

The Museum of Modern Art

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MASTERWORKS OF MUNCH FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. EXHIBITION TO BE SHOWN IN NEW YORK PRIOR TO RETURN TO NORWAY

By special arrangements recently concluded, an assemblage of the greatest masterpieces of Edvard Munch will be brought to New York City for exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art this spring, it was announced by the Director, Richard E. Oldenburg.

The paintings were scheduled to be returned to Norway, the artist's native land, immediately following the current major exhibition of Munch's work, entitled Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images, organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and now on view there until February 19. They were not expected to be shown elsewhere in the United States until The Museum of Modern Art initiated negotiations to show in New York a selection of the most significant works. The works chosen represent the prime period in the artistic career of Munch--the 1890s and the years immediately preceding and following that decade.

"In order to bring these most important paintings from Washington to New York City, we had to obtain the permission of the National Gallery of Oslo, the Munch and Bergen Museums in Norway, and two private Norwegian collectors. We also needed and received the full cooperation of the National Gallery of Art in Washington," stated Mr. Oldenburg. "The great generosity of these several sources will give our New York public an extraordinary opportunity to see some of Munch's greatest works, most of them rarely exhibited outside Norway. We are deeply grateful to Dr. Knut Berg, Director of the Nasjonal-galleriet, Oslo, to Dr. Alf Bøe, Director of the Munch Museet, Oslo, to Dr. Jan

Askeland, Director of the Billedgalleri, Bergen, to J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, and to the many others who have assisted us in arranging this exhibition."

THE MASTERWORKS OF EDVARD MUNCH, not previously scheduled in the Museum's program for 1979, will now be on view in the Museum's first-floor galleries from March 15 through April 24, after which the paintings will be returned to Norway.

Mr. Oldenburg undertook negotiations for the New York exhibition in late December, writing the Norwegian lenders: "Given the enormous interest and enthusiasm with which the Washington National Gallery exhibition, 'Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images', has been received, we would like to provide the opportunity for New York audiences to see the greatest of the Munch masterpieces before their return to Norway." He noted that it would be "a very great privilege" if the Norwegian lenders would allow the Museum to show the major Munch paintings from Norwegian collections that are currently in Washington.

"It is our intention to concentrate the exhibition on Munch's works of the 1890s with selected examples from the preceding and following decades. Paintings by Munch (of this quality and significance) are very rarely seen in the United States, indeed outside Norway. Given their presence in this country for the Washington exhibition, we hope that you will give your most generous consideration to our request that they be allowed to remain here for these additional weeks and thus be made accessible to the large and appreciative public The Museum of Modern Art serves."

After discussions by telephone to Norway and with the National Gallery of Art in Washington, final approval was given to retain the Munch works in this country for exhibition in New York.