

M.c. escher report

Business



M. C. Escher By: Mercedes Moser Maurits Cornelis (M. C.) Escher was born on June 17, 1898, in the Dutch province of Friesland. His parents, George Arnold Escher and Sarah Gleichman Escher, had three sons of which Maurits was the youngest.

The Escher family was living in Leeuwarden in 1898, where George served as Chief Engineer for a government bureau. The family lived in a grand house named “ Princessehof,” which would later become a museum and host exhibitions of M. C. Escher’s works. Young M.

C. Escher moved with his family to Arnhem. M. C Escher lived in Arnhem for a while, in order to improve his health. In 1907, in secondary school, his marks were poor except in drawing. His art teacher took an interest in his drawing talent, and taught him to make linocuts.

He failed his final exam and thus never officially graduated. In 1913, M. C. Escher met his lifelong friend Bas Kist. Kist was also interested in printing techniques, and may have encouraged M.

C. to make his first linoleum cut works. In 1917, the two friends visited the artist Gert Stegeman, who had a printing press in his studio. Some of M. C. ‘ s work from this year was apparently printed at Stegeman’s.

Also, in 1917, the Escher family moved to Oosterbeek, Holland. During these past few years, M. C. Escher and his friends became very involved in literature, and M. C.

began to write some of his own poems and essays. In 1918, Escher began private lessons and studies in architecture at the Higher Technology School

in Delft. He managed to get a deferment on military service in order to study, but poor health prevented him from keeping up with the curriculum. As a result of always being sick he could not continue school (he had never successfully graduated from high school!). During this ruff period in time, Escher did many drawings, and also began using woodcuts as a medium.

It was also at this time that his work began to receive favorable reviews in the media. Still trying to pursue a career in architecture, M. C. Escher next moved to Haarlem and began studies at the School for Architecture and Decorative Arts. After on a week in the city, he met the artist Jessurun de Mesquita.

After seeing Escher's drawings, Mesquita and the school's director advised him to continue with them. He began full-time study of " the graphic and decorative arts" in the fall of 1919. Also at this time, he acquired a white cat as a present from his land-lady. In 1921, Escher and his parents visited the Riviera and Italy. Unimpressed by the tropical flowers of the Mediterranean climes, he made detailed drawings of cacti and olive trees.

He also sought out high places and dramatic vistas to sketch, some of his later works were influenced by these sights. Escher started to experiment with themes that would suffuse his later works around this time. The woodcuts he did for a humorous booklet *Easter Flowers* exhibit several: mirror images, crystal shapes, and spheres. The first print by M. C.

Escher to sell in large numbers was *St. Francis (Preaching to the Birds)*, a woodcut that Escher claimed to have " worked on like a madman. " (www.wikipedia.com) In 1922, in search of fresh inspiration, he decided to go to <https://assignbuster.com/mc-escher-report/>

Italy. He did a great deal of serious drawing here and in the next few towns he visited: Volterra and Siena.

He spent all of the spring of 1922 roaming the Italian countryside, drawing landscapes, plants, and even insects. In Assisi he met a fellow Dutchman, the painter Gerretsen. The two met occasionally over the next few years. He took his first opportunity to return to southern Europe, taking a freighter to Spain with some friends. It was on this trip that he first saw the phenomenon of a phosphorescent sea, so beautifully expressed later in his woodcut of the same name.

He visited Madrid and its famous museum, the Prado, but was unimpressed by many of the paintings there. Missing an express train, he spent 24 hours on a local train to get to Granada. In Granada, Escher visited the Alhambra, and saw examples of Moorish (Arabic) decorative styles. He studied these, and copied one. In time he was concentrating on a young lady named Jetta. In mid-August he proposed to her, and was wed in Viareggio.

And on August 28th the two arrived in Zurich to formally meet the family. (Math ; amp; Mathematicians: The History of Math Discoveries around the World (Volume 4)) 1924 was a very busy year for M. C. Escher. He held his first one-man show in his native Holland in February. M.

C. Escher and his newlywed visited Genoa, Annecy, and Brussels. In October they went to France, and then went back to Italy. During all these travels, Escher had the chance to observe a great many architectural forms. Shortly after Escher moved into his new home outside of Rome, his brother was

killed in a mountaineering accident, and Escher had to go to the site to identify the body.

