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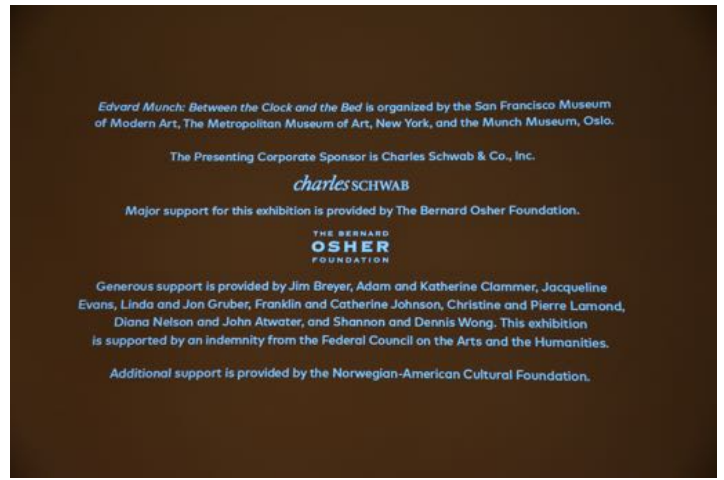


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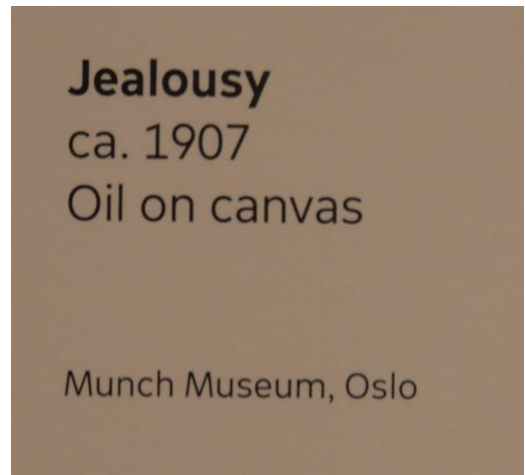


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The Kiss

1897

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

In this painting of the essential form of a kiss, two lovers melt in an intimate embrace. The strong light from behind the curtain emphasizes the distinction between public space and the private space into which we are allowed a glimpse. Munch's contemporary, the Polish author Stanisław Przybyszewski, wrote of the melded faces, "It looks like a puddle of liquefied flesh: there is something repulsive in it." Oscillating between representation and abstraction, the fusion of the couple's features suggests that passion may be a fulfillment of desire that satisfies the self by effacing it.

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The Dance of Life

1925

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Set in the coastal village of Åsgårdstrand, Norway, this joyous composition, first conceived in 1899, incorporates many of Munch's recurring motifs into a single image. The central couple, thought to represent the artist and his first love, Milly Thaulow, embodies the bliss of romantic union. The female figures on either side outline the phases of an affair, in all its joys and sorrows. As Munch described it: "A wild mass of people are whirling. Fat men biting the necks of women, strong men locked in the embrace of women. To the left, a woman in a flower-patterned dress stretches out to pick a flower."

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Eye in Eye

1899-1900

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Eye in Eye, once called *Tête à tête*, shows a man and a woman standing beneath a tree, gazes locked. The dark green thicket that rises above the couple and the flowers blooming at their side create a sense of primal intimacy evocative of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In a literary sketch entitled "How Love Grew," Munch seems to speak of this painting: "Our eyes met, and then invisible hands wove fine wires that passed through your large eyes and into my eyes, and bound our hearts together."

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Death Struggle

1915

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

This artwork, which Munch retained in his personal collection throughout his life, revisits his sister Sophie's final moments. Like *At the Deathbed*, also on view in this gallery, it shows relatives crowded around the dying girl. Now, however, they are rendered in a vivid palette of blurring and contrasting colors. Delineated in thin runs of oil paint nearly thirty years after the event occurred, their faces are portrayed as if in a distant vision distorted through time.

