton, c. 1883–1953) was a young, gifted violinist whom Munch got to know in 1902. Together with the pianist Bella Edwards, she toured Europe giving concerts that brought her renown and acclaim.

NOTES

- In the lithograph, Mudocci is depicted half-length and from a low angle. Her loose dark hair flows freely around her pale face. Her gaze is lowered and turned to one side, towards something beyond the frame and invisible to the viewer. Focal to the picture is her brooch, which creates a fine balance in the composition and enhances her enigmatic gaze. What does it mean to her? What is she thinking about? Mudocci appears in two other works Munch finished in the same year: *Violin Concert* and *Salome*.
- There are certain similarities between the figure in ***The Brooch*** and Munch's famous ***Madonna***. Earlier, this lithograph itself bore that title. Here the erotic dimension is considerably toned down and the figure shows more individual and thoughtful traits. The work demonstrates how Munch was gradually mastering the expressive potential of the lithographic medium. The undulating lines have a lot in common with the leisurely brushstrokes that characterise so many of Munch's paintings. With its simple contrasts and subtle visual effects this is a highlight among Munch's graphic works.



Mathilde Larsen (1869-1942)



Self-Portrait with Tulla Larsen, c. 1905, Munch Museum

Self-Portrait with Tulla Larsen, c. 1905, Munch Museum

Mathilde Larsen (1869-1942), photograph

- **In 1898** Munch met **Tulla Larsen**, the 29 year-old daughter of a wealthy wine merchant. **He rejected her advances and she pursued him across Europe** and eventually persuaded him to propose. He then fled and **settled in Berlin** where he worked on his *Frieze of Life* paintings.
- (CLICK) In the summer of 1902, friends convinced him to visit Larsen as she was **threatening suicide and taking morphine**. Some say Larsen pulled out a gun and threatened to shoot herself but others say that a drunken Munch pulled out a gun and accidentally shot his middle finger.

NOTES

- “The end of Edvard Munch and Tulla Larsen’s relationship was more explosive than most breakups. Although the exact details of the event remain unclear, its aftermath is well-recorded: Munch suffered a gunshot wound that claimed part of the middle finger on his left hand, and Larsen, quickly rebounding from the broken engagement, married Norwegian painter Arne Kavli. Some time later, *The Scream* artist **took a saw to a self-portrait** depicting him and his former fiancée, splitting the canvas in two as a physical manifestation of the relationship’s dissolution.” (Smithsonian Magazine)
- **1896 (43) Munch moved to Paris.** Many of the Parisian critics still considered Munch's work "violent and brutal" but his exhibitions received serious attention and good attendance.

- **1897 (44) his financial situation had improved**, and he bought a summer house on a fjord he called the 'Happy House' He returned there almost every summer for the next 20 years. He returned to Kristiania and he critic begrudgingly wrote, "A fair number of these pictures have been exhibited before. In my opinion these improve on acquaintance."
- **1899 (46), Munch began an intimate relationship** with Tulla Larsen, a "liberated" upper-class woman. They travelled to Italy together and upon returning, Munch began another fertile period in his art, which included landscapes and his final painting in "The Frieze of Life" series, *The Dance of Life* (1899). Larsen wanted to marry but **Munch wrote** (in the third person), "**Ever since he was a child he had hated marriage. His sick and nervous home had given him the feeling that he had no right to get married.**" He fled from her considerable fortune in 1900 to Berlin.

