

EDVARD MUNCH



EDVARD MUNCH (1863 - 1944)



After studies in Norway, Edvard Munch spent several years in France and Germany. From his time in France his work was influenced by the Nabis and the Post-Impressionists, particularly Gauguin, van Gogh, and Toulouse-Lautrec. Simultaneously he developed a distinct "private" symbolism, based on his own traumatic experiences.

In Berlin during the 1890s he executed a series of pictures called *The Frieze of Life*, described by himself as "a poem of life, love and death". The *Scream* from this series - with its strong expression of conflict and tension - has become the very symbol of the alienation of modern man. With his emphasis on mental anguish and his distortion of colours and form, Munch is regarded - together with van Gogh - as the main source of German Expressionism.

In 1908 Munch suffered a nervous breakdown, and the following year he returned to Norway where he spent the rest of his life. His palette became brighter and his motifs changed, but his art still reflects in a vigorous way the same existential problems of his earlier days, mirroring his own life into old age.

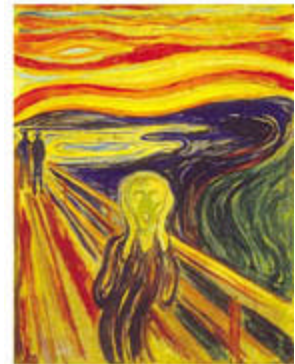
"Two forces like priests and seafaring folk are no laughing matter!" That is how Edvard Munch himself expressed his view of the opposing forces which he inherited as spiritual ballast. Both literally and metaphorically these two "forces", represented by the priests and seafarers in his family, characterised his life. It is likely that Munch himself was entirely aware of the core of contrasts and conflicts which became evident even in his early childhood and which finally found release in his art. With a not entirely successful metaphor, Munch sums up how these inherited dispositions governed his life: "When I cast off on the voyage of my life, I felt like a ship made from old rotten material sent out into a stormy sea by its maker with the words: If you are wrecked it is your own fault and then you will be burnt in the eternal fires of Hell."

Edvard Munch was born at Løten on 12 December 1863. At the time, his father Christian Munch, a qualified doctor, was medical officer to the military garrison there. When visiting his colleague Dr. Munthe at Elverum he became acquainted with the young Laura Cathrine Bjølstad, employed by the family as a maid. The 44-year-old doctor and the tubercular 23-year-old married in 1861.

Munch's parents came from different backgrounds and different environments. Laura Bjølstad's father was a successful sea captain and timber merchant who later lost his fortune. Tuberculosis ran in the family. "My mother was from farming stock, a strong-willed family, but rotten to the core with tuberculosis", Edvard Munch told his personal physician. The Munch family, on the other hand, was dominated by the middle class, priests,

scholars and artists: "My father belonged to a family of poets, with signs of genius but also signs of degeneration... The couple, however, shared a strong and sincere belief in God, which came to characterise their life together and the family home. I believe it was the Will of God that we were to have each other", Christian Munch wrote to his father-in-law. The year after the wedding saw the birth of their first child, Johanne Sophie and in the following year the family's first-born son entered the world at Engelhaug farm, which the family rented. The child seemed sickly and the priest was called immediately to baptise him at home. It was not until later in the spring that the baptism was confirmed in Løten church. Edvard Munch was only about a year old when the family moved from Løten.

In 1864 Christian Munch was appointed medical officer at Akershus Fort in Kristiania, as Oslo was called at that time, and the whole family looked forward to living in the capital. They moved into a flat close to the fort and it was there that their three youngest children were born: Peter Andreas in 1865, Laura Cathrine in 1867 and Inger Marie in 1868. Their mother, however, was constantly growing weaker and she herself had hardly expected to survive the last birth. On 12 January 1868 she wrote a farewell letter to her family, addressed to her eldest daughter, in which she expressed the hope that "we all, who God so carefully has bound together, may meet in Heaven never to part again". The letter was often read aloud in the family circle and became a guide for Christian Munch in bringing up his children.