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At the Deathbed
1895
Oil and tempera on canvas

KODE Art Museums of Bergen, Norway

This painting, so dry as to have the matte finish of pastel, draws an analogy between bed and coffin. Extreme foreshortening obscures the identity of the deceased, but based on the surrounding mourners, it's clear that Munch has depicted his sister Sophie's death. Collapsing various moments in time into a single composition, the picture includes family members who were alive when Sophie passed, but also the artist's mother, who had died several years before. In addition to the gaunt and skeletal rendering of the figures, the desiccation of the paint contributes to the effect of bone dryness.

Photo173985.JPG



Photo173986.JPG

The Smell of Death

1895

Tempera and oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Photo173987.JPG



Photo173988.JPG

Man with Bronchitis

1920

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Photo173989.JPG



Photo173990.JPG

Self-Portrait in Hell

1903

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

The Munch we see in this painting, one of his most clearly allegorical self-portraits, is not of this world. He is immersed in his own vision of hell, seeming to rebuff viewers with his gaze. His body rises up like a tapered flame while his face glows with refracted light, the atmospheric setting offering little if any sense of spatial orientation. The placement of the signature squarely on his painted torso emphasizes the artwork as an act of self-construction.

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Self-Portrait with Cigarette

1895
Oil on canvas

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo

Immediately after its completion this self-portrait was exhibited in Berlin, Oslo, and Bergen, Norway, furthering the development of Munch's public persona. At age thirty-two the artist was experimenting with painterly techniques that would place him at the forefront of the avant-garde. Here pigment was layered, thinned, and removed to evoke smoke, an effect heightened by light washes atop the dark ground. Paint drips over the exposed canvas at the lower margin. Lit from below, with eyes alert and attentive, Munch presents a sophisticated self-image at once distant and confrontational.

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Photo173995.JPG



Photo173997.JPG



Photo173998.JPG

Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu

1919
Oil on canvas

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo

Depicting the artist in a decrepit state, with a mouth that hangs open, weak hands, and indistinct eyes, this canvas evokes both the psychic and the physical effects of the Spanish Flu. It is unknown whether Munch, then in his fifties, actually had the illness, which caused thousands of deaths in Norway at the end of World War I, or whether the painting was a performative self-portrait intended to express sympathy with its many victims. Discussing this work with a collector, Munch asked: "Does it seem repellent? ... Can you smell it? ... Can't you see that I'm close to rotting?"

Photo173999.JPG



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Madonna

ca. 1895-97
Oil on canvas

Collection of Catherine Woodard and Nelson Blittz, Jr.

Of Munch's five paintings of the Madonna, which daringly unite sexual desire and religious piety, this is the most technically experimental. Its faint arcs of delicately sprayed purple and blue pigment pulse outward, surrounding the figure with a palpable field of rhythm.

Munch's earliest Madonna was painted in 1894, after which the motif became a principal element in his ongoing cycle *The Frieze of Life*. Often interpreted as an image of contradictions, the subject is at once a being beyond reach, nearly divine, and a corporeal woman, pictured here from the vantage of a lover. While her softness and fecundity promise new life, her sexual power also carries the threat of death.

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Hallucination

Munch's relentless desire to communicate reality in all its fullness led to paintings that blend concrete observations with evocations of unseen mental and emotional states. This comingling of natural sight and illusory vision might seem otherworldly—or, conversely, closer to life, expressing the simultaneity of thinking, feeling, and sensing.

Some portions of *Red Virginia Creeper*, on view here, clearly derive from an autumn landscape. When seen with the ghoulish face in the foreground, however, the red foliage seems to swell as if a conflagration. While contradictory in one sense, these two aspects of the scene—one physical, the other psychological—exhibit no tension, preserved together as concurrent realities within the picture.

