

The masterworks of Edvard Munch

Introd. by John Elderfield, commentaries by Arne Eggum

Author

Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)

Date

1979

Publisher

The Museum of Modern Art

ISBN

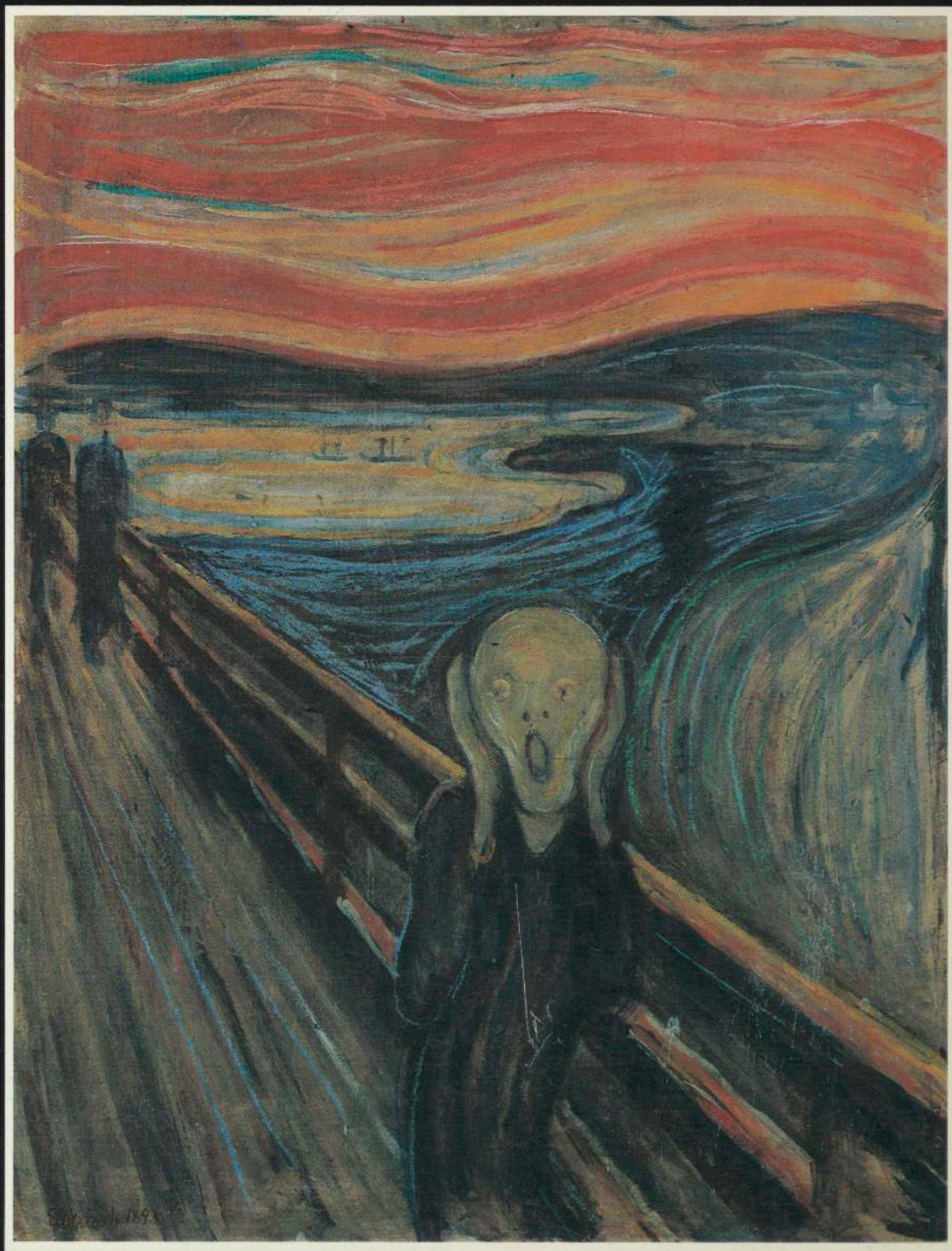
0870704923

Exhibition URL

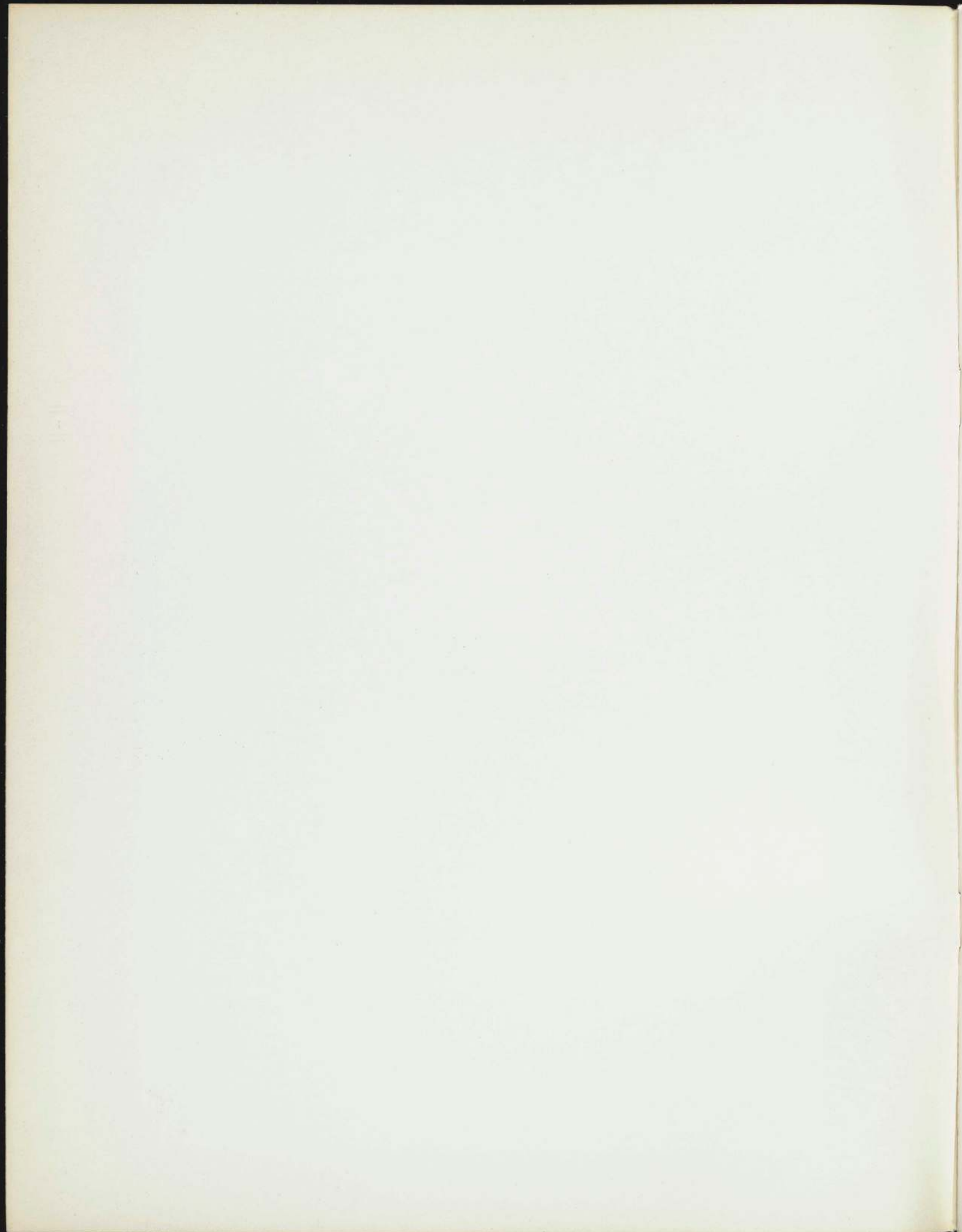
www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1701

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.

The Masterworks of EDVARD MUNCH



THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART · NEW YORK



The Masterworks of
EDVARD MUNCH

The Masterworks of

f EDVARD MUNCH

Introduction by John Elderfield

Commentaries by Arne Eggum

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART · NEW YORK

"The Masterworks of Edvard Munch," on view from March 15 to April 24, 1979, is presented with the support of Mobil Corporation and is drawn from an exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. This catalog has been assisted by a grant from The Lauder Foundation.

Copyright © 1979 by The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Commentaries by Arne Eggum copyright © 1978 by
the Trustees of the National Gallery of Art, Washington
All rights reserved
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 79-84029
ISBN 0-87070-492-3
Designed by Christopher Holme
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street
New York, N.Y. 10019
Printed in the United States of America

Cover: *The Scream*. 1893. Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo

This catalog is published on the occasion of an exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art of a group of masterworks by the great Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. Exhibitions of Munch's art are only too rare in the United States. By far the largest portion of his life's work is held in Norwegian collections, and many of the most important paintings are seldom available for loan. We are therefore particularly fortunate in being able to show in New York an assemblage of Munch's finest paintings drawn from the exhibition "Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images," organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Our selection concentrates on Munch's paintings of the 1890s, the decade in which he is widely considered to have produced his most extraordinary work. The twenty-three paintings shown are complemented by thematically related prints from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the directors of the Norwegian museums not only for allowing us to show their superb Munchs before the pictures return to Norway, but for their encouragement and active assistance, without which we would not have been able to arrange this exhibition on very short notice. To Knut Berg, Director of the Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo, Alf Bøe, Director of the Munch-Museet, Oslo, and Jan Askeland, Director of the Billedgalleri, Bergen, go our very warmest thanks. We are also most grateful to The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and to two private Norwegian collectors for allowing their paintings to be shown in New York.

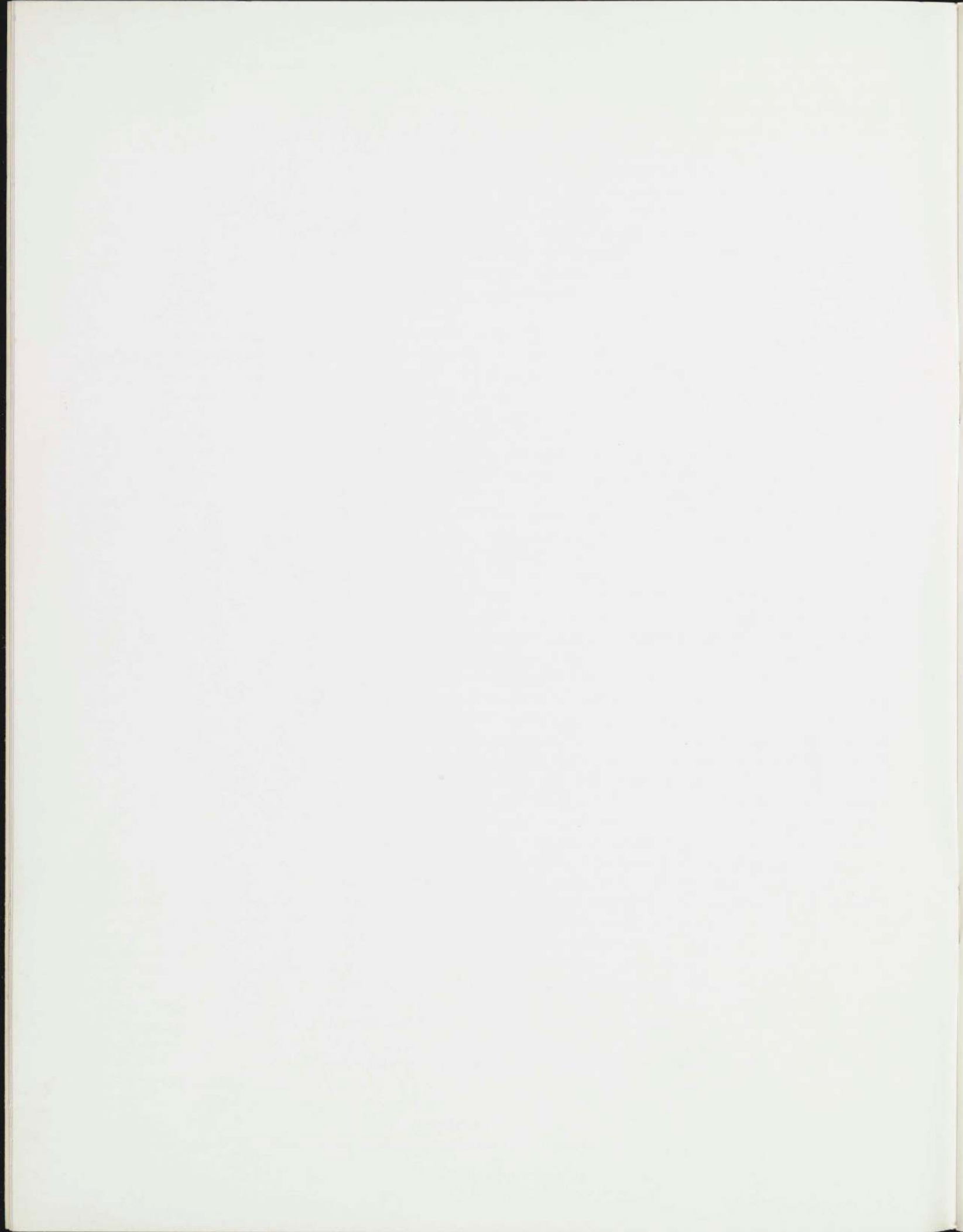
To the National Gallery of Art, Washington, we also owe our particular thanks. J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, has given his fullest support to our project, and our work has been greatly aided by Earl A. Powell III, Sally Freitag, Catherine Warwick, and Frances Smyth of the National Gallery of Art staff. The Museum of Modern Art is also grateful to the National Gallery of Art and to Arne Eggum, Chief Curator of the Munch-Museet, for permission to reprint in this catalog Mr. Eggum's commentaries on the paintings reproduced. We have also followed the dates Mr. Eggum established for the works.

At The Museum of Modern Art, John Elderfield, Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, assumed directorship of the exhibition and supervised the preparation of this catalog, for which he wrote the Introduction. He was ably helped by Monique Beudert, Curatorial Assistant in the same department, who also prepared the chronology for the catalog, and by Diane Gurien, who dealt with the secretarial work this exhibition involved. William Rubin, Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, William S. Lieberman, Director of the Department of Drawings, and Riva Castleman, Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, were also involved in a consultative capacity. Richard Palmer, Coordinator of Exhibitions, supervised the administrative details of the exhibition, working with Barry Winiker, Assistant Registrar. James Snyder, Associate Director of Finance, made arrangements for the extension of U.S. Government indemnification of the loans with Linda Bell of the NEA Museum Program. This catalog was edited by Francis Kloeppel and designed by Christopher Holme; Yone Akiyama handled its production.

The exhibition has been supported by a grant from Mobil Corporation and by a Federal indemnity provided by the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The catalog of the exhibition has been published with the aid of a grant from The Lauder Foundation. The Museum of Modern Art is deeply grateful for the generous support provided by these sources, without which the exhibition could not have been realized.

FOREWORD

RICHARD E. OLDENBURG
Director, The Museum of Modern Art



It has become customary to make a distinction between the widely intelligible or public symbolism of the artists of the past and the private symbolism of modern artists. Public symbolism suggests an appeal, through the medium of conventional signs and symbols, to a body of ideas and beliefs that are the common property of both artists and audience. Private symbolism, in contrast, presumes the absence if not of a common fund of beliefs to which symbols can refer, then of widely intelligible symbols which can be relied upon to refer to them—and the replacement, therefore, of conventional symbols by ones drawn from personal experience and emotion.

It is, nevertheless, too easily possible to overemphasize the "private" nature of modern symbolism. In Munch's case, we find meaning in his best works whether or not we are aware of the personal themes that motivated and shaped them. This is not to say that his art seems the more convincing the more it escapes the purely personal conditions that engendered it: although it is certainly true that a large part of its power lies in its appeal to broader issues than those of Munch's own psychology, a still larger part depends upon the sense of exact alignment that exists, when Munch is at his best, between the personal and the general. At least, his work seems to be at its most effective when it resists too easy translation either into biographical or into universally symbolic terms. For when his art invites direct translation in either of these ways we sense a lack of correspondence between personal emotion, symbolic code, and the pictorial structure of the work in question.

If this is to say no more than what is true for all art—that the strength of its internal coherence may be measured in its resistance to paraphrase—then it has particular relevance for Munch's art and for that of his contemporaries. When Munch wrote the now famous statement in his Saint-Cloud diary of 1889—"no more interiors should be painted, no people reading and women knitting; they should be living people who breathe, feel, suffer, and love"—he was expressing a concern with emotional, meaningful, and antinaturalistic themes that was shared by very many members of his artistic generation. Like Gauguin, Ensor, and Hodler, moreover, he sought to realize these themes in intrinsically emotional, meaningful, and antinaturalistic subjects. The obvious contrast here is with van Gogh, who shunned subjects of this kind and for whom, therefore, there was no division between "people reading and women knitting" and "living people who breathe, feel, suffer, and love." When we compare Munch's art to van Gogh's, we see that the Norwegian required emotional characters to express emotional moods, and that the characters of his art are important not as individuals, but only as vehicles for the moods that they express. How successfully they do their task seems largely to depend on whether they capture or merely personify these moods, whether what we see is more than just "a translation of abstract notions into a picture language, which is itself nothing but an abstraction from objects of the senses."

This is Coleridge's definition of allegory, to which he opposed symbolism's "translucence" of the specific in the individual and the general in the specific. Is this, then, to say that an art like Munch's succeeds to the extent it is symbolic rather than allegorical? Such a definition would seem to provide for the exact alignment of the personal and the general that characterizes Munch at his best. Even at his best, however, Munch is allegorical in the sense of channeling and directing the power of his art to convey a didactic content. Even at those greatest moments when his art presents itself at its most archetypal and mythic, the myths and archetypes it contains are employed rhetorically rather than being simply

INTRODUCTION

embodied in the work, which is therefore in one way or another "literary" and moralizing in character. There is always some sense of distance between personal emotion, symbolical code, and pictorial structure because there is always a certain allegorical quotient in Munch's art. Again the comparison with van Gogh is suggested. Munch's very dependence upon intrinsically "important" themes meant that he was denied the absolute fusion of form, symbol, and subjective emotion available to van Gogh and bound instead to seek what Robert Goldwater called (using Hodler's terminology) a state of "parallelism" between them. It is a sign, however, of the greatness of Munch's best work, particularly of his paintings and prints of the 1890s, that the "parallelism" of the elements is so exact and so closely drawn as to defy their separation.