That same year the family moved to a new and better flat at Pilestredet 30, in rural surroundings on the edge of the city. Here, Laura Bjølstad died on 29 December 1868. The last memory Edvard had of his mother was from the living room at home. The Christmas tree was lit and "in the middle of the sofa she sat in her heavy black skirt... calm and pale. Around her sat or stood all five. Father walked up and down the floor and sat next to her on the sofa. She smiled and tears ran down her cheeks..." Her younger sister, Karen Bjølstad, who had spent long periods with the family helping with the children, then moved in and took over responsibility for the household. Despite the sombre memories associated with that time in Pilestredet, Edvard Munch looked back on these years happily. "...We were healthy there and should never have left that neighbourhood..."

In 1875 the family moved again, this time to Grunerløkka, a new suburb on the eastern edge of the city. Its cold, draughty rented blocks of flats housed industrial workers and craftspeople, some unmarried clerks and a few civil servants. Christian Munch's more well-to-do relatives, however, lived in the more presentable areas to the west of the city. Dr. Munch hoped to boost his modest income from the army as a private doctor in the new part of town. The fact that the family's finances were very poor is probably also due to his poor head for money and his soft-heartedness when faced with patients of limited means. Karen Bjølstad ran the house with a firm and loving hand and, thanks to her intelligence and imagination, the family still managed to maintain a middle class standard of living. Servants were taken for granted and the family suffered no real material want. Karen Bjølstad made collages from moss and leaves, a popular genre which she sold to shops in the town. This work made an important contribution to the family finances and was also an important activity for the children in the family. From Aunt Karen, they learned to cut silhouettes out of paper and together created entire landscapes of moss and straw. She was also the one who inspired them to try drawing. The children's work was taken very seriously and the results carefully kept for posterity. Edvard Munch remembered every single drawing and, as an adult, could spend days looking for a special childhood drawing which he knew existed

somewhere in the house.

The oldest preserved drawings of Edvard Munch, such as interiors of the family home, show that he worked systematically as early as the age of 12. Most of the drawings from his childhood derive their motifs from items around the house, furniture and other objects. Motifs from adventure and history also appear and here the books his father read aloud were an important source of inspiration. Christian Munch had a keen interest in literature and history. He knew the sagas inside out, and the major work on Norwegian history by his famous brother P.A. Munch was read aloud in the family circle. His repertoire also included adventure and ghost stories. In 1877 the Munch family suffered a new tragedy. The eldest child Johanne Sophie, died of tuberculosis. Edvard Munch was himself often sick in his childhood. He suffered from chronic asthmatic bronchitis and had several serious attacks of rheumatic fever. For long periods in the winter, he had to stay indoors and then he received private tuition. In his childhood the home was, therefore, in every sense the centre of Edvard Munch's life. It was there that he received his early education and there that he arranged to have his first drawing lessons. And it was experiences in the home and the family that came to provide the inspiration for his most important motifs as a modern artist.

In Autumn 1879 Edvard Munch began to study at Kristiania Technical College. It was his father's wish that he should have a technical education, as, in his opinion, that would be the field of the future. Drawing was one of the most important subjects and Edvard Munch made friends with other students who drew and painted in their free time. Frequent absences due to illness, however, led to large gaps in his attendance and in the autumn of 1880 he took the decision of his life: "My decision is now namely to be a painter", he wrote in his diary on 8 November. The same autumn he registered as a pupil at the Royal School of Design in Kristiania. His relatives worried on behalf of his father over whether he would be able to make a living, "Poor Uncle Christian, now there is all that business with Edvard too..." In the spring of 1881 he began to study at the Royal School of Design, in the freehand drawing class, but it was not until the autumn of 1881 that he began to attend with anything like regularity. He then entered the life drawing class where he was taught by the sculptor Julius Middelthun.

