

# Open Windows 1

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## Open Windows 1

This first issue of *Open Windows*, the on-line periodical on the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza's collection, aims to encourage new and more creative, analytical and individual ways of looking. There is no doubt that seeing our paintings in different contexts – for example, the works by Lucian Freud currently on loan to the exhibition at the Centre Pompidou – offers an enriching experience that will also lead to new ideas and interpretations.

In addition, a varied range of articles offers insights and information on works in the Museum's collections. *The Flood at Port-Marly* of 1876 by Alfred Sisley is analysed in the context of depictions of that subject, from Michelangelo's *The Flood* up to Impressionism. An article on *Two Mothers with their Children* and *Three seated Figures* by Henry Moore allows for an examination of the importance of that artist's *Shelter Drawings* for the evolution of his sculpture. The text on the *Portrait of David Lyon* by Sir Thomas Lawrence (ca. 1825) includes previously unpublished information on the sitter's life and on the painting's history. Finally, *Evening* by Munch (1888) is interpreted as a key work for the subsequent development of the artist's Symbolist idiom.

# Other ways of seeing. Baron Thyssen and Lucian Freud's Atelier

Paloma Alarcó



Fig. 1  
Lucian Freud. *L'Atelier*  
Centre Pompidou  
10 March to 19 July 2010,  
Paris



Fig. 2  
Lucian Freud  
*Large interior. Paddington*,  
1968-1969  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza,  
Madrid  
[\[+ info\]](#)



Fig. 3  
Lucian Freud  
*The Painter working*.  
*Reflection*, 1993  
Private collection

A giant-size blow-up of *Reflection with two Children*, mounted on the façade of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, welcomes visitors to the exhibition *Lucian Freud. L'Atelier*, curated by Cécile Debray (fig. 1). The incisive gaze of this great painter, made even more penetrating by the exaggerated use of a low angle in the composition, seems to alert us to the fact that in order to enter into his personal universe we must mentally prepare ourselves to survive his ability to disturb the viewer.

This self-portrait, which is also currently to be seen adorning half the walls of the city of Paris, is one of the works that the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum has lent to the exhibition. It offers a unique opportunity to reconsider the art of Lucian Freud and to discover in the works from the Museum's collection (temporarily absent from its galleries) a network of interpretations that arouse previously unknown emotions.

Freud's disturbing realism offers no respite, and once inside the exhibition the visitor is immediately enveloped in an atmosphere as sickening as it is fascinating. In the first section, *Interior/Exterior*, the viewer enters into Freud's private universe, his realm of freedom, reflection and transgression. We see various canvases from different periods and of different sizes in which his *atelier* emerges as an intimate, private place in the manner of a secret laboratory or a metaphor for painting. Outside, gardens, back courtyards, empty streets and views of roofs with chimneys co-exist with rubbish dumps. Inside, the chipped and faded walls are plastered with thick gobbets of paint wiped off the brush, while on the steeply sloping wooden floors we see a tangle of dirty rags and rickety furniture that defy the force of gravity. There is generally a plant or two which, rather than making the room feel more human, create a sense of menace, for example, the fleshy potted plant of twisted branches next to which the artist's daughter Ib lies, half-naked, in *Large Interior, Paddington* of 1968-1969 (fig. 2). Freud's models always seem unaware of any presence and submit themselves in a natural manner to the painter's acute analysis. In contrast, the viewer can start to feel extremely uncomfortable when looking at these troubling images to the point of being overtaken by a sense of suddenly finding ourselves in forbidden territory.

Freud immediately puts us to a second test. In the section of the exhibition entitled *Reflections* the naked painter in front of a mirror, wearing only boots and holding his painting tools, challenges us to meet his gaze (fig. 3). The force and complexity of Freud's self-portraits, which perfectly combine veracity and irony, are largely due to his capacity to make us feel fragile and vulnerable. While in his portraits the artist generally uses a high viewpoint, perhaps in order to emphasise his mastery over his model, in his self-portraits there is always a slight effect of *di sotto in sù*, increasing the sensation of oppression that the



Fig. 4  
Lucian Freud  
*Portrait of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza*,  
1981-1982  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid  
[\[+ info\]](#)



Fig. 5  
Jean Antoine Watteau  
*Pierrot Content*, ca. 1712  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid  
[\[+ info\]](#)



Fig. 6  
Lucian Freud  
*Large Interior W11 (after Watteau)*, 1981-1983  
Private collection

viewer experiences and making us feel more naked in their presence than we would ideally like.

Further into the exhibition, the sections *Rediscoveries* or *Re-readings* focuses on Freud's devotion to the great masters of the past such as Constable, Cézanne, Picasso, Chardin and Watteau, a devotion that he masterfully combines with a marked desire for independence. One of the most radical of these rediscoveries of the Old Masters is undoubtedly the *Portrait of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza* (fig. 4), which occupies a prominent place in this section.

From 26 July 1981 and for almost the next two years, Baron Heinrich Thyssen patiently attended sittings for his portrait at the artist's studio near Notting Hill Gate. It was the first time that the Baron had posed as a model and it marked the start of an unforgettable experience. In his words, the painter and model established a "long and fruitful relationship" that led to discussions on painting and to comparisons of their respective tastes in art.

In this small, frontal portrait, Freud looks back to his portraits of heads that he had largely executed in the 1960s. The Baron is informally dressed in a tweed sports jacket, white shirt and dark tie. Behind his right shoulder and functioning as the background to the image, is a lightly painted fragment of Jean Antoine Watteau's *Pierrot Content*, a work that had been in the Thyssen collection since 1977 (fig. 5). The Baron is located in front of the position occupied by Pierrot in the painting and even seems to have adopted his pose and expression. The slight forward tilt of the head and the downward gaze convey the idea of a prominent business tycoon absorbed in his own thoughts.

Still influenced by Watteau's painting, of which he had a reproduction stuck to his studio wall, Freud painted his monumental *Large Interior W11 (after Watteau)* (fig. 6), which is sadly not included in the present exhibition. It is a group portrait of various family members and friends. In the centre, playing the role of Pierrot, is Freud's son Kai, dressed in lemon yellow, while his daughter Bella assumes the role of Columbine. On either side of them are Celia Paul, on the left next to Bella, and Susy Boyt, Kai's mother, on the right. Both women had posed for Freud on previous occasions. The young girl lying on the floor between them creates a distorting element in the composition and recalls the young, semi-naked Ib in *Large Interior* of the previous decade.

Through his unique approach to composition and his ability to enter into the interior world of a number of his close friends and relatives, Freud transforms a theatrical subject on human sentiments characteristic of the *commedia dell'arte* into an interpretation of his own private life, re-writing Watteau's fantasy as an emphatically modern subject.