After this tragedy, Escher produced his famous Days of Creation woodcuts. Living in Rome, happy with his wife and child, the late 1920s were a productive period for Escher. It was during this period that his pictures were first labeled as mechanical and “reasoned.” Pictures from this period include some of Escher’s most striking landscapes, and also some stark commercial illustrations. The very famous lithographic of a mountainside village, Castrovalva, was completed in February 1930.

Also, Escher’s son Arthur was born in 1930. Later in 1930, and into 1931, Escher health was poor and there was a lull in the sale of prints. The print room of Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam bought twenty-six prints to give Escher a nice start to 1933. In May, he went to Corsica and made nineteen drawings that later became wood engravings and lithographs. Later that year, he created some prints for a horror book named The Terrible Adventures of Scholastica.

In 1934, Escher and his wife continued on to Belgium, Ghent, and Bruges. In the meantime, his work was doing well in the US. His print Nonza won third prize at the Exhibition of Contemporary Prints at the Art Institute of Chicago. The Art Institute also purchased the print, which was Escher’s first sale to a museum in America. He then travelled to Amsterdam.

During this visit, Escher spent a great deal of time on a detailed portrait of his father. This lithograph was finished in August, and prints given to members of the family only. Escher made a lithograph of a farmer’s shed on <https://assignbuster.com/mc-escher-report/>

a snow-covered hillside, but was disappointed with the poverty and starkness of the result. His son George later said that his father missed the warmth of Italian landscapes. In early 1936, Escher was determined to take a trip back through southern Europe. He wrote a shipping company, and offered to make prints of the company's ships and their ports of call, in exchange for free passage on the company vessels.

To his surprise, the Adria shipping company accepted the offer, and at the end of April he left for Trieste. At the Adria offices, he was treated with great deference and courtesy. Escher's journey by ship took him to Venice, Ancona, Bari, Catania, Palermo, Genoa, and several other Italian and Sicilian cities. Jetta joined him in mid-May. During the trip, Escher made many sketches of the ships and ports. Roughly nine prints, almost all woodcuts, resulted from the trip.

It was to be Escher's last extended trip through his beloved Mediterranean Italy. In June, after his trip courtesy of Adria, Escher and his wife visited some lakes in Switzerland, and then went to stay with Escher's parents at The Hague. The trip was successful, but it was a successful ending to one phase of Escher's career. On September 1, Escher and his family returned to Chateau d'Oex, and Escher's graphic work gradually began to take new directions. In 1938, Escher continued to experiment with plane-filling techniques, shapes, and transformations.

In order to give the impression of infinite extent, he tried first tried making the figures vaguer toward the edges of the print and later by scaling the figures smaller as they approached the center, or smaller as they

approached the border. One of the most beautiful motifs Escher created was that of two birds flying in opposite directions. This became the basis for the famous print Day and Night, which is still one of his most popular single works. On June 14 1939, M. C. Escher's father, G.

A. Escher, died in his home in The Hague. Several months after his father's death, Escher began work on a new major work. He had already done a woodcut named Metamorphosis (1937), it showed a city block transforming into a little human figure. The new Metamorphosis II was to show a sequence of ten transformations, and at 19cm x 3. 9m it was his largest print.

As another experiment with tilings, he carved a motif of swimming fish onto a Beachwood sphere, completely covering the surface. Escher was extremely fond of this little sculpture, keeping it with him the rest of his life. At the end of May, Escher's mother died. Due to the invasion, he missed her funeral at The Hague. Escher spent the rest of 1940 settling his mother's affairs, and executing a commission to decorate the town hall of Leiden.

He and Jetta found a house in Baarn, Holland, and moved there in February of 1941. (www. wikipedia. com) In 1946, Escher became interested in a new technique: mezzotint. While very laborious and time-consuming, the resulting works could show very subtle and delicate lines and shadings.

Possible one of Escher's most famous mezzotint works, and one that shows off the technique well, is the 1948 Dewdrop. www. wikipedia. com) In addition to doing woodcuts, lithographs, and an occasional mezzotint, Escher took on several unusual commissions in 1949/1950. Working with a weaver, he designed a tapestry, and he designed a ceiling decoration for a factory.

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It is a good measure of Escher's growing fame that he was beginning to get as many requests for these kinds of services as he could handle. Although some serious print collectors in America knew about Escher's work, he was not yet popular outside of Europe. Fame in America began for Escher with two magazine articles. Due to recognition in the art journal *The Studio*, *Time-Life* journalist Israel Shenker interviewed Escher at his home in Baarn. The interview took place in late 1950, and articles about Escher and his work appeared in the 4/2/51 *Time* and the 5/7/51 *Life*.