Just a year later, however, Munch left the Royal School of Design. Together with a group of young colleagues, he rented a studio in Karl Johan Street, in the centre of the city. A number of painters had studios in the same building, including Christian Krohg, a known and respected naturalist. He offered to give the young painters free advice and such an offer was impossible to refuse. Edvard Munch, however, was not always entirely enthusiastic about "interference" from an "old academic" like Krohg. "Now he has destroyed everything for me", he is said to have said once when Krohg had exercised his pedagogical role with authoritarian discipline.

Edvard Munch's debut as a painter took place in the spring of 1883, when he exhibited a painting at the Industry and Art Exhibition, and in December of the same year he took part in the Autumn Exhibition for the first time. The painter Frits Thaulow was a central figure among the artists of Kristiania. As a prosperous international artist, Thaulow was involved in helping young colleagues of limited means. Frits Thaulow also soon recognised Munch's talent, and approached Munch's father with an offer to meet the cost of sending his son to visit Paris "to see the Salon".

At the end of April 1885 Edvard Munch, then 22, was able to travel abroad for the first time. He went first to Antwerp, where he exhibited a work in the Norwegian exhibition at the

World's Fair. From there he continued to Paris, and during a three-week stay studied the collections in the Louvre. He also arranged to see the "Salon", the major annual review of contemporary art in Paris. What else he saw in terms of art or what thoughts he gave to his future work remain unknown. However, the man who headed home after his first stay abroad was a young artist with all his senses alert and intent on new experiences.

In the summer of 1885 Edvard Munch became acquainted with Milly Thaulow, "Mrs Heiberg" as he calls her in his literary records. This young woman, who was married to the doctor and army medical officer Carl Thaulow, brother of the painter Frits Thaulow, was to become the first great love of Edvard Munch's life. He began to wander restlessly up and down Karl Johan Street on his walks in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. Now and again they would meet at a studio Edvard Munch rented in the town and the joy and excitement of their secret meetings was soon replaced by a feeling of guilt. "He had committed adultery... he had cast himself into something which filled him with dread...". It was the thought of his father in particular which haunted him and the knowledge of his father's view of the sin he had committed. But later, when the memory of his first love had paled in the light of other experiences, Edvard Munch was able to analyse his feelings for Milly Thaulow in a more sober fashion: "... Young and inexperienced - from a monastery-like home - unlike the other Comrades knowing nothing of this Mystery - I met a Salon lady from Kristiania - I stood before the Mystery of Woman - I looked into an undreamt-of World..."

At the Artists' Carnival of 1886, which was also attended by Milly Thaulow and her husband, Edvard Munch came into conversation with Hans Jæger. It is likely that the two, Munch and the notorious leader of what was known as Kristiania Bohemia had met fleetingly before. However, it was probably not until this period during the uproar surrounding the confiscation of Jægers's book *From Kristiania Bohemia*, that Munch became part of his circle. While Munch was to remain as much an observer as a participant in the small circle of artists who called themselves "bohemians", this meeting marked a turning point in his life. It is likely that it was Jæger's idea of "writing his life" that inspired Munch's literary works. In what has later been termed "literary diaries" he began to write about "spiritual experiences" from his childhood and youth, particularly memories linked to love and death, themes which were later given shape in pictures.



In the spring of 1889 Munch arranged his own exhibition in Kristiania, the first one-man show held in the Norwegian capital. The exhibition covered his entire output and resulted in his being awarded a state travel scholarship to study life drawing in Paris. In the summer the Munch family rented a small house in the town of Åsgårdstrand on the Kristiania Fjord, a place which was to become a fixed point in Munch's life.

In 1889 he bought a house of his own in Åsgårdstrand, and returned there almost every single summer for over 20 years. This was the place he longed for when he was abroad and whenever he felt depressed and exhausted. "Walking in Åsgårdstrand is like walking among my paintings - I have such an urge to paint when I am in Åsgårdstrand," he said. In the autumn of 1889 Edvard Munch travelled to Paris on his state scholarship. An express condition of the scholarship was that he would study life drawing and he therefore enrolled as a pupil with the master Leon Bonnat, where a number of other Norwegian artists had also studied. In November his father died and Edvard Munch was unable to return for the funeral. In January he moved to the suburb of St. Cloud, where he rented a pleasant room with a view over the Seine. For four months Munch went dutifully to Bonnat but after a

while he preferred to keep to his room.