Fig. 7  
David Dawson  
*Lucian Freud in his Studio*

Our survey ends with a group of nude portraits, displayed in the exhibition under the heading *As Flesh*, referring to the artist's comment made to Lawrence Gowing in 1982: "I want paint to work as flesh". This section of the exhibition hails Freud as the artist who has best succeeded in revealing the vulnerability of the human body. Proof of this idea is the photograph of the painter taken by his assistant David Dawson in which he appears with a paint-soiled rag tucked into his belt like a butcher's apron, while he holds his brushes like knives, as if on the point of cutting up a piece of meat (fig. 7). Particularly striking in this section are the colossal images of Leigh Bowery, as heroic as a Michelangelo and a fleshy as a Rubens, and the life-size nudes of Sue Tilley, *Big Sue*, the benefits supervisor whose morbid obesity becomes a great mound of humanity through Freud's thick impasto.

Lucian Freud's paintings may fascinate or irritate, provoking immediate empathy or complete rejection, but no one who has seen them can fail to experience a profound and long-lasting sense of bewilderment. The disjunction between the subtlety of his painting and the sickening personal universe on which he focuses, combined with his grim vision of our bodily presence, projects a layer of angst onto all the sitters that he has depicted. With his ability to paint the texture of skin and the inevitably decaying reality of flesh, Freud seems to focus on reminding us that ultimately we are no more than mere mortals made from human clay.

## Juan Ángel López-Manzanares



Fig. 1  
Alfred Sisley  
*Flood at Port-Marly*, 1876  
Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection on loan  
at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid  
[\[+ info\]](#)

In March 1876 the River Seine burst its banks at the harbour of Port-Marly, situated at the foot of Marly-le-Roi. Alfred Sisley (1839-1899), who had taken up residence in the town at the end of 1874, took the opportunity to paint a series of works on the flood. Now regarded as crowning achievements in the English artist's career and a milestone in the evolution of Impressionism, they reveal an extraordinary harmony and luminosity. One of the works (fig. 1), owned by the Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, offers us a chance to make a detailed study of Sisley's contribution.

### 1 "It's nothing but water and people drowning"

Flooding as an artistic motif can be traced back to the Great Flood that Michelangelo (1475-1564) painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel between 1508 and 1512 (fig. 2). Both Michelangelo and other artists who dealt with the theme, such as Leandro Bassano (1557-1622), Carlo Saraceni (c. 1579-1620) and Antonio Carracci (c. 1583-1618), focus on the victims of the tragedy in their respective works. Their vast number accentuates the cosmic nature of the event while simultaneously minimising any possible development of the landscape.

Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) was the first to give landscape an unprecedented prominence in his work entitled *Winter* (1660-64), also known as *The Deluge* (fig. 3). In fact, we only know that this is a painting of the biblical flood because of the ark in the background and the heroic nature of the figures represented. These are relatively few in number and, unlike previous works on the same theme, they are situated at an intermediate distance from the observer. In contrast, Poussin shows himself to be a shrewd observer of atmospheric phenomena in his depiction of the lightning and the heavy clouds blocking the sun. It was this naturalism that led the critic and essayist André Félibien to claim: "It's nothing but water and people drowning".<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 2.  
Michelangelo  
*The Flood*, ca. 1508-1512  
Sistine Chapel, the Vatican

Fig. 3  
Nicolas Poussin  
*Winter or The Deluge*, 1660-1664  
Musée du Louvre, Paris

### 2 En plein air

With works such as *Winter*, Poussin laid the foundations for "heroic" or "historical" landscapes, a genre that would only be officially recognised a century and a half later by the Neoclassical painter Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750-1819), who considered it second only to history painting. However, Valenciennes is best known for having codified and systematised a hitherto sporadic practice: painting small studies outdoors, *en plein air*. In his essay *Éléments de perspective pratique* (1800), he argued that painting outdoors was a vital part of the learning process and an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the great heroic landscape compositions produced in the studio.



Fig. 4  
Paul Huet  
*Flood at Saint-Cloud*, 1855  
Musée du Louvre, Paris

On the subject of storms and the floods that often arise from them, Valenciennes urged young artists to “study the sublime scenes of a spectacle that cannot be admired without a shudder,” not hesitating to paint before their eyes scenes such as the following: “Large heavy drops announce the rain, which suddenly becomes a downpour; the condensed clouds, now grown too heavy for the air that supports them, plunge down almost en masse; torrents form, which grow and overflow, sweeping away earth, rocks, trees, animals and anything else that the rapid, muddy waters find in their path”.<sup>2</sup>

However, because of the difficulty of capturing these phenomena in the outdoors, floods were not a frequent theme among the artists who began to paint en plein air in the late 18th and early 19th century. One of the rare exceptions is the painting *Flood at Saint-Cloud*, 1855 (Musée du Louvre, Paris), in which Paul Huet (1803-1869) depicted the overflowing waters of the River Seine (fig. 4). Even so, this is a large-format work painted entirely in the studio, possibly from earlier sketches, and, in keeping with Valenciennes’s exhortations about final compositions, it underscores human distress much more emphatically than the destructive force of nature.

### 3 “They are very sad pictures, but beautiful too in their sadness!”

Of all the floods that occurred in France during the 19th century, one of the most catastrophic was when the River Rhone and its tributary the Saone burst their banks late in May of 1856, causing the water level to rise by nearly eight metres in Lyon, Avignon, Tarascon and other small towns in south-east France. The number of fields flooded and houses destroyed by the water was such that Emperor Napoleon III himself was obliged to visit the worst-hit towns with a group of his ministers. This event would give rise to the well-known paintings by Hippolyte Lazerges (1817-1887) and William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905).

The photographer Édouard Baldus (1813-1889) arrived in Lyon four days after Napoleon with the mission of creating a series of negatives on the effects of the flood.<sup>3</sup> At the time, Baldus was working on an official assignment to photograph the New Louvre and had previously produced vistas of Roman and medieval monuments in the south of France. When he reached Lyon, Avignon and Tarascon, the rivers were already returning to their usual levels. Over the course of eight days he produced 25 negatives, but rather than capturing the terrible consequences of the flood, he focused his attention on the semi-dilapidated buildings and the large pools of receding water (fig. 5). In contrast to the paintings by Bouguereau and Lazerges, his photographs eschew a direct confrontation with the tragedy, and yet they cannot avoid a certain cosmic symbolism, as if the water itself had erased all trace of human presence. Fascinated by this combination of reportage



Fig. 5  
Édouard Baldus  
*Flood at Lyon, Les Brotteaux*, 1856  
Musée d’Orsay, Paris



Fig. 6  
Charles-François Daubigny  
*Flood at Billancourt*, ca. 1866  
Private Collection



Fig. 7  
Claude Monet  
*Flood at Argenteuil, 1872*  
Bridgestone Museum of Art,  
Ishibashi Foundation, Tokyo



Fig. 8  
Alfred Sisley  
*Flood at Port-Marly, 1872*  
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.



