

Edvard Munch 1863 - 1944

Edvard Munch 1863 - 1944

1863

– Born 12 Dec. near Loten in county of Hedmark, Norway 2nd child of military doctor Christian Munch and Laura Catherine, née Bjolstad. His mother has already contracted tuberculosis at the time of his birth. The oldest child is Sophie (1862-1877) and 3 more will follow: Andreas (1865-1895), Laura (1867-1926), Inger (1868-1952).

1864 – Family moves to Christiania (Oslo).

1868 – Munch’s mother dies after the birth of Inger. Her sister Karen Marie Bjolstad, who is an art lover, moves in to look after the children and encourages them to draw.

1877 – Death of Sophie. Munch’s father suffers from depression and becomes puritanical and religious.

Munch’s health is weak, he studies engineering in Kristiania technical school.

1880 – Munch quits school having decided to become a painter. He enrolls in Royal school of drawing.

1882 – Sells some small paintings in an auction, shares studio with 6 other students on Karl Johan Street, central thoroughfare of Kristiania. Meets Norwegian Naturalist painters Christian Krogh (1852-1925) and Frits Thaulow (1847-1906)

1883 – Exhibits his work for the first time at the Kristiania Art and Industry exhibition and at the Autumn Salon inspired by the famous Paris Spring salon. His painting, ‘Morning’ is criticized.

1884 – Paints at Krogh's outdoor academy in Modun in the summer, frequents Kristiania Bohemians, notably anarchist writer Hans Jaeger.

1885 – Improved health allows him to travel abroad thanks to a grant obtained for him by Thalow. Visits World Fair in Antwerp, where he shows a portrait of his sister Inger, and Paris. Back in Norway meets and begins a passionate liaison (until 1889) with Milly Thalow, sister in law of his friend and patron. Shows at Autumn Salon and begins work on the 'Sick Child'.

1886 – Befriends Oda Krogh, writer and art critic Jappe Nielsen, poet Gunnar Helberg, painter Karl Jensen-Hjell.

1887 – Worst reactions yet to his paintings at Autumn Salon, notably the first version of 'Sick Child'.

1888 – Participates in major Copenhagen art show where he discovers latest international trends. Discovers village of Asgardstrand, which will become his summer holiday home for the next 20 years.

1889 – First solo show at Kristiania Student Union with 63 works is better received. Obtains two-year grant from Norwegian state. Participates in Paris World Fair art exhibition. Begins an illustrated diary in which will be elaborated the subjects for the 'Frieze of Life'. Moves to Paris to study with Realist painter and society portraitist Léon Bonnat. Discovers the work of Van Gogh, Seurat, Signac and Toulouse-Lautrec at the Paris Salon des Indépendants. Retires to Saint-Cloud outside Paris. Is initiated in Symbolist theory by Danish poet Emanuel Goldstein.

1890 - Gradually abandons Realism for a more Symbolist and Post-Impressionist style. Suffers from rheumatic fever, is hospitalized in Le Havre.

1891 – Arrives in Nice in January for a cure and is inspired by the bright southern light. In April he returns to Paris, visits Salon des Indépendants and sees a Gauguin exhibition. Spends summer in Asgardstrand where the triangular relationship between Oda Krogh, her husband and the poet Jappe Nielsen inspire 'Melancholy', which will be recognized as the first Norwegian symbolist painting. Deterioration of health due to excessive drinking.

1892 – Exhibition of 50 paintings in new style at the Kristiania Tostrupgarden. 52 paintings are also exhibited in solo show at the Verein Bildender In Berlin. The works are criticized for being unfinished and ugly and the show is shut down by majority vote of the members before its scheduled end. Munch becomes famous overnight. Dissenting artists quit the Verein Beildender in protest and under the leadership of Max Liebermann found the Berlin Secession. The Berlin art dealer Eduard Schulte takes the show to Düsseldorf and Cologne.

1893 – Munch remains in Berlin through the winter. Paints his most famous picture, “The Scream”. He frequents the literary circle of the Zum Schwarzen

Ferkel brewery: writers August Strindberg, Stanislaw Prybyszewski, Julius Meier Graffe, Holger Drachmann. He introduces a Norwegian music student, Dagny Juel, to his Berlin friends, she marries Prybyszewski causing a great deal of jealousy and havoc in the group. Shows at Berlin Free exhibition in June. 6 paintings grouped together under the theme of “Love” pre-figure “Frieze of Life”.

1894 – Publication of first monograph on his art with contribution of several writers including Meier Graffe.

Shows 70 paintings at Swedish Artists Association in Stockholm. In Berlin for winter concentrates on etching and lithography. Sister Laura is diagnosed as a schizophrenic and is institutionalized in Norway.

1895 – “Self Portrait with Cigarette” bought by Norwegian National Gallery. Death of his brother Andreas.

1896 – In Paris for Salon des Indépendants (10 paintings, including “The Sick Child”) and a solo show at Sigfried Bing’s Salon de l’Art Nouveau. Commissioned to illustrate programs for two Ibsen plays (Peter Geent, John Gabriel Borkamn) for the avant garde Théâtre de l’Oeuvre run by Lugné-Poë. Frequents Tuesday evenings of poet Stéphane Mallarmé, begins woodcuts inspired by Gauguin’s prints.