After the death of his father Munch fell into a period of depression and, in a mood of deep melancholy, he sought out the Montagnes Russes on the Boulevard des Capucines. It was as if the music and the colours drew him into a world of joy and light and, through clouds of tobacco smoke, he was captivated by a sight which had a surprisingly strong effect on him. The picture of a couple in each other's arms burned itself into his soul and many years later he recalled this experience and put it into words. The impressions from Montagnes Russes here take on the nature of an artistic manifesto as is described in all subsequent literature on Edvard Munch: "People will understand what is sacred in them and will take off their hats as if in church. I will paint a number of such pictures. No longer shall interiors be painted with people reading and women knitting. There shall be living people who breathe and feel and suffer and love."

After having seen the Salon, Munch travelled home in May, a little uneasy about his means of support for the future. The summer was spent partly in Åsgårdstrand, partly in Kristiania, and in October 1890 he left his home town again to start his second year of study in Paris. The voyage was via Le Havre, but having fallen ill on board, he had to be admitted to hospital there before he was able to continue the journey. After a few days of "Siberian cold" in Paris, he travelled south to warmer climes on the Mediterranean. The remainder of the winter was spent in Nice. His money problems led Munch to try his luck on the gaming tables of Monte Carlo, and for a while he was obsessed by the excitement of roulette. But in May he travelled back to Paris to "see the Salon", and in the summer he returned to his beloved Åsgårdstrand once more.

Due to the long periods of illness during his period of study, Munch's scholarship was extended for a third year. And so for the third year in a row he set sail for France, where, together with the Norwegian painter Skredsvig, he once more spent the winter in Nice. At this time Munch experimented with different methods of painting. For a brief period he worked in purely impressionistic techniques. Later he developed an art reminiscent of Symbolism and Synthetism, within which the subjects were based on the "spiritual experiences" of his youth and childhood. This was to be developed into the picture cycle known as The Frieze of Life.



The painting is the "Girls On The Bridge".
Stand on the exact same place Munch painted it.

When Munch was granted the state scholarship for the third consecutive year, there was some grumbling that he had spent the money on a "holiday" in the south of France. He then decided to show the results of his time studying in France and in September 1892 he once more opened a one-man show in Kristiania. The exhibition was visited by the Norwegian painter Adelsteen

Normann, who was living in Berlin and a member of the Artists Union there. He was immediately captivated by the paintings and aimed to obtain for Munch an invitation to exhibit his work at the Artists' Union premises in the German capital.

The exhibition in Berlin opened on 8 November, and was immediately declared an "insult to art". However, the reaction was against the method of painting, not the subjects and after discussion and a vote taken in the Artists' Union the exhibition was closed after a week. The newspapers were full of "The Munch Affair", but Edvard Munch himself was in sheer delight over the uproar: "I have never had such an enjoyable time - incredible that something as innocent as painting can cause such a stir," he wrote to his family at home. He immediately saw the advertising potential of "The Munch Affair" and signed a contract with the art dealer Edouard Schulte to show the exhibition in Cologne and Düsseldorf. In December he hired premises at the Equitable Palast in Berlin out of his own pocket, where the public were charged admission. The financial gain, however, was not as high as he had hoped.

Munch had now become a famous figure in the artistic circles of Berlin. In the bar "Zum schwarzen Ferkel" (The Black Pig) he entered a stimulating environment in many ways reminiscent of the bohemian circles at home in Kristiania. He became friends with and socialised with poets, men of letters and philosophers such as August Strindberg, Richard Dehmel, Holger Drachman and Julius Meier-Graefe. The Polish poet Stanislaw Przybyszewski, himself preoccupied by sexuality and free love was the driving force in this environment, which acted as a melting-pot for ideas and motifs. Edvard Munch rented a studio and continued to work on the motifs for The Frieze of Life. The nucleus of this picture cycle, where the subjects are linked to love, angst and death, was a group of pictures exhibited in 1893 under the title Love. In Berlin he also created his first etchings and lithographs.

For four winters in a row Munch lived in Berlin. He had little contact with German painters, "Berlin will not be a city of artists for long in any case," he wrote home. It is clear that it was the social life in The Black Pig which kept him there and once the circle of friends began to split up he decided to make a break. In the autumn of 1895 he held a major one-man show at home in Kristiania, which was also attended by Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen was particularly preoccupied by the painting *Woman in Three Stages*, a painting which, according to Munch himself, was the inspiration for the subject of Ibsen's play "When We Dead Awaken".

At the end of February 1896 Munch returned to Paris. He exhibited paintings at the Salon des Independants, firmly determined to make his mark as an artist in this cosmopolitan city. In the private Salon de l'Art Nouveau, he also exhibited his extended series of love motifs, and graphic works. In a fruitful partnership with the famous printer Auguste Clot, he created a number of colour lithographs and woodcuts with subjects from The Frieze of Life, and designed the playbills for the Theatre de l'Oeuvre's performances of Ibsen. But there was no real breakthrough in Paris. Munch's finances at this time were poor, particularly due to unsuccessful games of roulette. Once more he came into contact with August Strindberg, then in the middle of the Inferno Crisis. He also socialised with the poets Sigbjørn Obstfelder and Stephane Mallarme. Through his friend, the composer Frederick Delius, Munch came into contact with the Molard family who, in their home in the rue Vercingetorix, created a meeting place for artists.

Although Munch did not attain the expected breakthrough in Paris, the tide of public opinion began to turn back home in Kristiania. In the autumn of 1897 he held a major exhibition in Kristiania, and here he was able to see that his pictures no longer appeared quite so

shocking to the public. Encouraged by good fortune, he rented studios in Universitetsgaten with the painter Alfred Hauge. He lived there too, sleeping on a mattress on the floor beside a smoking, smelly paraffin stove.

It was at this time that Munch became acquainted with Mathilde Larsen, daughter of one of the city's largest wine merchants. Tulla, as she was known, was already an "old maid" of thirty. Munch was four years older and the relationship that began that winter was one from which neither would completely recover. Even at an early stage, it appears that the relationship was totally out of control as far as Munch was concerned, in that he completely underestimated the strength of Tulla Larsen's passion. In the spring of 1898 they travelled together to Italy, where Munch studied the monumental art of the Renaissance, but soon he sent Tulla to Paris, to wait for him there. On Tulla Larsen's departure from Italy, however, the relationship was, in effect, over. Later they were together only sporadically until the relationship came to a dramatic close. In 1902 Edvard Munch and Tulla Larsen met for a "reconciliation" in Åsgårdstrand. There was a revolver in the house and in a shooting accident Munch was wounded in the left hand. He blamed Tulla Larsen for the accident and subsequently broke off all contact with her and their set of friends, who he considered were on her side. Later Munch's concern about his hand almost amounted to monomania and his destroyed finger was a constant reminder of the "three wasted years" of his life.

That same year, 1902, saw Edvard Munch achieve his definitive breakthrough in Berlin. Ten years after the "scandal exhibition", The Frieze of Life was exhibited at the Berlin Secession, an exhibition which led to artistic recognition and financial success. "It is all like an adventure", he wrote home. He signed a contract with a German art dealer on the sole rights to sell his paintings and graphic work and, in the ophthalmologist Dr. Max Linde from Lubeck, found his first patron. At the Salon in Paris, where Munch exhibited in 1903 and 1904, his pictures attracted considerable attention. His greatest success at this time, however, was the great exhibition in Prague in 1905. "I hope that it brings not only Honour but also Gold", he wrote hopefully to his aunt. Gold was not quite as abundant as he had hoped but all the same Munch looked back on that exhibition with great joy. He was grateful for the whole-hearted and magnificent reception he received and in later years he looked on those days in Prague as a "beautiful dream".