1896–1897

- "In 1896, Munch returned to Paris, where his circle consisted of artists such as the composer Fredrick Delius, Hans Jæger, Alfred Hauge, August Strindberg and Stéphane Mallarmé. That year, Munch printed colour lithographs and his first woodcut at Auguste Clot.
- During these years, Munch worked on a series of paintings that he was later to call *The Frieze of Life*, and which included his most central works, such as *The Scream*. This image has come to represent an expression of existential anxiety and despair of modern man. Munch returned to several of the subjects in *The Frieze of Life* during a 30-year period. The pictures are tied together in terms of subject matter and form, and focus on existential topics such as love, pain, anxiety, jealousy and death.
- In April and May 1897, Munch participated in the Salon des Artistes Indépendants in Paris. He did the programme for Lugné-Poë's staging of Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre. Munch spent the summer in Åsgårdstrand, and in September and October he held a large exhibition in the Dioramalokalet by Karl Johan in Kristiania." (Munch Museum)

1898–1901

- "Munch spent 1898 in Berlin and Paris. During the summer, he stayed in Åsgårdstrand, and in August he bought a small fisherman's cabin for NOK 900. Munch met Tulla Larsen during this year. The following year he

travelled a lot, including to Berlin, Paris, Nice, Florence and Fiesole. He studied Rafael in Rome, before travelling to Paris and Le Havre and spending the summer in Åsgårdstrand. Munch was often ill, and during the autumn he lived at Holmenkollen Hotel and at Hamar Grand Hotel. He spent the winter at the Kornhaug sanatorium in Østre Gausdal.

- In May 1900, Munch travelled to Berlin. He held an exhibit in Dresden before moving on to Florence, Rome and a sanatorium in Switzerland. Munch spent July in Como in northern Italy. During this year, he exhibited in the Dioramalokalet in Kristiania and painted the *Dance of Life*. He lived at Holmenkollen hotel and at Hammer's Guest House at Ljan.
- The summer of 1901 was also spent in Åsgårdstrand. Munch exhibited 72 paintings and prints in Hollændergården in Kristiania in September. In November, he moved to Berlin and settled in Lützowstrasse 82." (Munch Museum)



The Dance of Life, 1899-1900

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *The Dance of Life*, 1899-1900

- *The Dance of Life* became part of *The Frieze of Life*. One of the inspirations for the work was the play *Dansen gaar* (*The Dance Goes On*) by Helge Rode in which a character says, “*The dance of life. My picture shall be called The Dance of Life! There will be a couple dancing in flowing garments [...] He is holding her tight. He is profoundly serious and happy. [...] He will hold her so close, so tight, that she almost merges with him. [...] He infuses her with strength.*”
- The painting could represent the stages of life with an innocent young woman in a white dress on the left, a sensual woman in a red dress dancing and an anguished woman in a black dress looking sad on the right.
- All three women resemble Tulla Larsen and the man appears to be Munch. The leering man on the right is a caricature of the playwright Gunnar Heiberg, who had introduced Munch to Tulla Larsen and of whom he was jealous, believing Tulla had previously had an affair with him.
- **1902 (49) the entire *Frieze of Life—A Poem about Life, Love and Death* was exhibited** for the first time in Berlin, “**it made a great stir—a lot of antagonism—and a lot of approval**”. With good press coverage he gained the attention of two wealthy patrons Albert Kollman and Max Linde.

NOTES

- “It is possible to construct a reasonable explanation of the scene if we remember that at times Munch used the depth of the picture space as a time scale, moving from the distant past in the far background up to the present in

the foreground adjacent to the picture plane. Applying this principle here, the initial impulse for life's dance comes from the sun with its phallic column of light crossing the sea. In front of this, far away on the beach stands a solitary girl, waiting for a sex partner. At about the same distance but now on the greensward a group of men appear to contend for the girl's favour - a point where jealousy arise.