Munch's most celebrated depiction of hallucination, *The Scream*, shows a being who, as the artist described it, sensed a paralyzing cry in nature that his companions were unaware of and unmoved by. In this gallery we see the first rendering of that intangible provocation in *Sick Mood at Sunset: Despair*, where fingers of red sky build a mood of psychic distress even before it could be named.

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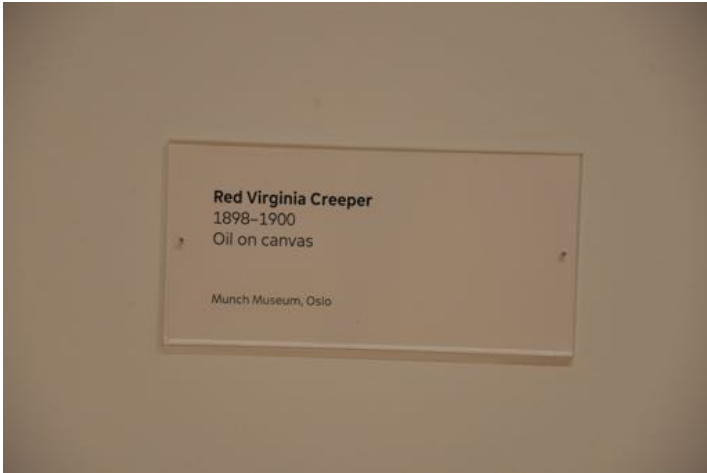


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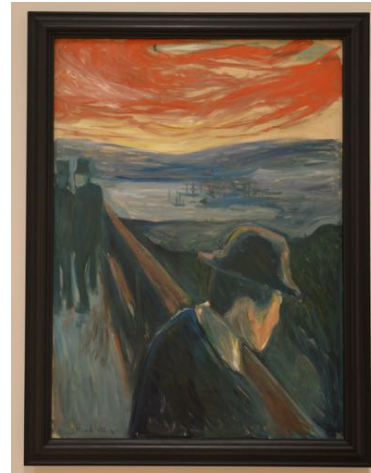


Photo174006.JPG

Sick Mood at Sunset: Despair

1892
Oil on canvas

Thielska Galleriet, Stockholm

On a sketch for this painting Munch wrote: "Suddenly the sky became a bloody red and I felt a tinge of melancholy, a sucking pain beneath my heart. I stopped, leaned against the railing, dead tired." His first attempt to articulate a sunset vision experienced in Norway, this canvas depicts a lone figure beneath a gaseous sky. The use of racing perspective and sense of ambiguous, bodily fear would reappear in Munch's famous picture *The Scream*, first rendered in 1893. In the artist's later accounts of *The Scream*'s development, he cited this painting as its genesis.

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Despair

1894
Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

With its sharp angles, dramatic foreshortening, and dizzying, blood-red sky, this canvas bears a striking resemblance to *Sick Mood at Sunset: Despair*, also in this gallery, as well as to Munch's iconic image *The Scream*, first painted in 1893. Together these pictures form a vivid triad of existential dread. The fjord landscape is disorienting in each composition, but here it is rendered with firmer, more stylized contours and bolder colors. Munch's familiar melancholy figure appears with his head bowed, as usual, though in this painting he assumes a more upright posture as cosmopolitan men in top hats carry on a conversation in the background.

Photo174009.JPG



Photo174010.JPG

Ashes
 1925
 Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Ashes is a visionary painting that explores the complexity of romantic love. Set in a forest, its subjects enact an anxious relationship between the sexes: a voluptuous, assertive woman is juxtaposed with a melancholic male figure also seen in *Despair*, on view nearby. Here he appears in the lower left corner, head bowed and back feebly hunched. This composition was Munch's personal copy of an 1894 canvas held in the National Museum, Oslo.