Fig. 9  
Alfred Sisley  
*The Boat during the Flood, Port-Marly, 1876*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

and aestheticism, the critic Ernest Lacan would eloquently declare: "They are very sad pictures, but beautiful too in their sadness!"<sup>4</sup>

Charles-François Daubigny (1817-1878) also opted to let the Seine return to its normal level before painting *Flood at Billancourt* around 1866 (fig. 6). As in the photographs by Baldus, this painting omits all reference to human suffering. Only a boat that has run aground and the broken trunk of a tree uprooted from the earth hint at the aftermath of the flood.

#### 4 Port-Marly, 1872-1876

Sisley and Monet (1840-1926) met at the studio of the Swiss painter Charles Gleyre (1806-1874) in the early 1860s. Years later, in February 1872, they painted the streets of Argenteuil together, an event which marked Sisley's definitive assimilation of the Impressionist language that Monet and Renoir (1841-1919) had been using since 1869.

The Impressionists were drawn to the changing atmospheric conditions inherent to floods. At the same time, they were also interested in how – as with snow – the various parts of the landscape succumbed to a blanket unity. It is therefore not surprising that, towards the end of 1872, both Money and Sisley should have dedicated several works to the floods caused by the Seine. However, the two painters approached the theme from different angles. While Monet painted flooded trees in a practically natural setting (fig. 7), Sisley situated his paintings in the urban environment of Port-Marly. This context, as can be observed in the canvas at the National Gallery in Washington (fig. 8), lends greater stability to the English painter's works.

When Port-Marly was inundated again in 1876, Sisley painted another seven works that reflect different vistas and moments of the flood.<sup>5</sup> In pictures such as those at the Musée d'Orsay (fig. 9) and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, Sisley explored the juxtaposition of solid elements with more fragile and fleeting things, such as reflections and clouds. At the same time, he also experimented with the combination of depth and other clearly flatter forms, such as the façade of the À St Nicolas tavern with its bright bands of colour and its dark openings reflected in the water. These are works of great luminosity and balance which, as has been pointed out, seem to evoke the tranquillity of the Venetian Lagoon rather than the destructive waters of the Seine.<sup>6</sup>

#### 5 "Puddles of water mirroring the sky"

Throughout his career, Sisley was fond of constructing careful compositions around *repoussoirs* and vanishing points, following the example of painters such as Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot





Fig. 10  
Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot  
*The Sin-le-Noble Road, near Douai, 1873*  
Musée du Louvre, Paris

(1796-1875) (fig. 10). In the picture *Flood at Port-Marly* belonging to the Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection (fig. 1), the viewpoint chosen by the artist emphasises the linear perspective.

In this painting, a carriage situated at the intersection of Rue Paris – the old Saint-Germain road – and Rue Jean-Jaurès announces the return to normality after the flood. The eye is immediately drawn to the background, advancing in great discontinuous leaps along the south-east corner of the Lion d’Or inn – which juts out from the rest of the street – and the À St Nicolas tavern. The tree-lined avenue along the wharf also evokes a hurried pace, and even the arrangement of the puddles on the cobblestones and the clouds in the sky contribute to the sensation of a funnel perspective.<sup>7</sup>

However, perhaps the most salient aspect of the whole composition is the sky. On the importance of this element in his oeuvre, Sisley would tell the critic Adolphe Tavernier in 1892: “Objects should be painted with their own texture; moreover – and above all – they should be bathed in light just as they are in nature. [...] The sky must be the means of doing so (the sky cannot be a mere background). On the contrary, it not only helps to add depth through its planes (for the sky has planes just as the ground does), it also gives movement through its shape, and by its arrangement in relation to the effect or composition of the picture. Is there anything more splendid or thrilling than that which is frequently found in summer, I mean the blue sky with beautiful clouds, white and drifting? What movement, what allure they have! [...] As evidence: I always start a painting with the sky.”<sup>8</sup>

Although the canvas in the Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection features spring clouds rather than summer clouds, Sisley’s words seem to have been written with this specific canvas in mind. Meanwhile, his reference to the sky as the starting point for his pictures fits in perfectly with one of Valenciennes’s principal pieces of advice, which confirms Sisley’s adherence to the classical landscape tradition. But, above all, these words reveal his tremendous affinity with the work of John Constable (1776-1837), whose cloudscapes Sisley had greatly admired during his training in London in the 1850s (fig. 11), and whose influence would years later set him apart from his fellow Impressionists.<sup>9</sup>

Critics of Sisley’s oeuvre have always pointed out the importance of his cloudscapes. It could well have been the clouds in the picture in the Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection that the critic Georges Rivière was referring to when, in connection with Sisley’s contribution to the third Impressionist exhibition in 1877, he noted: “His wonderful landscape – a path after the rain, tall trees dripping with water, the wet ground, puddles of water mirroring the sky – is full of a charming lyricism.”<sup>10</sup>



Fig. 11  
John Constable  
*The Valley Farm, 1835*  
Tate

## Notes

- 1 André Félibien: *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes (1666-1688)*, *Entretien VIII*. Paris, 1685, p. 307; cit. in René Démoris: "De La tempestad a El diluvio". In *Poussin y la Naturaleza*. [Exh. cat.]. Bilbao, Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao, 2007, p. 99.
- 2 Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes: *Éléments de perspective pratique, à l'usage des artistes, suivis de réflexions et conseils à un élève sur le peinture, et particulièrement sur le genre du paysage* (2nd ed. revised, corrected and enlarged by the author). Paris, Aimé Payen, 1820, p. 219.
- 3 See: Malcolm Daniel: *The Photographs of Édouard Baldus*. [Exh. cat.]. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Arts, 1994.
- 4 Ernest Lacan: "Photographie historique". In *La Lumière*, 21 July 1856, p. 97 ; cit. in Malcolm Daniel: "Édouard Baldus, artiste photographe". In Daniel, op. cit. p. 70, note 171, p. 266.
- 5 See: *Sisley*. [Exh. cat.]. Paris, Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992, pp. 170-175; Richard Shone: *Sisley*. London, Phaidon Press Limited, 1992, pp. 85-107; and Mary Anne Stevens and Ann Dumas: *Alfred Sisley: poeta del impresionismo*. [Exh. cat.]. Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, 2002, pp. 171-207.
- 6 Robert Rosenblum: *Les peintures du Musée d'Orsay*. Paris, Éditions de la Martinière, 1995, p. 306.
- 7 Tomàs Llorens, in Javier Arnaldo: *Colección Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza*. Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, 2004, vol. II, p. 46.
- 8 Alfred Sisley, cit. in Adolphe Tavernier: *L'Atelier de Sisley*. [Exh. cat.]. Galerie Bernheim Jeune, Paris, 2-14 December 1907; repr. in Shone, op. cit. p. 218.
- 9 Mary Anne Stevens: "Un pintor entre dos tradiciones". In Stevens / Dumas, op. cit., pp. 47-71.
- 10 Georges Rivière: "L'Exposition des impressionnistes". In *L'Impressionniste*, no. 2, 14 April 1877; repr. in Sisley. [Exh. cat.], op. cit., p. 291.