To look at his great pictures of the nineties is to realize that Munch has harnessed within his oeuvre, and often within individual works, two major symbolical themes of nineteenth-century art, each of which was coming to a climax when Munch was finding himself as an artist and each of which had acute personal significance for him. The source of power in his work seems indeed to reside in the way in which traumatic personal experiences allowed Munch to pass on the accumulated force of these themes and to tie them together. One was the theme of conflict between man and modern urban life; the other the theme of sexual conflict. To call one social and therefore public and the other psychological and therefore private is to avoid the fact that the social manifests itself psychologically and the psychological socially, but let these terms stand for the moment.

The "social" theme had been fully defined in nineteenth-century literature long before it found explicit and major expression in the visual arts. One thinks particularly of the early Victorian social novels, notably Dickens' great books of the 1850s where, as Northrop Frye points out, the life of his times was presented as an ebb and flow to and from the great industrial centers, and then of his later novels where the city itself appears as a sort of spreading cancer upon the landscape, inhospitable to organic life. The pathological metaphor is relevant here—and important for appreciation of Munch—because the image of the metropolis in nineteenth-century art expressed not only the tension and alienation of the individual in its anonymous geometry and anonymous crowds, but also something broader. It came to epitomize the disintegration both of rural patterns of living and of culture or cultivation as a whole—previously an ideal of personal-ity but increasingly a social ideal through which the health of society was to be defended against what Coleridge called "the hectic of disease" of modern civilization. Twentieth-century critics of the city have tended to focus on its physical uniformity, which is seen as symbolic of spiritual conformity. Victorian criticism, however, noticed far more its physical ugliness and unsanitary suffocation, seeing them as symbolic of the spiritual ugliness of materialism and the diseased state of culture as a whole. Munch's work undoubtedly learned from Parisian representations of Haussmann's geometric metropolis, and undoubtedly anticipates (as Robert Rosenblum notes) twentieth-century representations of urban tension. But it also conveys a nineteenth-century, non-Parisian sense of the suffocating and the claustrophobic. For Munch's Oslo, as represented in his pictures, is not so much a harsh and geometric city as a gray, opaque, and provincial town whose sickly, spectral inhabitants seem to be assailed by anxieties and diseases over which they have no control.

The theme of sickness and disease links Munch's private, autobiographical images like *Death in the Sickroom* (p. 45) to his more generalized urban ones, from the relatively topographical *Evening on Karl Johan Street* (p. 23) to the

nonspecific *Anxiety* (p. 33) and *The Scream* (p. 31). If the autobiographical work can be described (by Reinhold Heller) as a picture of Munch's own family "reacting in isolation and bewilderment to the process of dying," then the others invite interpretation as transpositions of the same theme from a private to a public frame of reference. The city in Munch's art presents itself both as a source of modern shock and as an agent of communicable disease from which all of its inhabitants suffer and which seems, in fact, to be the only form of communication between them. This is not at all to deny that these paintings acutely convey the abstract emotions—fear, terror, and so on—to which Munch often drew attention in his titles. The point, rather, is that urban fear and terror are expressed in physiological metaphors and that the power of Munch's art has a great deal to do with the way in which purely abstract states are embodied in images that evoke the frailty and physical vulnerability of the human body.

For a number of Munch's contemporaries, pastoral nature offered the hope of an escape from the diseased city to a healing Arcadia of gardens and waters. One thinks most obviously of Gauguin here, but artists as different as Monet and (later) Matisse may usefully be considered within this context. In Munch's art, no such alternative is offered, or when it is offered it is immediately withdrawn. For metropolitan civilization is not presented as a kind of veneer that hides some more integral and natural state, but as a crust "underneath which nature courses, waiting until a crack appears and it can burst into the open," as a later German writer was to articulate this essentially Northern view. Indeed, the urban scene itself, as Munch presents it, analogizes the animistic forest of Northern Romanticism: windows are like eyes; the ivy that surrounds them is biologically alive; and, where the patterns of landscape appear, they offer no sense of refuge but respond to and mirror the pathology of the urban population.

They have to. We think of Munch as a painter of figures. Only rarely, however, did he seem to be able to paint them whole. They are nearly always truncated, abruptly cut off by the bottom edge of the picture, and often (even when most of the figure is given) only the masklike head is modeled or defined. Their bodies lack all sense of substance, flattened beneath neutral and inexpressive clothes. It is frequently noted that the settings of Munch's pictures embody the psychology of their figures; if so, the dense and physical surfaces that surround the figures also carry the sense of corporeality that they themselves are denied. The clotted and congealed pools of dry paint that form the sky in *The Scream* (p. 31) and that Munch himself likened to blood; the solidified and claustrophobic space that presses around the figures in *By the Deathbed*, *Fever* (p. 47); the agitated landscape background in *Ashes* (p. 37)—all are more real and physically present to the viewer than the bodies of the figures themselves.

At times the space of the paintings is vaporous and foggy, as in *Self-Portrait with Cigarette* (p. 38), where Munch seems to have scrubbed paint across the surface, and in *Vampire* (p. 35), where the surface is streaked and scumbled. But even in such instances the pictorial space is at least as substantial as the figures that inhabit it. There is one important exception to this, the superb *Puberty* of 1894-95 (p. 43), which is also the only completely convincing nude figure that Munch painted; and I shall return later to this immensely moving work. Generally, however, the sense of physical and tactile reality denied to the bodies of Munch's spectral beings is manifested in the density of the invented pictorial space. (In some of Munch's prints, the *illusion* of dense space is such that the figures seem somehow to read as holes or absences in the pictorial field.) This effect is announced as early as 1889 in that amazing tour de force, *Inger on the*

Beach (p. 17). If it is true, as Arne Eggum says, that the expressionless woman is given life by the landscape, "which becomes an image of her mood," then surely those great veined and fleshy rocks that surround her are there to provide, in surrogate form, carnal knowledge of the physical, sexual body hidden beneath the shroudlike tent of a dress that she is wearing.

The erotic charge of this and subsequent works by Munch joins his art to what Mario Praz (who documented the Southern manifestations of this trend) has called "that extraordinary conflagration of cerebral lechery which occupied the end of the [nineteenth] century and gave the impression of a genuinely imminent catastrophe." The theme of sexual conflict—the second of the two important themes I mentioned above that Munch inherited from earlier nineteenth-century art—is a strong link between his work and that of many of his contemporaries from Toorop and Rops to Gustave Moreau. His morbid madonnas and vampires are easily recognized as part of the common iconography of Symbolist art. Munch differs from most of his contemporaries, however, and particularly from those in the South, in that his work shows nothing of their fascination and absorption in decadence as virtually an alternative culture. The vice and cruelty of much Symbolist art take place between consenting adults in a heavy, suffocating atmosphere that speaks of the escapist, masochistic pleasure they find in the beautifully bizarre. Munch's art is claustrophobic in quite a different way, full of frustration and emotional tension. There is certainly none of the exoticism that comes with eroticism in a great deal of Symbolist art.

Munch belongs with his contemporaries, then, when he links images of beauty and death in a *femme fatale* in various guises and when he reveals in paintings like *Vampire* (p. 35) a sense of horror at the loss of personality in sexual union. He remains separate from them, however, in the extent of his obsession with loneliness, jealousy, and frustration, and in the fatalistic way that his figures are presented, in Rosenblum's words, as "helpless pawns of emotional and sexual forces deep below the level of consciousness." And it is here that the "social" and "psychological" themes of his work are brought together. The social alienation expressed in his urban pictures and the psychosexual alienation in his allegorical ones are but two iconographic manifestations of a single iconology and a single fatalism, from which neither a pastoral nor a voluptuous Arcadia is offered by way of escape.

Hence the emphatic formal dissonance of Munch's work. His is not an allover harmonious style of continuous rhythms bespeaking the wholeness of an invented world, either pleasant or demonic. Conflict and disjunction characterize all his major compositions. Organic contours and *cloisonniste* forms are opposed by rigid and rectilinear ones. Softly molded figures stand stiffly to attention before formally arranged forests. Psychic disturbances take place around intrusive geometric fixtures like fences, piers, and bridges, which jar the stylistic unity of the surfaces, focusing expression. And when these elements recede in abrupt perspective or cause the eye suddenly to jump into deeper space, it becomes even clearer that space itself in Munch's art is presented as an expressive phenomenon, and not as an objective attribute of perceptual experience. The spatial shifts that geometric elements provide seem to push forward virtually into the observer's space the figures that are invariably positioned in front of these elements, thus reinforcing the metaphor of active forces beneath a rigid surface crust. Emphatic surface geometry fulfills a similar function in *Puberty* (p. 43). The expression of bodily change and outbreak of sexuality inherent in the subject of the work is heightened by the way the frontal, horizontal bands of the bed cause the body of

the girl to levitate in public view in front of the picture, despite the embarrassed withdrawal of her pose—and despite the ominous placentalike shadow that ties this image of unwilling birth to the bedroom setting which so often in Munch's art evokes pregnancy and death at one and the same time.

The disjunctive character of Munch's art sets the pattern for modern Expressionism, which is likewise torn between stillness and rigidity on the one hand and vitality and chaos on the other, and between suppressed emotion and the brittle, easily shattered form in which it is encased. It also belongs, more generally, with modern Existentialist art in representing a fallen and fatalistic world of disconnected fragments resistant to being ordered—except that no sense of irony, and none therefore of resignation, attaches to this situation in Munch's case. Unprotected by irony, Munch's art takes refuge in subjectivity and in empathy. Isolated but never detached—and denied therefore the role either of reporter or of pure inventor—Munch cast himself as a kind of medium. Experiences invading the body would be transformed into a symbolic code that tells of both private emotion and public feeling. "If only one could be the body through which today's thoughts and feelings flow," he wrote in 1892, "that's what an author ought to be. A feeling of solidarity with one's generation, but yet standing apart. To succumb as a person yet survive as an individual entity, this is the ideal . . ."

JOHN ELDERFIELD

Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture
The Museum of Modern Art

Note: In the text above, I have referred by name of author to the following works: Northrop Frye, *The Modern Century* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Robert Goldwater, "Symbolic Form: Symbolic Content," *Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art, IV, Problems of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933); Robert Rosenblum, Reinhold Heller, Arne Eggum, et al., *Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1978). The references to Coleridge derive from Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), and the quotations from Munch from the National Gallery of Art publication.

Morning, Girl at the Bedside. 1884

Oil on canvas. 96.5 x 103.5 cm (38 x 40³/₄ in)

Rasmus Meyers Samlinger

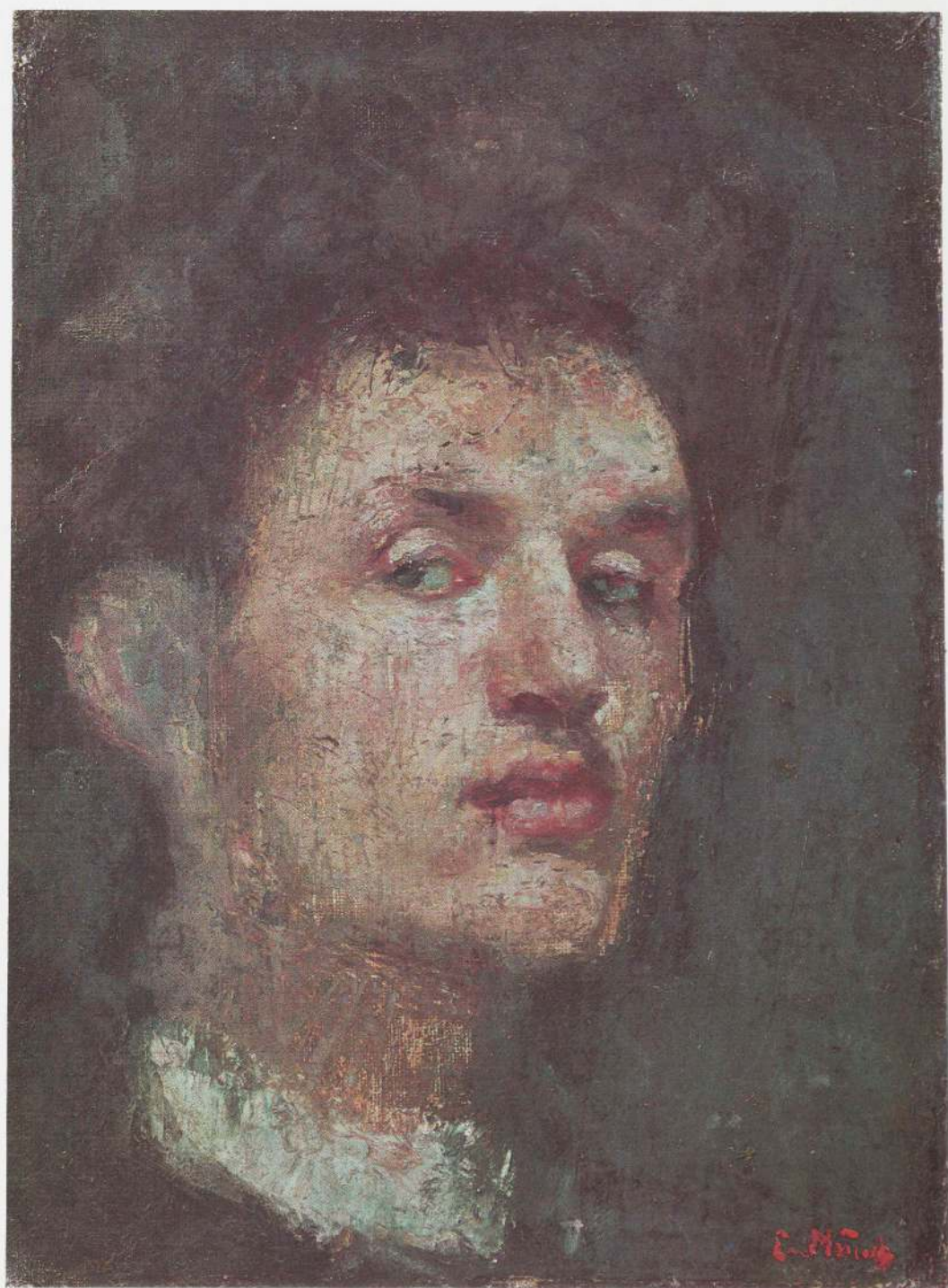
The picture was painted at Modum Blåfargeverk, where Munch's distant relative, the painter Frits Thaulow, conducted an "open-air academy." Like Christian Krohg in the studios at the Pultosten in Christiania, Frits Thaulow here met with younger painters, with whom he shared his more extensive experience. Besides Krohg, Thaulow was at this time Norway's most influential painter, as well as the most well informed in the French art scene. *Morning* shows a seated girl, half-dressed and rustic, in typical Krohg style. But the French-inspired *teint* and the superior rendering of the light in the picture make *Morning* an independent work compared to Christian Krohg's art. The innovative idiom is articulated in the light falling through the window to the left. The light creates the effect of immaterializing the forms of the decanter and the glass, before it is captured in the figure of the girl on the edge of the bed. In the formulation of the girl, Munch used the light more to dissolve the forms than to define them. The painting, which was exhibited for the first time at the Autumn Exhibition in 1884, met with an extremely negative review. The execution and motif were found to be in bad taste. In 1883 Munch had exhibited a head study in the style of Hans Heyerdahl at the Industrial Exhibition, and during the same year he painted *Early Morning*, in Christian Krohg's style. This picture shows a girl preparing to light an oven. *Morning* from 1884 is the last of Munch's paintings that essentially can be described as apprentice works. In 1889 the Norwegian jury selected the picture for participation in the World Fair in Paris. Munch himself had wished to be represented by a more personal work.