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Photo174015.JPG



Photo174016.JPG

The Artist and His Model
 1919–21
 Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

This painting shows Munch, formally dressed, looming behind his model Annie Fjeldbu, who wears a nightgown and an open robe. The uneasy relationship between the male and female bodies projects out into the room itself, where the tension is registered not only in Annie's face, which appears to nearly melt off the canvas, but also in the disheveled rug and bedsheets in the background. If not for the recognizable elements of the painter's studio complex in Oslo, the picture might seem to be a theatrical demonstration of well-worn gender roles rather than a depiction of the artist in his everyday surroundings.

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Model by the Wicker Chair
 1919–21
 Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Photo174019.JPG



Photo174020.JPG

Weeping Nude

1913-14
Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Weeping Nude is neither a portrait nor a life study but rather an expression of vulnerability and despair. Munch's use of intense color and luminous abstraction make it impossible to place the figure in any specific context, creating an atmosphere of heightened emotion. The subject, Ingeborg Kaurin, sat for Munch and served as his housekeeper from around 1911 to 1915. In this work we get the sense that he was less interested in depicting her as an individual than as an embodiment of devastation.

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Photo174022.JPG

Female Nude (Anna)

1920
Oil on canvas

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston

Photo174023.JPG



Photo174024.JPG

The Death of Marat

1907
Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Photo174025.JPG



Photo174026.JPG

The Sick Child

1907
Oil on canvas

Tate, London, presented by Thomas Olsen, 1939

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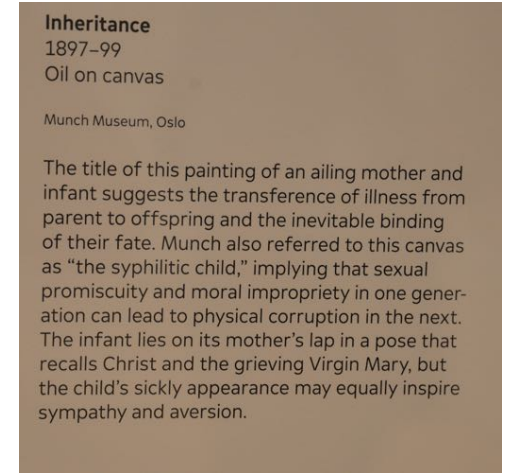


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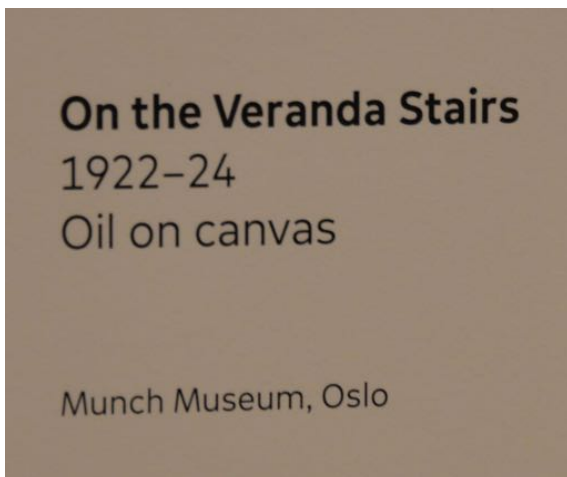


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Photo174048.JPG

The Storm
 1893
 Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. Irgens Larsen and acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Funds, 1974

The Storm depicts a menacing scene at the Grand Hotel in Åsgårdstrand, a small Norwegian coastal village where Munch spent many summers. A raging wind dramatically bends a group of trees, while unidentifiable figures huddle in an indistinguishable mass. Jens Thiis, the first director of the National Gallery in Oslo, described the night that inspired this dusky image as a "sultry evening when a sharp gust of wind cut through the air and the storm broke loose." The central gesture of astonishment recalls the iconic expression of despair in Munch's first painting of *The Scream* (1893), which debuted the same year this work was completed.