# A wartime Artist. Henry Moore and his *Shelter Drawings*

Marta Ruiz del Árbol



Fig. 1  
Henry Moore  
*Two Mothers Holding Children*, 1941  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

[\[+ info\]](#)

Fig. 2  
Henry Moore  
*Three Seated Figures*, 1941  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

[\[+ info\]](#)



Fig. 3  
Myra Hess, promoter of the lunchtime  
concerts, during a concert in the empty rooms  
of the National Gallery

With all probability it was on the night of 11 September 1940 that the sculptor Henry Moore (1898-1986) and his wife Irina decided to return home on the underground after a dinner with friends in London's West End. Just a few days prior to that date the intensive German bombings of London known as the Blitz had started and the Moores discovered to their surprise that the stations in which their train stopped on the way back to Belsize Park were full of people. Covered with blankets, thousands of men, women and children tried to make themselves comfortable in order to pass the night on the hard floors of the platforms. These improvised shelters that Londoners had decided to use in the face of the imminent attacks remained imprinted on Moore's visual memory and would give rise to one of his most important series of drawings, known as the Shelter Drawings.<sup>1</sup>

*Two Mothers Holding Children* (fig. 1) and *Three Seated Figures* (fig. 2), acquired by Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza in the early 1970s and periodically on display in room 47 of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, are two outstanding examples from this series.

## A city beneath the bombs

From the outset of the War in September 1939 the possibility that London might come under attack from Nazi bombing raids resulted in the closure of most of the city's cultural centres, concert halls and museums. One of the few exceptions was the National Gallery whose director, Kenneth Clark, decided to continue with that institution's activities, as a result of which the Gallery becomes the driving force behind cultural life in London.

Clark evacuated the Gallery's collection to a remote disused state mine in Wales, away from the bombings and from the threat of Nazi looting. With the Gallery's masterpieces safe from harm, he began to organise numerous activities in the building's empty rooms. The lunchtime concerts became institutions, while numerous and varied temporary exhibitions were organised. Finally, once the worst of the Blitz was over, the Gallery exhibited one painting every month that was brought back from Wales.<sup>2</sup>

Clark's initiatives went further, and in November 1939 he became the principal figure behind the War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC). As had been the case in World War I, the Committee commissioned artists to create works that focused on the conflict. During World War I artists of the stature of Wyndham Lewis and Paul Nash had been asked to produce works, and once again Clark contacted some of the leading names in British art in the 1940s, among them Henry Moore.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 4  
Henry Moore making sketches in Holborn underground station, 1943  
From the documentary by Jill Graigie *Out of Chaos* (photograph, Lee Miller)



Fig. 5  
Henry Moore  
*Helmet*, 1939-1940  
The Henry Moore Foundation.  
Donated by Irina Moore, 1977



Fig. 6  
Henry Moore  
*Madonna and Child*,  
1943-1944  
Church of St. Matthew,  
Northampton

Moore was initially reluctant to participate in the WAAC project as proposed by Clark, but his experience that night on the underground at the outset of the *Blitzkrieg* (lightning war) made him change his mind and he decided to produce drawings as a war artist.

### A sculptor who drew

Henry Moore's life and work were affected by the outbreak of World War II. The Chelsea School of Art, at which he was a teacher, closed down, while Moore's country house in Kent where he made most of his sculptures was declared a restricted zone due to its proximity to the English Channel. Obtaining material for sculpture became increasingly difficult and the possibility of having to abandon unfinished works in the studio meant that Moore focused more intensively on drawing.

Moore had always championed drawing as the keystone of his sculptural process, considering the lengthy life-drawing sessions and his regular visits to the British Museum to be essential to his artistic development. When drawing became his principal means of expression in 1940 and an autonomous art form, separate from his sculpture, his work in this medium retained some of the characteristics that he had formulated over the previous years.

Notable among them was what the artist defined as the "two-way sectional line method of drawing", in which, and in addition to the line that defined the outline, he introduced others in a horizontal direction that created volumes without the need to use shadows (see, for example, the figure on the right of *Three Seated Figures*, fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> The sense of volume that he achieved using this method and the "organic sinuosity of the forms, are fully consonant with his sculptures".<sup>5</sup>

### "The war brought out and encouraged the humanist side in one's work"

Numerous academic studies have emphasised the importance of Henry Moore's war drawings for his artistic development.<sup>6</sup> During this period he set aside his chisels and gouges, moving from an idiom associated with Surrealism (fig. 5) to a more humanist vision of the human form that is evident in the works executed immediately after his war drawings (fig. 6).

"The war brought out and encouraged the humanist side in one's work"<sup>7</sup> Moore noted, aware of the way that the conflict had affected his creative activities. The empathy that he experienced in relation to the Londoners taking shelter in the underground, totally defenceless against what was taking place above their heads, made Moore's drawings more human in their vision. In addition, the quest for a new idiom led him to explore directions opened up by his profound knowledge of art. As he himself noted, "The Italian trip [in 1925] and the Mediterranean tradition came once more to the surface."<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 7  
Henry Moore  
*Women and Children on the Underground*, 1940  
Imperial War Museum, London

The Mediterranean tradition, which Moore understood as a shared vision of the world that ran from archaic cultures to the Renaissance of Giotto and Masaccio, is present in these works in the monumentality and heroic solemnity of the figures and in the lack of interest in individualising them. Equally unimportant for Moore was the exact location of the scenes, which thus acquire a timeless air that is emphasised by the folds of the blankets that cover the figures in the manner of classical draperies.