After the break with Tulla Larsen, however, Munch's nerves were on edge. Constant travel and a high consumption of alcohol took their toll. Portrait commissions for the rich banker Warburg's daughter took him to Hamburg, where he suffered a series of hallucinatory attacks. Things were no better in Weimar, where his portrait commissions thrust him into a world of parties and receptions. As his nerves got worse, his aversion to Norway and the "Town of the Enemy" increased. Munch convinced himself that he had to avoid returning home at any price, with the possible exception of short visits to Åsgårdstrand. After encouragement from friends in Germany he tried staying at spas in Thuringerwald, Bad Elgersburg and Bad Kosen, but failed to find peace and by 1906, when Munch was engaged by Max Reinhardt to design the set for a performance of Ghosts for the new intimate stage at Deutsches Theater in Berlin, his nerve problems were already severe.

Edvard Munch spent the summers of 1907 and 1908 at the bathing resort of Warnemunde on the Baltic, "a German Åsgårdstrand", as he christened it. He would set up his heavy canvases on the nudist beach and paint Bathing Men using life-guards as models, while enjoying deep breaths of sea air. In September 1908, however, his stay was suddenly interrupted. Munch appears to have been on the verges of psychosis, he had the feeling he was being followed and believed that everyone was spying on him. He travelled to Denmark

and with the help of his friend, the poet Emanuel Goldstein he allowed himself to be admitted to Dr. Jacobson's clinic in Copenhagen. Here he found peace and quiet and also underwent various cures, including "electrification". He also vowed never again to drink alcohol. He continued his work while at the clinic and during the eight months he spent there he gained recognition on many counts. He was awarded the Royal Order of St. Olav for meritorious artistic activity and the National Gallery in Kristiania purchased many of the paintings in his exhibition in Kristiania in 1909, which was a success with the general public.

In May 1909 Munch was discharged from Dr. Jacobson's clinic. He decided to live in Norway but wished to avoid Kristiania at any price. As he saw it, that was where the "enemy" lived. Together with his relative Ludvig Ravensberg, he travelled home by sea, his thoughts constantly on finding a place where he could settle down. When the ship passed the coastal town of Kragerø, he was so enchanted that he decided to make his home there. He rented a property with a large house and garden and a view over the archipelago. Here he had an open air studio built so that he could enter the competition to decorate the new hall, the Aula, of the university in Kristiania. He was inspired by the countryside and the people he met. The motifs for the main panels in the university decoration History and the centrepiece The Sun, are drawn from the natural surroundings of Kragerø, while the main figure in History was modelled on the sailor Børre Eriksen, who became Munch's handyman. "Never has work given me so much pleasure", he said. It was a disappointment to Munch that he was unable to buy the house in Kragerø. The next year he therefore purchased a property on the other side of the Kristiania Fjord, Nedre Ramme in Hvitsten.

Here he found the landscape he sought for the other large picture for the Aula, Alma Mater. In Munch's opinion, this property was in the most beautiful place on the coast and he stayed there with doves, turkeys, ducks and chickens, and his horse Rousseau postured on the verdant grassy hills. In 1913 he also rented Grimsrød manor on the island of Jeløy for a few years, where he also had a studio built. His old aversion to Kristiania and its people also appeared to abate somewhat at this time, and now and then he ventured into the capital to visit the old haunts of his childhood.



At the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne in the spring of 1912, Munch had the great honour of being invited to exhibit with van Gogh, Gauguin and Cezanne. "Here are gathered the Wildest things painted in Europe - I am a pure classicist and faded...", he wrote to his friend Jappe Nilssen. And the next year Munch and Picasso, as the only foreigners invited, were each given their own room at the Autumn Exhibition in Berlin.