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Photo174051.JPG



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Lady in Black (Olga Buhre)
 1891
 Oil on canvas

Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

The lady in black painted here, identified years later as the wife of one of Munch's wealthy acquaintances, emerges from a nebulous setting. Though the frontal composition demands direct eye contact and the figure's posture and gaze establish an authoritative presence, the artist reveals little about his subject. Her expression remains mysterious, perhaps stern or simply resolute. The rectangular form at right may be the foot of a bed, but the narrative remains ambiguous. In this sparsely furnished room, everything is communicated in shadow.

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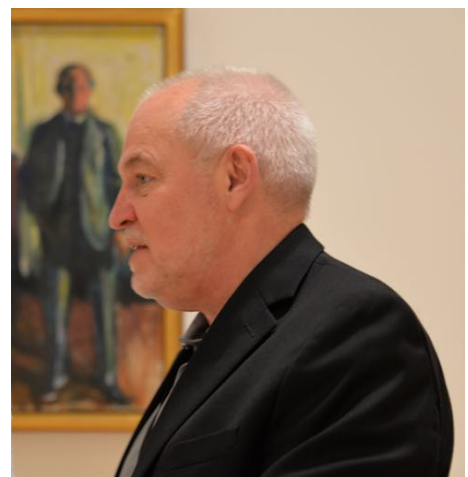


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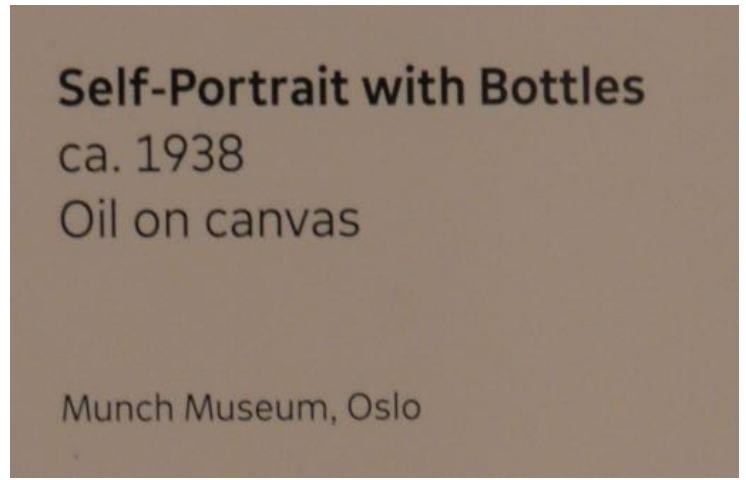


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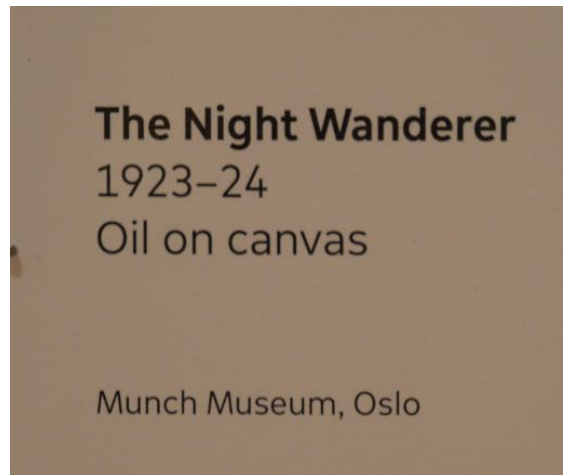


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Photo174071.JPG

Self-Portrait by the Window
ca. 1940
Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Photo174072.JPG



Photo174073.JPG



Photo174074.JPG



Photo174075.JPG

Self-Portrait with Hand under Cheek
1911
Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

The bright palette and loose fluidity seen here are emblematic of Munch's paintings after his return to Norway in 1911. Having suffered a physical collapse driven by alcohol abuse, hallucinations, and partial paralysis, the painter had admitted himself to a Copenhagen clinic in 1908 for treatment by Dr. Daniel Jacobson and remained under his care for eight months. This canvas makes reference to another artist-doctor relationship: Munch's posture with hand on cheek is a direct quotation of Vincent Van Gogh's 1890 depictions of Paul Gachet, the melancholic physician whose attempts to cure the Dutch painter ultimately proved unsuccessful.