The two drawings in the Thyssen Collection manifest another characteristic of Moore's work that relates to his interest in archaic art, namely his focus on the female figure. He generally depicted these figures nude and in repose and they represent the motif through which he expressed all his artistic innovations. The women taking shelter in the underground enabled him to continue with this line of artistic research even though they are depicted clothed. *Two Mothers Holding Children* reflects the artist's interest in depictions of women as mothers and protective figures, while *Three Seated Figures* refers to "the theme of the Three Graces".<sup>9</sup>

### The painstaking process of drawing from memory

A few days after his fortuitous encounter with the motif that would occupy him over the following months, Moore executed what he considered to be the first *Shelter Drawing* (fig. 7). As in subsequent compositions of this type, it was his visual recollections of the subject that Moore set down on paper. Starting at that date, the artist regularly went down to the underground platforms where he spent hours observing the chaotic situation around him and memorising it, hardly making any use of sketches in order not to intrude on the scant privacy of the night-time sleepers.

Moore then set down his impressions of the underground in a number of sketchbooks that were done in his studio or his country home at Perry Green, to where he moved after his atelier was destroyed in a bombing raid in October 1940. The first two sketchbooks, produced in 1940 and 1941, have survived intact to the present day,<sup>10</sup> while we also have loose sheets from three more of 1941. The sketches in these notebooks are executed in great detail and are reflected in the final compositions with few changes, as can be seen in the two studies (figs. 8 and 9) of *Two Mothers Holding Children*, which come from a horizontal sketchbook of 1941 of which only a few pages have been identified.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, Moore translated some of these images to a larger sheet of paper, on which he made use of various techniques. He had used the combination of pencil, watercolour, India ink and charcoal since the 1920s. For the *Shelter Drawings* Moore added wax crayon, whose



Figs. 8 and 9  
Henry Moore  
*Shelter Scene:  
Clothed Figures with Children*, 1941  
Private collection, USA

potential he had discovered shortly before the outbreak of the war. Its waterproof quality and the way it could be scraped off with a knife in selected areas allowed him to add new textures to his drawings. Using light coloured wax crayons he defined the outlines, then applied an overall layer of dark-toned watercolour that slid off the greasy areas of wax crayon. Finally, he used ink to better define the forms.

Moore worked on this series from the autumn of 1940 until the summer of 1941. During this period he produced more than sixty drawings, of which the WAAC acquired seventeen that were exhibited with works by other artists at the National Gallery and which are now in various museum collections in the UK. The remainder of the series, totalling more than forty drawings including the two now in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, were sold to art dealers.

Moore's interest in the underground shelters waned as the months went by. The British government had imposed regulations on sleeping in the underground and the chaotic scenes that had fascinated the artist were no longer to be seen. Around this time, in August 1941, the WAAC offered him a new commission to draw miners in the north of England.

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**Notes**

- 1 The entire series and its sketches are documented and reproduced in *Henry Moore, Complete Drawings 1916-1983*. Ann Garrould (ed.). London, Henry Moore Foundation-Lund Humphries, 1994-2003, vols. 2 and 3.
- 2 See Suzanne Bosman: *The National Gallery in Wartime*. London, National Gallery Company Limited, 2008.
- 3 Brian Foss: *War Paint. Art, War, State and Identity in Britain 1939-1945*. New Haven-London, The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art-Yale University Press, 2007.
- 4 For a detailed description of this technique see Alan G. Wilkinson: "Die Zeichnungen Henry Moores". In Seipel, Wilfried (ed.): *Henry Moore: 1898-1986. Eine Retrospektive zum 100. Geburtstag* (exhib. cat. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Milan, Skira, 1998, pp. 106-107.
- 5 Paloma Alarcó: *Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. Pintura Moderna*. Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, 2009, p. 469.
- 6 For example, Alan G. Wilkinson: *The Drawings of Henry Moore* [exhib. cat., London, Tate Gallery; Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1977-1978]. London, Tate Gallery Publications, 1977, or John Russell in *Henry Moore* [exhib. cat., La Jolla, Art Center; Santa Barbara, Museum of Art; Los Angeles, Municipal Art Galleries]. La Jolla, The Center, 1963.
- 7 Cited in Wilkinson 1977, op. cit., p. 36.
- 8 *Henry Moore on Sculpture: a Collection of the Sculptor's Writings and spoken Words*. Philip James (ed.). London, Macdonald, 1966, p. 14.
- 9 Alarcó, op. cit., p. 468.
- 10 The first of them is in the collection of the British Museum, and the second is in the Henry Moore Foundation, Perry Green.
- 11 See the detailed studies undertaken on both works in Christopher Green: *The European Avant-Gardes. Art in France and Western Europe 1904-ca.1945: The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection*. London, Zwemmer, 1995, pp. 352-359.

# History of a Portrait: New information on the provenance of David Lyon by Sir Thomas Lawrence

Dolores Delgado



Fig. 1  
Thomas Lawrence  
*Portrait of David Lyon*, ca. 1825  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

[\[+ info\]](#)



Fig. 2  
Thomas Lawrence  
*Portrait of David Lyon senior*  
Present whereabouts unknown

Thomas Lawrence's splendid portrait of David Lyon (fig. 1) is one of the most attractive works in the Old Masters' collection of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, both with regard to the quality of this work by the celebrated painter and the fascinating and enigmatic personality of the sitter. Lawrence was a key figure in the 19th-century English School, particularly celebrated for his brilliant technical skill. His innate genius led him to devote himself to art from a very young age. In 1787 he moved to London where he studied at the Royal Academy of Arts, then held his first exhibition. In a short time, Lawrence became the favourite artist of the British monarchy and of the nobility and patrician classes. The present canvas reveals his outstanding abilities as a portraitist.

The painting dates from the artist's final phase and is particularly striking for its technical mastery and range of different textures and materials, for example, the shoes. In addition, the gloves and fur of the jacket, while only sketchily painted, reflect Lawrence's painterly abilities. Interestingly, the sitter wears the tight trousers that had been made fashionable some years earlier by Beau Brummell, the English dandy and arbiter of fashion.

In addition to the sitter's slim figure, another notable element is the face, with its captivating and extremely lifelike expression. Combined with his medium-length hair that seems to wave softly in the breeze, the image of this young landowner conveys an extremely pleasing personality. Visitors to the Museum find it difficult not to pause over Lawrence's image in the gallery in which this work is hung. David Lyon is depicted in a pose that is both natural but also elegant and distinguished. Combined with Lawrence's ability to capture the personality of his sitters and to idealise them without resorting to overt flattery, the result is to create a halo of mystery. The background conforms to the type habitually used by the artist, with the figures set in an imposing, rather idyllic setting. In this case the landscape also has a symbolic function, with the numerous trees in the background referring to Lyon's social position as a wealthy landowner. It is also to be inferred that he is the owner of the estate depicted in the work.<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence's clients also included David Lyon senior,<sup>2</sup> whom he painted ten years before executing the present work (fig. 2). The whereabouts of that portrait is now unknown and we only know that on Lawrence's death it was still in his studio. The portrait remained unfinished and was thus not delivered to the client. In contrast, it is known that in 1828 David Lyon the younger paid the sizeable sum of 700 guineas for his portrait.<sup>3</sup> Both canvases were auctioned at Christie's on 21 November 1980.



