

A fascinating examination of Munch's prints, which were central to his creative process and established his reputation as an artist

Edvard Munch

love and angst

Edited by Giulia Bartrum

Includes an interview with Karl Ove Knausgaard

150 Illustrations

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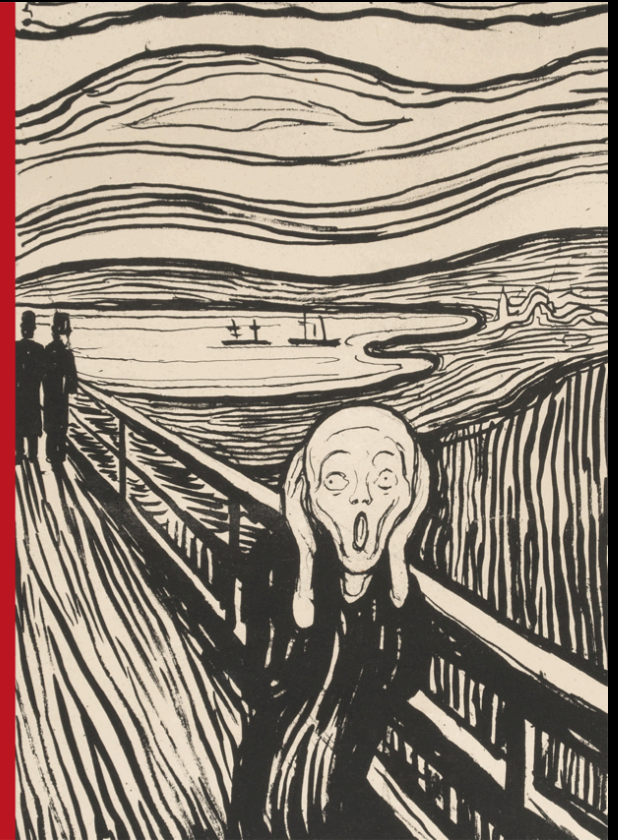
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Book

Edvard Munch love and angst



Key Sales Points

- Accompanies the exhibition at the British Museum from 11th April to 21st July 2019
- Munch is one of the 20th century's most famous artists, best known for his work *The Scream*
- Includes an interview by Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgaard, who has written previously about Munch
- Sheds light on a key aspect of Munch's work that is often overlooked
- Reveals Munch as a highly innovative and original printmaker in the tradition of the Old Masters

women who lived on the fringes of society were the source of some of the greatest French works of art and literature of the later nineteenth century.¹⁸

Munch had a brief spell training as an engineer, which his father considered a respectable profession, but within a few months had enrolled in 1881 at the National School of Art and Design to follow his desire to be an artist. He was much encouraged by a distant cousin, the influential painter of Norwegian landscapes, Fris Thaulow (1847-1906) who recognised his talent and helped him acquire a travel grant to study abroad in 1884-5. It was the support however, of Munch's first master Christian Krohg (1852 – 1925) who supervised his work during the early 1880s and recommended him for at least three scholarships to study in Paris, that was of particular impact. Munch's early paintings of figure studies, such as *Morning*, 1884 (Bergen, Rasmus Meyer Collection), portraits of his family members and street views were made in a French Impressionist style. Krohg was one of the first to argue for a Norwegian school of painting and focused on subjects taken from the lower working classes set in humble interiors or Scandinavian landscapes, instead of the pastel shades and technical experimentation of French Impressionism, or the slick society portraiture then fashionable in Paris, London and Berlin. If Krohg's grandest painting is *Albertine*, his masterpiece is surely *Sick Child* (1880-81) an especially poignant rendering of a common subject¹⁹ (fig. 3). Krohg