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Photo174079.JPG

Self-Portrait with a Bottle of Wine

1906

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Munch considered this as an especially successful picture from a trying time in his life. Writing in 1909 to Norwegian art historian Jappe Nilssen, he referred to this painting as one of his best "self-scrutinies from the difficult years" in Germany. Scholars today point to this rather claustrophobic composition as a portrait of the artist in crisis, as well as the beginning of the end of Munch's early twentieth-century style, which would garner him widespread following among expressionist painters in Germany.

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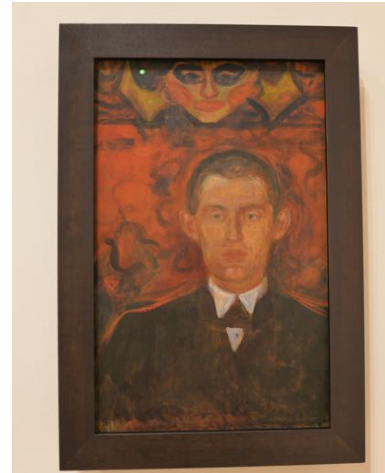


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Self-Portrait under the Mask of a Woman

1893

Tempera on wood panel

Munch Museum, Oslo

This painting has been characterized by art historians as Munch's first explicitly psychological self-portrait. The somewhat threatening female mask intimates a relationship between sexuality and identity and between public and private personas, a theme reinforced by the artist's own masklike visage. Though the mask has been identified as an architectural element of a casino Munch frequented in Monte Carlo, he completed the composition in Berlin, where at age thirty he was an active member of the city's avant-garde circles.

Photo174082.JPG



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Self-Portrait with Hands in Pockets
 1925-26
 Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

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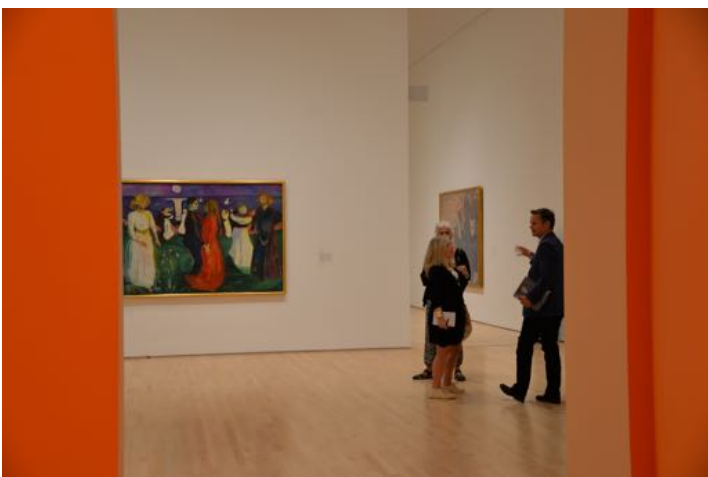


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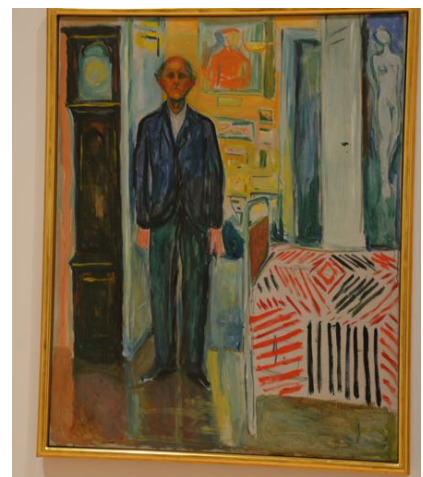


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