Fig. 3  
Old postcard of Goring Hall converted into  
a school and lacking one of the towers

Figs. 4 and 5  
The East and West entrances to Goring Hall,  
located at the end of the holm oak avenue  
(Ilex Way). Above, the main entrance, and below,  
the entrance on Sea Lane, Ferring

### Notes on the life of David Lyon the younger

David Lyon of Goring Hall, Sussex, and Balintore Castle, Forfarshire, was born around 1794 and died in Nice in 1872. He was a judge and Conservative member for Beeralston between 1831 and 1832. Late in life, at around the age of 55, Lyon married Blanche Bury, daughter of the Rev. Edward and Lady Charlotte Bury, the latter a well-known novelist of the day. In one of his letters, Benjamin Disraeli, the British Prime Minister, mentions Lyon's wife Blanche. According to Disraeli, who met her at a dinner, she was extremely beautiful and captivating, while he merely notes that Lyon was "a rich man".<sup>4</sup>

David Lyon seems to have been descended from a noble English family, the Lyons of Auldbar, who were related to the Bowes-Lyons, the family of the late Queen Mother.<sup>5</sup> They were direct descendents of the Hon. Sir Thomas Lyon, Knight of Auldbar, Forfarshire, Scotland, who was awarded the title of Master of Glamis. Sir Thomas Lyon was a prominent figure in the 15th century: Treasurer of Scotland and Captain of the Guard of the Scottish monarch, James IV, in Arran.

John Lyon of Castle Lyon in Perthshire and Kinnaird, Fifeshire, was the grandfather of Lawrence's sitter and a direct descendent of the 15th-century Sir Thomas. He married Jane, daughter of Sir Alexander Ochterlony. They had seven children, of whom the second, David, was the father of the present sitter. Although not the eldest son, he inherited the family fortune following the death of his brother without heir. David Lyon senior married Isabella, elder daughter of John Read of Carney, Forfarshire, with whom he had ten children, of which the present sitter, David Lyon of Goring, Sussex, was the third.

Although untitled, the family owned extensive estates and business interests in both Britain and Jamaica, where they had sugar plantations.<sup>6</sup> On his death David Lyon senior's fortune totalled almost 600,000 pounds.<sup>7</sup> His son, David Lyon, and his other sons attended Harrow school around 1809, and on leaving school the present sitter decided to pursue studies in commerce and business, amassing a considerable fortune in the Antilles.

### David Lyon and Goring Hall

From his father, Lyon inherited the relatively small estate (in comparison to other family properties) of Goring Hall, Sussex, comprising more than 600 acres, and another at Balintore Castle, Forfarshire, Scotland.<sup>8</sup> He settled at Goring Hall and had the old house demolished in order to build a splendid new one in 1840 (fig. 3).<sup>9</sup> The new residence had a splendid drive of holm oaks and magnificent wrought-iron gates (figs. 4 and 5), which, according to local legend, impressed the Queen Mother when she visited her relations for the first time. David Lyon





Figs. 6 and 7  
Present-day view of Goring Hall, and the interior  
of the house with the coat-of-arms of the Lyon  
family over the fireplace

lived between Goring Hall and his London residence at 31 South Street, Grosvenor Square.

Following his death, the Sussex estate and house were inherited by Lyon's closest relative, William Lyon, who seems to have been one of his brothers, given that David Lyon died childless. During the time of William Lyon's ownership, Goring Hall was seriously damaged in a major fire in 1888, as various documents record,<sup>10</sup> but it was rebuilt on the lines of the original in less than a year. The house subsequently passed into the hands of Fitzroy Lyon, a cavalry officer, who, from 1906 onwards, rented it out to the Molson family. Documents demonstrate that the house, estate and Lawrence's painting remained with the family until 1934, when Joy, Fitzroy's only daughter, sold the Goring, Clapham and Ferring land and properties that she had inherited. The choice of the incumbency of the church of Saint Mary at Goring, an ecclesiastical appointment that had always been the prerogative of the Lyon family, thus passed to the Bishop of Chichester, Peter Bennett. Joy Lyon retained Lawrence's portrait, however, for the rest of her life. After the sale of the house, Goring was used for a range of purposes until it became a boarding school four years later. It is now a private hospital (figs. 6 and 7).

### **New information on the provenance of the portrait of David Lyon**

The last member of the Lyon family to own the portrait, which had belonged to the family of its wealthy sitter from the date of its creation, was Joy Lyon, who married a French citizen and became Madame Claude François of Keltie Castle, Perthshire, Scotland. As noted above, in 1934 she decided to sell the Sussex estates that she had inherited but retained the portrait for the rest of her life.

Various letters in the archive of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza<sup>11</sup> written by Laura Nepean-Gubbins, a close friend of Joy Lyon, have provided new information and additional bibliography on the history of this painting, giving rise to the present text. From descendents of Mrs Nepean-Gubbins,<sup>12</sup> it is known that she, Joy Lyon and Elizabeth Carnegie-Arbuthnott remained friends throughout their lives. As a result, and following her divorce and death without descendants in sad circumstances, Joy Lyon bequeathed all her possessions, including the portrait, to her friend Betty Carnegie-Arbuthnott.

Miss Carnegie-Arbuthnott and Laura Nepean-Gubbins shared a rented house known as Hampton House at Hampton Court (East Molesey, Surrey). The house was the venue for celebrations and events, some of a family nature, and the portrait of David Lyon hung in the drawing-room for many years.<sup>13</sup> The two friends were eventually obliged to leave the house and moved to a smaller one named The Coach House. Not having sufficient room to display the portrait,



Fig. 8  
The drawing-room at Daylesford,  
at that time the UK residence of Baron  
and Baroness Thyssen-Bornemisza  
© Christopher Sykes

Miss Carnegie-Arbuthnott regretfully decided to sell it and it was auctioned at Christie's London on 21 November 1980, as lot 114. The painting was acquired by P. & D. Colnaghi and Co., of London, and the following year, in 1981, was purchased by Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza. The Baron displayed the painting in the drawing-room at Daylesford (fig. 8), and subsequently in his residence at Lugano. In 1993 it became part of the collection of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza.