Self-Portrait, 1886Oil on canvas, 33 x 24.5 cm (13 x 9⁵/₈ in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo

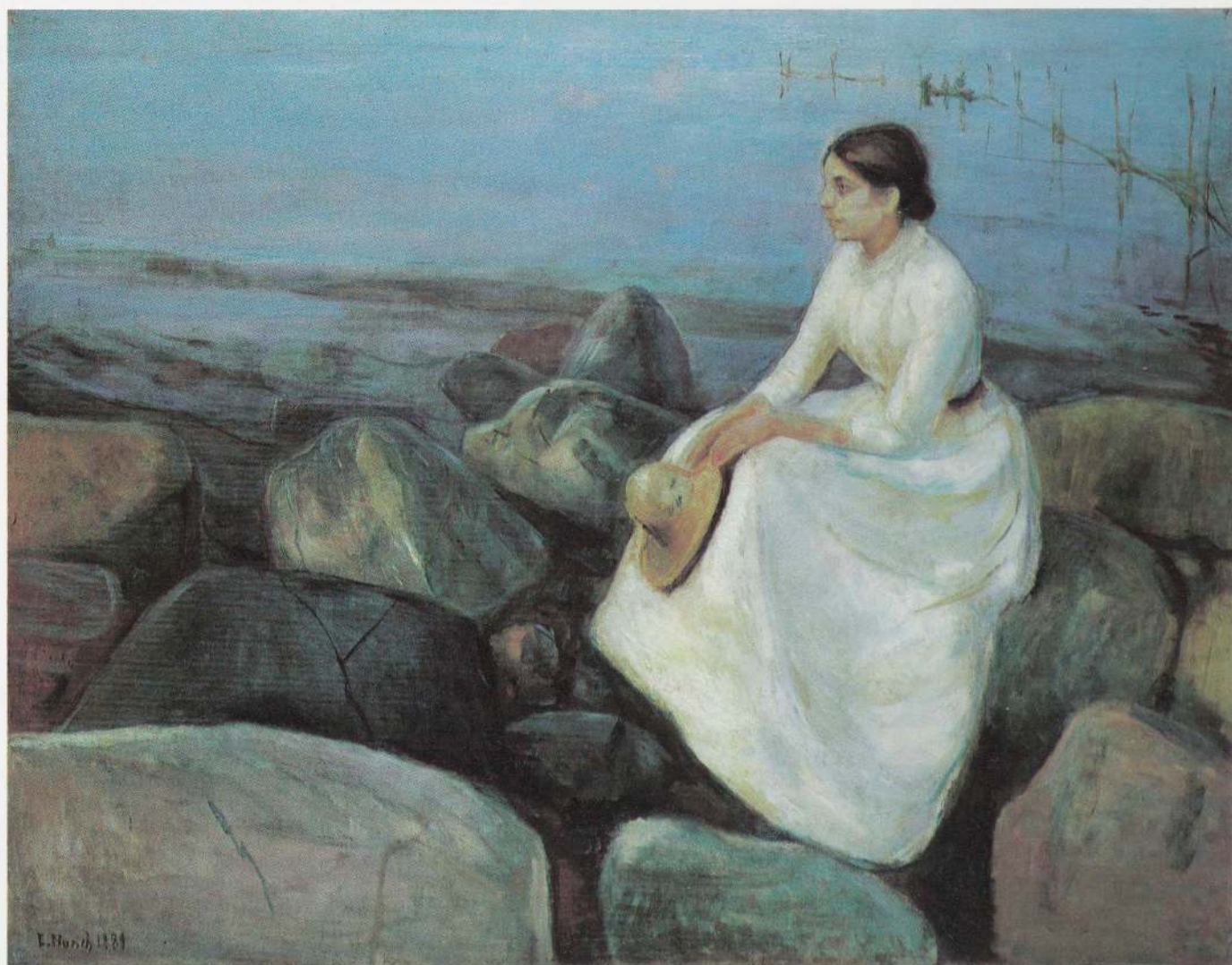
Self-Portrait, 1886, as I see it, is a portrait of the creator of the famous *The Sick Child*. It is the portrait of an artist who *knows* that he has come into a domain that is wholly his own. Technically speaking, it is in its way just as interesting as *The Sick Child*. The face was modeled with a spatula in the same way that a sculptor works with a clay model. To highlight the most expressive parts of the face, Munch scraped away the paint around it all the way down to the canvas. The structure and color of the canvas play a part in the general impression of the picture. Munch made the background around the head look blurred and utilized a technique involving washing the areas with a diluent. From a coloristic viewpoint the picture is concentrated and extremely expressive through the play of subdued red and green hues. The green in the eyes and the red in his lips and around his right eye have been extremely well placed from a coloristic point of view. Thus Munch, in his own portrait, stressed the sickliness that he created in *The Sick Child*, but the sickliness in the portrait borders on artistic oversensitivity. In this painting Munch laid himself bare in a way that seems to imply an artistic program. When he painted this self-portrait, he still had impressions of the Louvre and of Rembrandt in his retina. There is reason to believe that the negative reception accorded *The Sick Child* made Munch fail to pursue this expressive aspect of his talent during the following years.



Inger on the Beach. 1889Oil on canvas. 126.4 x 161.7 cm (49³/₄ x 63³/₄ in)

Rasmus Meyers Samlinger

The scene is from Åsgårdstrand, where Munch rented a house for the first time this summer. His sister Inger is sitting on some rocks not far from the house Munch later bought in 1898. With this picture, painted between nine and eleven o'clock at night, Munch captured the light summer night over the fjord by Åsgårdstrand. This motif was to be a recurring theme in his art. The picture of Inger on the beach was exhibited for the first time at the Autumn Exhibition in 1889 under the title *Evening*, and was met by a review as negative as the one given to *Sick Child* only three years earlier. It is apparent from Munch's diaries that during his visit to Paris in 1885 he was already influenced by the art of Puvis de Chavannes. But it was not until *Inger on the Beach* that he let himself be inspired to paint a canvas with homogeneous pale surfaces shimmering with color and with a musical mood. The slumped, seated female figure is, in itself, quite lacking in expression; the quality of soul we read into her is caused by the essential quality of the landscape around her, which becomes an image of her mood.



Night in Saint-Cloud, 1890

Oil on canvas. 64 x 54 cm (25¼ x 21¼ in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo

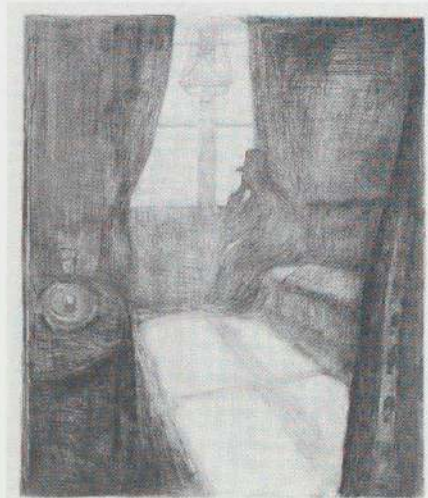
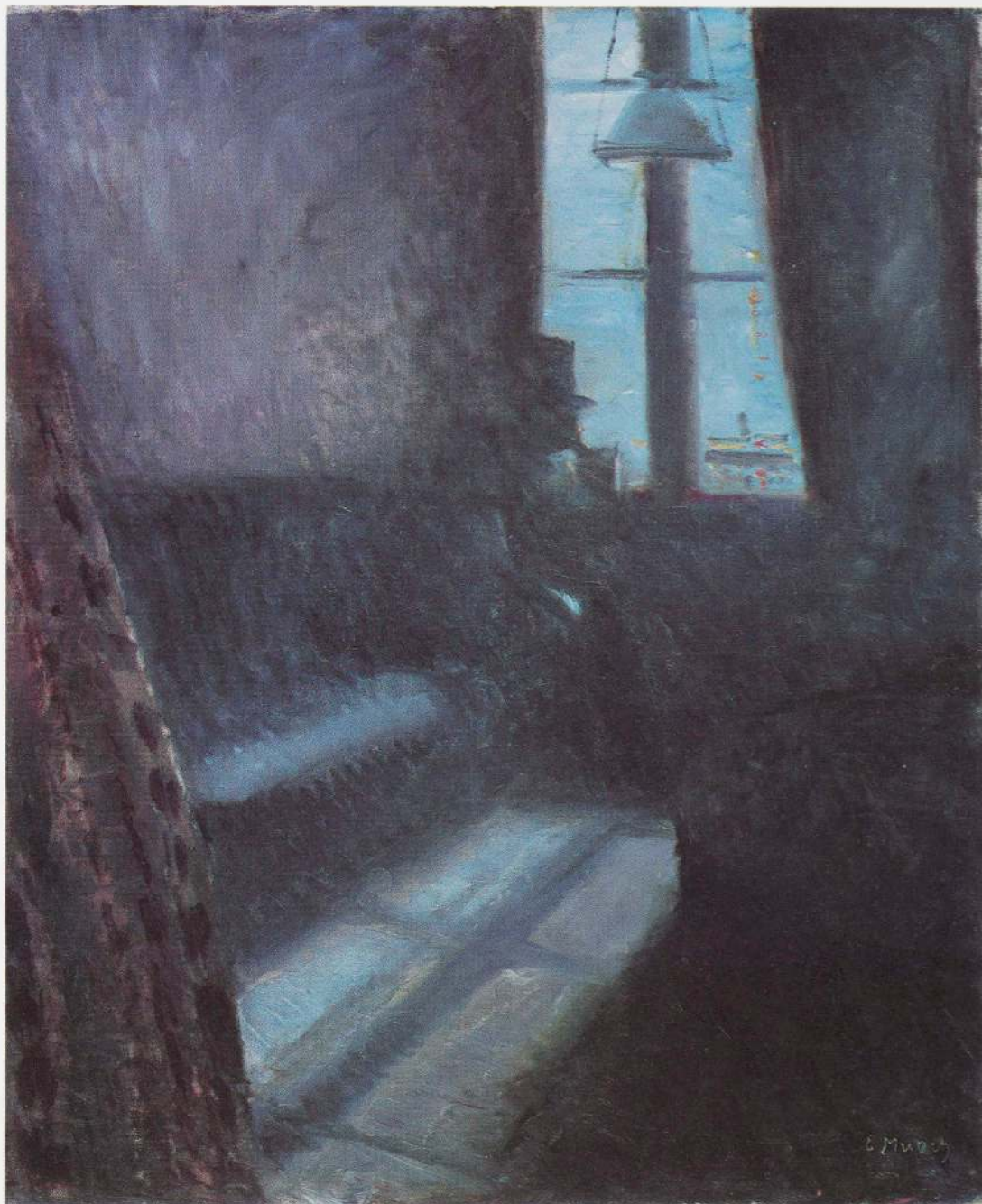


Fig. 1. **Moonlight**, 1896. Woodcut, printed in color. 40.2 x 47.2 cm (15⅞ x 18⅝ in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection

The setting is Munch's room in Saint-Cloud, outside Paris, with its view over the Seine. He stayed there in the winter of 1890 to escape the epidemic in the city. As a model for the slumped figure by the window, Munch used the Danish amateur poet Emanuel Goldstein. The picture is traditionally conceived of as an expression of the artist's own mood, caused by the news of his father's death. In the otherwise empty room, the window frame's shadow falls like a double cross over the floor and gives immediate associations of death. The picture has a strongly reflective and melancholy character, which is partially caused by the tension between the life outside and the silence inside. The seated figure's thoughts seem to lie far away in time and space, but they are present as pictures of recollection, and their mood marks his immediate surroundings. In several of the sketches contained in Munch's illustrated literary diary which I have dated 1888-90, he developed a pictorial idiom that shows the artist slumped and reflective. The reality outside stands as a contrast to his inner world. *Night in Saint-Cloud* is the first Munch picture where death is presented as a mentally vacated space. He repeated the motif in two additional paintings and in an etching [fig. 1].



Melancholy, Yellow Boat. 1891-92
Oil on canvas. 65.5 x 96 cm (25¾ x 37¾ in)
Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo

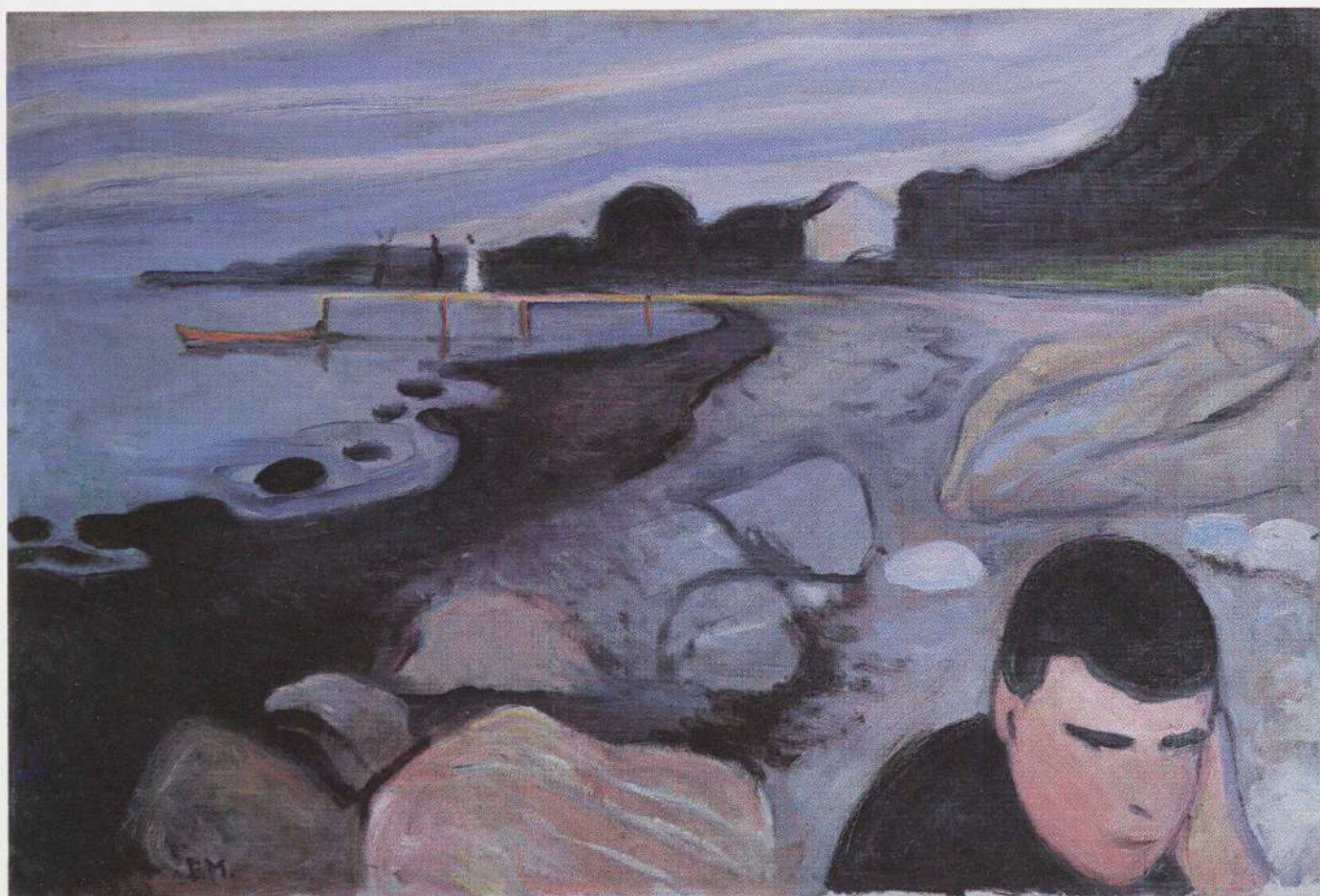




Fig. 2. Evening (Melancholy: On the Beach). 1896. Woodcut, printed in color. 41.2 x 45.7 cm (16 1/4 x 18 in). Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

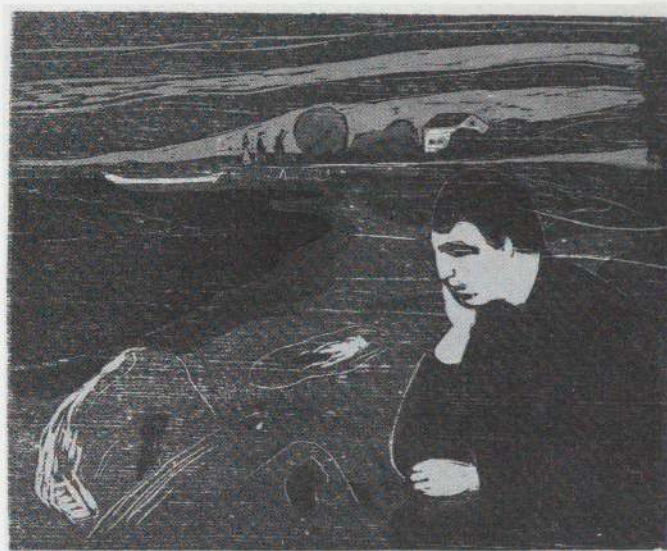


Fig. 3. Evening (On the Beach: Melancholy). 1901. Woodcut, printed in color and hand-colored. 37.5 x 47 cm (14 3/4 x 18 1/2 in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection

The picture was painted in Åsgårdstrand in 1891 or 1892. According to tradition, it is supposed to represent the jealous Jappe Nilssen. In the background on the wharf, Oda Krohg is standing with Christian Krohg. They are to be rowed out to a small island where they can make love. Seen as such, the motif carries implications of jealousy, which is the title under which Munch exhibited the picture. The painting was one of the first where Munch clearly let himself be inspired by the most recent tendencies in French Synthetist painting. The painting is also an articulation of Munch's distinctive character. Unlike the French, he did not construct but found a landscape where he could see in terms of the new criteria of style. In this picture, we see the large wavy lines, the large surfaces, and the yellow boat which repeats the horizon in the background in a precise and subtle fashion. At the Autumn Exhibition in 1891, Munch exhibited a version of the motif now in a private collection in Oslo. The National Gallery version was either the basis for the numerous sketches he executed to illustrate Goldstein's *Alruner* during the winter of 1891-92 or it was a result of this work. Both versions were shown at the Munch exhibition in the Equitable Palace in Berlin in 1892-93. There are altogether five painted versions and two woodcuts [figs. 2, 3] of this motif.

Evening on Karl Johan Street. 1892

Oil on canvas. 84.5 x 121 cm (33 1/4 x 47 5/8 in)

Rasmus Meyers Samlinger

The action takes place on Karl Johan Street with the Parliament in the background. The first drafts of the motif are in the illustrated diary, which I have dated 1888-90. The text in the diary shows that the basic experience behind the picture is Munch's restless search after "Mrs. Heiberg," the woman who was his first unsatisfying love. The lonely figure to the right is traditionally read as an image of the artist himself. The text also explains why the intensely illuminated yellow windows have such a strong pictorial function. When Munch himself was overwhelmed by anxiety, he stared up at these windows to have something to fix his eyes on other than the stream of people moving by. The picture was first exhibited at Munch's one-man show in the Tostrup building in 1892, and the reviews characterized it as insane. Ingrid Langaard has seen in the motif a reflection of the mass psychology of the middle class that brushed aside Munch's art. For me, the rich associations of the masks also call up a pall of death and disaster. Besides reflecting the Pont-Aven school's criteria of style, the picture gives us a sense that Ensor's art must have been of great significance to Munch. *Evening on Karl Johan Street* can also be seen as Munch's answer to Ensor's *The Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889*, 1888. In a lithograph that Munch made of *Evening on Karl Johan Street*, probably in 1895, there is a border with masks under the main motif. This shows further associations with Ensor's mask art. The lithograph, known in only one edition, was not discovered until a couple of years ago in a private collection in Bergen.