- Nearer to us a chosen male partner dances decorously with the girl; this is the stage of courtship. Still closer to the foreground courtship has progressed to lust, in the form of a leering man ready to ravish his partner. His face is a gross caricature of the playwright Gunnar Heiberg, who had introduced Munch to Tulla Larsen and of whom he was jealous, believing Tulla had previously had an affair with him. The girl still wears white but her hair has darkened and reddened. The couple in the foreground represent the final stage, where the dance of life turns into a dance of death. They glide through the motion like somnambulists, trapped by their fate. Munch's feet are enveloped by the coils of Tulla's red gown, while its predatory contour almost completely encases him. Yet there is no eye contact, they remain spiritually remote from each other. Placed in profile, unlike nearly all the other figures, they form the timeless image of a pair for whom creative life, his artistic, hers biological, has ended. Tulla on the left looks forward naively to connubial bliss, for her gaze misses the distressing vision, but she on the right looks straight at it, apprehending the fatal consequences of love." (edvardmunch.org)
- *The Guardian*, "Some people fall in love and their love is reciprocated. Others get caught up in sinister, scary, cruel relationships like the woman who's dancing with a green-faced phantom. Some remain alone, like the woman in white, while others are widowed, like the woman in black. This painting expresses Munch's view of life as a dance of desire and fate in front of an eerie pale moon reflected in the dead-still sea on a Scandinavian summer's night. It was so important to him as a statement of his pessimistic philosophy that **he painted it twice, first in 1900, again in 1925.**"



Golgotha, 1900

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Golgotha*, 1900

- Munch suffered from mental health difficulties all his life and has been described as having a disorder characterised by a fear of being abandoned, a chronic feeling of emptiness and impulsive behaviour. He was also a borderline alcoholic.
- The work was completed in 1900 when he was in a sanatorium. He was **unable to deal with his fear of marriage or his drinking habit**,
- Two years later he had received good press coverage and had two influential patrons. However, his **self-destructive streak** led to an argument with another artist and an **accidental shooting** in the presence of Tulla Larsen. She had just returned for a reconciliation but left him to marry a younger colleague. Munch was shot through the hand and injured two fingers making it difficult to hold a palette.
- The scene shows the crucifixion of Christ on Mount Golgotha (meaning 'the skull') but the face of Christ resembles Munch. The woman praying could represent Tulla Larsen and the seven figures facing us could be the seven cardinal sins. The central figure can be identified as Stainslaw, a poet and friend of Munch and in many paintings he uses him to represent jealousy.



Self-Portrait with Brushes, 1904

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Self-Portrait with Brushes*, 1904

- “*Self-portrait with Brushes* is Munch’s first full-length self portrait. It is one of three paintings where he depicts himself with painting tools and may be regarded as an expression of his view of his role as an artist.
- In 1904 Munch stayed with his friend and patron, the optician Dr. Max Linde in Lübeck. In this period **Munch supported himself by painting portraits**, and it is in this role he has portrayed himself in ***Self-portrait with Brushes***.

NOTES

- The picture has points of similarity with a full-length portrait that he painted of Max Linde in the spring of 1904, where the pose and the use of the space and colours are very similar.
- Munch has dated the painting to 1905, but it was probably painted in December 1904 when he was 51.
- In *Self-portrait with Brushes* he may be said to be reflecting his role as “court artist”, i.e. portraitist. Munch is shown dressed in a dark working coat, his face turned towards the viewer – confident in his own abilities, full of strength and vitality.
- Munch’s body constitutes a centre line in front of an abstract background painted with short, rapid brushstrokes.
- The hands which hold the artists’ brushes are to more-or-less at the centre of the painting. The red colour of the brushes placed in front of the heart, form an

optical focus that may be said to revive the theme of “Art that is created by the artist’s life-blood”. (Google Arts & Culture)

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Portrait of
Friederich Nietzsche*, 1906



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Portrait of Friederich Nietzsche*, 1906

- **1903-4 (50-51) Munch exhibited in Paris and may have inspired the Fauvists** who invited him to exhibit with them in 1906. His financial situation continued to improve with many commissions.
- 1906 (53) he painted a screen for an Ibsen play which was later sold but is now in the Berlin National Gallery.



Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Death of Marat I*, 1907



Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825), *The Death of Marat*, 1793

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Death of Marat I*, 1907

Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), *The Death of Marat*, 1793, 165 × 128 cm, Royal Museums of Fine Art of Belgium

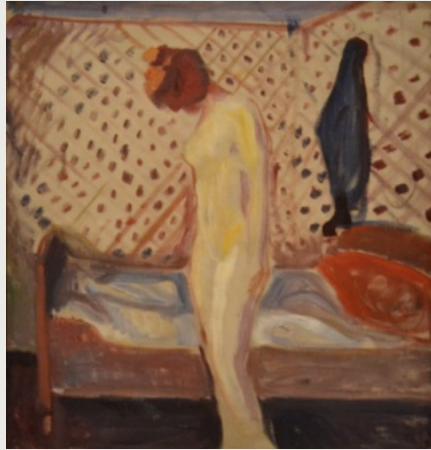
- (CLICK) The title refers to the death of the French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat at the hands of Charlotte Corday a scene painted by Jacques-Louis David. Marat has become Munch with his injured hand and Corday is Tulla Larsen an erect nude facing us after committing or witnessing the deed in 1902. (CLICK)
- **1908 (55) Munch's anxiety**, compounded by **excessive drinking and brawling**, had become acute. He suffered from **hallucinations** and later wrote, "**My condition was verging on madness—it was touch and go**". He suffered a **nervous breakdown** and was admitted to a clinic where he received '**electrification**' treatment and spent several months recovering. He had an ambivalent attitude to recovery. He said: '**I would not cast off my illness for there is much in my art that I owe to it.**'
- When he **emerged, teetotal** and considerably more stable than before, he did indeed seem to have lost his edge. Following his recovery he created landscapes and scenes of people at work and play, using a **new optimistic style**—broad, loose brushstrokes of vibrant colour with frequent use of white space and rare use of black. The new style was popular and his income improved and he was able to buy more homes and provide for his family.
- **1912 (59) his first exhibition in America** in New York.

NOTES

- In the autumn of 1908, Munch's anxiety, compounded by excessive drinking and brawling, had become acute. As he later wrote, "My condition was verging on madness—it was touch and go." [87] Subject to hallucinations and feelings of persecution, he entered the clinic of Daniel Jacobson. The therapy Munch received for the next eight months included diet and "electrification" (a treatment then fashionable for nervous conditions, not to be confused with electroconvulsive therapy). [88] Munch's stay in hospital stabilized his personality, and after returning to Norway in 1909, his work became more colorful and less pessimistic.

1907–1908

- "Munch spent the summers of 1907 and 1908 in the German seaside resort Warnemünde by the Baltic Sea. There, he tried to gather strength while also developing a new and more life-affirming expression than previously. He experimented with different techniques, as is evident in scenes of bathing men at the beach.
- His contract with Cassirer expired during this period. Munch received a visit from the philosopher Eberhard Grisebach. During autumn 1908, he had a breakdown in Copenhagen and checked in to Dr. Jacobson's private clinic, where he spent the following eight months. Munch was awarded the Royal Order of St. Olav in 1908." (Munch Museum)



Weeping Woman, 1907-09

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Weeping Woman*, 1907-09

1909

- “Jappe Nilsen and his friends organised a successful exhibition at Blomqvist Kunsthandel in Kristiania, and the first director of the National Gallery, Jens Thiis, made a large purchase of Munch's paintings despite strong protests. Munch's relative Ludvig Ravensberg brought him back to Norway from Copenhagen.
- Following many years abroad, in May Munch moved into the Skrubben property in Kragerø. His reunion with Norwegian nature after his return resulted in a new interest in harmony and classical composition. This manifested itself in a multitude of landscapes executed with bold, vital brush strokes in a new, monumental style. Munch consciously used his impressive natural surroundings in the decorations he produced for the University Aula. He signed up for the competition for the decoration of the University Aula right after arriving in Kragerø, and the first drafts were made in the summer of 1909. Today, the two most well-known pictures that decorate the Aula are: *The Sun* and *History*. In order to have enough space to produce the large Aula decorations, Munch had to use untraditional methods. These included building his first outdoor studio at Skrubben.” (Munch Museum)