Following its sale at Christie's, both Elizabeth Carnegie-Arbuthnott and Laura Nepean-Gubbins attempted to locate the whereabouts of this remarkable work of art that they had been able to enjoy for so many years, but without success. By chance, in 1987, and after the death of Miss Carnegie-Arbuthnott, Laura Nepean-Gubbins read an article in the July 1983 issue of *House & Garden* on Daylesford, the English residence of Baron and Baroness Thyssen-Bornemisza.<sup>14</sup> The article included a photograph of the drawing-room with Lawrence's great portrait (fig. 8).<sup>15</sup> For this reason Mrs Nepean-Gubbins wrote a letter to Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza with the aim of passing on information regarding the provenance of the work and of communicating her "satisfaction on knowing that the canvas had fallen into good hands."<sup>16</sup>

## Notes

- 1 David Lyon's personal and financial situation is discussed in more detail in the section on his life in this article.
- 2 See Garlick, Kenneth: *The Thirty-Ninth Volume of the Walpole Society 1962-1964. A Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings and Pastels of Sir Thomas Lawrence*. Glasgow, 1964, p. 135.
- 3 Garlick, Kenneth: *Sir Thomas Lawrence. A Complete Catalogue of the Oil Paintings*. Oxford, Phaidon, 1989, p. 232.
- 4 Disraeli, Benjamin: *Benjamin Disraeli Letters: 1838-1841*. Conacher, J. B. and Wiebe M. G. (eds.). Toronto, 1987, vol. 3, p. 188.
- 5 Burke, Bernard: *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage and Baronetage, the Privy Council, and Knightage and Companionage*. London, 1921.
- 6 Burke, Bernard: *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland. Enjoying Territorial Possessions or High Official Rank but Invested with Heritable Honours*. London, 1838, vol. IV, pp. 592-593.
- 7 *Portraits Publiques. Portraits Privés. 1770-1830* [exhib. cat. 2006-2007]. Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais; London, The Royal Academy of Arts; New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2006, pp. 358-359.
- 8 Thompson, F. M. L.: "Life after death: How successful nineteenth-century businessmen disposed of their fortunes". In *The Economic History Review*, n.s. 43: 1 February, 1990, p. 54; Thompson, F. M. L.: "Stitching it Together Again", in *The Economic History Review*, n.s. 45: 2 May, 1992, p. 373.
- 9 Fox-Wilson, Frank: *The Story of Goring and Highdown*. UK, 1987, pp. 60-62.
- 10 Ibid. pp. 62, 73-75.
- 11 Dated: 12 October 1987, 8 November 1987, 3 January 1988 and 3 December of that year.
- 12 The author would like to thank Una-Mary Parker and Baba Hobart (daughter and granddaughter of Laura Nepean-Gubbins) for their generous and disinterested help with this text.
- 13 Unfortunately, no photograph from this period is known.
- 14 With thanks to Condé Nast Publications, in particular the director of the Library and Information Service, Mrs Cynthia Cathcart, for their assistance.
- 15 Bowes-Lyon, John: "The English country house of the Thyssen-Bornemiszas". In *House & Garden*. New York, July 1983, pp. 50-66 and 161.
- 16 Letter dated 12 October 1987. Documentary archive of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Department of Old Master Paintings.

# Evening by Edvard Munch. Towards an image of melancholy

Clara Marcellán



Fig. 1  
Edvard Munch  
*Evening*, 1888  
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid  
[\[+ info\]](#)

“A girl with a large, purple face under a yellow straw hat sitting on a blue lawn in front of a white house. The whole thing is so indescribably bad in every respect that it is almost comical.”<sup>1</sup>

These were the terms in which the critic of the *Aftenposten* described Munch’s painting *Evening*, exhibited to the public for the first time at the Autumn Salon in Oslo (then Kristiania) in 1888. Munch had painted the work that summer as one of a series in which the principal motifs were his sisters Inger and Laura (figs. 1, 2, 3, 6). Reactions were varied. In contrast to the *Aftenposten*’s critic, others appreciated the shift in direction evident in the artist’s work. Andreas Aubert, a follower of Munch and a critic on the progressive newspaper *Dagbladet*, acknowledged the painter’s talents in his article of December 1888 and noted that Munch had reached a critical phase in his career.<sup>2</sup> Aubert specifically referred to the tension between the artist’s use of colours, which was close to Symbolism, and the still realist settings in his works. Munch maintained close links with naturalism and began to use the Impressionist technique, experimenting with both trends and ultimately surpassing them to become the pioneering Symbolist artist in Norway and a forerunner of Expressionism.

*Evening* (1888) is particularly interesting as it represents the period when Munch began to develop his most characteristic style and subject matter, including that of melancholy, making this painting a testing ground for his ideas. Among the pictorial aspects that Munch was investigating was that of the relationship between the figures and the landscape,<sup>3</sup> whose interaction represented a formal and visual problem for Manet and his Norwegian followers, but which, in the case of Munch, affected the content of the work due to the emotional link between landscape and figure. This is the case with the strange placement of the figure of the young woman, seated in the foreground but offset to the far left, with her lower limbs and back truncated by the frame. In the case of artists such as Degas, compositional arrangements of this sort (inspired by Japanese prints) were associated with movement and a sense of the transient. As used by Munch, however, the result was to turn his solid, introspective figures into visual walls against which the viewer collides. These elements and their arrangement in the composition may have been inspired by the work of the French painters to which Munch had access, but they could also derive from the northern European Romantic tradition that some of Munch’s fellow artists were rediscovering at that period. Seen in a Neo-Romantic context, the figures reveal a contemplative attitude towards nature (fig. 4), giving Impressionist compositional formats a different significance and allowing Munch to develop them to the point of formulating his particular Symbolist idiom.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 2  
Edvard Munch  
*Inger in the Sun*, 1888  
Bergen Kunstmuseum (Rasmus Meyers Samlinger), Bergen

Fig. 3  
Edvard Munch  
*Summer Night*, 1889  
Bergen Kunstmuseum (Rasmus Meyers Samlinger), Bergen



Fig. 4  
Eilif Peterssen  
*Evening at Sandø*, 1884-1894  
Private collection



Fig. 5  
Detail of the centre of *Evening* (fig. 1)  
using infra-red photography

Fig. 6  
Edvard Munch  
*Laura and Inger in the Summer Sun*, 1888  
Private collection