1897 – Shows a section of the “Frieze of Life” at the Salon des Indépendants. Buys fisherman’s cottage in Agsardstrand and paints house and garden in the summer. 85 paintings, 65 prints and 31 studies are shown at Diorama in Kristiania. Liaison with Tulla Larsen, daughter of well to do wine merchant.

1898-99 – Spends winters in Kristiania and travels in Europe. Commits himself to Kornhaug Sanatorium.

1900 – Refuses to marry Tulla, fearing loss of his artistic freedom and transmission of his illness and disposition to madness to a future generation. They travel in Italy together but relationship is ended. Munch enters sanatorium in Switzerland. Exhibits at Diorama and in Dresden.

1901 – Exhibits in Munich and at Vienna Secession. His financial situation remains precarious despite growing success of his art.

1902 – Exhibits 22 paintings of the “Frieze of Life” at Berlin Secession. Meets Lübeck ophthalmologist Max Linde who will become one of his closest friends and collectors. Shoots himself during fight with Tulla Larsen, loses two finger joints in his left hand.

1903 – Shows in 13 exhibitions, including at the Paul Cassirer gallery in Berlin and Commeter in

Hamburg. The popularity of his print style is attested by the sale of 800 prints.

1904 – Signs exclusive contract for his prints with Cassirer and with Commeter for his paintings. The contracts prove unsatisfactory and will be repudiated in 1907. Invited to teach at the Berlin Secession is unable to do much because of excessive drinking. He paints more portraits which will become an important source of revenue.

1905 – Exhibits at Manes in Prague, great impact on young Czech painters. Shows also in Copenhagen, Paris, Stockholm, Munich and Vienna. Leaves Norway for Denmark after violent fight with painter Ludvig Karsten. One of his best collectors the Swedish banker Ernst Thiel commissions a portrait of Nietzsche. Undertakes a cure for alcoholism in in Bad Elgersburg in Germany.

1906 – Remains in Germany, is commissioned by theatre director Max Reinhardt to design the sets for Ibsen's Ghosts and for the Berliner Kammerspiele lobby (the "Reinhardt frieze"). His work inspires the German avant-garde, the Expressionists of the Die Brücke group.

1907 – Works in Berlin. Designs sets for Hedda Gabler and paints two portraits of industrialist Walter Rathenau. Shown with Cézanne and Matisse at Cassirer gallery in Berlin. Meets the German painter Emil Nolde.

1908 – Moves to Copenhagen. Suffers from hallucinations, delirium, persecution delusions and partial leg paralysis. Hospitalized in October in psychiatric clinic of Dr Jacobson. Continues painting in his hospital room. Is awarded the Norwegian royal order of St Olav. His graphic works meet great success at the Berlin Secession show.

1909 – Leaves clinic in much better shape. Great success for his retrospective exhibition in Kristiania. First purchases of his paintings by the Norwegian National Gallery. The collector Olaf Schou leaves his collection including 7 paintings by Munch to the national gallery. Munch settles in large wooden house in Kragero on southern Norwegian coast and paints the vicinity. Numerous exhibitions in Germany, Central Europe and also Rome. Begins working on project for decoration of festival hall of Kristiania University.

1910 – Shows 89 paintings and 180 prints at Diorama. His decorative project for the university is rejected.

1912 – Immense success of his exhibitions in Vienna and Cologne..

1913 – Rents bigger property on Jeloya peninsula in order to work on large paintings, notably monumental depictions of workers.

1914 – His university mural project is finally accepted.

1916 – Buys new property in Ekely west of Kristiania.

1919 – Ill with Spanish flue,
paints self portrait while ill.

1922 – Major exhibition at
Kunsthaus in Zurich, Switzerland, also travels to Bern and Basel.

1923 – Named member of German
Academy of Fine Arts.

1925 – Kristiania re-named Oslo.

1926 – Death of his sister
Laura, suffering from deep depression. The mural destined for Oslo University,
“The Human Mountain” is finally finished but rejected.

1927 – Travels abroad,
important retrospectives at Berlin and Oslo National galleries.

1928 – Exhibits in San
Francisco and Royal Academy, London.

1929 – Builds “winter studio”.

1930 – Temporarily blinded
after ruptured blood vessel in right eye. Paints all phases of this ailment.

1932 – Death of his aunt and
surrogate mother Karen.

1933 – Receives many
decorations on his 70th birthday including the Norwegian order of St
Olav and Goethe medal from German president Paul Hindenburg.

1937 – 82 of his post WWI
paintings in German collections are declared “degenerate” by Nazi regime and
confiscated.

1939 – Refuses great exhibition
in Paris. Gallery Harvolsen in Oslo holds auction sale for 14 paintings and 31
prints confiscated in Germany.

1940 – Norway occupied by the
Germans. Munch lives in isolation in Ekely and begins his last self- portraits,
a confrontation with death.

1942 – First American
retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

1944 – Dies of pneumonia in Ekely on 23 January. Leaves all of his works in his possession (1100 paintings, 18 000 prints, 3000 drawings and watercolors, 143 lithographic stones, 150 copper plates, 33 woodblocks and numerous photographs, manuscripts and his library) to the city of Oslo.

1946 – The city parliament votes the building of a Munch museum.

1952 – His sister Inger leaves another 15 paintings to the city on her death.

1963 – Inauguration of Munch museum in Toyen on the 100th anniversary of his birth.