The Storm. 1893Oil on canvas. 91.7 x 130.8 cm (36 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ in)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Irgens Larsen and Purchase

The motif is taken from Åsgårdstrand with the Kjøsterud building in the background, well known from many of Munch's pictures. According to Jens Thiis, the motif was inspired by the experience of a strong storm there. The storm is, however, depicted more as a psychic than a physical reality. The nervous, sophisticated brushstrokes, the somber colors, and the agitated nature are brought into harmony, rendering the impression of anxiety and turbulent psychological conflicts. *The Storm* is also a reflection of Munch's interest in the landscapes of Arnold Böcklin. As in the painting *Evening on Karl Johan Street*, the illuminated windows function as an important pictorial element. The eye is drawn toward them; in a strange way, they radiate psychic life. Munch emphasized controlling the effects rendered by the illuminated windows. He has scraped out the paint around the yellow areas to achieve the maximum effect. It is as though the house becomes a living organism with yellow eyes, creating contact with the surroundings. In front of the house, a group of women stands huddled together, all with their hands up against their heads like the foreground figure in the painting *The Scream*. Isolated from the group, closer to the center, stands a lonely woman, also with her hands against her head. Like the foreground figure in *The Scream*, she represents anxiety and violent spiritual conflicts. The mood and charged atmosphere indicate that the object of the anxiety is an erotic urge. In the summer months Åsgårdstrand was visited by a great number of women, since most of the summer guests consisted of families whose men worked during the week in Christiania. By now, Munch had formulated an aesthetic which dictated that in his most important motifs, he should represent pictures of recollection as well as the artist's psychological reactions to them. He also made a small woodcut of this motif.



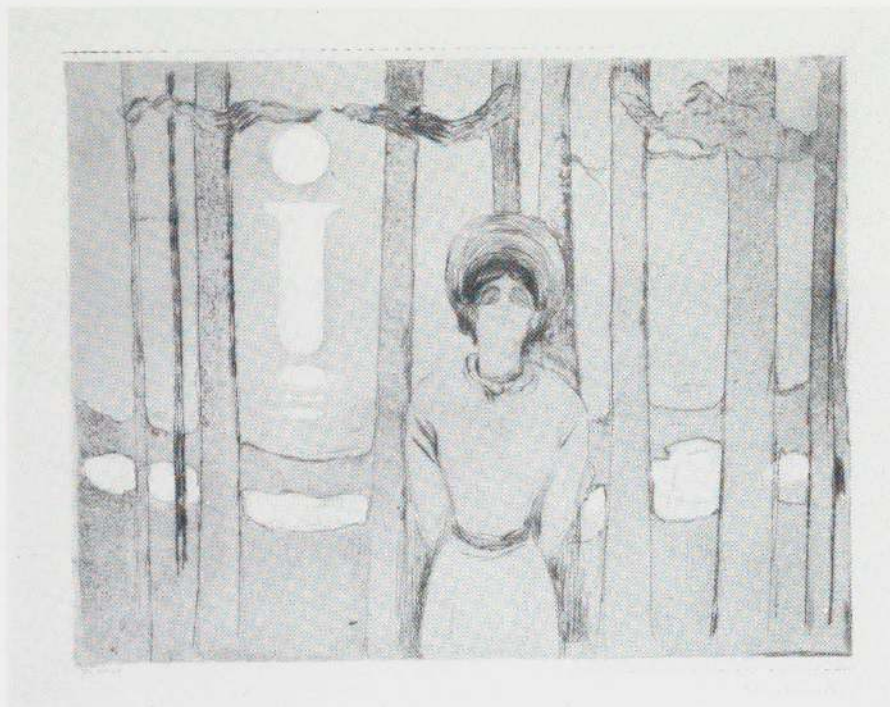


Fig. 4. *Summer Night (The Voice)*. 1895. Aquatint and drypoint. 25 x 32.5 cm (9⁷/₈ x 12³/₄ in). Gift of Mrs. Louise G. Harper

The motif is probably taken from the beautiful Borre forest, with the famous Viking graves, not far from Åsgårdstrand. Here, in 1889, Munch is supposed to have painted a picture of his friend, Miss Drefsen, and something of this motif may have been preserved in *The Voice* from 1893. Przybyszewski described the pictures as a puberty motif, and this interpretation is supported by Munch's own literary notes. According to these, the painting represents Munch's first childhood romance. He had to stand on a mound to be able to look into the eyes of the taller girl. The suggestive, erotic mood in the picture is created by the interplay between the vertical pine trunks, which repeat the form of the woman, and the shaft of moonlight. As a sign of awakening eroticism, the shaft of moonlight is placed as a phallic symbol on the fjord. The picture was originally called *Summer Night Mood*. It is not known whether Munch approved of the later title. However, the title is a suitable one, since it helps us see its lyrical-auditory quality. If we use Munch's texts as point of departure, we stand as a viewer in front of the woman just as Munch once stood in front of her as a child. But simultaneously, the picture expresses a tension between the couple in the boat and the woman in the foreground. As in other motifs of Munch, for instance *Melancholy*, *Yellow Boat*, the main character stands alone in contrast to the two who are together in the boat. The woman, depicted in severely closed form, with her hands behind her back, was used by Munch in a series of depictions of women and portraits at this time. The formula is often interpreted as a picture of a woman who is offering herself and holding back at the same time. Besides another painted version, the motif is repeated in a woodcut and an etching [fig. 4].

The Voice. 1893

Oil on canvas. 87.6 x 107.9 cm (34½ x 42½ in)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow Fund



Starry Night. 1893

Oil on canvas. 135 x 140 cm (53 1/8 x 55 1/8 in)

Private Norwegian Collection

With certain qualifications, *Starry Night* is one of the few pure landscapes in Munch's art from the 1890s. We recognize the place as Åsgårdstrand, and the linden tree is the same one that appears in a series of motifs. A wary mood, filled with premonitions, is communicated through the blue velvet night sky illuminated by the golden-red stars. The tendency to synthesize large surfaces and sweeping lines has been given a monumental articulation in *Starry Night*. Munch expressed himself by means of a very sophisticated use of line. The soft, undulating line of the beach continues subtly in the contour of the group of trees. The white fence, which shoots diagonally into the picture space, seems to increase the feeling of space without defining it in a precise way. The basic observation of nature is an element of Munch's independent style in relation to contemporary French avant-garde art. Munch depicted a place he saw and was familiar with. At the Berlin Secession of 1902, Munch exhibited the motif as the first picture in the group "The Seed of Love." The vaguely erotic charge of the picture is in keeping with this, as is the motif, since the shadow on the fence suggests a tryst. In the lithograph *Attraction I*, for instance, the shadow from the couple is captured on the same fence. Munch made two other versions of the same motif, these also without the couple in the foreground, but with the shadow preserved on the fence.



The Scream. 1893Oil on cardboard. 91 x 73.5 cm (35⁷/₈ x 29 in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo. Gift of Olaf Schou

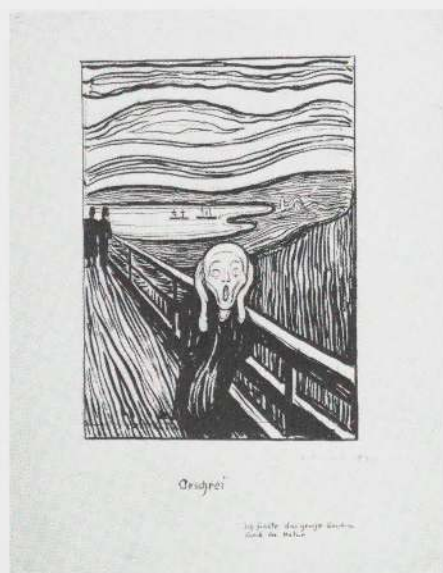


Fig. 5. *The Shriek*. 1895, signed 1896.
Lithograph. 35.4 x 25.4 cm (14 x 10 in).
Matthew T. Mellon Fund

The Scream is known as Edvard Munch's most central work of art, and it is considered to be a powerful expression of the anxiety-ridden existence of modern man. The painting achieves its strong impact partially by the intensive use of the rhythmic wavy lines and contrasting straight band, so characteristic of Art Nouveau. The road with the railing, which shoots diagonally toward the left, creates a powerful slant of perspective into the pictorial space, while the soft, curved forms of the landscape give a sense of a precipice in the picture. The strange foreground figure is rendered as a concrete form, even as it personifies a general experience of anguish. Munch described the basic experience behind the picture as follows:

I walked one evening on a road — on the one side was the town and the fjord below me. I was tired and ill — I stood looking out across the fjord — the sun was setting — the clouds were colored red — like blood — I felt as though a scream went through nature — I thought I heard a scream. — I painted this picture — painted the clouds like real blood. The colors were screaming —

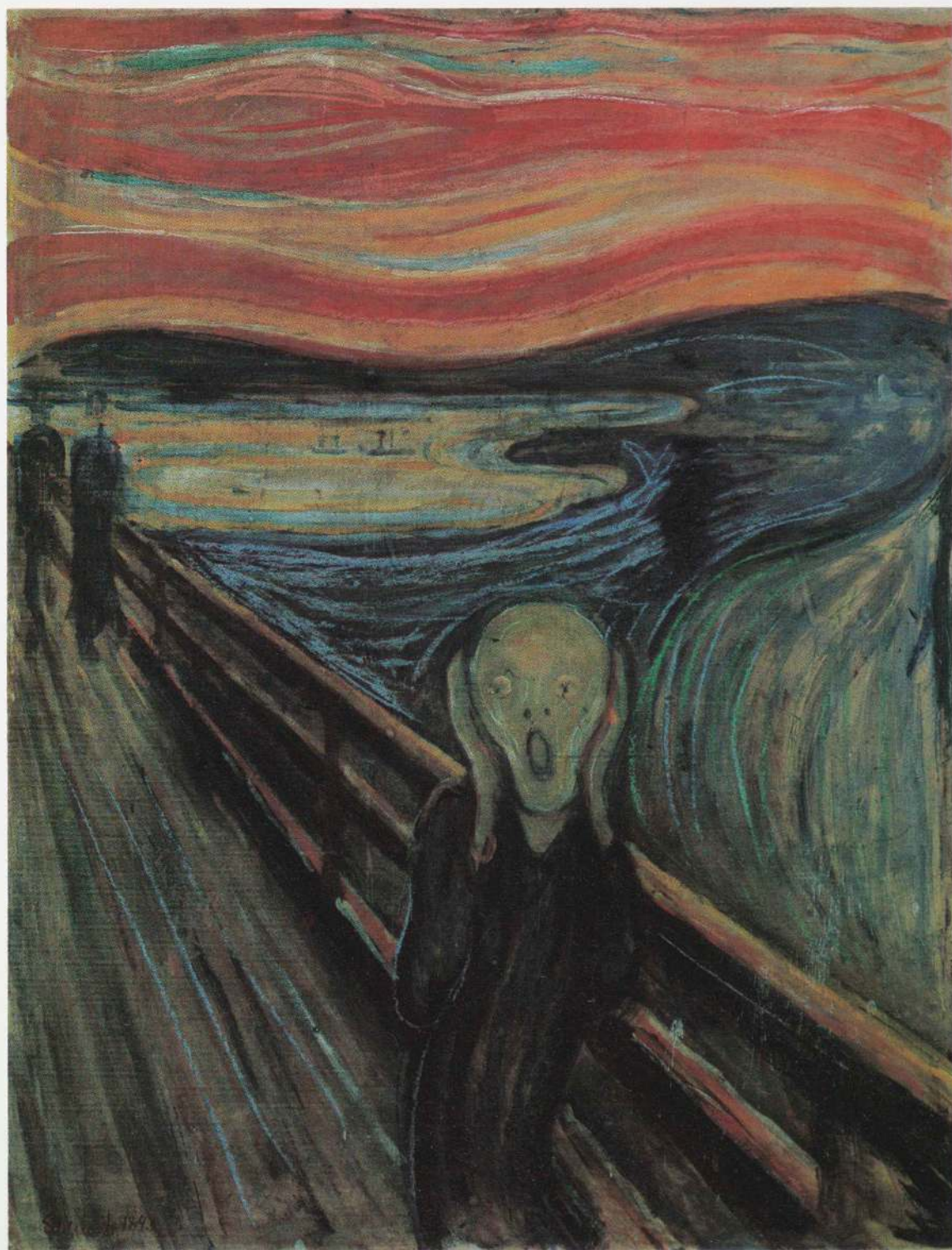
The author Przybyszewski puts the picture in the context of Symbolist theories of color:

For the new trend, the sound brings about color. A sound can magically conjure up an entire life in an infinite perspective. A color can become a concert, and a visual impression can arouse terrifying orgies from the psyche.

In Munch's handwriting in the upper red area of the painting is written:

Can only have been painted by a madman.

Munch painted the picture in several versions, and he also did it as a lithograph [fig. 5].



Anxiety. 1894

Oil on canvas. 94 x 73 cm (37 x 28¾ in)

Munch-Museet, Oslo



Fig. 6. **Anxiety.** 1896. Lithograph, printed in color. 41.6 x 39.1 cm (16⅜ x 15⅜ in). Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

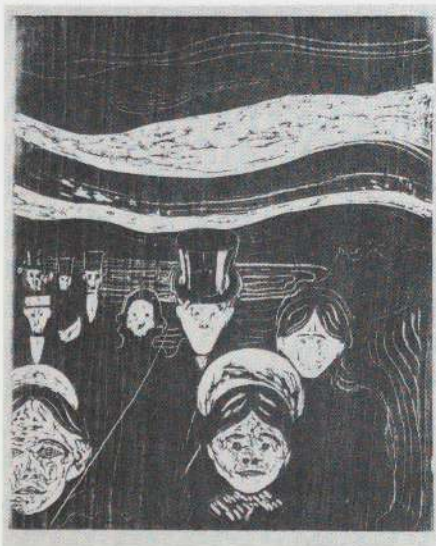


Fig. 7. **Anxiety.** 1896, signed 1897. Woodcut, printed in color. 45.7 x 37.6 cm (18 x 14¾ in). Purchase

The painting can be analyzed as a synthesis of two earlier angst motifs, *Evening on Karl Johan Street* and *The Scream* or *Despair*. The landscapes in *The Scream* and *Anxiety* both depict the inner part of the Christiania fjord, and the figures in *Anxiety* for the most part are taken from the Karl Johan picture. But the bearded man on the left in *Anxiety*, who resembles Stanislaw Przybyszewski, was not depicted in *Evening on Karl Johan Street*. *Anxiety* may have been executed in Berlin, where Munch painted portraits of Przybyszewski. Furthermore, Munch may have had reasons for depicting Przybyszewski in *Anxiety*, if it is true that only after reading Przybyszewski's novel *Requiem Mass* did Munch find the final articulation for the pictorial motif of *The Scream*. The woman, possibly "Mrs. Heiberg," who was Munch's first love, is depicted with a bonnet-shaped or halo-shaped hat, while the man in a top hat—"Mr. Heiberg" (?)—is just about unchanged from the Karl Johan picture. His features are preserved in the lithograph and woodcut of the same motif [figs. 6, 7]. In the graphic versions, however, Przybyszewski is no longer depicted, and the man in the top hat stands among three women with bonnet-shaped hats. In Munch's literary notes, he constantly sees "Mrs. Heiberg" in the women passing by. Among French critics in the nineties, the title was considered superfluous. They felt that anxiety characterized so many of Munch's most important pictures that the title should not be reserved for only one of them.

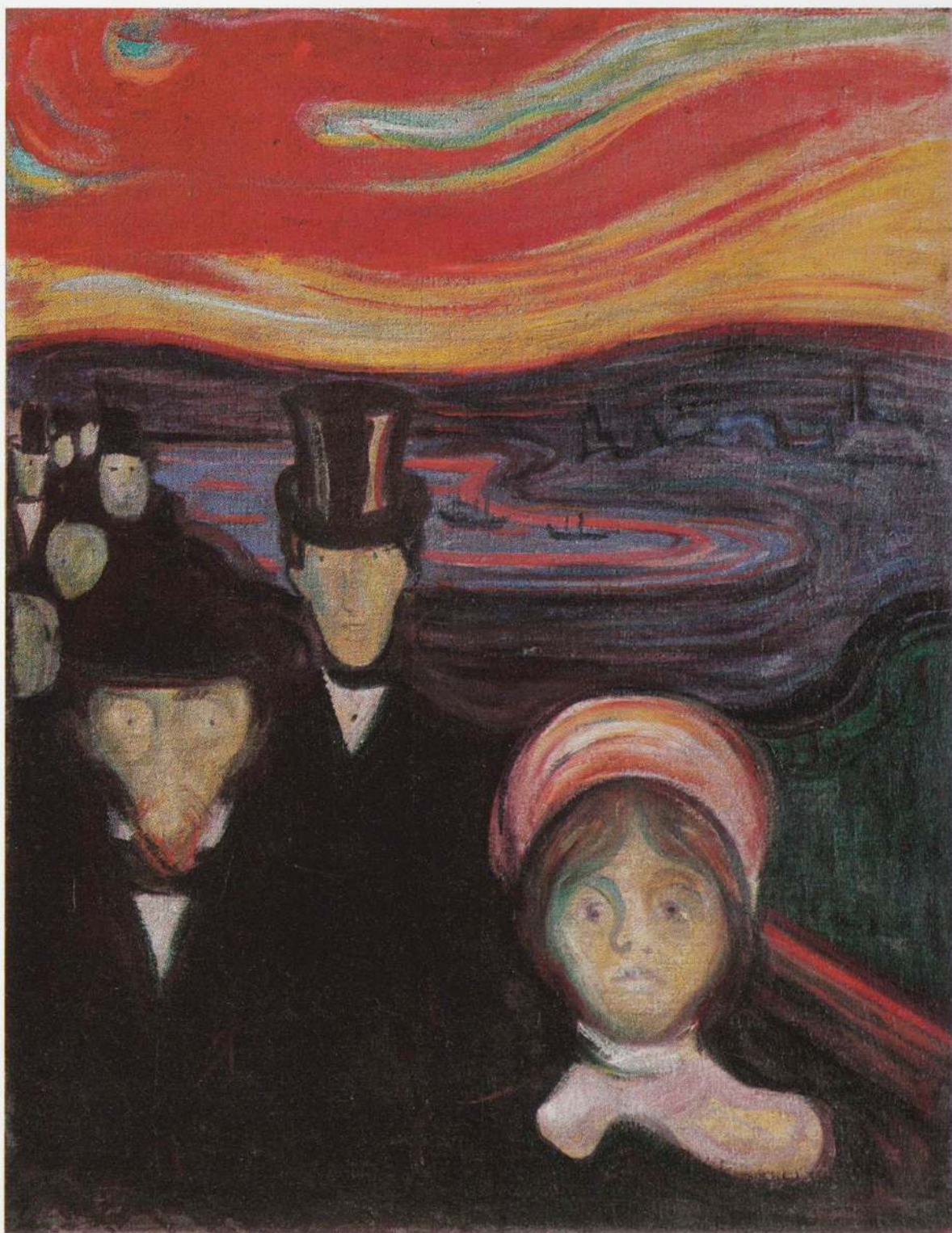




Fig. 8. *Vampire*. 1895-1902. Lithograph and woodcut, printed in color. 38.1 x 55.2 cm (15 x 21¾ in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection

The motif was first exhibited under the title *Love and Pain*, while the title *Vampire* was inspired by Stanislaw Przybyszewski. Munch adopted the title until, as a reaction to accusations of being too literary, he asserted that the motif merely represented a woman kissing a man on the neck. In *Vampire*, the woman is completely dominant. She actively bends down and sinks her lips into his neck, while he is in a collapsed attitude, passively seeking comfort. Her red hair is cascading down around him, and she dominates the picture space by constituting a diagonal in it. He is positioned passively, parallel to the picture plane. Munch gave the motif a unified monumentality by merging both figures into one pyramid form. A threatening shadow, which repeats their mutual form, rises behind the couple. Active love is a dimension that the woman is fulfilling, while the man is characterized by pain in the relationship. With Munch's literary notes as the source, this scene has to illustrate one of the many instances when Munch, in the mid-1880s, visited prostitutes with the purpose of satisfying his needs, but without ever having intercourse. The woman has features resembling the whores who are depicted in the painting *Rose and Amelie*. Munch also executed a great number of additional painted versions of *Vampire* as well as a lithograph and a woodcut which he often used together to make a combination print [fig. 8].