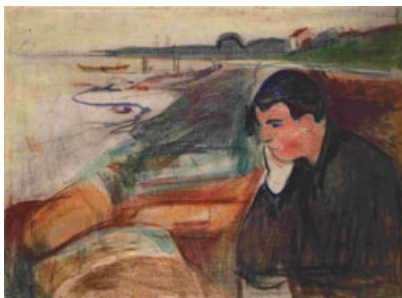


Fig. 7  
Edvard Munch  
*Evening. Melancholy*, 1891  
Munch-museet, Oslo

As a transitional work *Evening* prefigures these ideas in a tentative manner. At this period Munch repainted at least one out of ten of his canvases, as x-rays have revealed.<sup>5</sup> In the case of *Evening* two figures have been eliminated, one on the steps leading up to the house and another, a larger one, in the centre of the composition. The latter figure, which is visible to the naked eye and can be seen in detail in an infra-red photograph (fig. 5), is notably similar to the figure in another composition painted that summer (fig. 6). By removing this large figure from the centre, the composition becomes slightly unbalanced. The viewer's attention shifts towards the monumental figure of Laura, located in the corner away from the central axis where the vanishing point is located and where the principal motif of the painting would normally be found. This odd element in the painting co-exists with another more traditional one with which the figure of Laura seems to have no relation, namely the two figures pulling a boat onto the shore who constitute a scene that could be described as a genre motif.<sup>6</sup> The presence of apparently unconnected, independent scenes in Munch's paintings has been related to the state of mind of the principal figures. This is particularly evident in *Melancholy* of 1891 (fig. 7), in which the identification of the figures, who were friends of the artist, has made it possible to associate the anguish of the foreground figure with the lovers depicted in the background, given that there had been an amorous relationship between the three of them whose termination resulted in the melancholy or jealousy depicted by the artist. Jay A. Clarke has also suggested this idea in relation to *Evening*, in which the background scene would function as a reflection of or trigger for Laura's state of mind.<sup>7</sup>

In common with much of Munch's work, *Evening* is difficult to locate within any specific genre. Is it a landscape, a portrait, a genre scene, all these combined, or none of them? The painting's title may cast light on the painter's intentions, but in itself it raises further questions. *Evening* (1888) was also known as *The Yellow Hat*,<sup>8</sup> *Portrait (Sister with Yellow Hat)*,<sup>9</sup> and *Sister Laura*.<sup>10</sup> Munch was not particularly rigorous with the titles that he gave his works and would leave this task to others or changed the titles on repeated occasions.<sup>11</sup> This may be because he did not formulate the subject of the painting prior to its execution in order for the images to work for themselves, without any narrative support. Such a possibility was suggested by the artist himself in the annotations that he started to write in 1888 and which would be fully articulated in his text *Frieze of Life*.<sup>12</sup>

The importance of *Evening* within Munch's oeuvre lies precisely in the fact that it leads on to the major concepts and themes that characterise his work. The painting can be considered the first in which the artist represented melancholy, a subject that would become a constantly recurring motif, together with love, death and angst.



Fig. 8  
Edvard Munch  
*The Scream*, 1893  
Nasjonalmuseet for kunst,  
arkitektur og design, Oslo

His repeated use of the same concepts has made it difficult to identify some works due to the lack of precise descriptions. *Evening*, for example, may refer to various works of 1888, 1889 (fig. 3) and 1891 (fig. 7). The association with melancholy is established through the particular time of day depicted in the painting and by Laura's expression. Even more significant, however, is the clear link between this painting and subsequent works that constitute the corpus of Munch's images based on this particular emotion. *Melancholy* (1891) (fig. 7) was initially entitled *Evening* (as well as *Jealousy and The yellow Boat*) and its composition is a refinement of the present painting, albeit turned the opposite way. The isolation of the foreground figure, this time located in the right-hand corner, the undulating coastline and the background scene repeat the composition of *Evening*.

Between *Evening* of 1888 and *Melancholy* of 1891 Munch's way of depicting the landscape became more abstracted in order to emphasise its expressivity. This transformation, which could be associated with the projection of the figures' emotions onto the scene, endowed the landscape with a symbolic function. As Gerd Woll suggested in the catalogue raisonné of the artist's work,<sup>13</sup> it may be legitimate to speak of the creation of psychological settings. In the case of *Evening* of 1888, some areas, in particular the house, are painted in considerable detail and thus indicate Munch's continuing links with naturalism. In *Melancholy* of 1891, however, the landscape is reduced to powerful lines of intense colours that contrast with each other and are seemingly dependent on the pensive figure that dominates the scene. This approach led Munch's friend Christian Krogh, a well-known realist painter, to consider *Melancholy* (1891) the first Symbolist painting by a Norwegian artist. The composition, tried out for the first time in *Evening*, would be refined and repeated in further works by Munch. In the first version of *The Scream* of 1893 (fig. 8), an image that has now become one of the great 20th-century icons, Munch took this composition to its furthest point, just five years after he painted *Evening*.

## Notes

- 1 In *Aftenposten*. 5 October 1888, no. 604, p. 1.
- 2 Andreas Aubert: "Tilbageblik paa Hostudstillingen. III". In *Dagbladet*. 10 December 1888. See Nils Messel: "Edvard Munch and his Critics in the 1880s". In Ingeborg Ydstie and Mai Britt Guleng: *Munch becoming "Munch"*. [exhib. cat.] Oslo, Munch Museet, 2008, p. 170.
- 3 Otto Benesch: *Edvard Munch*. London, Phaidon, 1960, p. 7.
- 4 Jay A. Clarke: "Munch's Anxiety of Influence". In Jay A. Clarke: *Becoming Edvard Munch. Influence, Anxiety, and Myth*. [exh. cat.] Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago - New Haven - London, Yale University Press, 2009, p. 14.
- 5 Dieter Buchhart (ed.): *Edvard Munch. Signs of Modern Art*. [exh. cat. Riehen (Basel), Fondation Beyeler - Schwäbisch Hall, Kunsthalle Würth]. Riehen (Basel), Fondation Beyeler-Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz, 2007, p. 43.
- 6 Götz Czymbek: "Edvard Munchs Weg zur symbolistisches Landschaft". In Czymbek, Götz... [et al.]: *Landschaft als Kosmos der Seele: Malerei des nordischen Symbolismus bis Munch, 1880 - 1910*. [exh. cat. Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum]. Heidelberg, Edition Braus, 1998, p. 71.
- 7 Clarke, op. cit., p. 12.
- 8 See the exhibitions *Edvard Munch*. Oslo, Nasjonalgalleriet, 1927, no. cat. 32; and *Edvard Munch*. Berlin, Nationalgalerie, 1927, no. cat. 16.
- 9 See the exhibition *Edvard Munch. Høstutstillingen gjennom de første 25 år 1882-1907*. Oslo, Kunstnerens Hus, 1932, cat. no. 199.
- 10 See the monograph by Josef Paul Hodin: *Edvard Munch*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1972.
- 11 Sue Prideaux: *Edvard Munch. Behind the Scream*. New Haven - London, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 91.
- 12 Edvard Munch: *Livsfrisens tilblivelse*. Oslo, Blomqvist, 1929.
- 13 Gerd Woll: *Edvard Munch. Complete Paintings. Catalogue Raisonné*. London - New York, Thames and Hudson, 2009, 4 vols.