

Edvard munch



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Important Paintings of Edvard Munch The art of Edvard Munch encompasses many styles from the late 19th and early 20th century, but it is the expressionism and symbolism that most deeply portrays the soul of the artist and reflects his view of the world around him. The personal struggles that he endured are portrayed on canvas and reveal the journey he made through life as well as the impact that the outside world had on him. With color, brush strokes, placement and nuance his paintings often induce a sense of morbid awe, yet we are pulled into the familiar subjects as they invoke fear, pity, shame, and love. Three paintings that highlight important periods in the artist's journey through life and depict events which changed his course are "The Scream", "The Kiss", and "Self-Portrait between the Clock and the Bed".

One of Munch's most widely recognized paintings is "The Scream". The painting depicts the fear and agony that Munch carried with him as he came to terms with the loss of his family through death and illness. The figure is seen haunted by the dark figures lurking in the past as he gazes in horror at the future ahead of him. The colors are dark and surreal which merge to form a vaguely recognizable landscape. As the colors swirl into the central theme of the canvas, they distort and twist the face of the subject. A tortured soul gripped with the fear of the impending apocalypse with nowhere to run. Munch pulls us into the horrifying world of loss and torment and in doing so we begin to hear "The Scream".

"The Kiss", painted in 1897, comes from Munch's middle life and is a continuing theme of the love and women that populate his art. In "The Kiss", we see the image of lovers wrapped in embrace, alone and secure. The picture develops the figures as one body, faceless and without form as they

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meld into an inseparable image. Joined, yet isolated, they are serene as they are set away from the window and the outside world. The colors are more muted and the sky a truer representation of a pleasant day. Yet, the subjects exude a dark brooding that elicits a feeling of anonymity as the pair fall in love and lose their individual identity. "The Kiss" displays the ambiguous conflict that Munch experienced with the women in his life. Love, seen here, may be a quiet escape from the anxiety of the world, or it may be the pit where we lose ourselves forever.

In his later years, as Munch became more aware and accepting of his own mortality, he painted "Self-Portrait between the Clock and the Bed". Here we see Munch posed beside a clock with time running out, and an easy step away from the bed that had become a symbol of death to him. The man is focused on his audience, not running from his fears. In the background are his paintings, hung in an orderly fashion with straightened lines and form. The painting of the woman on the right gives a sense of rising to the heavens as Munch accepts that he will finally at last follow to join her. In contrast to his earlier works, here we see a floor that is smooth and polished offering a reflection of Munch and his surroundings in realistic form.

These important works of Edward Munch all show us the spiritual nature of life whether in our fear, our love, or our death. Munch was able to capture the unspoken, and often undefined, space in a way that forced the world to view itself in a new and different way. These paintings are all a depiction of the artist's self image and represent that part of us that we share with his own frightening view of the world around us.