Vampire. 1894

Oil on canvas. 100 x 110 cm (39³/₈ x 43³/₈ in)

Private Collection





Fig. 9. *Ashes*. 1899. Lithograph, printed in black and hand-colored. 35.4 x 45.7 cm (14 x 18 in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection

A man with an ash-gray face, holding one hand to his head, is huddled on a beach. In sharp contrast stands a sensuous woman; the front of her dress is open, revealing a striking red undergarment. The man seems to be turning away from her. The tension between the two is echoed in the landscape elements. The columnlike shape of the woman is repeated in the tree trunks, while the broken-down figure of the man becomes a part of the shoreline. On close examination it becomes clear that the log has partly turned to ashes, and the man is staring into the smoke which rises from the log, spreading throughout the air like psychic waves.

The tension in the situation is both existential and sexual. An interpretation which corresponds with Munch's other "Life Frieze" motifs is that the man in the picture has failed to curb his desire for the woman, even though his love for her is dead. In the final revision of his "Life Frieze" in 1902, Munch hung this painting in a central position, using it to introduce a group of paintings about the flowering and passing of love. He called it *After the Fall*, meaning that the period of love in Paradise had ended.

The 1896 lithographic version, in which the log is reduced to a pile of ashes, supports this interpretation. In "The Tree of Knowledge" Munch wrote a brief commentary on the motif: "I felt our love lying on the ground like a heap of ashes." In 1899 Munch made another lithograph [fig. 9] of this subject.

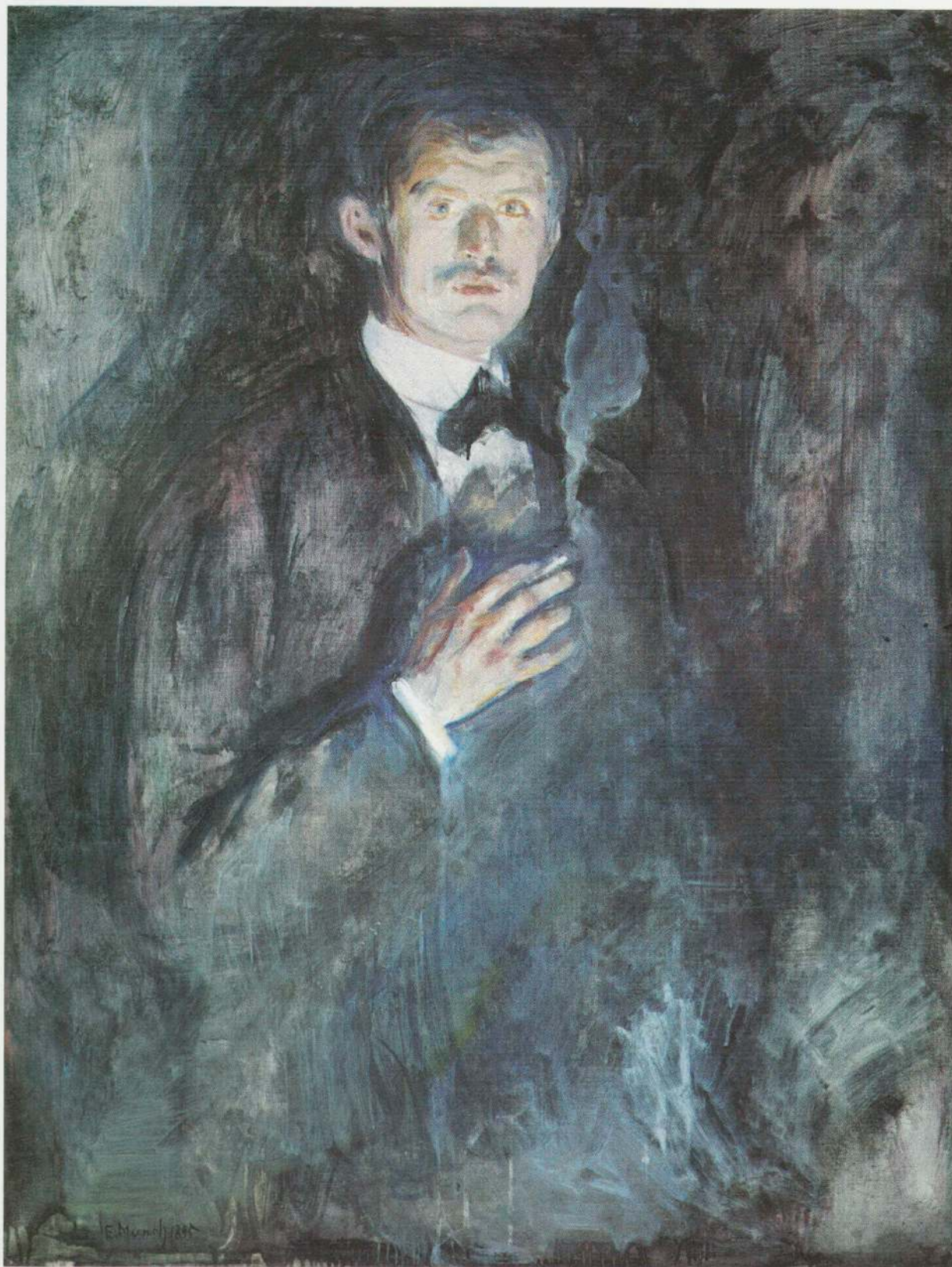
Ashes. 1894

Oil and tempera on canvas. 120.5 x 141 cm (47½ x 55½ in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo



Self-Portrait with Cigarette. 1894-95
Oil on canvas. 110.5 x 85.5 cm (43½ x 33⅝ in)
Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo



In the *Self-Portrait with Cigarette* Munch positioned himself in a room filled with bluish smoke, explained by the cigarette he holds in his right hand. A strong light, as if from a projector, illuminates him from below. The light emphasizes the hand with the cigarette and the face. The hand was painted with great sensitivity, appearing at the same time strong and delicate. The face expresses something of the same duality. It is as if the artist looks into himself, concerned only with what happens behind the retina, still having a firm basis in reality. The hand is holding a cigarette and not a brush. This indicates that he as an artist now evaluated the thought and the idea as being more important than the execution. The portrait may thus be regarded as an artist's portrait showing an inspired painter who is living in his own universe.

When Munch painted this portrait he had completed the most important of the "Life Frieze" motifs, thought by many to be spontaneous expressions of a sick mind. The press had pictured Munch as being hypersensitive and nervous, and his popular image was that of being decadent. His art was looked upon as anarchistic in the sense that it violated prevailing rules and norms. To many, Munch was a problem child; others worshiped him as a genius. When Munch depicted himself in an oil portrait, the notions that people had about the artist were applied to the portrait.

At a meeting of the Students' Association in Christiania on September 5, 1895, a debate followed a lecture by the young lyricist Sigbjørn Obstfelder. A student, Johan Scharffenberg, who was later to become a professor of psychiatry, stood up and stated his opinion that the artist was insane and that Munch's self-portrait indicated that the artist was not a normal person. Munch was present in the auditorium, and subsequent notes by him seem to indicate that he was hurt by that public statement. Munch's insanity was also implied by those who spoke on his behalf; they pointed to the fact that other artists who were suffering from hereditary insanity had been able to create first-rate art. On closer inspection the self-portrait reveals an artist who seems haunted by dreadful psychic experiences. . . .

The debate in Christiania that surrounded Munch's *Self-Portrait with Cigarette*, having to do with insanity, how sickly it is to love one's own sickness, and the artist's morbid world of ideas, provided no motivation for Munch to paint additional self-portraits. Instead he continued, as is shown in *Death in the Sickroom*, to "enter into" his own world of images.

Madonna. 1894-95

Oil on canvas. 136 x 110 cm (53½ x 43¾ in)

Munch-Museet, Oslo

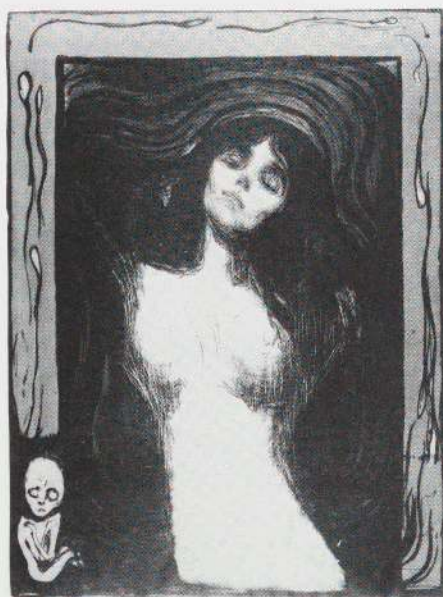
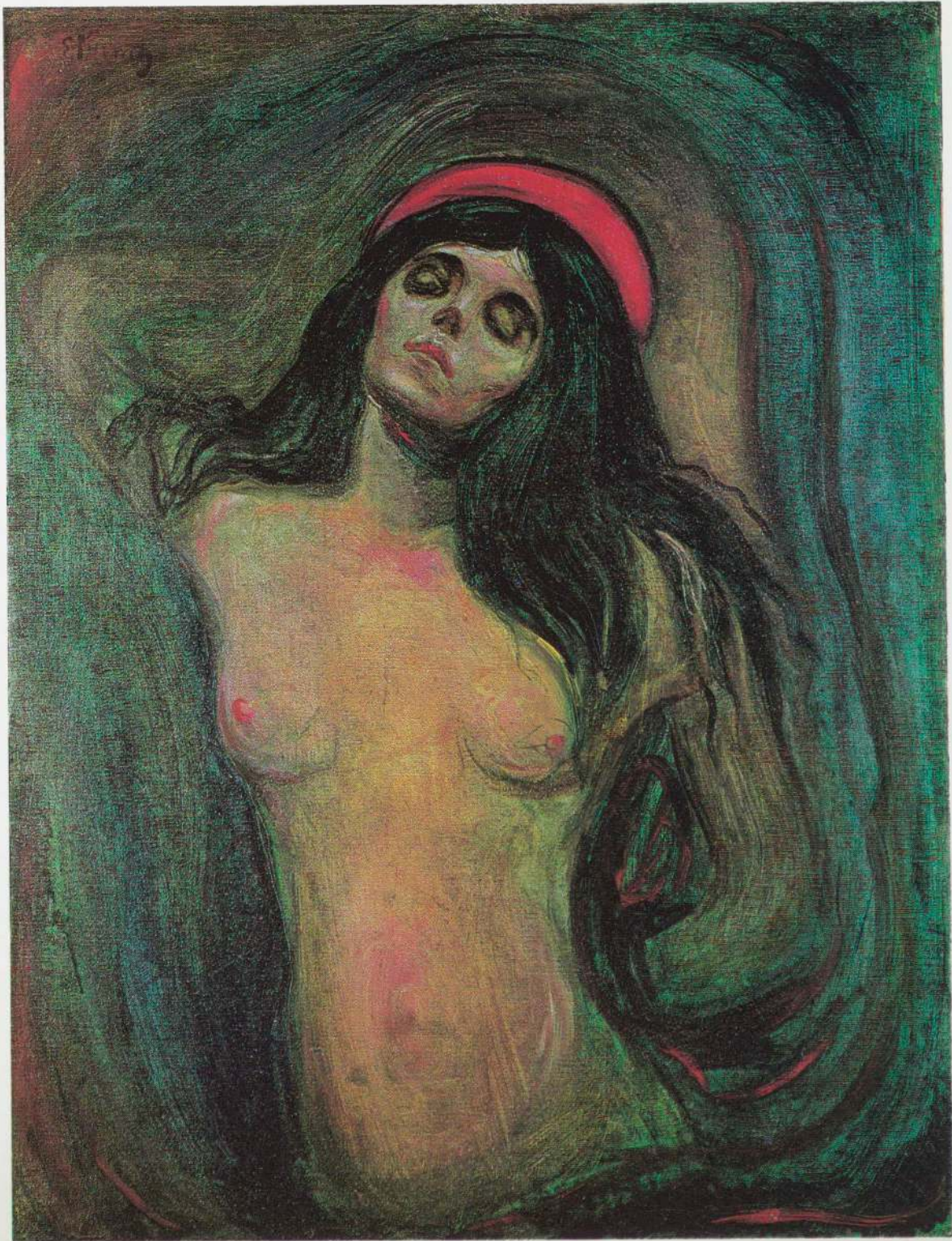


Fig. 10. **Madonna.** 1895-1902. Lithograph, printed in color. 60.5 x 44.5 cm (23¾ x 17½ in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection

The first time *Madonna* was exhibited, it was probably furnished with a frame with painted or carved spermatozoa and embryos, as can be seen on the lithograph of the same title [fig. 10]. The frame was later removed and has been lost. Munch must have executed several versions of the motif simultaneously and called the motifs alternately *Loving Woman* and *Madonna*. The pseudo-sacred *Madonna* has been given widely different interpretations by various critics. Some emphasize the purely orgiastic element in the motif; others see the mysteries of birth. Still others, especially Munch himself, emphasize the aspect of death. In "The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," an album in which Munch collected some of his most important motifs, he accompanied *Madonna* with the following text:

The pause when the entire world halted in its orbit. Your face embodies all the world's beauty. Your lips, crimson red like the coming fruit, glide apart as in pain. The smile of a corpse. Now life and death join hands. The chain is joined that ties the thousands of past generations to the thousands of generations to come.

Munch executed the motif in a series of painted versions and repeated it in a lithograph. There exists a closely related etched motif, which perhaps refers back to a now lost version.



Puberty. 1894-95

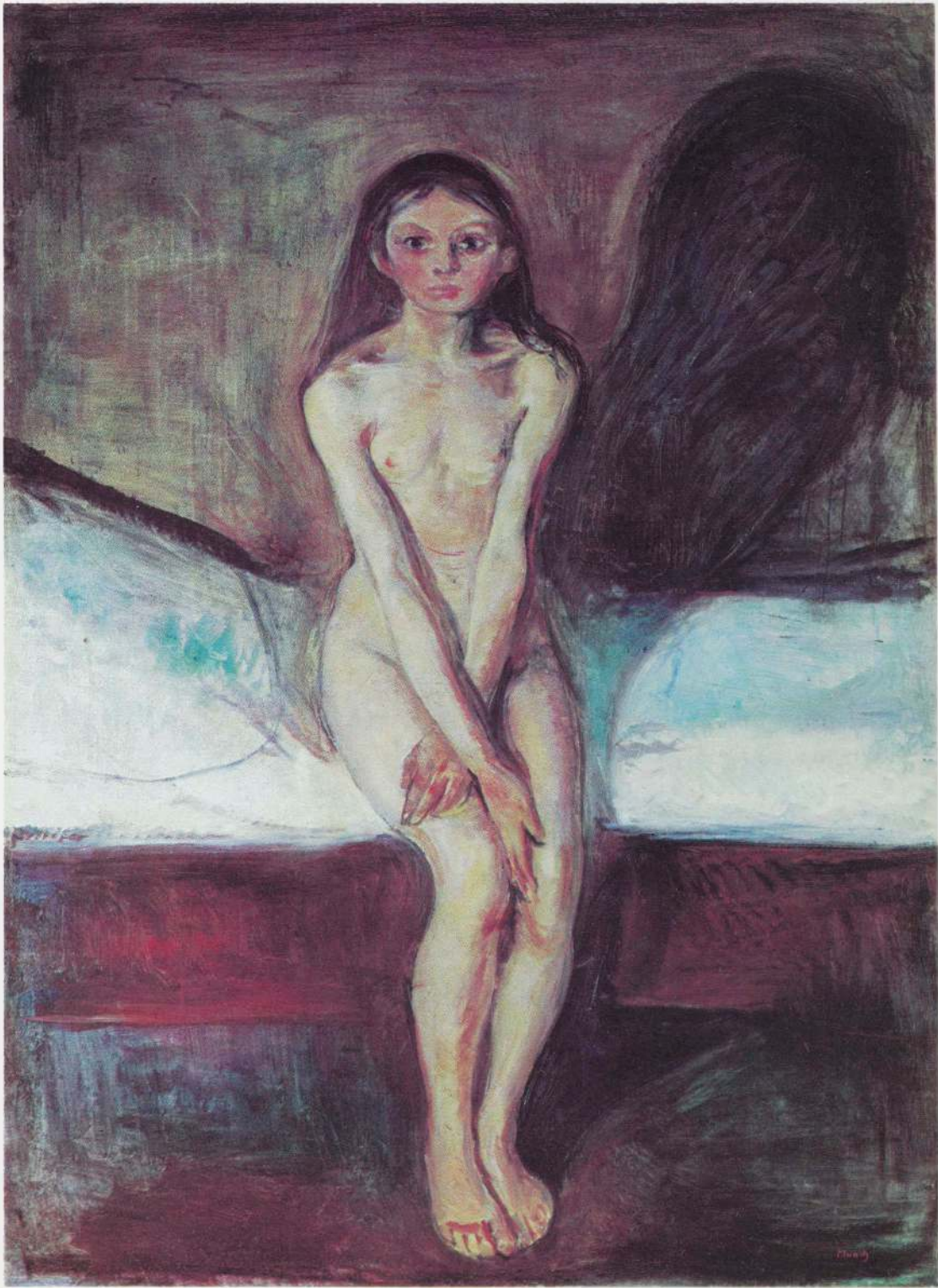
Oil on canvas. 151.5 x 110 cm (59⁵/₈ x 43³/₈ in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo



Fig. 11. *The Young Model*. 1894. Lithograph. 41 x 27.2 cm (16¹/₈ x 10³/₄ in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection

Munch stated that he had executed exactly the same motif in the mid-1880s, and that this earlier version had been lost in a studio fire. He emphasized that he did not imitate the etching of Félicien Rops, *Le Plus Bel Amour de Don Juan* from 1886, which superficially has the same motif. Munch was, furthermore, supposed to have used a model when he painted the motif in Berlin. The obtrusive, "naturalistic" details in the upper part of the girl's body reflect decisive intentions in Munch's art in the 1880s. On the other hand, the articulation points toward a direct observation of the model. The threatening shadow that rises over the girl can be seen as a phallic form which alludes to the girl's experience of changes in her own body. But the shadow can also be seen as a shadow of death. The coupling of death and sexuality is not unusual in Munch's art. The motif itself is almost frozen into the picture by the severe contrast between the horizontal line of the bed and girl placed in the middle of the picture. Besides this version, an earlier and a much later painted version are in the Munch Museum. The motif was also done as a lithograph [fig. 11] and as an etching.