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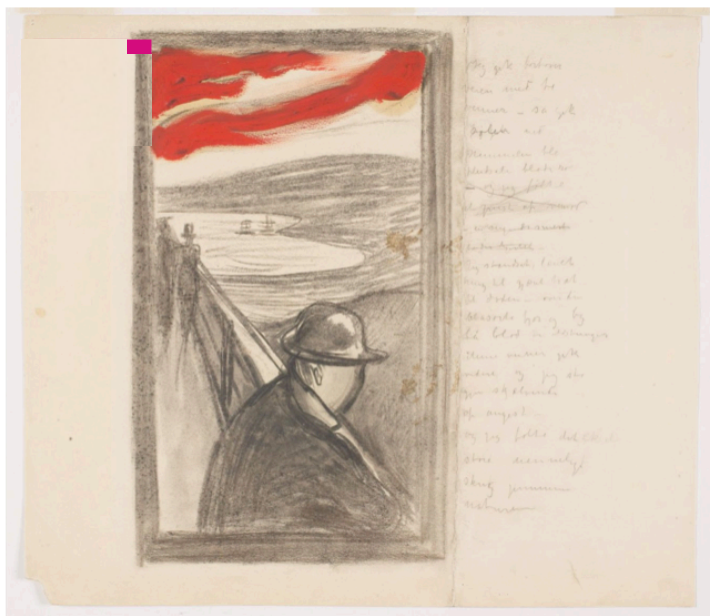
Fig 4. Caption info xerepe magn atem. Puda ius pratint, conse quam rest quam erac tem. Nam er ro blaccum que nos eius ipsus dolorro dita velis tu rae volup tatur. Tombstone line Tombstone line Tombstone line Tombstone line

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Black Piglet tavern ('Zum schwarzen Ferkel') centring around the Swedish dramatist August Strindberg (1849-1912; cat no. ##) and the Polish novelist, Stanislaw Pszybyszewski (1868-1927; cat.no ##); others included Olger Drachmann, Jens Thiis and Richard Dehmels all of whom in different ways became closely associated with Munch.³⁰ Discussions focussed around a deep interest in science, naturalism, alchemy, sex and free love, as well as French and Belgian Symbolist art. The destructive pattern of relationships of the Kristiania Bohemians continued when Munch introduced to the group, his friend Dagny Juel (1867-1901) who was the daughter of a Norwegian doctor. Dagny had affairs with many of them, and married Pszybyszewski with whom she had two children; she was along with Milly Thaulow and Tulla Larsen, the muse behind much of Munch's work, especially *Jealousy* (cat.no##) which shows her standing half-dressed with Munch in the background; the pale tormented face in the foreground is that of Pszybyszewski. The Polish writer was the one whose life could have been written by Hans Jaeger; he had at least four further children with other women across Europe and had abandoned Dagny for the wife of a Polish

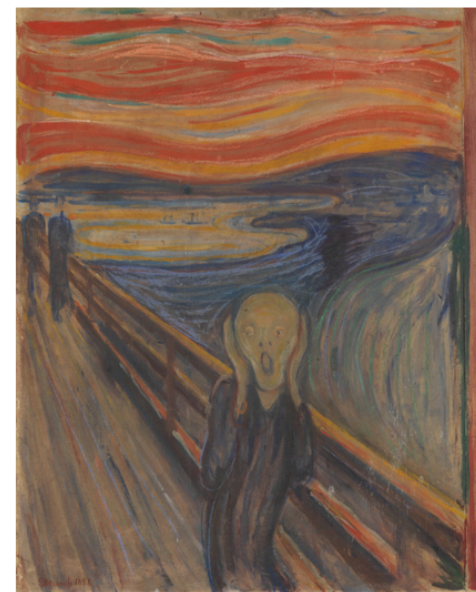
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friend by the time Dagny was shot dead by a jealous lover, Wladyslaw Emeryk, the son of a Polish mine-owner, in Tblisi in 1901. Dagny remained a good friend to Munch and worked hard to promote his work in eastern Europe³¹; she was one of very few women to whom he remained courteous and friendly throughout her life. While the press vilified Dagny for her sexual independence and marriage to a 'Satanist', inferring that her lifestyle had led to her murder, Munch wrote an eloquent obituary:³²

Increased exposure of his paintings in 1892 encouraged Munch to think in terms of a frieze sequence and his output increased. In a large monographic exhibition at 19 Unter den Linden in Berlin in 1893, he exhibited six new compositions entitled '*Study for a Series: Love*' which were inspired by this period of his life. Set against the coast-line and pinewoods of Bærgsøstrand where his memories lay tied to Milly Thaulow, the series chronicles the flowering and climax of first love, separation and jealousy followed by despair: these were all versions of *The Voice*, *Kiss*, *Vampire*, *Madonna*, *Melancholy*, *Jealousy (The Yellow Boat)* and the recently completed *Scream*³⁴ (fig. 5 and cat. no.##) with the new *Death in the Family* (cat.##).