Galopping Horse, 1910-12

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Galopping Horse*, 1910-12

1910–1912

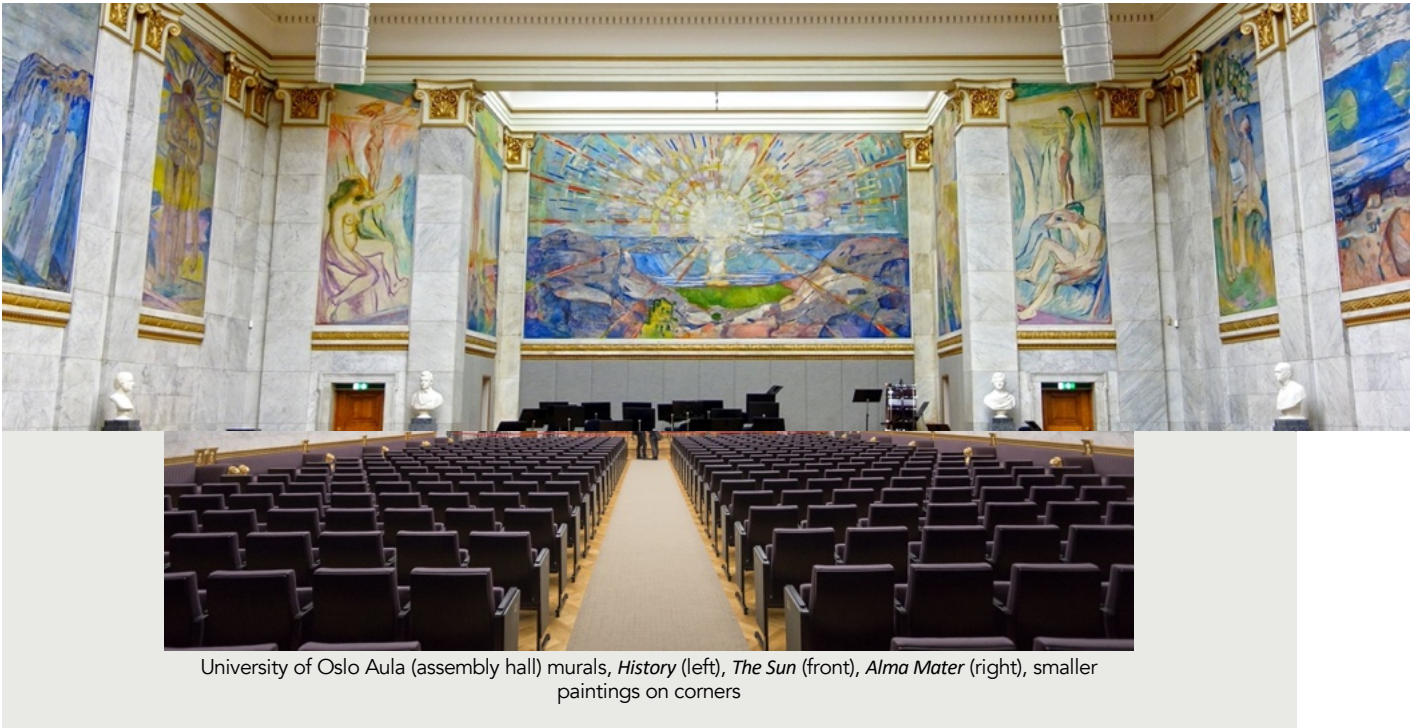
- After spending the winter and spring in Kragerø, Munch bought the Nedre Ramme property at Hvitsten on the east side of the Oslo fjord in November 1910. At Nedre Ramme, he continued working on the Aula decorations. Several of the drafts were inspired by the beautiful landscape in Hvitsten, and the background for the first drafts of *The Researchers/Alma Mater* shows the beach near his property.
- Munch spent 1911 in Hvitsten, taking a brief trip to Germany and holding an exhibition in Kristiania with more than 100 paintings and nearly 200 prints. Munch also purchased a lithographic press to print lithographs and woodcuts in 1911. He spent the autumn and winter in Kragerø.
- In 1912, Munch travelled to Copenhagen and Paris. On invitation, he participated in the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne as one of the exhibitors of honour. The other exhibitors included van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso and Cézanne. 'All the wildest things that have been painted in Europe are collected here – I am practically a pale classicist', he wrote. Munch was introduced to the German art historian Curt Glaser in 1912.