Death in the Sickroom. 1895

Oil on canvas. 150 x 167.5 cm (59 1/8 x 66 in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo. Gift of Olaf Schou

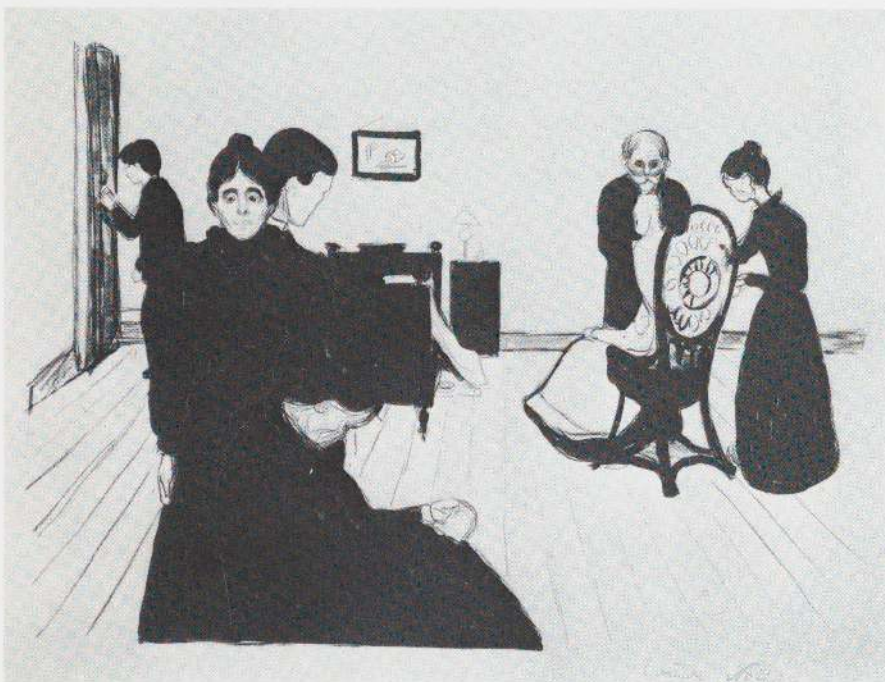


Fig. 12. **The Death Chamber. 1896.**
Lithograph. 38.7 x 55 cm (15 1/4 x 21 5/8 in).
Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

Munch took up the motif in Berlin in 1893, probably with the clear purpose of painting pictures of formative childhood experiences. In the naked picture space, we see Munch and his family present at the death of his sister Sophie. She is sitting in a chair, with her back turned toward the viewer, but not visible to us. In this way, Munch depicted death as an absence or an emotional void that lives on in the survivors as a feeling of privation. A deathlike silence is conveyed by simple and synthesizing artistic means. Munch used simple, suggestive color contrasts; the actors have masked faces, and the action takes place on a sloping stage floor. The picture presents an image of recollection; the family is portrayed at the age they were when Munch painted the picture, and not at the age they were when the experience took place. In terms of style, the painting is one of the pictures that mark Munch's unique position within the Synthetist and Symbolist movements with the most simplicity and immediacy. The picture can be analyzed from a series of prototypes which range from Degas's and van Gogh's interiors to Gauguin's and Ensor's masked figures. Contemporary critics in the 1890s suggested that Maeterlinck's plays must have been Munch's source of inspiration. After Munch had completed the first drafts of *Death in the Sickroom*, he got an offer to illustrate one of Maeterlinck's plays. In the same way as Munch, though in a somewhat more cerebral fashion, Maeterlinck also depicted death as a psychic presence among the survivors. Besides the large versions in the Munch Museum and in the National Gallery, the Munch Museum also has a series of studies and sketches of the motif, which was also repeated in a lithograph [fig. 12].



By the Deathbed, Fever. 1895

Oil on canvas. 90 x 125 cm (35½ x 49¼ in)

Rasmus Meyers Samlinger

By the Deathbed is a subject that goes back to the memory of his sister Sophie's death. She is lying in the bed with folded hands, and to the right stands her family, except Edvard Munch. We do not see the dying one, but through the eyes of the artist we see what she sees and dimly sense what she senses. The identification with the dying one here borders on the pathological. By using simple pictorial effects, Munch is forcing us, as an audience, to participate in his sister's death. There exists a series of studies and sketches of the motif, and he also executed a lithographic version. In a monumental version from about 1915, he repeated the pictorial structure, but it is possible that he here presented himself as the sick one in the bed.

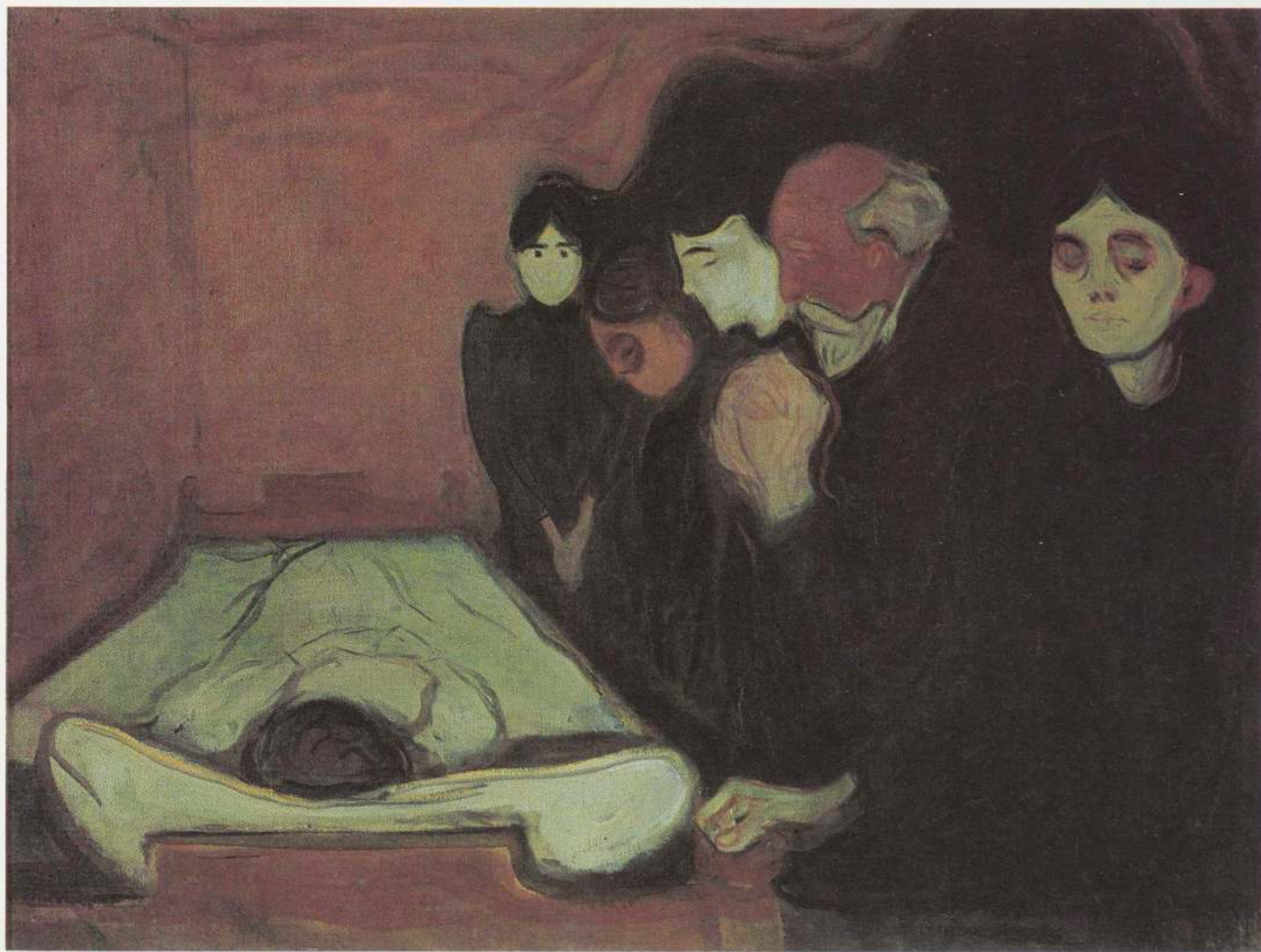




Fig. 13. *Jealousy*. 1896. Lithograph. 34 x 46.7 cm (13 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection



Fig. 14. *Jealousy*. 1896. Lithograph. 47.7 x 57.5 cm (18 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 $\frac{5}{8}$ in). The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection

The painting, which was exhibited in Berlin in 1895, is traditionally conceived as a representation of the triangle among Przybyszewski, Dagny Juell, and Munch. In Przybyszewski's *roman à clef*, *Overboard*, published early in 1896, Munch is described as a jealous rival who kills himself after his fiancée (Dagny) is definitely won over by Przybyszewski. This novel may be Przybyszewski's answer to Munch's picture. *Jealousy* is constructed on three levels. To the right, we see Przybyszewski's head. He stares straight ahead, wan and pale, and in his mind's eye, he sees the Adam and Eve motif in the mid-level. To the left, in the third level, stands a blood flower, Munch's usual symbol of art. Jealousy was a prominent trait in many of Przybyszewski's novels, and especially clearly articulated in *The Vigil* from 1895. On the cover of *The Vigil*, Przybyszewski used one of Munch's drawings of *Madonna*. In light of this, it is reasonable to see the picture as a literary portrait of Przybyszewski, who masochistically used his wife as a living model for his writing. This may have been the reason why he freely let her choose other sexual partners, even after they were married. Even if the picture can be analyzed as a literary portrait, this interpretation is too limited, since Munch actually created an image of the nature of jealousy, giving universal traits to this human feeling. Munch repeated the composition shortly afterward in a couple of lithographs [figs. 13, 14] and returned to the motif much later in a series of derived versions.

Jealousy. 1895

Oil on canvas. 67 x 100 cm (26³/₈ x 39³/₈ in)

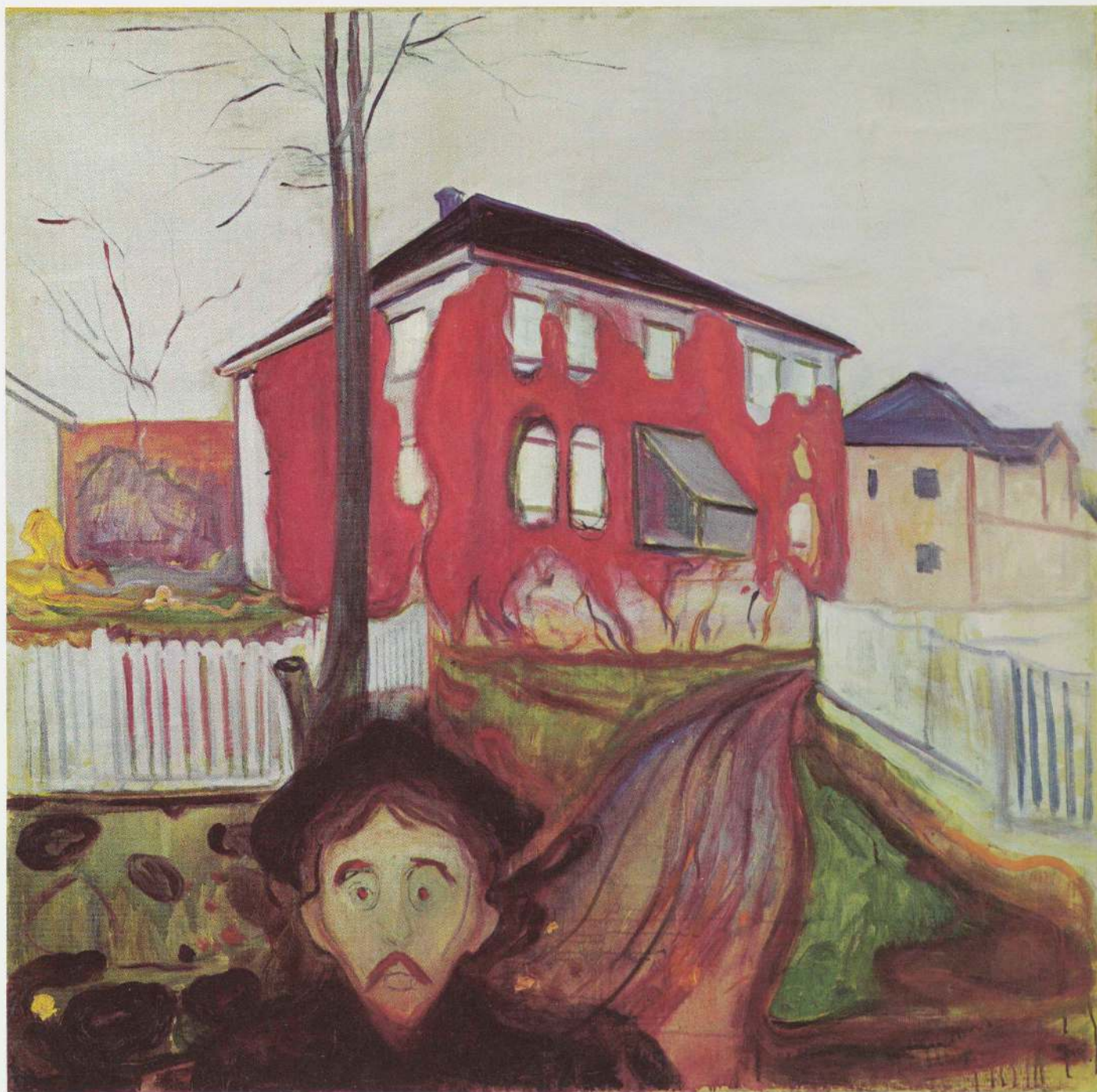
Rasmus Meyers Samlinger



The Red Vine. 1900Oil on canvas. 119.5 x 121 cm (47 x 47⁵/₈ in)

Munch-Museet, Oslo

The picture shows a tendency toward the use of stronger color which characterized Munch's art at the turn of the century. At the Berlin Secession in 1902, Munch included the painting in the group of angst pictures, so it must be included among the original "Life Frieze" motifs. The man in the foreground has features resembling Stanislaw Przybyszewski's, while the house in the background must be the Kiøsterud building, which we recognize from so many of Munch's motifs from Åsgårdstrand. The red ivy appears to be not merely organically but also biologically alive. It grows up around the house like beings in a macabre dance. In contrast to the ivy, the house itself gives the impression of being an empty, blown shell. The windows have the same function as those in *Evening on Karl Johan Street* and *The Storm*, in that they are also "eyes" that draw our eyes toward them. It is as though the house contains a tragedy that the man in the foreground has in his mind's eye. The bare tree trunk with its cut-off stump to the left of the house suggests images of death. The picture has been interpreted as a version of *Jealousy*. Munch again used this pictorial structure in the paintings *The Murderer* from 1910 and *The Murderer in the Avenue* from 1919.