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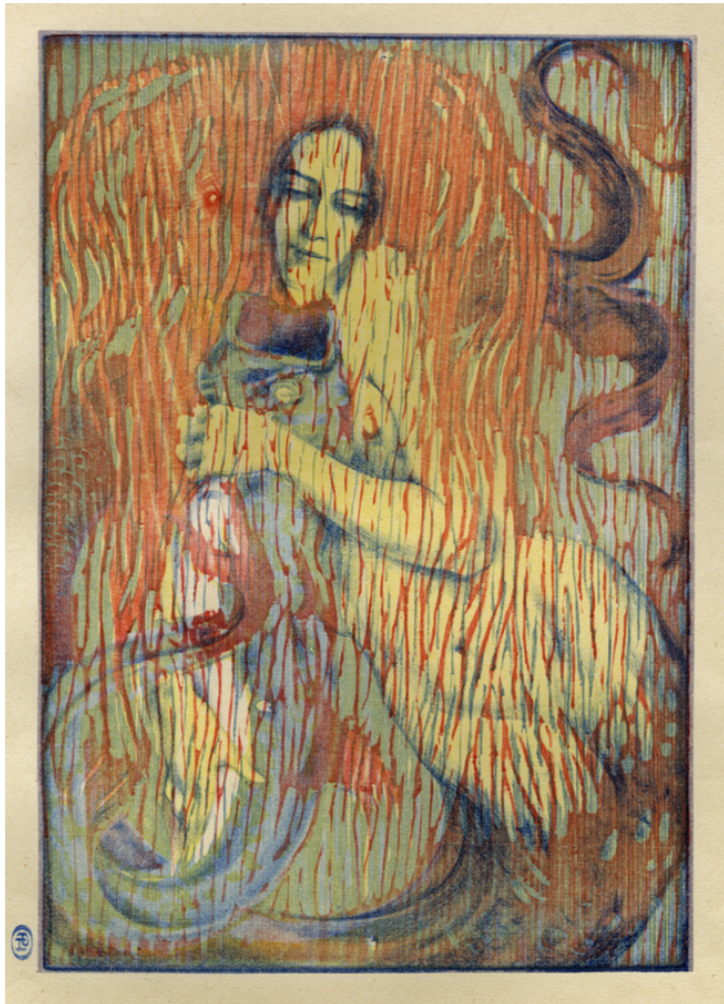
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Munch lived in the city, it produced artist's original prints and modern re-prints of cheap popular woodcuts.

Inspired by the international success of art journals such as these, and to provide a boost to original printmaking in Germany, the journal *Pan* was initiated in Berlin in 1895 by a group of Munch's associates. They included Eberhardt von Bodenhausen, Harry Kessler and Julius Meier Graefe, of whom the last used the offices of Pan to publish Munch's first portfolio of eight drypoints in 1895. Munch's contribution to *Pan* was a drypoint of his friend, Knut Hamsun (1859-1952), a much admired Norwegian author. The journal quickly became an outlet for advertising major decorative art movements of the day that had little interest for Munch, and ceased publishing altogether in 1900; but not before a striking colour print, *Playful Mermaid* by his close friend, Paul Herrmann, was published in 1897 (cat. no. ##). They knew each other in Paris, where Munch painted a double portrait in 1897 of Herrmann with the French psychiatrist, Paul Contard. The innovative technical combination of three colour woodblocks printed over a lithograph to add atmospheric texture in *Playful Mermaid* must have inspired Munch to create the second state of *Vampire* (cat. no. ##) a technical tour de force which combines two lithographic stones, four woodblocks and one stencil. The image of a man's face sinking into watery depths in Herrman's *Frightened nymph*, published in *Le Centaur* in 1896 in which he also combined woodcut over lithograph, is powerfully recalled by Munch, in his *Lovers in the Waves* (cat. no. ##). The two artists had a common link through the excellent colour printer, Auguste Clot. Jens Thiis recounts an occasion when Herrmann, arriving at Clot's workshop was told he would have to wait to be seen, because Munch was there supervising the printing sequence of numerous colour stones for his lithograph *Sick Child* (cat. no. ##).