1916 saw the inauguration of the Aula at the university and the same year Edvard Munch bought the property at Ekely in Skøyen, west of Kristiania. Here he was to settle for the rest of his life. The main house at Ekely was a roomy villa in Swiss style. A glass veranda on the south side looked out onto a splendid orchard with apple and cherry trees. From the veranda, one could see for miles, towards the south the landscape opened out towards the town and the fjord and in the west there was a view of far off mountains. When Munch bought the property it included an old barn and besides the horse and the dogs, for a while he also kept cows in the cowshed and pigs in the sty. Hens were also part of the "farm". At that time Munch was a prosperous man and liked to look the "landowner". He had several outdoor studios built and, in addition, in 1919 a "winter studio" designed by his friend and relative the architect Henrik Bull.

Edvard Munch lived in relative isolation at Ekely, and had less contact than before with friends and family. His travelling fell off too, but in 1920-1922 he visited Berlin, Paris and Zurich, and in 1926-27 he once more travelled to several European cities. The Munch exhibitions around Europe were a "triumphal procession without equal", as Jappe Nilssen put it, and in 1927 major retrospectives of Edvard Munch's art were held in Berlin and Oslo. However, the painter himself steered clear of the "opening fuss". He had more important things to do: "I can no longer stand being away from charcoal and paintbrushes for long. I must know that if the urge comes rushing through me the charcoal and brushes will be ready". In 1930 a blood vessel burst in Munch's right eye. He was almost blind for a while and three years later he again suffered what he himself called "dangerous congestion".

On his 70th birthday in 1933 Munch was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Olav. When German forces invaded Norway in 1940, Munch refused all contact with German and Norwegian Nazis. The occupation powers threatened to seize Ekely, and Munch feared for his "children" - his pictures. But at the same time he felt a strange peace. "...now all the old phantoms have crept down in their mouseholes for this one enormous phantom", he is said to have said to Pola Gauguin, the artist's daughter. In the winter of 1943-44 Munch contracted pneumonia and he died peacefully at Ekely on 23 January 1944.



Edvard Munch bought this 18th century mariners house at Åsgårdstrand in 1897. Munch used the house as a summer home and studio up until his death in 1944. Today the house and studio have been turned into a museum.

THE LIFE OF EDVARD MUNCH - CHRONOLOGY

1863 Born 12 December at Løten, Hedmark.

1864 The family moves to Kristiania (Oslo).

1868 The mother dies.

1877 Favourite sister Sophie dies, 15 years old.

1880 Breaks off his engineering education to become a painter.

1881 Studies at the Royal School of Drawing.

1885 Three weeks stay in Paris.

1886 First versions of the paintings The Sick Child, Puberty, The Day After.

1889 First private exhibition at The Norwegian Students Association. The Father dies. To Paris in the autumn, studies with Leon Bonnat.

1892 Exhibits in Berlin's Artists Association. Scandal causes premature closure.

- 1893** Lives in Berlin and works on The Frieze of Life motifs.
- 1894** First etchings and lithographs.
- 1895** The younger brother Andreas dies.
- 1896** First colour lithographs, colour etchings and woodcuts executed in Paris.
- 1904** Paints frieze for Dr. Max Linde's home in Lubeck.
- 1906** Decorations for Max Reinhardt's staging of Henrik Ibsen's Ghosts in Berlin.
- 1907** Paints Frieze of Life motifs for the lobby of the "Kammerspiele" stage at Deutsches Theater, Berlin.
- 1908** Nervous breakdown in Copenhagen.
- 1909** Returns to Norway. Settles in Kragerø. Commences work on decorations for the Aula of the University of Kristiania.
- 1916** Aula decorations installed after great controversy. Purchases the estate Ekely, near Kristiania, where he settles permanently.
- 1922** Paints murals for the canteen at Freia Chocolate Factory, Kristiania.
- 1928** Works on sketches and plans for the decoration of Oslo City Hall, later renouncing the task.
- 1937** 82 works by Munch in German public galleries confiscated as "entartete Kunst".
- 1940** Bequeathes all works of art in his possession to the City of Oslo.
- 1944 Dies 23rd January at Ekely.**
- 1963** The Munch Museum is opened.

By Marit Lande

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