Weeping Nude, 1913-14, 110.5 × 135 cm, The Met

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Weeping Nude*, 1913-14, 110.5 × 135 cm, The Met

- The long black hair in *Weeping Nude* reminds us of his paintings from the 1890s, such as *Madonna*. In this painting, however, he is painting a real model who is crying mixing the sensual with the compassionate.



University of Oslo Aula (assembly hall) murals, *History* (left), *The Sun* (front), *Alma Mater* (right), smaller paintings on corners

University of Oslo Aula (assembly hall, pronounced 'oh-la') murals, *History* (left), *The Sun* (front), *Alma Mater* (right, one's college, literally nourishing or nursing mother), smaller paintings on corners

- **In 1911** the final competition for the decoration of the large walls of the University of Oslo Aula (pronounced 'oh-la', the assembly hall) was held between Munch and Emanuel Vigeland. The jury cannot decide which artist to select and there was what became known as the "Aula controversy". The assembly hall opened without any paintings and Munch with the help of friends arranged for his paintings to be hung so the public could see them and make up its own mind. The public loved the works and he received the commission in 1914.
- In 1914 he was finally commissioned to decorate the Assembly Hall (Aula) and the work was completed in 1916. This major work in Norwegian monumental painting includes 11 paintings covering 223 m² (2,400 sq ft). *The Sun*, *History* and *Alma Mater* are the key works in this sequence.
- (CLICK) This is a closer view of the paintings at the far end. Munch declared: **"I wanted the decorations to form a complete and independent world of ideas, and I wanted their visual expression to be both distinctively Norwegian and universally human."**

NOTES

- **In 1913, Munch rented the Grimsrød manor house** at Jeløya near Moss, which provided him with more workspace. He used the large main building as

a studio and as storage for his paintings and prints. Munch **built a wood studio with a glass roof in the large garden**, and this is where he worked on the monumental Aula decorations. He also painted the views from the garden and landscapes from Søndre Jeløy, his dogs, and glassworks workers on their way home after work.

- He painted portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Glaser and their relatives Käthe and Hugo Perls. Munch spent the autumn in Kragerø, Hvitsten and Moss. He exhibited in Berlin in October and was celebrated on his 50th birthday.
- In 1913, **he travelled across Europe from Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne, Paris and London to Hamburg, Lübeck and Copenhagen.**
- **In 1914** (when he was 61) the First World War divided his loyalties, he wrote "**All my friends are German but it is France that I love**".
- It was recently estimated the paintings are worth about 500 million kroner (£45 million).
- During the spring and summer of 1915, Munch painted the Aula decorations in Hvitsten. In August, he travelled to Trondheim. He spent September at Jeløya and travelled to Copenhagen in November. Munch produced an exhibition poster for the Norwegian Art Exhibition in Copenhagen, using irony to express his opinions about the conditions in the neutral countries Denmark and Sweden during the First World War. He provided financial support for young German artists in 1915.



Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu,
1919

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu*, 1919

- In 1916 he bought the Ekely property (at Skøyen) on the outskirts of Kristiania and lived there for the rest of his life. It consisted of 11 acres of fields, apple trees, bushes and shrubs. He had a broad view of the city and surrounding hills and in time, he built several large outdoor studios on the property.
- 1918 (55) he contracted Spanish Flu and considering his poor health he was **lucky to survive**.

1916–1921

- In 1916, the decorations for the University Aula were completed: they were the monumental paintings *History*, *The Sun* and *Alma Mater*. These showcase the new tendencies in his art, and the pictures are now considered major works in Norwegian monumental painting. In parallel with the drafts for the Aula, Munch developed landscape paintings that used a similar mode of expression. The subjects of the paintings were often from the seaside and forests around Kragerø and Hvitsten.
- Munch bought the Ekely property at Skøyen on the outskirts of Kristiania that same year. He lived at Ekely for the rest of his life. Ekely consisted of 11 acres of fields, apple trees, bushes and shrubs. He had a broad view of the city and surrounding hills from Ekely. In time, Munch built several large outdoor studios on the property.
- In 1918, Munch bought Ålerud farm in Vestfold, which he sold in 1922. He held a large exhibition at Blomqvist Kunsthandel in October, showing images

from *The Frieze of Life*. He published the 'Frieze of Life' booklet later.

