

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

The Prints of Edvard Munch, an exhibition of 100 works including the recent gift of the William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from February 13 through April 29. In addition to 68 prints from the Museum collection, letters to and from the artist and books from his personal library relating to the prints and their subjects have been lent by the Munch Museum of the Oslo Municipal Collections and The Houghton Library at Harvard University for this exhibition. Two of Munch's wood blocks from the Munch Museum showing the artist's unique method of making woodcuts are displayed, as he often did, as wall sculpture.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Pål Hougen, Director of the Munch Museum, will lecture on Sunday, February 18, at 3 p.m. in The Museum of Modern Art Founders Room. The lecture is free and open to the public, although seating is limited.

The prints in the exhibition date from 1894 to 1931 and include Munch's first lithograph, The Young Model made in 1894, his first woodcuts done in 1896, and three hand-colored prints: Ashes and Woman (The Sphinx), both executed in 1899, and Evening (on the Beach: Melancholy), of 1901.

"At the moment when Freud was formulating his theories, Munch's art was depicting the subjects of psychological studies," Riva Castleman, director of the exhibition, comments in the Introduction to the accompanying checklist and chronology. "His concern with the relationship between the sexes emerges obsessively. This exhibition of Munch's prints in the collection...includes the first showing of the William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection devoted to this central theme: Man and Woman."

"The haunting, magic atmosphere that Munch conjures so expressively in his prints is made more vivid by awareness of the personalities of the artist and his friends as well as the circumstances of their lives," continues Riva Castleman. There are a number of portraits of his friends in the exhibition, among them August Strindberg, Henrik Ibsen, and Max Linde, and 21 letters and manuscripts. Some of the more pertinent

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facts of Munch's life, augmented by quotations from this correspondence and his books, are given in the checklist and chronology.

Riva Castleman, Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books at the Museum, was assisted by Howardena Pindell, Assistant Curator.

This is the third exhibition at the Museum devoted to the work of Munch. The first, a retrospective, was presented in 1950; the second, The Graphic Work of Edvard Munch, was shown in 1957.

The New York State Council on the Arts supports a portion of The Museum of Modern Art's program.

Photographs and additional information are available through Linda Gordon, Associate Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, N. Y., N. Y. 10019. Tel: (212) 956-2648.

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NO. 8A

THE PRINTS OF EDVARD MUNCH

February 13 - April 29, 1973

WALL LABELS

This exhibition of prints by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944) is drawn entirely from the collections of The Museum of Modern Art. Because much of Munch's work has a direct relationship to his life, a selection of letters, photographs, and books recording some of his experiences have been borrowed from The Munch Museum of The Oslo Municipal Collections.

Munch is one of very few artists whose prints are more than an incidental part of his life's work. Indeed, they encompass almost his entire thematic encyclopedia. In woodcut, in lithography, and in etching, the compelling personality of the so-called "father" of expressionism increases in intensity. The vigor of his chisel or crayon and the impact of his subjects are made more striking by the intimate immediacy of these fragile sheets of paper.

The Museum of Modern Art gratefully acknowledges the support of its exhibition program by the New York State Council on the Arts.

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MAN AND WOMAN

Today, the manifold and complex relationships between the sexes are being minutely examined in the public arena. Many of the compositions of Edvard Munch were created at the moment in the late 19th century when similar investigations engrossed a significant part of the European intellectual community. The prevailing concepts of man as the hero and pillar of society and woman as the suppliant servant and mother were being attacked in public by those who revolted against such roles and by those who chronicled in writing and the fine arts the discrepancies that they found to exist in reality.

When Munch was five years old his mother died of tuberculosis. Although his aunt took her place in the household, his father's withdrawal into a rigid religious existence did not provide Edvard with a conventional family experience. His eldest sister died when he was thirteen, and he became convinced that the tendency toward tuberculosis in his family precluded a marital role for himself. He was handsome (Strindberg called him "Pretty Boy Henry" in his autobiographical novel Inferno) and virile. During his twenties and thirties he lived in the midst of a rowdy Bohemian crowd intent on destroying the prevailing social conventions and increasing their awareness of the inner mysteries of the human psyche. Some women, attempting to build lives outside of the bourgeois morality, placed themselves in the community of prostitutes in order to have the same freedom as men. Munch and many of his friends drank excessively or took drugs in order to expand their awareness. In his paintings and prints he recorded this revolution by depicting the emotional relationships between men and women. He called his pictures "Cycles from the Modern Life of the Soul."

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Munch acutely observed the sexual evolution of woman and transcribed these impressions through the distortion of his own crippling heritage and experiences. The woman who dominates a submissive man becomes the Vampire. She rises in triumph in Ashes while the huddled male is consumed by the sexual struggle. Woman (or The Sphinx) is the one composition that embodies Munch's appraisal of women during the period before his nervous breakdown in 1908. Munch's explanation, "she is the woman of dreams, woman of lust, and woman the nun," was used, he believed, by Henrik Ibsen for his characterizations of the three females in his play When We Dead Awaken. Man is the victim, not the hero, subjected to fits of melancholy and jealousy. Only in youth do the sexes meet on equal terms (Attraction and Two Beings) but they are shown separate and expectant. Their fate is to lose their individuality, as in the fusing of their faces in The Kiss. In Munch's interpretation of her sexual evolution, woman is the "hero" and her orgasmic apotheosis occurs in Madonna.

The William B. and Evelyn A. Jaffe Collection, devoted to the theme of Man and Woman as it was developed in Munch's prints from 1894 to 1902, has been augmented by other prints in the Museum's collection that represent the same subjects.

Riva Castleman
Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books

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SPECIAL TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

EDVARD MUNCH AND ROMANTIC ART

Lecture by Dr. Werner Timm, author of The Graphic Art of Edvard Munch

At The Museum of Modern Art
Sunday, March 11, at 3:00 p. m.
in the 6th Floor Founders Room

Presented in conjunction with the current exhibition
'The Prints of Edvard Munch' on view through April 29

Admission to the lecture is included with Museum admission
Tickets are not required, although seating is limited

FULL TIME STUDENTS WITH CURRENT IDENTIFICATION ARE NOW
ADMITTED TO THE MUSEUM AT THE SPECIAL RATE OF \$1.00 EACH

Dr. Timm, who was formerly director of the department of prints and drawings at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, resides in East Germany and is a specialist on Munch's German influences and experiences.