Girls on the Pier. 1900

Oil on canvas. 136 x 125.5 cm (53½ x 49¾ in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo. Gift of Olaf Schou

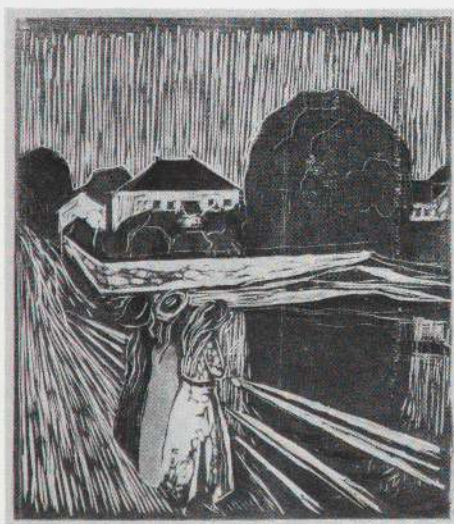
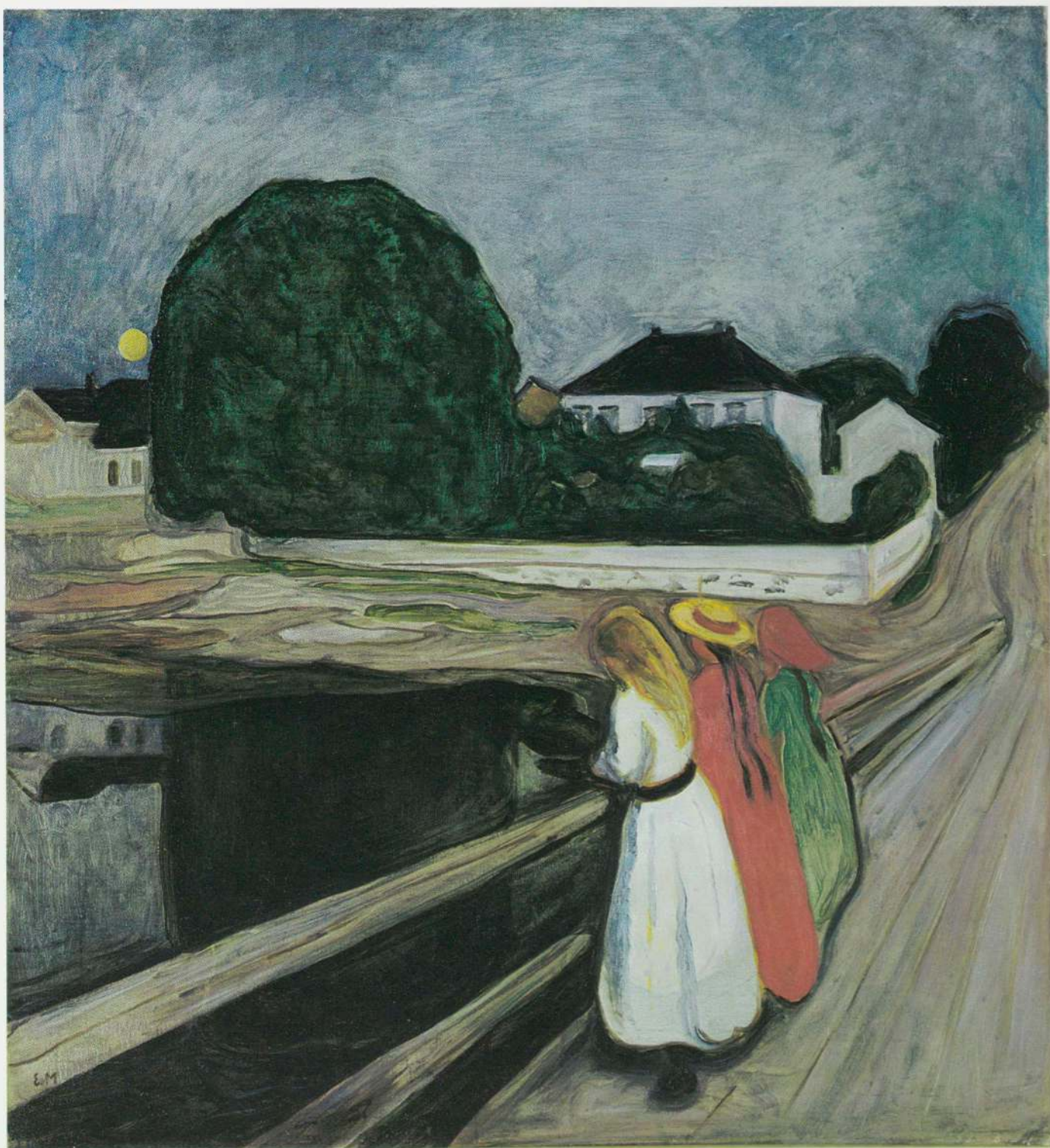


Fig. 15. **Three Girls on the Bridge.** 1918–20. Woodcut and lithograph, printed in color. 50.1 x 43.3 cm (19¾ x 17 in). Purchase

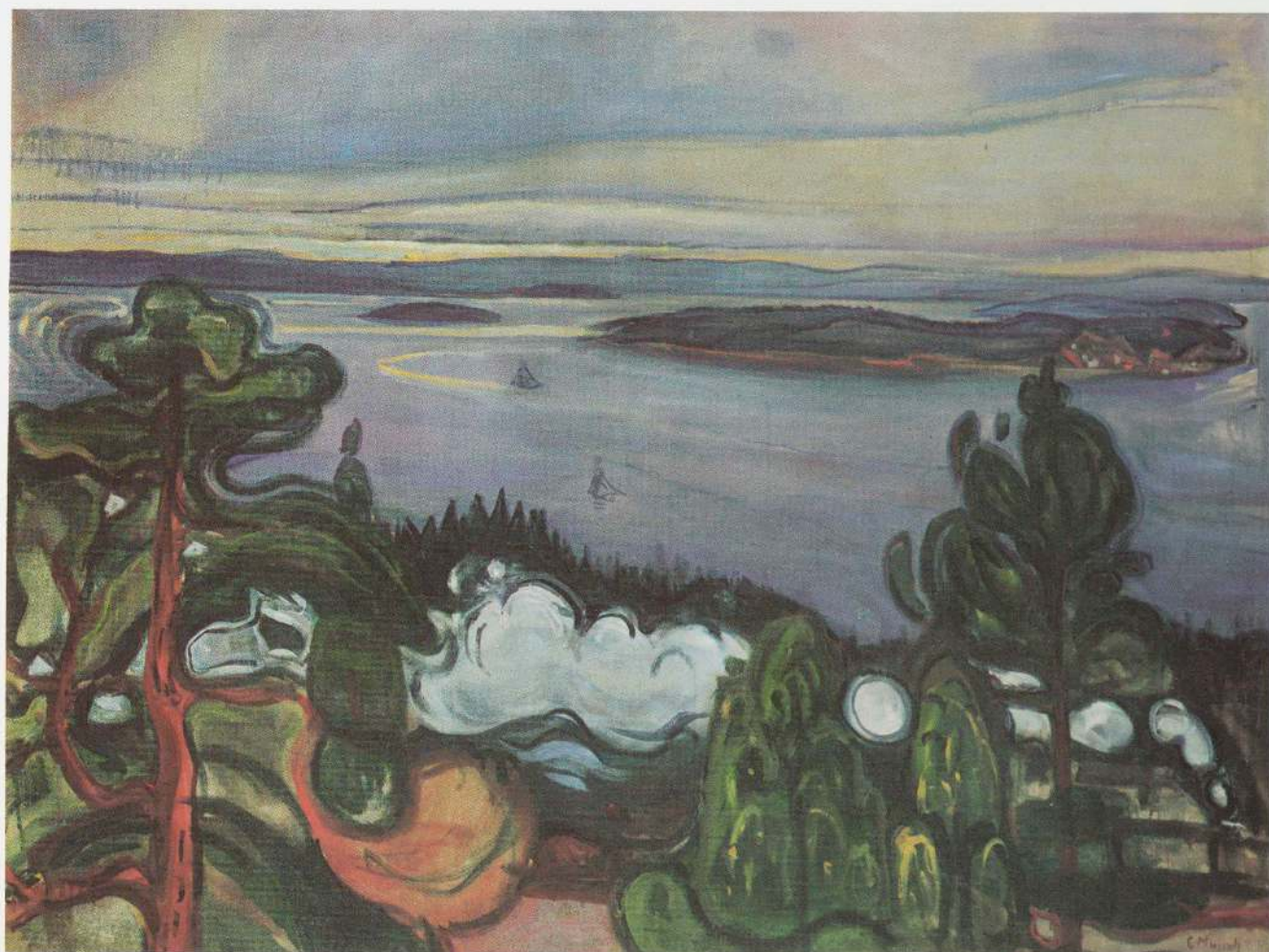
The picture is among Munch's most harmonious and lyrical motifs. Its original title was *Summer Night*, and we see, indeed, the sun shining over the houses to the left. On the bridge that leads out to the steamship pier at Åsgårdstrand, some girls stand staring down into the water where the tree is reflected. The tree and the shadow can be seen as a phallic symbol, and this explains the girls' sensations. It is again a matter of a puberty motif, crystallized in the fine erotic charge of the summer night. The delicate, French-inspired coloring of the picture is enlivened by the yellow full moon and the white, green, and red dresses of the girls. From this popular motif, Munch executed a series of painted versions, and he made several prints—among others, one [fig. 15] which is a combination lithograph and woodcut.



Train Smoke. 1900Oil on canvas, 84 x 109 cm (33 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 42 $\frac{7}{8}$ in)

Munch-Museet, Oslo

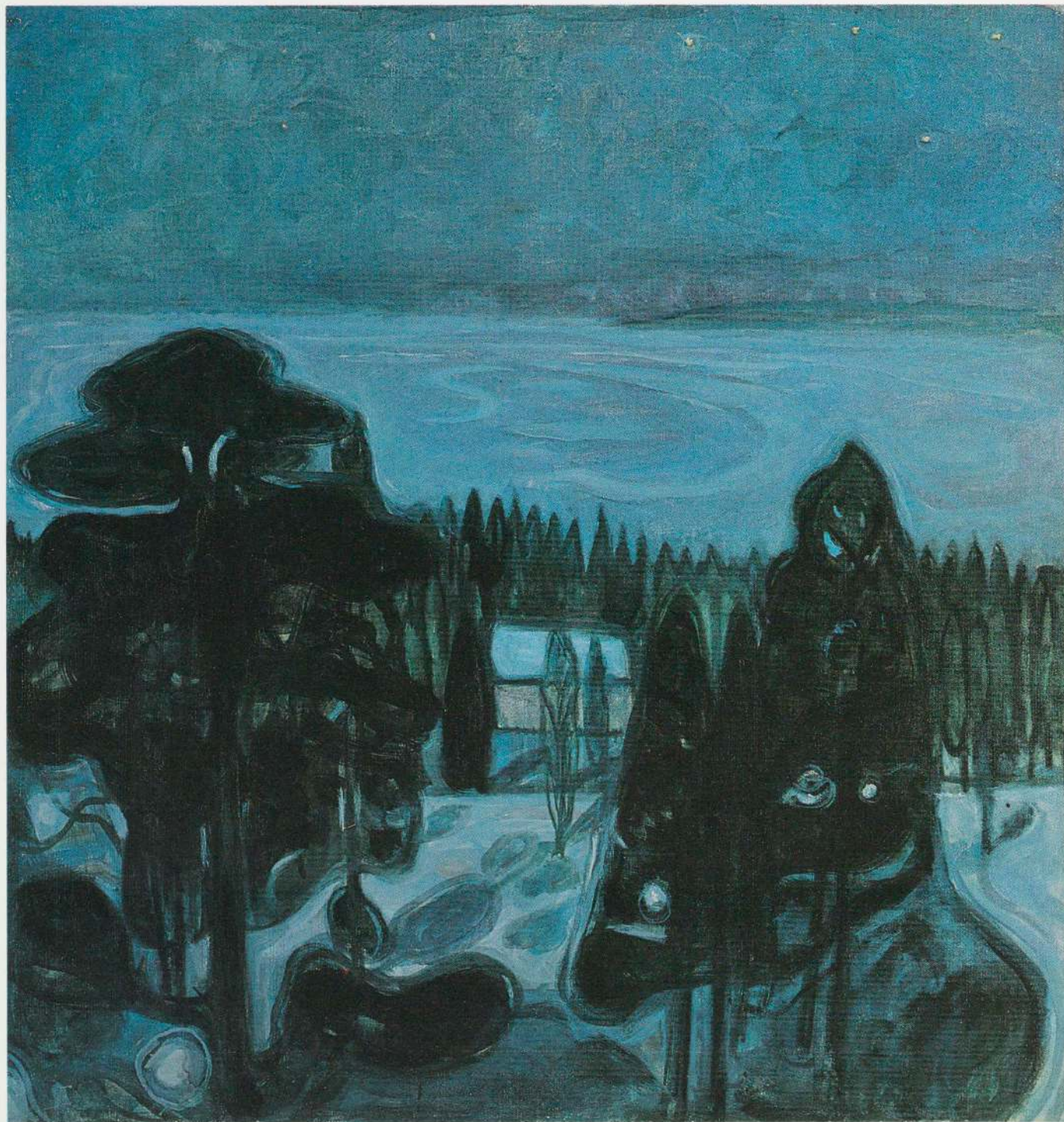
The picture shows the view from Munch's rooms at Hammer's Boarding-house in Ljan, overlooking the Oslo fjord with islands, sailboats, and heavy gray rain clouds. The middle ground is filled with smoke from a train on its way toward Christiania. Twisted pine trees form ornamental figures in the foreground and correlate rhythmically with the train smoke and the spruce trees in the background. The sea and the sky are painted in the same grayish violet. In depicting the clouds, Munch returned to a technique with which he had experimented in the first version of *The Sick Child* from 1886. He let part of the color run in a controlled way in the sky to form a pattern, probably to indicate the onset of rainy weather. In *Train Smoke* there is, furthermore, a built-in contrast between the ornamental elements in the foreground and the naturalistic character of the background. Munch later painted another version of the motif.



Winter Night. 1901

Oil on canvas, 115.5 x 110.5 cm (45½ x 43½ in)

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo



The picture was painted in Ljan, outside Christiania, with the fjord as a background. At the turn of the century, Munch painted a series of monumental winter landscapes with distinctive musical qualities. A formal, rhythmic main element lies in the interplay between the pointed, jagged forms of the spruce trees and the joined tops of the pine trees in the foreground. The use of the large organic forms and the large surfaces and shadows renders a feeling of space and gives the picture its distinctive Art Nouveau quality. The basis for this is a desire to decorate, which possibly reflects Munch's wish to execute monumental room decorations.

CHRONOLOGY

1863 Edvard Munch born December 12 at Engelhaugen Farm in Løten, Norway, son of army doctor Christian Munch and his wife, Laura Catherine Bjølstad. He is the second of five children.

1864 Family moves to Oslo (then called Christiania).

1868 His mother dies of tuberculosis, and her sister, Karen Bjølstad, takes over the household.

1877 Munch's sister Sophie dies of tuberculosis at the age of fifteen.

1879 Enters the Technical College to study engineering.

1880 Starts painting seriously in May, and produces his first sketches of the town and its surroundings. Leaves the Technical College in November.

1881 During the spring paints still lifes, interiors, and scenes of the town. Enters the School of Design in August, attending first the freehand and later the modeling class taught by the sculptor Julius Middlethun.

1882 Rents a studio with six fellow artists; their work is supervised by the Naturalist painter Christian Krohg.

1883 Participates in first group exhibition in June at Oslo. Represented in the Annual State Exhibition (Autumn Exhibition) in Oslo by one painting and two drawings. In autumn, attends Frits Thaulow's "open-air academy" in Modum.

1884 Comes into contact with the avant-garde of contemporary Naturalistic painters and writers in Norway. In September receives a grant from the Schaffer Bequest Fund. *Morning, Girl at Bedside* (p. 13) painted and exhibited at Annual State Exhibition.

1885 In May, on a scholarship from Frits Thaulow, travels via Antwerp to Paris, where he stays for three weeks. Visits the Salon and the Louvre; is especially impressed by Manet. Spends summer at Børre, returns to Oslo in autumn to begin three of his major paintings: *The Sick Child*, *The Morning After*, and *Puberty*. Receives another grant from the Schaffer Bequest Fund.

1886 Becomes identified with the avant-garde group called Christiania-Bohème, after a novel by its principal figure, the anarchist Hans Jaeger. This group was made up of young artists and writers whose controversial work and personal behavior were deliberately opposed to the political and moral codes of Christiania's bourgeoisie. Completes the first of several versions of *The Sick Child*, which causes an uproar among conservative critics and some colleagues when it is exhibited in the Annual State Exhibition. Paints *Self-Portrait* (p. 15).

1887-88 Travels in Norway and participates in Annual State Exhibitions.

1889 In April, first one-man exhibition in Oslo. Rents a house at Åsgårdstrand for the summer. Receives a State scholarship in July, and in October travels to Paris, where he enters Léon Bonnat's art school. In November his father dies. Moves to Saint-Cloud at the end of the year. *Inger on the Beach* (p. 17) painted and exhibited in Annual State Exhibition.

1890 Lives in Saint-Cloud with the Danish poet Emanuel Goldstein, and continues to attend Léon Bonnat's art school. Paints *Night in Saint-Cloud* (p. 19). In May returns home via Antwerp; spends the summer in Åsgårdstrand and Oslo. Receives second State scholarship in September and in November sails for France. Munch's health, which was fragile since childhood, is weakened by rheumatic fever, with which he is hospitalized in Le Havre for two months. His strength is further debilitated by excessive drinking and strenuous travels in later years. In December five of his paintings are destroyed by fire while in storage in Oslo.

1891 Convalesces from January to April in Nice; goes to Paris in May, then returns to

Norway for the summer. Granted State scholarship for the third time. In autumn travels to Paris via Copenhagen; in December goes to Nice. Commissioned to illustrate Emanuel Goldstein's *Alruner. Melancholy (The Yellow Boat)* (p. 20) painted this or the following year.

1892 Returns to Norway in March. Paints *Evening on Karl Johan Street* (p. 23), which is included in large one-man exhibition in Oslo in September, from which three paintings are sold. On October 4, receives an invitation from the Verein Berliner Künstler to exhibit in Berlin. His paintings cause such violent protest that the exhibition is closed after one week, following a debate and vote in the Verein. The German artists who support Munch, led by Max Liebermann, subsequently withdraw from the Verein and form the Berlin Secession. The exhibition is later shown at Düsseldorf and Cologne, returns to Berlin, and then goes to Copenhagen, Breslau, Dresden, and Munich. Paints a portrait of August Strindberg.

1893 Begins to travel a great deal, spending much of his time in Germany until 1908, with visits to Paris and summers in Norway. Exhibits extensively in Germany, Paris, and Scandinavia. Has close contact with Strindberg, Richard Dehmel, Gunnar Heiberg, Julius Meier-Graefe, and the Polish poet Stanislaw Przybyszewski, who are associated with the periodical *Pan*. The "Frieze of Life" begins to take form. For the next two years concentrates on painting; by 1895, the following paintings (among others) are completed: *The Storm* (p. 25), *The Voice* (p. 27), *Starry Night* (p. 29), *The Scream* (p. 31), *Anxiety* (p. 33), *Vampire* (p. 35), *Ashes* (p. 37), *Self-Portrait with Cigarette* (p. 38), *Madonna* (p. 41), *Puberty* (p. 43), *Death in the Sickroom* (p. 45), *By the Deathbed*, *Fever* (p. 47), and *Jealousy* (p. 49).