- **Munch contracted the Spanish Flu in 1919.** He commissioned the architect Arnstein Arneberg to draw a studio for Ekely, and he painted and drew the construction workers. He exhibited 57 prints at Bourgeois Galleries in New York and was one of the initiators of the Association of Norwegian Printmakers.



Starry Night, 1922,
Munch Museum, Oslo

Edvard Munch (1863–1944), *Starry Night*, 1922, Munch Museum, Oslo

- At Ekely he painted a number of **blue-tinted night pictures** between 1922 and 1924 that convey a sense of **calm, harmony and stability**.
- Between 1920 and his death in 1944 he **lived largely on his estate** drawing and painting landscapes, friends and a **stream of women who visited his home to ask if they could model for him**. Munch occasionally left his home to paint murals on commission, including those started for the **Freia chocolate factory**.

NOTES

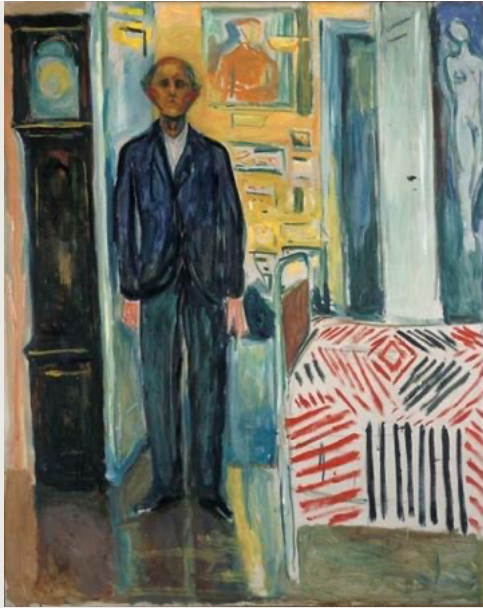
- **1920s and 30s he spent the last two decades of his life in solitude** on his estate near Oslo. Many of his late patrons celebrate farm life. He attracted a stream of female models whom he painted nude. He left his home to paint murals including the Freia chocolate factory. He continued to paint unsparing self-portraits.
- 1930s and 40s **his work was declared degenerate** by the Nazi regime along with that of Picasso, Klee, Matisse, Gauguin and many other modern artists. Many of his Jewish German patrons lost their fortunes and some their lives.
- 1940 (76) the **Nazis invaded Norway** and Munch was afraid his paintings would be destroyed.
- 1944 (80) he died in his house near Oslo and the **Nazis organised his funeral leading many to believe, incorrectly, that he was a Nazi sympathizer**. On his

death his remaining works were bequeathed to the city of Oslo which built the Munch Museum which opened in 1963. The museum holds a collection of approximately 1,100 paintings, 4,500 drawings, and 18,000 prints, the broadest collection of his works in the world. His estate was bought by Oslo in 1946 and his house demolished in 1960.

- In April 2019, the British Museum held a new exhibition, *Edvard Munch: Love and Angst*, which comprised 83 artworks and include a rare original print of *The Scream*