One of the reasons Munch decided to move from Berlin to Paris in early 1896, was the critical publicity he received in the French journal, *La Revue Blanche*. Thadée Natanson, the French Symbolist critic and publisher of *La Revue Blanche* was so taken by Munch's *Scream* when it was first printed by Liebmann in Berlin in 1895, that he reproduced it the same year with a French translation in the December issue of the journal. It was in Paris, where highly sophisticated colour printers excelled, that Munch's most innovative experiments with lithography and woodcut took place; and the complex sequence of colour stones employed in *Sick Child* make this print his masterpiece in the technique. It was in Paris too, that he started making woodcuts in the autumn of 1896. The fashion for the flat planes of colour evident in the woodcut technique was so strong that one of his earliest lithographs, *Angst* (cat. no. ##) was published by Ambroise Vollard mistakenly described as a woodcut.

Within a few years of taking up printmaking, Munch advertised his intention to publish a graphic series. Announced at a large solo exhibition of mainly paintings held from 15 September to 17 October 1897, at the Diorama Hall in Kristiania, Munch specified 18 lithographs and four woodcuts from his *Frieze of Life* subjects, including *Madonna*, *Scream*, *Jealousy*, *Vampire*, *Angst* as part of a 'a series of portfolios, *The Mirror, which will appear in the near future*'. Munch's own poster design for the show advertises his skills



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ES 249 Edward Munch



'Is art influenced by too much business?'

Frances Carey

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'Ours is a time of markets – a time of bazaars. It characterizes the time we live in. The great Salons are simply market places. Where art is put up for sale for the bourgeoisie who are so eager to buy. Contemporary art is under the thumb of the worst band of capitalists - the bourgeoisie.. Is art influenced by too much business?'

Munch made these observations in the latter part of his career when having achieved a considerable measure of renown and financial stability, he was ever more reluctant to part with his 'children', whether paintings or prints. But the evidence, especially from before the 1920s, provides a different picture. Over a fifty-year period he produced some 850 different printed compositions with perhaps as many as 30,000 impressions - 250 of those subjects were executed in his first decade as a printmaker from 1894-1904; his prints were exhibited on at least 268 occasions between 1895 and 1942 and a catalogue raisonné had been published by the end of 1907. None of this activity, to which must be added a prodigious flow of correspondence to and from friends, dealers and patrons concerning exhibition opportunities and prices, betokens indifference to what the business of art, and of prints in particular, could achieve.

Munch entered this world in the mid-1890s when the market in original prints was dominated by black and white etching – the medium Munch first essayed. It was an international market that prospered, with occasional blips, until the end of the 1920s. At its apex in terms of profitability, stood the work of Charles Meryon (1821-68), J.A.M Whistler (1834-1903), and a group of 'super-etchers' who came to the fore in the early twentieth century: the Scottish trio of Muirhead Bone (1876-1953), D.Y. Cameron (1865-1945) and James McBey (1883-1959) together with the Swedish artist Anders Zorn (1860-1920). Their reach extended beyond Britain and



Plates, Stones and Blocks

Edvard Munch's Printing Matrices

Ute Kuhlemann

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Edvard Munch bequeathed in his will almost the complete collection of his own art to the City of Oslo. His generous gift comprised around 25,000 objects, including numerous world-class paintings, prints and drawings, which today constitute the core of the Munch Museum's collection.

As may be sensed in this exhibition, the Museum's print collection is as comprehensive as it is diverse; it encompasses almost 18,000 prints of approx. 800 different motifs, ranging from rare impressions (*Young Women on the Shore*, cat.nr. xx [MM G 816-1]), and considerable numbers of almost identical print portfolios (such as *Alpha and Omega*, see Woll 2012, 336-357) to fascinating groups of numerous experimental variants of the same motif (*Towards the Forest I and II*, cat.nrs xx, xx and xx [MM G 575-6, G 644-5 and G 644-12]). Each print is the result of a complex interaction between a printing surface (matrix), ink and paper – all brought together under pressure, usually in a printing press. Quite rightly, it is the final print that receives art lovers' and researchers' main attention; after all, this is the print that printmakers produce for circulation and public scrutiny. Certain by-products, such as the rare, often unique proof impressions, are also much appreciated: they show the unfinished print and therefore allow valuable insights into the artist's creative process (*Kristiania Bohemians II*, cat. nr. xx [MM G 10-5]).

At the same time, the mother of them all, the printing matrix, receives little attention. Although its existence is generally acknowledged in catalogues raisonnés, the matrix is rarely exhibited or a subject of further discussion. However, in Edvard Munch's case, it is rather difficult not to pay attention to his matrices: 504 of his printing plates, blocks and stones are held by the Munch Museum, with around 150 lithographic stones prominently displayed in its corridors. In other words, Munch managed to

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