1894 Living in Berlin, he produces his first etchings and lithographs. First monograph on his work, *Das Werk des Edvard Munch*, by Przybyszewski, Meier-Graefe, Servaes, and Pastor, is published in July. He is introduced to Count Prozor, Ibsen's German translator, and Lugné-Poë, director of the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in Paris. Travels to Stockholm, where he has his first Swedish exhibition, in September.

1895 In March, the fifteen-painting series entitled "Love" is exhibited in Berlin. Stays in Berlin until June, then to Paris. Meier-Graefe publishes a portfolio with eight Munch etchings. On June 26, travels to Norway via Amsterdam, and spends part of the summer at Åsgårdstrand. Returns to Paris in September; then goes to Oslo for an exhibition (reviewed by Thadée Nathanson in the November issue of *La Revue Blanche*). In December, *La Revue Blanche* reproduces the lithograph *The Scream*. Munch's brother Andreas dies.

1896 In February moves from Berlin to Paris, where his friends include Frederick Delius, Meier-Graefe, Stéphane Mallarmé, Strindberg, and Thadée Nathanson. Prints his first color lithographs and makes his first woodcuts at Clot's. Contributes the lithograph *Anxiety* to Vollard's *Album des Peintres-graveurs*; makes a lithograph for the program of the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre production of *Peer Gynt*. In May, works on never-completed illustrations for Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Represented by ten paintings at the Salon des Indépendants, April-May; his one-man show at Samuel Bing's gallery L'Art Nouveau is reviewed by Strindberg in *La Revue Blanche*. Goes to Norway in July, to Belgium in August, returns to Paris in the autumn.

1897 In Paris, exhibits ten paintings from the "Frieze of Life" at the Salon des Indépendants, and designs the program for Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre. Spends the summer in Åsgårdstrand, where he buys a house; goes to Oslo in September for an exhibition.

1898 Travels in Norway; in March to Berlin via Copenhagen (exhibition); May in Paris (Salon des Indépendants); June in Oslo; summer in Åsgårdstrand; autumn in Oslo.

1899 Travels continue. In spring to Italy via Berlin, Paris, and Nice; then to Åsgårdstrand and Norstrand. During autumn and winter, convalesces at a sanatorium in Norway.

1900 Visits Berlin, Florence, and Rome in March; then goes to a sanatorium in Switzerland; spends July in Como, Italy, then autumn and winter in Norway. Completes *The Red Vine* (p. 51). *Girls on the Pier* (p. 53) painted c. 1900-02.

1901 Travels back and forth from Norway to Germany; spends the summer at Åsgårdstrand. In November to Berlin. Paints *Winter Night* (p. 56).

1902 Winter and spring in Berlin. Is introduced to Dr. Max Linde, who becomes his patron, purchases *Fertility*, and writes a book about him. To Norway in June, summer at Åsgårdstrand. Late autumn, visits Dr. Linde at Lübeck and is commissioned to make a portfolio of sixteen prints (*Linde Portfolio*). To Berlin in December; he meets Gustav Schiefler, who buys several of his prints and starts a catalogue raisonné of his prints. In the spring exhibits twenty-two works from the "Frieze of Life" at the Berlin Secession. At the end of an unfortunate love affair, suffers gunshot wound in finger of his left hand.

1903 In March via Leipzig to Paris, where he exhibits eight works at the Salon des Indépendants. Three trips to Lübeck; works on portraits of Dr. Linde and his four sons. Several stays in Berlin, a visit to Delius, summer at Åsgårdstrand.

1904 Winter in Berlin. Concludes important contracts with Bruno Cassirer in Berlin and Commeter in Hamburg, for rights to sale of Munch prints and paintings in Germany. Becomes a regular member of the Berlin Secession, which Beckmann, Nolde, and Kandinsky join a year later. Travels in Germany and Scandinavia, summer at Åsgårdstrand.

1905 Travels in Germany and Scandinavia. Returns to Åsgårdstrand in spring after violent quarrel with artist Ludwig Karsten. Important exhibition of 121 works at the Mánes Gallery, Prague.

1906-07 Designs two Ibsen plays for Berlin productions, *Hedda Gabler* and *Ghosts*. Paints portrait of Friedrich Nietzsche at request of Swedish banker Ernest Thiel, who subsequently commissions many of his oils. Spends time convalescing at several German spas.

1908 Winter in Berlin with a short trip to Paris in February. Starts series of pictures based on workmen and industry. Despite strong opposition, Jen Thiis, Director of the Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo, buys five works for the museum. In autumn, travels via Hamburg and Stockholm to Copenhagen (exhibition), where he enters Dr. Daniel Jacobson's clinic because of a nervous breakdown.

1909 Spends winter and spring at the clinic. Writes and illustrates the prose poem *Alpha and Omega*; draws animal studies at the Copenhagen zoo. In May, returns to Norway. In June, goes to Bergen (exhibition), where Rasmus Meyers purchases several of his works. Major exhibition in Oslo at Blomquist's of 100 oils and 200 graphic works. Works on designs for competition for the decoration of the Oslo University Assembly Hall (Aula murals).

1910 Winter and spring at Kragerø. Buys the Ramme estate at Hvitsen on the Oslo fjord to obtain better and larger working space. Works on Aula decoration project.

1911 Lives at Hvitsen; short trip to Germany. Wins Aula competition in August. Spends autumn and winter at Kragerø.

1912 Is an honorary guest at the Sonderbund, Cologne; like Cézanne, van Gogh, and Gauguin, is given a room to himself. In December, is represented in exhibition of contemporary Scandinavian art in New York, believed to be the first American showing of his work. Travels in May via Copenhagen to Paris (Indépendants), to Cologne (Sonder-

bund), and Hvitsen; returns to Cologne in September. Continues working on Aula decorations.

1913 Represented in the Armory Show, New York, by eight prints. Receives numerous tributes on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday. Travels in Germany and Scandinavia, with trips to London and Paris.

1914 Travels in Germany and to Paris continue; returns to Norway in the spring. Oslo University accepts Aula murals on May 29.

1915 Awarded gold medal for graphics at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco; ten oils also exhibited. He is now successful enough to give financial aid to young German artists. Travel confined to Scandinavia.

1916 In January, purchases the Ekely House, at Skøyen, outside Oslo, where he spends most of the rest of his life. Aula murals are unveiled on September 19.

1917 *Edvard Munch* by Curt Glaser is published. Has exhibitions in Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Copenhagen.

1918 Writes brochure *The Frieze of Life* for an exhibition of the paintings at Blomquist's in Oslo. Continues to work with Aula and "Frieze of Life" motifs.

1920-21 Visits Berlin for exhibitions, and Paris, Wiesbaden, and Frankfurt.

1922 Paints twelve murals for the workers' dining room in the Freia Chocolate Factory, Oslo. Retrospective exhibition of 73 oils and 389 graphics at Kunsthau Zürich, in May.

1923-27 Continues to support German artists. Has many exhibitions in Germany and Scandinavia, where he continues to travel. His sister Laura dies in 1926.

1927 In February, Munch's most comprehensive show is held at the Nationalgalerie, Berlin, including 223 oils. Exhibition is later enlarged and shown at Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo.

1928 Works on designs for murals for the Central Hall of Oslo City Hall (project later abandoned).

1929 Builds "winter studio" at Ekely. Major graphics show at the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

1930 Afflicted with eye trouble, which recurs for the rest of his life.

1931 Death of his aunt, Karen Bjølstad.

1932 Exhibition at Kunsthau Zürich, "Edvard Munch and Paul Gauguin."

1933 Celebrates seventieth birthday, receiving many tributes and honors. Monographs by Jens Thiis and Pola Gauguin published.

1937 Eighty-two of his works in German museums confiscated as "degenerate art" by the Nazis.

1940-44 Lives quietly during German occupation of Norway, refusing contact with Nazi invaders and collaborators. Continues painting and printmaking.

1944 On January 23, Edvard Munch dies at Ekely. He bequeaths all of his work in his possession to the city of Oslo: 1,008 paintings, 15,391 prints, 4,443 drawings and watercolors, 6 sculptures, as well as letters and manuscripts. The Munch-Museet is opened in 1963.

This chronology is based on information published in *Edvard Munch fra År til År: A Year-by-Year Record of Edvard Munch's Life*, by Johan H. Langaard and Reidar Revold (Oslo: H. Aschebourg & Co., 1961).

ILLUSTRATIONS

Color Plates

- Morning, Girl at the Bedside.** 1884. Oil on canvas. 13
- Self-Portrait.** 1886. Oil on canvas. 15
- Inger on the Beach.** 1889. Oil on canvas. 17
- Night in Saint-Cloud.** 1890. Oil on canvas. 19
- Melancholy, Yellow Boat.** 1891-92. Oil on canvas. 20
- Evening on Karl Johan Street.** 1892. Oil on canvas. 23
- The Storm.** 1893. Oil on canvas. 25
- The Voice.** 1893. Oil on canvas. 27
- Starry Night.** 1893. Oil on canvas. 29
- The Scream.** 1893. Oil on canvas. 31
- Anxiety.** 1894. Oil on canvas. 33
- Vampire.** 1894. Oil on canvas. 35
- Ashes.** 1894. Oil and tempera on canvas. 37
- Self-Portrait with Cigarette.** 1894-95. Oil on canvas. 38
- Madonna.** 1894-95. Oil on canvas. 41
- Puberty.** 1894-95. Oil on canvas. 43
- Death in the Sickroom.** 1895. Oil on canvas. 45
- By the Deathbed, Fever.** 1895. Oil on canvas. 47
- Jealousy.** 1895. Oil on canvas. 49
- The Red Vine.** 1900. Oil on canvas. 51
- Girls on the Pier.** 1900. Oil on canvas. 53
- Train Smoke.** 1900. Oil on canvas. 55
- Winter Night.** 1901. Oil on canvas. 56

Black-and-White Figures

All prints are from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art. Reference cited: Sch.—Schiefler, Gustav. *Verzeichnis des Graphischen Werks Edvard Munchs*. Vol. 1, Berlin, Bruno Cassirer, 1907; vol. 2, Berlin, Euphorion, 1928.

- Fig. 1. **Moonlight.** 1896. Woodcut, printed in color. Sch. 81c. 18
- Fig. 2. **Evening (Melancholy: On the Beach).** 1896. Woodcut, printed in color. Sch. 82. 21
- Fig. 3. **Evening (On the Beach: Melancholy).** 1901. Woodcut, printed in color. Sch. 144b. 21
- Fig. 4. **Summer Night (The Voice).** 1895. Aquatint and drypoint. Sch. 19 II b. 26
- Fig. 5. **The Shriek.** 1895, signed 1896. Lithograph. Sch. 32. 30
- Fig. 6. **Anxiety.** 1896. Lithograph, printed in color. Sch. 61 II b. 32
- Fig. 7. **Anxiety.** 1896, signed 1897. Woodcut, printed in color. Sch. 62. 32
- Fig. 8. **Vampire.** 1895-1902. Lithograph and woodcut, printed in color. Sch. 34 b. 34
- Fig. 9. **Ashes.** 1899. Lithograph, printed in black and hand-colored. Sch. 120. 36

- Fig. 10. **Madonna.** 1895-1902. Lithograph, printed in color. Sch. 33 Ab 2/B. 40
- Fig. 11. **The Young Model.** 1894. Lithograph. Sch. 8. 42
- Fig. 12. **The Death Chamber.** 1896. Lithograph. Sch. 73. 44
- Fig. 13. **Jealousy.** 1896. Lithograph. Sch. 57. 48
- Fig. 14. **Jealousy.** 1896. Lithograph. Sch. 58. 48
- Fig. 15. **Three Girls on a Bridge.** 1918-20. Woodcut and lithograph, printed in color. Sch. 488. 52

Photo Credits

Photographs of the paintings reproduced have been supplied by the owners or custodians of the works through the courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The following list applies to photographs for which a separate acknowledgment is due.

David Allison, New York, 23, 27, 37, 47, 49, 53, 56; Kate Keller,* 21 (fig. 3), 25, 32 (fig. 7), 36; James Mathews, New York, 26, 30, 34, 48 (fig. 13), 52; Soichi Sunami, 18, 21 (fig. 2), 32 (fig. 6), 40, 42, 44, 48 (fig. 14)

*Currently staff photographer, The Museum of Modern Art

TRUSTEES OF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

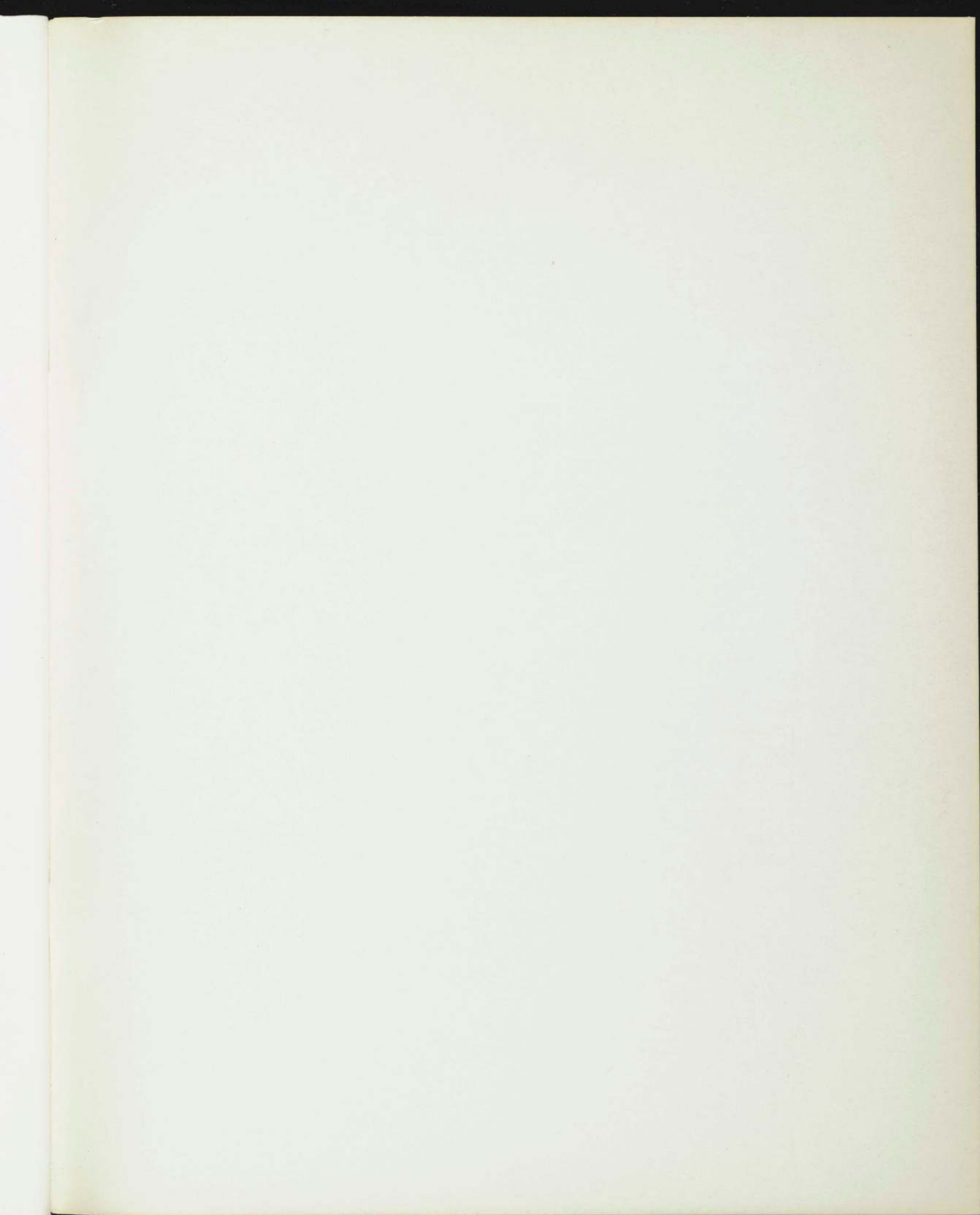
William S. Paley, *Chairman of the Board*
Gardner Cowles, *Vice Chairman*
Mrs. Bliss Parkinson, *Vice Chairman*
David Rockefeller, *Vice Chairman*
Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, *President*
Mrs. Frank Y. Larkin, *Vice President*
Donald B. Marron, *Vice President*
John Parkinson III, *Vice President*
John Parkinson III, *Treasurer*

Mrs. L. vA. Auchincloss
Edward Larrabee Barnes
Alfred H. Barr, Jr.*
Mrs. Armand P. Bartos
Gordon Bunshaft
Shirley C. Burden
William A. M. Burden
Thomas S. Carroll
Frank T. Cary
Ivan Chermayeff
Mrs. C. Douglas Dillon*
Gianluigi Gabetti
Paul Gottlieb
George Heard Hamilton
Wallace K. Harrison*
Mrs. Walter Hochschild*
Mrs. John R. Jakobson
Philip Johnson
Ronald S. Lauder
John L. Loeb
Ranald H. Macdonald*
Mrs. G. Macculloch Miller*
J. Irwin Miller*
S. I. Newhouse, Jr.
Richard E. Oldenburg
Peter G. Peterson
Gifford Phillips
Mrs. Albrecht Saalfeld
Mrs. Wolfgang Schoenborn*
Martin E. Segal
Mrs. Bertram Smith
Mrs. Alfred R. Stern
Mrs. Donald B. Straus
Walter N. Thayer
R. L. B. Tobin
Edward M. M. Warburg*
Mrs. Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.
Monroe Wheeler*
John Hay Whitney*

**Honorary Trustee*

Ex Officio

Edward I. Koch, *Mayor of the City of New York*
Harrison J. Goldin, *Comptroller of the City of New York*



ISBN 0-87070-492-3