1922–1929

- For years, Munch worked on monumental projects in the outdoor studios at Ekely, including the series of pictures known as *The Late Frieze of Life* and *The Human Mountain*. However, he did not receive any further commissions for decorations, with the exception of a frieze for Freia Chokolade Fabrik in 1922.
- In March 1924, the Rasmus Meyer Collection in Bergen opened as a public museum, and Munch's paintings and prints constituted an important part of the collection.
- His sister Laura died in 1926. Munch held several exhibitions that year and travelled to places such as Venice, Munich, Copenhagen, Paris and Mannheim. The Swedish State purchased Ernest Thiel's collection, and Thielska Galleriet opened at Blockhusrudden in Stockholm with several paintings and many prints by Munch.
- Munch travelled to Berlin in February 1927, where the largest retrospective Munch exhibit to date was presented in the National Gallery. In the summer of 1927, the National Gallery in Oslo showed 289 paintings, watercolours, drawings and prints. In October, Munch travelled to Berlin, Cologne and Paris. During this period, he also worked on ideas for decorations for the Oslo City Hall.
- In 1928, Gustav Schiefler published the second volume of the catalogue of Munch's prints.
- At Ekely, his winter studio was expanded in 1929 based on drawings by the architect Henrik Bull. The construction workers inspired his drafts for the decorations of Oslo City Hall.



Edvard Munch, *Self-portrait between the Clock and the Bed*, 1940–43. Munch Museum

Edvard Munch, *Self-portrait between the Clock and the Bed*, 1940–43. Munch Museum

- He contracted an **eye disease in May 1930** and had to rest until August and so he took a series of photographic self-portraits during these four months.
- In 1937, 82 of Munch's works were **confiscated from German collections by the Nazi regime and labelled 'degenerate'** but in 1938 **many of his works** were repatriated from Germany and auctioned.
- In his will, Munch **left all his artwork that was in his own possession to Oslo municipality.**
- During the last years of his life, Munch made several unflinchingly revealing self-portraits like this one, **showing an old man facing death.**
- He died quietly at his home in Ekely on 23 January 1944. He painted actively for sixty years and when **he died in 1944 aged 81 he bequeathed 1,200 paintings, 4,500 drawings and 18,000 prints to the city of Oslo.**
- A well-known newspaper (*The Guardian*) wrote, "**Few artists have ever seen their own old age with such terrifying clarity as Munch ... Time is ticking away in the shape of a solemn grandfather clock. A single bed ... testifies to his solitude. The artist himself seems frozen, flattened, already seeing himself as a stiffened corpse. He was to die soon after painting this austere farewell, in 1944.**"

1930–1939

- Munch contracted an **eye disease in May 1930** and had to rest until August. He took a series of photographic self-portraits.
- His aunt Karen died in 1931. Munch continued to suffer from the eye disease, and worried about losing his sight entirely. In October, he visited Kragerø and he was constantly busy doing exhibitions.
- In 1933, Munch spent parts of the winter and summer in Åsgårdstrand. He also spent time at Hvitsten and Kragerø. He was celebrated on this 70th birthday and was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Olav. Jens Thiis and Pola Gauguin published monographs about Munch.
- The Norwegian author, art collector and financier Rolf E. Stenersen offered his art collection to Aker municipality in 1936. His collection included more than 20 paintings and approximately 400 prints by Munch. The collection was exhibited in several places that year.

1940–1944

- In 1942, four of Munch's paintings were shown in the exhibition 'Art and Not. Clean-up April 1942' ('Kunst og ukunst. Oppryddingen april 1942') in the National Gallery. That year, Munch also exhibited his work in Gothenburg, and 34 of his prints were shown at the Brooklyn Museum in New York from December to February.
- **In 1943, Munch continued to have great capacity for work, and he celebrated his 80th birthday in December.**
- Munch left approximately 1,150 paintings, 17,800 prints, 4,500 watercolours, drawings and 13 sculptures, as well as writings and literary notes to the City of Oslo.



EDVARD
MUNCH
(1863–1944)

*Nature is not only all
that is visible to the
eye... it also includes
the inner pictures of
the soul.*

DR. LAURENCE SHAFE
ART@SHAFE.UK
WWW.SHAFE.UK

- It is difficult to convey the impact his paintings and his drawings have when you see them at an exhibition. If you have the opportunity to see his work I recommend it. It is moving, honest and intense.
- Thank you for your time and attention and I look forward to bringing you another talk soon.
- Goodbye for now.