The articles gained some attention and orders for Escher work increased greatly. Escher sometimes crafted models or figures in clay, wood, string, or other material to assist himself in visualizing subjects of his prints. For example, the famous *Reptiles* from 1943 depict a tiny crocodile crawling out of a tessellation and over some books. Also during the early 1950s, Escher gained popularity as a lecturer. He was in demand both for artistic audiences, and for scientific ones.

He also held his first one-man exhibition in the United States. It was held in Washington, and raised US awareness of Escher's work and sold many prints. Due to the rush of work, Escher completed only two new works in 1954. (Math & Mathematicians: The History of Math Discoveries around the World (Volume 4)) In 1955 and 56, Escher completed many famous prints, including the beautiful "Three Worlds" and distinctive "Print Gallery". During this time, he also sold many prints. For example, he received a check from a Washington art dealer – bring his total for sales in the US to \$2125 for the sale of 150 prints! This sum may seem small today (indeed, some individual

Escher works from the 1950s sell for nearly as much) but Escher was well pleased with it.

In terms of Escher's work, I can also see a definite trend beginning in 1956-58 toward merging the themes of approaching infinity and tiling the plane. Beginning with the print "Smaller and Smaller" (1956) and continuing through "Whirlpools" (1957) and up until his last print "Snakes", Escher sought a way to express infinity within the bounds of a finite print. Prior to 1958, all save one of his works show objects shrinking toward the center of the print. After 1958, all such prints show objects shrinking toward the outer edges. The change in approach to showing infinity was due in part to Escher seeing an article by Prof.

Coxeter of Ottawa, which included an illustration of a system for reducing a plane-filling motif with increasing distance from the center of a circle. Escher's interpretation and extrapolations of Coxeter's system appear in no less than 6 major works. Escher found the effect beautiful, but was sometimes worried that viewers would not. While a small circle of mathematicians had been appreciating Escher's work since the 1940s, it was in 1959 that he met Prof. MacGillavry. This lady academic arranged for Escher to give a talk about symmetry to an international meeting of crystallographers in England.

Early in 1960, the first book of Escher's prints was released, *Grafiek en Tekeningen*, with descriptions of 76 works by Escher himself. The book helped Escher gain recognition among mathematicians and crystallographers, including some in Russia and Canada. Before even giving his lecture to the Cambridge crystallographers' meeting in August of 1960, Escher also

arranged to give it again in Canada and the US. When he finally gave the Cambridge lecture, it was very well-received; Escher also had a great time in England, being a something of a guest of honor at the meeting, and the only artist in attendance. Mathematical and crystallographic aspects of Escher's periodic (tiling) works became quite popular in the late 1950s and 1960, and in 1961 he gave permission for a book about them to be published under the auspices of the International Union of Crystallography.

The book, *Symmetry Aspects of M. C. Escher's Periodic Drawings* by Prof. Caroline MacGillavry, was published in 1965. In 1964, Escher went to North America again to see his son and deliver a series of lectures.

Unfortunately, he fell ill almost immediately upon arrival, and after surgery in Toronto he and his wife returned to Holland. The lectures, which Escher had written out in full, were published more than two decades later as part of the book *Escher on Escher* (Abrams, 1986). Escher's wife was never happy living in Baarn. In 1968 she moved back to Switzerland, and lived there the rest of her life. Escher himself stayed in Baarn, and immersed himself in work.

His health was failing, but he continued drawing and printing woodcuts.

During the month of March, 1972, Escher's condition deteriorated. His family gathered around him, taking turns sitting by his hospital bed. On March 27, 1972, he died, at the age of 73. (Math ; amp; Mathematicians: The History of Math Discoveries around the World (Volume 4)) (www. wikipedia.

com) Bibliography Book: Math ; amp; Mathematicians: The History of Math Discoveries around the World (Volume 4) ©2003 by U-X-L. U-X-L is an

imprint of The Gale Group, Inc. , a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Internet:
en. wikipedia.

org/wiki/Tessellation www. wikipedia. com Discovery Tessellations: A
tessellation or tiling of the plane is a collection of plane figures that fills the
plane with no overlaps and no gaps. One may also speak of tessellations of
the parts of the plane or of other surfaces. Generalizations to higher
dimensions are also possible.

(en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Tessellation) Examples: Relativity: Relativity is a
famous lithograph print by the Dutch artist M. C. Escher, first printed in
December 1953. (en.

wikipedia. org/wiki/Relativity) Examples: