

Serial Experiments.
Close-Readings of Edvard Munch's
Det grønne værelset (1907)

Signe Endresen



Dissertation submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

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2015

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Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas
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*In loving memory of
Siri Endresen*

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Oslo, May 2015
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Introduction

What if paintings, which are inherently and insistently material, could behave as a kind of open-ended and unstable theater, unfolding in time, space, and subject matter to different formulations each time they are viewed? Edvard Munch (1863-1944) created a group of paintings collectively known as *Det grønne værelset* (*The Green Room*, 1907, Munch-museet, Woll 781-787, ill. 1-7) that seem to operate in that way. Munch was closely aligned with the avant-garde theatre of Lugné-Poë (1869-1940) in Paris, Swedish playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912), and director Max Reinhardt (1873-1943) in Berlin. The year he painted the highly innovative *Det grønne værelset* paintings appears to have been a crucial one in his development as an artist. These images reveal a cluster of experiments he undertook at that time as he explored visual narrative, affective space, and identity construction, combined with elements of performance. These paintings are a focus of my close readings in this dissertation.

Edvard Munch and his art have been the subject of research and critical analysis in a large number of books, academic dissertations, exhibition catalogues, in-depth biographies, and articles.¹ The first book, *Das Werk des Edvard Munch*, was published in 1894.² Primary sources, such as letters and notes, as well as his artistic output, are mostly preserved in archives and museums. Much of this material has been published and is available to the public in catalogues or online.³ Munch's travels, his friends and family, and extensive contacts have been well documented. Some areas of his life and oeuvre have received more attention than others: for example, his activities in the 1890s, the painting series *Livsfrisen*, his mental health and relationships with women

¹ Arne Nygård-Nilssen, 'Munch-litteraturen', *Kunst og kultur*, 1934; Arne Eggum, 'Litteraturen om Edvard Munch gjennom nitti år', *Kunst og kultur*, 1982; Patricia Berman, '(Re-) Reading Edvard Munch: Trends in the Current Litterature', *Scandinavian Studies* 66, no. 1, 1994; Patricia Berman, 'Edvard Munchs Mange Liv', *Edvard Munch. Samlede Malerier. Catalogue Raisonné*, Oslo 2008.

² Stanislaw Przybyszewski et al., *Das Werk Edvard Munch. Vier Beiträge*, Berlin 1894. Written by four of Munch's supporters and friends, the writer Stanislaw Przybyszewski, art historian Julius Meier-Graefe, and the art critics Franz Servaes, and Willy Pastor.

³ Gerd Woll, *Edvard Munch. The Complete Graphic Works*, New York 2001; Gerd Woll, *Edvard Munch. Samlede Malerier. Catalogue Raisonné*, 4 vols., Oslo 2008. Online: www.eMunch.no

have been extensively explored.⁴ Recent literature has raised questions about Munch's reception, market, and self-fashioning.⁵

Munch's *Livsfrisen*, the narrative arrangement of paintings he first planned in 1892 and exhibited in various formations through the 1930s, has received particular attention.⁶ Munch's other series – including *Alfa & Omega*, *Speilet (The Mirror)*, the decorations at University of Oslo Festival Hall, and at Freia – have also been well documented.⁷ One group of paintings that may have constituted a series, however, has received little analysis. *Det grønne værelset* is particularly intriguing and elusive as it resists an easy reading as a series. In form, repetition of elements, and suggestion of a story to be recounted, the paintings in *Det grønne værelset* series seem on the surface to form a cohesive whole. Yet attempts to gather these works into a clear structure, or to secure them within a clear conceptual frame, are undermined by the images themselves and by Munch's incomplete documentation of them. For this reason, they are complicated to examine and to read against, and not within, the framework of his other series. At the same time, their insistent distortion of form, color, perspective, and storytelling reveals much about Munch's ideas and experimental directions around 1900.

Seriality implies a structure, a narrative, and coherence. Munch's series tend to be analyzed with this in mind.⁸ Yet some of them are difficult to understand as a whole; they seem unstable. How can we come to grips with this instability? The pictorial space

⁴ See for example: Frank Høifødt, 'Skuddet i Åsgårdstrand - tema med variasjoner', *En face. Kunsthistorisk tidsskrift*, 2004; Frank Høifødt, *Kvinnen, kunsten, korset. Edvard Munch anno 1900*, PhD, Universitetet i Oslo, 1995; Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch's "Life Frieze": It's Beginnings and Origins*, PhD, Indiana University, 1969; Arne Eggum, *Edvard Munch. The Frieze of Life from Painting to Graphic Art*, Oslo 2000; Patricia Berman, 'Edvard Munch's Bohemian Identity and the Metaphor of Pain at the Fin-De-Siècle', *Edvard Munch*, Tokyo 1997.

⁵ Bessie Rainsford (Tina) Yarborough, *Exhibition Strategies and Wartime Politics in the Art and Career of Edvard Munch, 1914-1921*, PhD, University of Chicago, 1995; Jay Clarke, 'Meier-Graefe Sells Munch: The Critic as Dealer', *Festschrift Für Eberhard W. Kornfeld Zum 80. Geburtstag*, Bern 2003; Jay Clarke, *Becoming Edvard Munch. Influence, Anxiety, and Myth*, Chicago 2009; Jay Clarke, 'Kunst = liv? Munch og biografiens problem', *Edvard Munch 1863-1944*, ed. Mai Britt Guleng, Birgitte Sauge, and Jon-Ove Steihaug, Oslo 2013; Patricia Berman, 'Edvard Munch's Self-Portrait with Cigarette: Smoking and the Bohemian Persona', *Art Bulletin*, no. 4, 1993; Berman, 1997; Patricia Berman, 'Multiplication, Addition, Subtraction: Warhol, Munch and the Multiplied Print', *Munch - Warhol and the Multiplied Image*, New York 2013; Allison Morehead, *Creative Pathologies: French Experimental Psychology and Symbolist Avant-Gardes, 1889-1900*, PhD, The University of Chicago, 2007; Allison Morehead, 'Er der bakterier i rommene i Monte Carlo?' *Rulettmaleriene 1891-93', Munch blir 'Munch'. Kunstneriske strategier 1880-1892*, Oslo 2008.

⁶ Heller, 1969; Reinhold Heller, 'Affæren Munch' Berlin 1892-1893', *Kunst og kultur*, 1969; Reinhold Heller, 'Love as a Series of Paintings and a Matter of Life and Death. Edvard Munch in Berlin 1892-1895. Epilogue, 1902', *Edvard Munch. Symbols and Images* Washington 1978; *Edvard Munchs Livsfrise. En rekonstruksjon av utstillingen hos Blomqvist 1918*, Oslo, 2002; *Munch blir 'Munch'. Kunstneriske strategier 1880-1892*, Oslo, 2008; Mai Britt Guleng, 'Livsfrisens fortellinger. Edvard Munchs bildeserier', *Edvard Munch 1863-1944*, ed. Mai Britt Guleng, Birgitte Sauge, and Jon-Ove Steihaug, Oslo 2013; Eggum, 2000.

⁷ *Edvard Munch. Alfa & Omega*, Oslo 1981; Bente Torjusen, 'The Mirror', *Edvard Munch. Symbols and Images*, Washington 1978; Patricia Berman, 'Mirror Reflections: Edvard Munch, 'the Frieze of Life' and 'the Mirror'', *Edvard Munch: Mirror Reflections*, West Palm Beach 1986; Patricia Berman, *Monumentality and Historicism in Edvard Munch's University of Oslo Festival Hall Paintings*, PhD, New York University, 1989; *Munchs laboratorium. Veien til Aulaen*, Oslo 2011; *Kunsten på Freia*, Oslo 1988.

⁸ See for example: Heller, 1969; 1981; Eggum, 2000.

depicted in Munch's images is taken to represent places he had visited or lived – that is, reflections of existing interiors. Such a reading reduces him to a faithful copyist of real life. In fact, he was a creative visual artist who strongly filtered the spaces he created in his images through his imagination. They are strategic constructions of space, and space itself in his works must be understood as a narrative element. How does it affect the way we read Munch's images?

The figures in Munch's paintings have also received a great deal of attention. Many of them have been identified as people from the artist's life. Looking at them, however, should not be a game of connecting the dots to Munch's real-life relations. His figures have a function within the pictures, but what are they? It seems likely that they can tell us something about Munch's relationship to his own identity and to those around him. The liminal qualities of his figures, rather than their secure identities, have not been addressed prior to this study.

Anno 1907

The paintings in *Det grønne værelset* emerged from the year 1907, in the summer of which Munch had moved to Warnemünde, a seaside resort in Northern Germany, on the Baltic coast.⁹ He rented a house at am Strom 53, but went on a number of trips, particularly to Berlin, where he was working on a commission for one of the public rooms in Max Reinhardt's *Kammerspiele* (chamber play stage) at the Deutsches Theater. Prior to that he had completed *Stimmung-Skissen* (mood sketches) for Reinhardt's production of Henrik Ibsen's (1828-1906) *Gengangere* (*Ghosts*, 1881, ill. 15-24).¹⁰ It premiered on November 8, 1906 and was a great success for Reinhardt and his

⁹ Prior to moving to Warnemünde Munch traveled to Stockholm to make a portrait of the Swedish businessman and art collector Ernest Thiel (1859-1947). In Warnemünde he painted *Det grønne værelset*, and other paintings such as images of nude bathing men (for example *Badende menn*, 1907-08, Woll 766). Upon arriving in Warnemünde, he stayed at a hotel called Hosmanns Hôtel. See Woll, 2008, vol. I, 37-40; vol. IV, 1617; Johan Langaard and Reidar Revold, *Edvard Munch fra år til år. En håndbok*, Oslo 1961, 39-40. See also Edvard Munch's postcard with a view of the beach at Warnemünde to his aunt, Karen Bjølstad, dated May 29, 1907, MM B 2987(F) / MM N 0925; letter to Karen Bjølstad dated 1907 MM N 0926, Munch-museet; letter to Ernst Thiel dated June 14, 1907, Hosmanns Hôtel Warnemünde, PN 1158, Munch-museet.

¹⁰ Ibsen's play *Gengangere* was first published in 1881, but because of its controversial content it was not staged until May 1882, at the Aurora Turner Hall in Chicago (USA). Møllergadens Theater in Kristiania staged it in the playwright's homeland of Norway, in October 1883. However, the actors in this production spoke Swedish. The first staging in Norway, with Norwegian actors, did not take place until December 1890 at Den Nationale Scene in Bergen.

Munch was probably not very happy to take on the *Gengangere* project for Reinhardt, but this changed when he was promised a commission for one of the public rooms in the theatre. Joan Templeton, *Munch's Ibsen, a Painter's Visions of a Playwright*, Seattle and Copenhagen 2008, 42f; Angela Lampe, 'Munch and Max Reinhardt's Modern Stage', *Edvard Munch. The Modern Eye*, ed. Angela Lampe and Clément Chéroux, London 2012.

Kammerspiele.¹¹ Munch was then asked to create mood sketches for Reinhardt's production of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1890), which premiered on March 11, 1907. While working on the *Hedda Gabler* sketches (ill. 25-26), Munch also worked on *Reinhardt-frisen* (*The Reinhardt Frieze*, Woll 725-736), which he completed in December 1907.

Munch's contact with Reinhardt's theatre appears to have been quite close from the fall of 1906 until December 1907. An employee at the theatre, Arthur Kahane, noted that Munch was there daily from the fall of 1906, and was close with the staff: "That is why Munch was in the Deutsches Theater on a daily basis – living with us, working during the day and drinking of an evening or painting his *Ghosts* pictures and his cycle."¹² It seems that Munch not only felt at home in the theatre, but also made personal connections with people working there. The Norwegian art historian Arne Eggum has claimed that some of them had spent time in Warnemünde in the summer of 1907, while Munch was there.¹³ Thus, 1907 was, for Munch, an active year with important influences from Reinhardt's innovative and creative theatre.

Research questions

Det grønne værelset as a whole has not been subjected to much research. Therefore, a general question for this project is: What is *Det grønne værelset*? Is it a series, or motifs that Munch explored through a group of variations? Did he create these works to be exhibited as a narrative? Are they "mood paintings" or depictions of "real" spaces of human activity? The project is twofold. I first examine which paintings are part of *Det grønne værelset* and explore the reasons for the title, primarily in the introduction and the first article, "Time and Narrative in Edvard Munch's *The Green Room* (1907)." I then address three aspects of the images and their implications for our understanding of the group as a whole. In article 1, I investigate whether *Det grønne værelset* is a series and what the connection is between its paintings. In article 2, "Disjunctive space: The Fiction of the Comprehensive Space in Edvard Munch's *Det grønne værelset* (1907)," I look specifically at the pictorial space. What is the character of this space? How does it affect

¹¹ It had a run of 72 performances. See Nasjonalbiblioteket's online database: ibsen.nb.no – link to *Gengangere* at the Kammerspiele 1906: <http://ibsen.nb.no/id/54037> (accessed April 7, 2015)

¹² Arthur Kahane, 'How Munch Came to Reinhardt and the Deutsches Theater, 1926', *Edvard Munch. The Modern Eye*, ed. Angela Lampe and Clément Chéroux, London 2012, 119.

¹³ Arne Eggum, "Henrik Ibsen som dramatiker i Munchs perspektiv," *Edvard Munch og Henrik Ibsen*, København, 1998, 31. Eggum does not reference this information.

the figures and the scenes as a whole? Articles 3 and 4 examine the figures. Who are they? How can we as interpreters of Munch's art deal with the depiction of familiar-looking characters (such as Munch himself, Tulla Larsen, Stanislaw Przybyszewski, etc.) in his art? Can they be viewed as fictional or semi-fictional characters or even as "avatars"? More specifically, article 3, "Mannen og kunstneren. Den mørke mannfiguren i Edvard Munchs malerier 1891-1908" ("The man and the artist. The dark male figure in Edvard Munch's paintings 1891-1908") is a case study of the dark-haired man that appears in three paintings in *Det grønne værelset*. Article 4, "The Real and the Virtual: Edvard Munch's Construction of Characters," is an expansion of article 3 and considers all the figures present in *Det grønne værelset*.

Approach and overview

The format of this dissertation is that of an article-based dissertation. It consists of the present introductory section and four articles that explore various aspects of *Det grønne værelset*. At the time of this writing, articles 1 and 3 have been published; the remaining two are under review in academic journals. The introduction presents central issues pertaining to the project and forms the basis for different discussions in each of the articles. The four articles, though designed to stand alone, together form a close reading of *Det grønne værelset*. They focus on different aspects of that series: time and narrative (article 1), the (pictorial) space(s) (article 2), the dark-haired figure (article 3), and the figures and their roles in *Det grønne værelset* (article 4). The overall aim is to analyze these works and their place in Munch's oeuvre, as well as to open up questions about Munch's production as a whole.

Summary of the articles

Article 1: "Time and Narrative in Edvard Munch's 'The Green Room' (1907)"
Kunst og kultur no. 2, 2013, pp. 80-91.

This article explores the definition of *Det grønne værelset* as a group of formally similar paintings, several of which Munch considered to be a unit. I discuss the primary material and define which paintings most likely belonged to the group. I also examine the nature of this collection of paintings in order to assess whether it was a series or

not. The bulk of the article is, however, devoted to discussing how Munch's fascination with picture series is closely linked to modern notions of time, temporality, narrativity, and developments in new visual entertainment, such as film and cinema. The focus of this article is thus on the narrative features in *Det grønne værelset*, and the series' unstable qualities which engage the spectator and create not one, but several stories.

Article 2: "Disjunctive Space: The Fiction of the Comprehensible Interior in Edvard Munch's *Det grønne værelset* (1907)" (under review).

This article opens with an analysis of the depicted spaces in *Det grønne værelset* and considers the fictive nature of pictorial space itself. My primary interest is not to identify the room represented in these paintings, or the situations depicted within each image. Rather, I contend that the space itself is an important constitutive element of each scene, the overlooked carrier of mood and meaning. My argument is strongly influenced by the work of Susan Sidlauskas.¹⁴ I show that Munch's use of space in *Det grønne værelset* is far from straightforward, and possibly not related to any space or place in actuality. When examined closely, the spaces in *Det grønne værelset* contain some powerful disjunctions and inconsistencies. The combination of green color, wallpaper pattern, and claustrophobic enclosure create a conflicting atmosphere, and a space that acts on the figures as well as affects the spectator. In this way space becomes a character in its own right – and it could be viewed as the primary character in the paintings. The paintings in *Det grønne værelset* require each spectator to complete the pictures with the aid of her or his individual memory and imagination, and animate the characters within these highly suggestive spaces.

Article 3: "Mannen og kunstneren. Den mørke mannfiguren i Edvard Munchs malerier 1891-1908", in: *Kjønnshandlinger. Studier i kunst, film og litteratur*, A.B. Rønning and G. Uvsløkk (eds.), Pax Forlag, Oslo 2013, pp. 216-230.

This article is a case study centered on the recurring figure in Munch's paintings: a young-looking, dark-haired man dressed in dark clothes. He has been taken to be a visual representation of Munch himself, and his depictions have thus been associated

¹⁴ Susan Sidlauskas, *A "Perspective of Feeling": The Expressive Interior in Nineteenth Century Realist Painting*, PhD, University of Pennsylvania, 1989; Susan Sidlauskas, *Body, Place and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting*, Cambridge 2000.

with Munch's private life. My examination questions the assumption that the dark-haired man represents the artist. I discuss how else this figure can be understood and venture to suggest his function in Munch's art and overall artistic aims, for this figure appears in a large number of Munch's paintings. I see him as a strategic element that serves as a guide for the spectator. He is a familiar face in an unknown visual world. What is important is not whom he represents in real life (Edvard Munch, Jappe Nilssen, or someone else), but rather how he gives a narrative credibility to the images.

Article 4: "The Real and the Virtual: Edvard Munch's Construction of Characters"
(under review).

In this article I examine all the figures present in *Det grønne værelset* and argue that they function as identity markers for Munch as an artist. I explore the boundary between the artist-as-a-person and his painted figures, for in much of Munch's art the boundaries between the real and the virtual are blurred. The habitual reading of *Det grønne værelset* as a visualization of Munch's relationship with Tulla Larsen, his lover from 1898-1902, is an oversimplification of these paintings. Munch's figures are not stable representations of actual people from his personal life. Rather, they must be viewed separately from his biography. Using recent theories of digital identities, I liken these figures to avatars.

In virtual worlds of computer games the self is malleable, multiple, and fluid. Players can, at a click of a button, change the gender of their avatars, or create "alts." Virtual worlds have their own logic, currency, and set of rules. I argue that these aspects are also at play in Munch's *Det grønne værelset*, as well as in his other works. By inserting recognizable signs of himself, Munch alludes to a faithful depiction of reality. Yet in so doing he also questions what is real and what is fiction. I suggest that his figures must be viewed as something other than historic people: as avatars or projected selves created by Munch-the-artist.

What is *Det grønne værelset*?

Defining *Det grønne værelset* is not a straightforward matter. Within Munch's oeuvre, *Det grønne værelset* is a unique group of paintings: the framing of the images and the environments his figures inhabit are similar in most of the pictures. The paintings in *Det*

grønne værelset depict, in the strictest sense, scenes taking place in a repeated green interior. The images share two characteristics: (1) an interior space, a box constructed with three green walls, a floor, and a ceiling, and (2) the human figures inhabiting this space. The rooms are narrow and oblong, depicted with exaggerated perspective, as all angles seem to converge at an imaginary vanishing point in the backgrounds. The walls are straight but curve inward towards the ceiling. The space is tight, intimate, and claustrophobic, encapsulating the figures like a cell or a chamber. This is further accentuated by the murky floor and low-set ceiling. The only escape from the room is through the door in the background, to the right. In some of the images, however, the door is closed, while in others it is filled with a kissing couple or a servant holding a tray. Within these confined spaces Munch depicts figures, male and female, or of an ambiguous sex, in various constellations. All surfaces are painted in a hasty manner, with gestural strokes. In some areas the canvas has been left bare, while other areas are covered in impasto layers of paint.

There exists one document in Munch-museet (the Munch Museum, Oslo) which indicates that Munch painted a group of images that were meant to form a whole. A packing list (T 2742) written by him probably in the fall of 1908 or early 1909 contains the titles of a number of paintings and the crate in which they were packed for transportation.¹⁵ We do not know why Munch made the list, but most likely it was to keep track of paintings that were being shipped to a new location. Under crate number 9 he listed five paintings with their titles followed by “det grønne Værelse” (“the green room”) in parenthesis (ill. 8a-d). These paintings are #3 *Jalosi*, #8 *Jalosi*, #14 *Mordersken*, #28 *To Mænd og en Kvinde (Jalosi)*, and #30 *To Mænd og en Kvinde*. The titles are vague and not very helpful in identifying the images. Apart from #14 *Mordersken*, the pictures all seem to deal with relationships between men and women, especially focusing on jealousy. The list is interesting because it confirms that Munch considered a number of paintings to belong to this group. It also indicates the title under which he combined them: *Det grønne værelset*. The series must have been painted prior to November 1908.

¹⁵ Research librarian at Munch-museet, Lasse Jacobsen, has dated it to the winter of 1908/09. Arne Eggum claims that the document was written sometime between November 1908 and February 1909, see Arne Eggum, 'Det gröna rummet', *Edvard Munch 1863-1944*, Stockholm 1977, 76.

A second document pointing to *Det grønne værelset* as a group is related to Munch's retrospective exhibition in Berlin in 1927. In connection with it, the director of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, Dr. Ludwig Justi, visited Munch at Ekely (Oslo) so as to select the works for the show.¹⁶ According to Arne Eggum (1977), Munch showed Justi paintings from *Det grønne værelset* on that occasion.¹⁷ Eggum quotes from Justi's notes:

6 bilder 'Grünes Zimmer' in Warnemünde zwischen 1907 und 1908
Eifersucht
Weinendes Mädchen
Mann und Frau etc.¹⁸

This record confirms that Munch considered a group of paintings from Warnemünde to be a pictorial unit, and corroborates the information in the earlier packing list.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to locate the notes quoted by Eggum. Some of Justi's notes from the 1927 meeting have been preserved in Staatliche Museum zu Berlin – Zentralarchiv. They mention two paintings, *Eifersucht (Jealousy)* and *Mörderin (Murderess)*, with the following description: "small pictures, walls with green patterned wallpaper."¹⁹ The quote describes pictures showing interiors with green wallpaper pattern, but they are not singled out as forming part of a group or a series, as is the case in Eggum's quote. My search for Justi's notes has been unsuccessful, and the documentation for *Det grønne værelset* remains slim. The only primary source in evidence is the packing list, with Eggum's citation as corollary and anecdotal support.

Prior suggestions

Art historian Arne Eggum was the first researcher to treat these paintings as a whole. His first article on the subject appeared in 1977, and he published two further ones discussing these paintings in 1984 and 1999.²⁰ Eggum has pointed out that Munch

¹⁶ Eggum, 1977, 74.

¹⁷ Eggum states that Carl Justi [sic] visited Munch before the retrospective exhibition at the Nationalgalerie in Berlin in 1927, see Eggum, 1977, 74. Carl Justi (1832-1912) was an art historian and a professor at the University of Bonn. He died in 1912; it is, therefore, impossible for him to have visited Munch in 1927. It is more likely that Eggum means Ludwig Justi (1876-1957), who was then a director at the Nationalgalerie. We know he visited Munch at Ekely in the spring of 1927. It is confirmed in Thomas W. Gaehtgens and Kurt Winkler, eds., *Ludwig Justi. Werden - Wirken - Wissen*, 2 vols., Berlin, 2000, vol. 2, p. 269 (commentary to p. 474ff in vol. 1).

¹⁸ "6 pictures 'Green room' in Warnemünde between 1907 and 1908 / Jealousy / Weeping girl / Man and woman etc." Eggum, 1977, 74.

¹⁹ "kleine Bilder, Wände mit grünlich gemusterter Tapete" SMB ZA, I/NG 678, Staatliche Museum zu Berlin – Zentralarchiv, Berlin.

²⁰ Eggum, 1977; Arne Eggum, 'Das Grüne Zimmer. Ein Autobiographischer Zyklus', *Edvard Munch. Höhepunkte Des Malerischen Werks Im 20. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg 1984; Arne Eggum, 'Munch og Warnemünde', *Munch og Warnemünde 1907-1908*, ed. Annie Bardon et al., Oslo 1999.

himself was not clear about *which* paintings constituted *Det grønne værelset*.²¹ He never exhibited paintings under the title *Det grønne værelset* in his lifetime. In the following section I propose which constellations of images can be postulated, depending on the source material one consults. There are four possibilities.

1 The packing list:

The packing list mentions five paintings as part of *Det grønne værelset*.²² These titles are quite general and descriptive, and could apply to a number of paintings Munch completed prior to November 1908. Eggum has in his 1977 article tried to identify them as follows:

	Munch's title	Eggum's suggestion²³	Woll no.
Nr. 3	<i>Jalosi</i>	<i>Sjalusi</i>	783
Nr. 8	<i>Jalosi</i>	<i>Sjalusi</i>	784
Nr. 14	<i>Mordersken</i>	<i>Mordersken</i>	786
Nr. 28	<i>To Mænd og en Kvinde (Jalosi)</i>	<i>Sjalusi</i>	788
Nr. 30	<i>To Mænd og en Kvinde</i>	<i>Overraskelsen</i>	782

2 Justi's notes from Ekely:

Dr. Ludwig Justi, director of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, was (according to Eggum 1977) shown *Det grønne værelset* when he visited Munch at Ekely in the spring of 1927.²⁴ Since it has not been possible to locate the notes quoted by Eggum, there is no way to determine whether his quotation represents the complete notes about *Det grønne værelset* (the quote enumerates six paintings, but only three are mentioned by their titles). I interpret Eggum to mean that Justi also included *Zum Süssen Mädels Hat*, and *Morderseken* as part of *Det grønne værelset* in his notes. Justi's version of *Det grønne værelset* would then consist of the following paintings (ill. 9):

²¹ Eggum, 1977, 73.

²² Crate number 9, MM T 2742, Munch-museet (Oslo)

²³ Eggum, 1977, 76f.

²⁴ See note 17.

	Dr. Justi	Eggum's suggestion	Woll no.
1	<i>Eifersucht</i>	<i>Sjalusi</i>	783
2	<i>Weinendes Mädchen</i>	<i>Gråtende kvinne</i>	773
3	<i>Mann und Frau</i>	<i>Amor og Psyke</i>	769
4		<i>Zum Süssen Mädels</i>	781
5		<i>Hat</i>	787
6		<i>Mordersken</i>	786

Eggum has suggested that Justi's *Mann und Frau* could possibly be *Amor og Psyke* (Woll 769).²⁵ His argument is that "Amongst the images that were exhibited in 1927, it is only 'Cupid and Psyche' that previously have been exhibited with this title."²⁶ From this I gather that Eggum believed the six paintings in Justi's notes to have been included in the 1927 exhibition in Berlin. According to Woll's *catalogue raisonné*, the painting *Amor og Psyke* has never been exhibited as *Mann und Frau*.²⁷ There are a number of other paintings from this period that can fit this descriptive title, such as *Begjær* (Woll 785), *Hat* (Woll 787), and *Mann og kvinne på stranden* (Woll 789).

3a Exhibition catalogue, Nationalgalerie (Berlin 1927):

The catalogue for the 1927 exhibition in Berlin lists all the works shown. In the catalogue, Munch's series *Livsfrisen* (cat.no. 49-59), *Linde-frisen* (cat.no. 80-83), *Reinhardt-frisen* (cat.no. 109-110a) and sketches for the University of Oslo Festival Hall (cat.no 136-143) were grouped together under the title of the series.²⁸ Catalogue numbers 113-121 in Berlin did not have a heading identifying them as belonging to a group or a series (ill. 10).

Cat.no.	Title	Suggestion	Woll no.
113	<i>Haus 'zum süßen Mädels'</i>	<i>Zum Süssen Mädels</i>	781
114	<i>Begierde</i>	<i>Begjær</i>	785
115	<i>Haß</i>	<i>Hat</i>	787
116	<i>Eifersucht</i>	<i>Sjalusi</i>	783
117	<i>Die Mörderin</i>	<i>Mordersken</i>	786
118	<i>Trost</i>	<i>Trøst</i>	770
119	<i>Amor und Psyche</i>	<i>Amor og Psyke</i>	769
120	<i>Weinendes Mädchen</i>	<i>Gråtende kvinne</i>	773
121	<i>"Unter den Sternen"</i>	<i>Under stjernerne</i>	466

²⁵ Eggum, 1977, 76.

²⁶ "Bland de motiv, som var utställda 1927, är det bara 'Amor och Psyke' som tidigare varit utställd under denna titel." Eggum, 1977, 76. For the quote in English, see Eggum, 1977, 96.

²⁷ Woll, 2008, vol. II, p. 762.

²⁸ In the Oslo exhibition at Nasjonalgalleriet later that year this was only done for *Livsfrisen*, cat.no. 73-90.

3b Exhibition catalogue, Nasjonalgalleriet (Oslo 1927):

Photographs of the mounted paintings at the retrospective exhibition in Oslo exist, but not all the walls have been photographed.²⁹ The paintings we are concerned with are not included in these photographs, so it is not possible to be sure whether they were mounted together or on separate walls. At the exhibition in Oslo the paintings are listed in the same order in the catalogue, as in Berlin (ill. 10):

Cat.no.	Title	Woll no.
166	<i>Haus 'zum süssen Mädel'</i>	781
167	<i>Begjær</i>	785
168	<i>Hat</i>	787
169	<i>Sjalusi</i>	783
170	<i>Mord</i>	786
171	<i>Trøst</i>	770
172	<i>Amor og Psyche</i>	769
173	<i>Gråtende pike</i>	773
174	<i>"Under stjernene"</i>	466

4 Eggum's version:

As with *Livsfrisen*, Eggum is clear that it is not an easy task to define which paintings are part of *Det grønne værelset*.³⁰ However, he points to five paintings in which the *visual similarities* are obvious.³¹ These all display a small room with no windows, a simple and narrow door to the right in the background, a large round table, a Biedermeier sofa, and the same characteristic green wallpaper. All the scenes are viewed from close-up, and the box-shaped room is expanded and very wide in the foreground, resembling the effect of photographs taken with a fish-eye lens.³² Eggum lists five paintings as core images:

²⁹ MM B 3559(F)a-j; MM B 3559(F)1c, Munch-museet.

³⁰ Eggum, 1977, 73.

³¹ Eggum, 1977, 73; Eggum, 1999, 28.

³² Eggum, 1999, 28.

	Eggum's suggestion³³	Woll no.
1	<i>Zum Süssen Mädel</i>	781
2	<i>Begjær</i>	785
3	<i>Hat</i>	787
4	<i>Sjausi</i>	783
5	<i>Mordersken</i>	786

Eggum consistently includes these five paintings in *Det grønne værelset* (ill. 11). In addition, he considers a number of other paintings that he loosely associates with the series. As a result it becomes very difficult to interpret which paintings he views as a part of *Det grønne værelset*.

In Woll's *catalogue raisonné* (2008) the following paintings are grouped under *Det grønne værelset*, based on Eggum's texts (ill. 12):

Woll no.	Title
781	<i>Zum Süssen Mädel</i>
782	<i>Overraskelsen</i>
785	<i>Begjær</i>
786	<i>Mordersken</i>
787	<i>Hat</i>
788	<i>Sjalusi</i>

As we can see, Woll includes *Overraskelsen* in *Det grønne værelset*, although Eggum (1999) argues against it because of a different wallpaper pattern. He says that in this painting the pattern has become abstracted, and the trellis shapes have morphed into circles.³⁴

Several scenarios

Det grønne værelset is not a fixed entity, and the above survey of prior suggestions on which paintings are to be included shows variable results. There exist several possibilities. What remains clear, however, is that Munch considered some of his paintings from 1907 to belong to a group, and this was apparently confirmed in 1927. Munch had not forgotten, or given up on the project 20 years after it was initiated.

The fact that there have been diverse suggestions as to which paintings belong to *Det grønne værelset* is interesting in itself, as it reveals both the fluidity of Munch's own

³³ Eggum, 1977, 74.

³⁴ Eggum, 1999, 31-32.

uses of his art and historians' desire to define it more precisely. I think that a number of different constellations of paintings may constitute *Det grønne værelset*. There is no way to know which paintings Munch himself considered to form this series. Thus, defining this group becomes an exercise in applying artificial parameters for inclusion. I see six possible definitional parameters:

#1 Strict:

A purist or very strict definition of *Det grønne værelset* would only include the five images mentioned by Munch in his packing list. The titles are, however, slightly vague and generic. It is not possible to identify these paintings with certainty. So this is not a viable solution.

#2 Perspective:

This scenario only includes the six images that clearly depict a green room. In some of Munch's paintings the green wall is present, but the room as a whole is not shown. These pictures, then, do not depict "a green room." That title would only encompass the following paintings (ill. 13):

	Title	Woll no.
1	<i>Zum Süssen Mädels</i>	781
2	<i>Sjalusi</i>	783
3	<i>Sjalusi</i>	784
4	<i>Begjær</i>	785
5	<i>Mordersken</i>	786
6	<i>Hat</i>	787

#3 Green walls:

The images in which the green wall is present, but the full perspective of the room is not shown, can conceivably be viewed as close-ups of those images mentioned under scenario #2. All of these images seem so closely related that an exclusion of paintings on the grounds that the perspective of the room is not present seems arbitrary (ill. 13). Four additional paintings could thus be added to the list in scenario #2 (yielding a total of ten paintings):

	Title	Woll no.
1	<i>Marats død</i>	767
2	<i>Marats død</i>	768
3	<i>Gråtende kvinne</i>	773
4	<i>Overraskelsen</i>	782

#4 Green wall pattern:

If the *green wall* (and not the wallpaper pattern) becomes the defining factor, it could be argued that this group of ten images can be expanded further with an image such as *Sjalusi (Jealousy, 1907?, Woll 788, ill. 99)*, which is closely related to the ten in scenario #3 both with regards to dating and content. The image is, apart from the three figures, quite dark. But it is possible to glimpse a green wall behind the female figure in the middle. It is patchy with red spots, and reminiscent of the pattern seen in some of the other images. In this scenario *Det grønne værelset* would consist of eleven paintings: the images in scenarios #2, #3, and #4.

#5 Green background:

Trøst (Consolation, 1907, Woll 770) and *Amor og Psyke (Cupid and Psyche, 1907, Woll 769)* appear to be slightly peripheral to *Det grønne værelset*. Both stylistically and thematically they differ slightly from the images mentioned above. What makes them interesting in connection with *Det grønne værelset* is the background color. They both exhibit the same acid green used in the other images (ill. 13). *Amor og Psyke* is particularly interesting since its color seeps over and into the male figure and he becomes part of the green background. In many of the images discussed above Munch makes the green color of the walls infiltrate the figures and the props, as, for example, in *Zum Süssen Mädels (Woll 781)* and *Begjær (Desire, Woll 785)*.

#6 A green room?

It cannot be entirely ruled out that Munch's addition of "*det grønne Værelse*" in his packing list could be a reminder that these images were to be displayed in a room with green walls. However, this possibility is slim, since Justi in 1927 seems to have understood that some images belonged to a unit under the name *Det grønne værelset*. Moreover, in his packing list Munch also indicated the images belonging to *Livsfrisen* and the *Badende menn*-triptych by adding the title series behind the paintings' titles.

Towards a definition of *Det grønne værelset*

It becomes clear that the definition for inclusion in the *Det grønne værelset* can vary according to which criteria are applied. In this sense, the whole project is an overt exercise in art-historical judgment as much as an analysis of the artist's production. Part of my project, therefore, seeks to honor the fluidity and incompleteness of Munch's own organization.

I find the distinct acid green wall and its pattern to be two important criteria for inclusion in the series. In addition, the furniture and other props further define the room. There are seven paintings that appear to take place in the same interior and have the same green color of the wall(s). This room seems to be a dining or a living room, as it is furnished with a round table and a couch. In my dissertation I consider seven images to constitute *Det grønne værelset* (ill. 14):

	Title	Woll no.
1	<i>Zum Süssen Mädel</i>	781
2	<i>Overraskelsen</i>	782
3	<i>Sjalusi</i>	783
4	<i>Sjalusi</i>	784
5	<i>Begjær</i>	785
6	<i>Mordersken</i>	786
7	<i>Hat</i>	787

Nonetheless, I acknowledge that my method of organizing and composing the series is as exploratory as the previous attempts. I have assembled all the basic data about *Det grønne værelset* in order to ground my analysis in specific documentation. By clarifying the fundamental facts about the paintings it becomes possible to examine and evaluate their experimental nature while resisting the urge to link the project too closely to Munch's biography. Munch is often seen as a narrative artist who extensively exploited his life's experiences in his art. But as we shall see, *Det grønne værelset* breaks with the tradition of linear narrative, undermines the notion of a stabile pictorial space, and challenges our understanding of identity. Inherently unstable, this group of paintings reveals to us the complexity of Munch's pictorial universe.

Historiography and summary of research

The literature on Munch is extensive,³⁵ as is the body of texts produced by the artist himself in the form of letters and notes, newspaper articles he authored and interviews he gave. Previously, much focus has been placed on his art before 1900. He completed some of his best-known paintings prior to the turn of the century, including *Det syke barn* (*The Sick Child*, 1885-86, Woll 130, ill. 31), *Døden i sykeværelset* (*Death in the Sickroom*, 1893, Woll 329, ill. 44), *Vampyr* (*Vampire*), 1893, Woll 335, ill. 47), *Madonna* (1894, Woll 365, ill. 53), and, of course, *Skrik* (*The Scream*, 1893, Woll 333, ill. 46). Research on Munch's art *after* 1900 is of particular relevance to the topic of this dissertation.³⁶ In the following section I focus on the research related to *Det grønne værelset*, Munch's series, his construction of pictorial space, and the identity of the depicted figures.

Research on *Det grønne værelset*

Arne Eggum (1977) seems to be the first art historian to treat *Det grønne værelset* as a pictorial unit. He has written three articles in which the group is central: in 1977, 1984, and 1999, the earliest two taking the series as their main subject, the last focusing on Munch's works from his stay in Warnemünde in 1907-08.³⁷ These three articles offer the most extensive descriptions of the paintings, and even though the texts have been published over a period of 20 years, Eggum's views on *Det grønne værelset* have remained consistent.

I will focus mostly on the earliest of Eggum's articles, since the others repeat much of the same information, though the last has some new amendments.

³⁵ It has been summed up in state-of-the-field articles: Nygård-Nilssen, 1934; Eggum, 1982; Berman, 1994; Berman, 2008.

³⁶ For example Elizabeth Prelinger, *After the Scream. The Late Paintings of Edvard Munch*, Atlanta 2002; Angela Lampe and Clément Chéroux, eds., *Edvard Munch. The Modern Eye*, London, 2012; Mai Britt Guleng, Birgitte Sauge, and Jon-Ove Steihaug, eds., *Edvard Munch 1863-1944*, Oslo, 2013.

³⁷ Eggum, 1977; Eggum, 1984; Eggum, 1999.

Eggum 1977

Eggum's 1977 article was published on the occasion of the exhibition of Munch's art in Stockholm (Sweden). The catalogue contained seven articles by Eggum, in addition to commentaries on individual paintings by Gerd Woll.

In the text devoted to *Det grønne værelset*, Eggum focused particularly on Munch's relationship with Tulla Larsen, and the impact of the shooting incident that ended it in September 1902. Eggum claimed that the shooting was pivotal for Munch:

The gunshot at Åsgårdstrand changes everything. From now until after his stay at Dr. Jacobson's clinic, he is totally fixated on this event. To him, it is the sole cause of his poor nerves, his excessive use of alcohol, etc. His childhood memories are forced into the background. In Warnemünde in 1907/08 he analyzes the relationship with Tulla Larsen from start to finish, and concludes that the whole thing was ultimately futile. When he comes to Dr. Jacobson's clinic to treat his nerves he has already subjected himself to the therapy he himself wanted.³⁸

We understand from this that Eggum believed Munch's artistic output in Warnemünde to have been a form of treatment. Eggum saw the incident in 1902, and the feelings of betrayal and humiliation Munch experienced when Larsen went to Paris together with the artist Arne Kavli (whom she later married), as the direct precursor to his bad nerves and attempt to deaden them by heavy drinking in the subsequent years.³⁹

In this article, then, Eggum related *Det grønne værelset* to the liaison with Tulla Larsen. He saw *Det grønne værelset* as paintings about the hopeless male/female relationship. He found that the men and women are more lonely in these pictures than before in Munch's art, and portrayed in a more aggressive and desperate manner than before:⁴⁰ "[T]he woman is shut up within herself – inaccessible to the man. She is rigid like a pillar; he is, as it were, open to the surroundings and reacts to them. All the pictures are concerned with a man's inability to reach a woman who is rigid or otherwise inaccessible to him."⁴¹ This breakdown of the relationship between the sexes is something Reinhold Heller also brought up in connection with *Zum Süssen Mädels* in 1984: "There is hate and jealousy, and the women murder the men; compassion is

³⁸ Eggum, 1977, 100. All the quotes in English from this text are taken from the published English version of the article. This quote in Swedish can be found on p. 80.

³⁹ Eggum, 1977, 70.

⁴⁰ Eggum, 1977, 73.

⁴¹ Eggum, 1977, 78.

offered innocently by the men to weeping women, much as Munch condemned himself for having been compassionate towards Tulla [Larsen].”⁴²

Eggum stated that it is difficult to define which paintings are part of *Det grønne værelset*.⁴³ He presented the packing list and Justi’s notes and attempted to identify this series, focusing on five core paintings because of their obvious visual similarities and action taking place in “the same room.” These five, according to him, comprised *Zum Süssen Mädels, Begjær, Hat, Sjalusi, and Mordersken*.⁴⁴ Eggum’s definition became confusing, however, as he called the group a “‘Love’-series.”⁴⁵ He also oscillated between which five images formed the core, and offered a very broad definition: “Of the pictures listed in the section of the catalogue above, only ‘The Operation’ and possible ‘Weeping Nude’ (M 689) cannot directly be assigned to the series. The remaining pictures were painted in similar techniques.”⁴⁶ The catalogue section to which Eggum referred was located directly after the English version of the text and it listed 19 titles, numbered 94-112.⁴⁷ Number 94 and 95 were the two paintings mentioned by title in the quote, and not a part of the series, according to Eggum. Numbers 109-112 were graphic prints, and thus, as I read Eggum, excluded from his definition. Eggum stressed that *Det grønne værelset* was painted in Warnemünde, where Munch arrived in the summer of 1907. Number 96 on the list were dated to 1906 and therefore also excluded from Eggum’s definition. The 12 remaining paintings on this list must be assumed to be the paintings he considered part of *Det grønne værelset*. But he clouded the issue further by such statements as, “‘Man and Woman on the Shore’ is included because it is the only central love motive that Munch must have painted in Warnemünde that would not have been touched on otherwise.”⁴⁸

The article was published in both English and Swedish. Eggum was at the time a central figure at Munch-museet, and he wrote extensively about the artist. His text has, therefore, become authoritative. Eggum had unarguably covered new ground in Munch research, and presented relevant and new material, such as the packing list and the Justi

⁴² Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch. His Life and Work*, London 1984, 192.

⁴³ Eggum, 1977, 73. In the Swedish text defining *Det grønne værelset* it is described as “svårt” (eng.: difficult). In the English translation (p. 92), the words used are “quite futile,” i.e., an activity that is pointless or incapable of producing any useful results.

⁴⁴ Eggum, 1977, 73.

⁴⁵ Eggum, 1977, 77.

⁴⁶ Eggum, 1977, 73.

⁴⁷ Eggum, 1977, 102.

⁴⁸ Eggum, 1977, 78.

notes. Yet the article lacked notes and references. It did not give the archive signature of the packing list or proper citation for Justi's notes. This lack of documentation complicated it as a useful source.

Eggum 1999

The 1999 article was a more general text about Munch's artistic output while he was living in Warnemünde. It was published in the exhibition catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Munch og Warnemünde* at Munch-museet, also shown in Rostock Kunsthalle (Germany) and Ateneum (Helsinki, Finland). The catalogue was published in Norwegian, Finnish, and German. In the catalogue Eggum's article was followed by a section with illustrations. The first part was titled "I. Preludium – Mordet" (Prelude – The murder) and reproduced *På operasjonsbordet* (1902-03, Woll 550), *Mordersken* (1906, Woll 742), and *Marats død* (1907, Woll 767).⁴⁹ The following section was titled "II. Det grønne værelset", and contained a number of paintings from 1907, in addition to a few sketches and watercolors.⁵⁰

Since the topic of Eggum's 1999 article was Munch's entire Warnemünde period, *Det grønne værelset* was discussed only in the first half of the text. As in the 1977 article, Eggum argued that the series was rooted in the bitterness and aggression Munch felt towards Tulla Larsen.⁵¹ He called the series a visualization of the opposite of love, "kjærlighetens vrengebilde."⁵² But in this text he also focused more on the space depicted in the paintings. He saw the room as the interior of a brothel,⁵³ though he also suggested connections with a theatre space due to Munch's involvement with Reinhardt's *Kammerspiele* theatre at that time. Eggum further connected *Det grønne værelset* to a specific hotel in Warnemünde, the Hôtel Rohn.⁵⁴ He argued that a

⁴⁹ Eggum, 1999, 47-50.

⁵⁰ Eggum, 1999, 51-64.

⁵¹ Eggum, 1999, 27.

⁵² Eggum, 1999, 28.

⁵³ "bordellinteriør," Eggum, 1999, 27.

⁵⁴ Eggum, 1999, 32.

photograph of the model Rosa Meissner was taken there.⁵⁵ The photograph was used as a guide for *Gråtende pike* which Eggum included in the series in this article.⁵⁶

In this article Eggum did include endnotes, but these referred in many cases back to his own texts, among them the 1977 article, which is not particularly helpful in gaining new insights. Eggum was also vague about which paintings he defined as part of *Det grønne værelset*. Regretfully, this further complicated research on the series.

As we have seen, the main issues for Eggum regarding *Det grønne værelset* were identifying the paintings in the group, the room depicted, and the figures. Most of the researchers who mention *Det grønne værelset*, or touch on some of the pictures, do not critically discuss whether it was a *series*, a *group*, a *cycle*, or a *frieze*. Eggum in 1977 used a number of terms for *Det grønne værelset*, including *series*,⁵⁷ and *cycle*.⁵⁸ In addition, he compared it to Munch's "other 'Friezes'," thus indirectly calling *Det grønne værelset* a frieze.⁵⁹ Munch also completed series that were commissioned, such as *Linde-frisen* (1904, Woll 607-616), *Reinhardt-frisen* (1906-07, Woll 725-735), and the paintings for the University of Oslo Festival Hall (1911/1914-16, Woll 968, 970, 1220-1228).⁶⁰ In addition, he made graphic prints collected in portfolios, such as *Alfa og Omega* (1908-09, Woll G 336-357) and *Speilet* (commenced 1897 but not completed).⁶¹ *Det grønne værelset* differs from many of these in its very loose structure. There is no set order to the canvases, and they were never exhibited as a whole in Munch's lifetime. In article 1, I address these problems and discuss whether *Det grønne værelset* is a series or not. I believe that the grouping is of interest precisely because it resists the categories of taming and structuring as "series," "cycle," "frieze," or "narrative."

Others on Det grønne værelset

The paintings in *Det grønne værelset* have been mentioned by other researchers who are indebted to Eggum's writings. Most recently Angela Lampe discussed them in her

⁵⁵ MM F 059, Munch-museet. See also Cecilie Tyri Holt, *Edvard Munch. Fotografier*, Oslo 2013, 293.

⁵⁶ Eggum does not include this painting in *Det grønne værelset* in his 1977 article: Eggum, 1977, 73. In his book *Munch og fotografi* (1987) Eggum had discussed *Det grønne værelset* briefly. He made a direct connection between the Hôtel Rohn and *Det grønne værelset* because of the wallpaper pattern. Arne Eggum, *Munch og fotografi*, Oslo 1987, 127.

⁵⁷ Series is used throughout the text: Eggum, 1977.

⁵⁸ Cycle: Eggum, 1977, 72.

⁵⁹ Eggum, 1977, 73.

⁶⁰ See for example: Berman, 1989; Templeton, 2008.

⁶¹ See 1981; Torjusen, 1978.

article in the exhibition catalogue *Edvard Munch. The Modern Eye* (2011-2012).⁶² Nils Ohlsen addressed them in his article in the catalogue to the exhibition *Munch 150* (celebrating Munch's 150th anniversary in 2013).⁶³

Lampe's "Munch and Max Reinhardt's Modern Stage" is primarily interested in examining the Reinhardt/Munch collaboration (1906-1907). She claims that it inspired Munch to paint images of figures in interiors, such as *Mord* (*Murder*, 1906, Woll 741, ill. 91) and *Det grønne værelset*.⁶⁴ Lampe uses Eggum's articles from 1977 and 1999 as her only sources of information about these paintings. She thus remains vague about which canvases are part of *Det grønne værelset*:

Munch painted this group of around ten works in the summer of 1907 in the small Baltic spa town of Warnemünde, just a short train journey away from Berlin. He had taken refuge there to gather his strength again and to explore new avenues in his art. The core of this cycle, which is deeply influenced by Munch's traumatic relationship to Tulla Larsen, consists of the paintings portraying the situation in a room with green wallpaper: *Hatred, Jealousy, To the Sweet Young Girl, The Murderess, and Desire*.⁶⁵

In this quote Lampe indicates that *Det grønne værelset* consists of ten works, but shortly thereafter names only five by their title. They are identical to Eggum's so-called core paintings.⁶⁶

Nils Ohlsen, in his "Edvard Munchs visuelle retorikk – en tilnærming med utgangspunkt i utvalgte interiører" (2013) is concerned with Munch's use of interior space. The article is structured around chronological examples. It also points to the importance of Reinhardt's influence on Munch's paintings of interiors in 1906 and 1907.⁶⁷ In the short section devoted to *Det grønne værelset*, Ohlsen refers to Eggum's research. He lists four paintings by their title: *Zum süßen mädel* (1907, Woll 781, ill. 1), *Sjalusi* (*Jealousy*, 1907, Woll 783, ill. 3), *Sjalusi* (*Jealousy*, 1907?, Woll 784, ill. 4), and *Mordersken* (*The Murderess*, 1907, Woll 786, ll. 6). He claims, citing Eggum's research, that the interiors depict a brothel. But Ohlsen also contributes some insightful

⁶² *Edvard Munch. The Modern Eye / Edvard Munch. L'œil moderne* was shown at Centre Pompidou (Paris), Schirin Kunsthalle (Frankfurt), Tate Modern (London), and Munch-museet (Oslo), and accompanied by the exhibition catalogue: Lampe and Chéroux, eds., 2012.

⁶³ *Munch 150* was shown at Nasjonalmuseet (Oslo) and Munch-museet (Oslo), and accompanied by the exhibition catalogue: Guleng et al., eds., 2013.

⁶⁴ Lampe, 2012, 114.

⁶⁵ Lampe, 2012, 114.

⁶⁶ Eggum, 1977, 73 and 74.

⁶⁷ Nils Ohlsen, 'Edvard Munchs visuelle retorikk - en tilnærming med utgangspunkt i utvalgte interiører', *Edvard Munch 1863-1944*, ed. Mai Britt Guleng, Birgitte Sauge, and Jon-Ove Steihaug, Oslo 2013, 202.

observations. He compares the picture plane to something resembling a peep show. He further argues that the lines in the wallpaper pattern draw the spectator's eyes deep into the pictorial space. At the same time, the round table visually pushes the spectator out of the space. He notes a strong contrast in the way the figures relate to each other. They are both isolated from one another and fixated on each other, Ohlsen argues. In this way the paintings engage the spectator, and the spectator's space becomes the true recipient of the rhetorical devices in the paintings.⁶⁸

Munch and space

The space depicted in *Det grønne værelset* feels claustrophobic. There are no windows in the clearly defined interior space and the figures – as well as the spectator – seem to be trapped and oppressed by the environment. The green color is intense, and the ceiling low, giving the space a confined and restrictive quality. The connection to theatre in general, and to Max Reinhardt's *Kammerspiele* in particular, is highly relevant, as Lampe (and others) have pointed out. This is a significant connection that should be investigated further.

Munch seems to have been, from the beginning of his career, intent upon exploring space as an emotive and narrative element in his pictures. In *Skrik* (ill. 46) the space is the carrier of the picture's emotional content. In a painting such as *Døden i sykeværelset* (ill. 44) the space resembles a theatre stage, and is exaggerated compared to real life. Or as Carla Lathe puts it, "His presentation of this memory is therefore larger than life. As in the intimate theatre, he made a dramatic spectacle from his revelation of private experience."⁶⁹ We know that Munch was in close contact with writers and playwrights from the beginning of his career.⁷⁰ He associated with them through the Kristiania (today's Oslo) bohemian group. After moving to Berlin in 1893 he became a regular part of the group of artists at the café *Zum schwarzen Ferkel*.⁷¹ In 1896 and 1897 he made lithographs for the theatre programs and posters (*affiches de théâtre*) at

⁶⁸ "På nytt er betrakteren og hans virkelige rom adressat for bildets retoriske virkemidler." Ohlsen, 2013, 203.

⁶⁹ Carla Lathe, 'Edvard Munch's Dramatic Images 1892-1909', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 46, 1983, 206.

⁷⁰ See Eggum, 1998; Carla Lathe, *Edvard Munch and His Literary Associates*, Norwich 1979; Lathe, 1983.

⁷¹ "The Black Piglet" was originally called *Gustav Türkes Weinhandlung und Probierstube*, and was located at the corner of Unter den Linden and Neue Wilhelmstraße. The name *Zum schwarzen Ferkel* was coined by August Strindberg. From 1892 the café was regularly frequented by Munch, Swedish playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912), Swedish writer Ola Hansson (1860-1925), Polish writer Stanislaw Przybyszewski (1868-1927), German writer Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), and the Norwegians Gunnar Heiberg (1857-1929), Dagny Juel (1867-1901, who later married Przybyszewski), and Danish poet Holger Drachmann (1846-1908).

Lugn -Po 's Parisian Th atre de l'Oeuvre (for *Peer Gynt* in 1896, Woll (G) 82, ill. 27, and *John Gabriel Borkman* in 1897, Woll (G) 108, ill. 28).⁷² In 1906-07 he collaborated on projects for Max Reinhardt in Berlin, contributing to set decorations.⁷³

The connection between Munch and theatre has been the topic of quite a few publications. Most of the research is concerned with Munch's admiration for Henrik Ibsen.⁷⁴ This is understandable, as Ibsen was already in Munch's own lifetime a very important playwright, and a fellow countryman. P l Hougen (1976), Lars Roar Langslet (1994), and Joan Templeton (2008) have focused on identifying contacts between the two artists and how they were manifested in their artistic output. Templeton has also sought to document the creative process and circumstances surrounding Munch when he was making pieces inspired by Ibsen's plays. Eggum's article "Henrik Ibsen som dramatiker i Munchs perspektiv" (1998) examines Munch's work on Ibsen projects together with Lugn -Po  in Paris in 1896 and Max Reinhardt in Berlin in 1906-07, though more in terms of historical circumstances than Munch's understanding of or influence derived from theatre as an art form. Eggum touches on Munch's relation to other playwrights, such as Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) and his plays *L'intruse* (1889/90) and *Pell as et M lisande* (1892/93). This seems to me an important subject for investigation.⁷⁵

I believe that further research is needed on Munch and the theatre space, as well as on his relationship with German and Austrian theatre. I briefly touch on these topics in article 2, in discussing the nature of the space in *Det gr nne v relset*, but there is more to uncover in this area. Likewise, more research is needed on Munch's pictorial space in general. There have been a few studies on this subject, such as David Loshak's article "Space, Time and Edvard Munch,"⁷⁶ Mai Britt Guleng's work on the pictorial space in *Livsfrisen* (2013),⁷⁷ and Nils Ohlson's (2013) article mentioned earlier. Loshak is concerned with exterior space and how its depth can be an indication of time. Guleng discusses Munch's repetition of spaces, such as the shoreline or interiors, and their role as indicators of specific content (such as love or death). Ohlson makes a connection

⁷² See Lampe, 2012, 109f; Templeton, 2008, 22ff.

⁷³ Lampe, 2012, 111, fig. 45; Templeton, 2008.

⁷⁴ Eggum 1998; P l Hougen, *Edvard Munch og Henrik Ibsen*, Grimstad 1976; Lars Roar Langslet, *Henrik Ibsen. Edvard Munch. To genier m tes*, Oslo 1994; Templeton, 2008.

⁷⁵ Eggum, 1998, 24ff.

⁷⁶ David Loshak, 'Space, Time and Edvard Munch', *Burlington Magazine*, no. April, 1989.

⁷⁷ Guleng, 2013.

between the interiors and the role of the spectator in completing them.⁷⁸ I address the role of the spectator in *Det grønne værelset* in articles 1, 2, and 4.

In 2012, Wenche Volle completed her PhD dissertation *Munchs rom (Munch's Rooms)*.⁷⁹ She focused her discussion on Munch's knowledge of spatiality and architecture, and his concern with how his paintings were arranged in the spaces in which they were shown. In this thorough investigation of Munch's understanding of space, of how it was expressed in his visual output and his writings, Volle examined buildings and exhibition spaces, as well as intellectual ideas on space in Munch's lifetime. Volle's research was funded by The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, and had, naturally, a strong connection with architectural space. But she did not, by and large, discuss Munch's pictorial space. It is my contention that in *Det grønne værelset* Munch used the spatial dynamics in a very deliberate manner. I elaborate on that in article 2.

Munch's image

Early on, much of the research on Munch was focused on what was believed to be his historic person and his life story, his art being read in this light. It is by no means difficult to understand why a biographical perspective has become a favored approach, given the vast amounts of primary sources available to researchers at Munch-museet and the overall biographical emphasis in art-historical studies. This has resulted in a blurring of boundaries between his private life and the visual worlds he created. Munch contributed to this trend through his own writings, and through inclusion of figures in his images who physically resemble people we know from his personal life – his immediate family, colleagues, friends, and enemies, people like his father and siblings, Hans Jæger, Christian Krohg, Tulla Larsen, Gunnar Heiberg, Stanislaw Przybyszewski, and August Strindberg amongst others. It is tempting to link Munch's art to his life, all the more so because he had an ongoing dialogue with his biographers during his lifetime and participated strongly in creating his public image.⁸⁰ As a result, discussions

⁷⁸ Ohlsen, 2013, 202, 203, and 206.

⁷⁹ Wenche Volle, *Munchs Rom*, PhD, Arkitektur- og designhøgskolen i Oslo, 2012.

⁸⁰ These were: Przybyszewski et al., 1894. Max Linde: *Edvard Munch und Die Kunst der Zukunft*, Berlin 1905; Hermann Esswein: *Edvard Munch*, Munich 1905; Curt Glaser: *Edvard Munch*, Berlin 1917; Arnulf Øverland: *Edvard Munch*, Kristiania 1920; Pola Gauguin, *Edvard Munch*, Oslo 1933; Jens Thiis, *Edvard Munch og hans samtid. Slekten, livet og kunsten. Geniet*, Oslo 1933; Rolf Stenersen, *Edvard Munch. Närbild av ett geni*, Stockholm 1944. See also Clarke, 2013.

of Munch are saturated with myths and assumptions, and it is difficult to ascertain what really happened.

It has been claimed that since Munch painted many images of sickness and angst in the 1890s, his personal life must have been filled with the same.⁸¹ His relationship with Tulla Larsen supposedly dominated his artistic output in the decade following the shooting incident in 1902.⁸² Yet some researchers have ventured to read Munch's work in ways that counter the established truths. Carla Lathe questioned the impression that Munch was depressed, sick, and distraught in the 1890s, while living in Berlin. Since so many of his paintings from that period project this image, it has become the norm to assume that his life was filled with somatic and psychological problems. Lathe, however, has documented that Munch led a fairly happy, creative, and productive existence in Berlin. The subject matter of his paintings was a reflection not of his private life but, Lathe claims, the literary milieu in which he was submerged and its intellectual interests.⁸³

Another persistent story of Munch's career is his early and bitter critical failure. Nils Messel sought to question the notion that Munch was met by a wall of hostility from the art critics of Kristiania. He claimed instead that Munch was, from the start, received with enthusiasm and acclaim from the knowledgeable and influential segments of the art scene. The art critic Andreas Aubert wrote in 1884, "Those, who are not able to see the talent which Munch possesses, have no right to form any judgment of art (...) His artistic gifts should be more than obvious to everyone who can use their eyes."⁸⁴ The story of the lonely, motherless artist held down by a conservative society and tortured by his personal nightmares is only a character Munch played. According to Messel, the negative publicity became an important part of the artist's marketing in an era which valued stories of heroic struggle.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Lathe, 1983, 193.

⁸² Eggum, 1977; Eggum, 1999; Høifødt, 1995; Høifødt, 2004.

⁸³ Lathe, 1983, 193.

⁸⁴ "Den, som ikke kan se Begavelsen i Munchs Studie, har ingen Ret til at fælde Dom over bildende Kunst (...) Talentet og Dygtigheden er nemlig synlig nok for enhver, som kan se." Andreas Aubert, *Aftenposten*, November 22, 1884, here after Nils Messel, 'Edvard Munch and His Critics in the 1880s', *Kunst og kultur*, 1994, 218. For quote in Norwegian, see Nils Messel, 'Edvard Munch og hans kritikere i 1880-årene', *Munch blir 'Munch'. Kunstneriske strategier 1880-1892*, Oslo 2008, 163.

⁸⁵ Messel, 2008, 160.

The past couple of decades there have been a greater interest in Munch's abilities to market himself, and in his role as an artist in a larger context.⁸⁶ It has been pointed out that Munch was a clever businessman, strategically benefiting from his scandals as well as successes.⁸⁷ The duality of his public persona has been an underlying theme of two recent exhibitions: *Munch blir 'Munch'* (Munch-museet, 2008) and *Becoming Edvard Munch* (The Art Institute of Chicago, 2009). Jay Clarke has noted that:

In assessing Munch's post-1900 work, and particularly the effect of his prolonged hospitalization in 1908 and 1909, many scholars have argued for the existence of two different artists, one 'insane' and the other newly 'sane'. However, both Munch's imagery and ambitions were far more complex than these binary positions suggest. The sick and the healthy Munch coexisted, as a careful look at his art and relationship to the market reveal.⁸⁸

Patricia Berman, in her state-of-the-field articles (1994 and 2008), has examined how Munch seems to have been able to create personae for himself in relation to the public.⁸⁹ Berman has identified a century-long process of mythmaking regarding Munch-the-artist and Munch-the-person.⁹⁰ Our understanding of him has been colored by his own marketing efforts and concerns with shaping his legacy. Over the last century many writers have contributed to elaborating his myths. Yet even in the years following the shooting in Åsgårdstrand in 1902 Munch was in command of his career. As I argue in articles 3 and 4, he also used certain elements of his paintings to position himself.

Munch's figures

Munch was a savvy marketer of himself through various channels, including the media, exhibition strategies, and photographic self-promotion. Although a number of researchers have acknowledged that, little has been done to understand the subject matter of his paintings in this light. Yet it seems highly relevant to examine Munch's use of his artworks in constructing and promoting his public persona(e).

Jon-Ove Steihaug, in his article "Edvard Munchs performative selvportretter" (2013), addresses Munch's use of self-portraits in self-promotion. He sees them as a

⁸⁶ Yarborough, 1995; Berman, 1994; Berman, 1997; Berman, 2008; Clarke, 2003; Clarke, 2013; Messel, 2008.

⁸⁷ Yarborough, 1995; Berman, 2013.

⁸⁸ Clarke, 2009, 160.

⁸⁹ Berman, 1994, 45.

⁹⁰ Berman, 2008.

way of staging an identity, as a part of Munch's strategic mythmaking about himself as an artist.⁹¹ This argument intersects with Berman's research on Munch's *Selvportrett i spanskesyken* (*Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu*, 1919, Woll 1296, ill. 102). She argues that Munch was skilled at actively staging himself in a specific role.⁹² Steihaug and Berman focus on individual self-portraits. Iris Müller-Westermann has conducted extensive research on Munch's complete oeuvre of self-portraits – a work of great interest for understanding how Munch promoted himself visually through the use of his own person.⁹³ Müller-Westermann, however, proposes a very wide definition of Munch's self-portraits and aligns his paintings with his biography, thereby continuing the tradition of identifying a young dark-haired man dressed in dark clothes in Munch's paintings with the artist.⁹⁴ In my articles 3 and 4 I challenge the assumption that this man is Munch-the-person. In article 3 I take a close look at this figure and analyze the specific traits he displays. I expand on this subject in article 4, as I subject all the figures in *Det grønne værelset* to critical analysis, including the red-haired woman who is often taken to be Tulla Larsen, with whom Munch was romantically involved between 1898 and 1902.

Theoretical framework and methodological considerations

The aim of my project is to develop new interpretative strategies for analyzing Munch's pictorial imagery by looking closely at *Det grønne værelset*. I focus on how Munch used this group of paintings to turn space into a character and to project himself as an avatar in these pictures. I seek to understand how Munch experimented with visual effects and embraced instability as a practice. My main research interest is the pictures themselves and what they tell us – not as elucidations of Munch's biography, or reflections of the circumstances of their creation, but as visual documents of Munch's artistic process. I do not necessarily want to know what these paintings meant, or why they were painted.

⁹¹ Jon-Ove Steihaug, 'Edvard Munchs performative selvportretter', *Edvard Munch 1863-1944*, ed. Mai Britt Guleng, Birgitte Sauge, and Jon-Ove Steihaug, Oslo 2013.

⁹² Patricia Berman, "Identity Tourism": Mobility and the Modern Self" unpublished paper given at *Munch and the Promise of Modernity* at Tate Modern (London), October 13, 2012. The information referred to here is based on a version of the manuscript that Berman shared with me prior to giving this paper, and on Steihaug, 2013, 19f.

⁹³ Iris Müller-Westermann, *Munch själv*, Stockholm 2005.

⁹⁴ Müller-Westermann, 2005, 16.

Rather, I strive to understand what the images themselves can tell us and how they function as a group. We need to see them, I propose, not as mirrors of Munch's life or visualizations of his time, but as reflections of his artistic thought. J.W. Mitchell, in his article "What do pictures *really* want" (1996), has argued that a dislocation of the pictures from their makers does not eliminate the interpretation of signs: "It's crucial to this strategic shift that we do not confuse the desire of the picture with the desire of the artist, the beholder, or even the figure in the picture."⁹⁵ In the theory of narratology, the central issue is not to detect *what* the work means, but rather to identify *how* it has meaning, and how this is presented and conveyed, who tells the story, and how it is structured. How does Munch tell his stories, or rather how does *Det grønne værelset* narrate?

If we loosen the ties between the series and Munch's biography, who does the storytelling in the images and what stories do they tell? Mieke Bal insists that a narrator is always present in a work of art, but is external to it.⁹⁶ This figure does not include himself in the images, but has uttered the symbols and signs on canvas. In other words, the narrator is not the same as Munch. The author of the work (Munch) is, according to Bal, not relevant for a narratological reading. Thus I am not concerned with Munch's intentions with the series (and we do not have the evidence for them anyway). The work itself produces meaning regardless of the historic person behind its creation, so it is necessary to examine the series in itself in order to reveal its meaning. The narrating subject is integrated in the narrating *text*, which, in this case, is comprised of seven paintings (as examined above). The narrating subject is not as readily available for identification in the paintings as in a written text or a narrative film. Objects and paintings narrate in more indirect ways, through paint strokes, texture, light, color, spatial relations, and body language. These trigger the spectators' body of knowledge, and contain elements of meaning in a narratological sense. The paint strokes and color choices prompt associations in the spectator's internal emotional landscape. These elements point to things outside the images, such as the style of the wallpaper, the type of furniture, the objects on the table, etc. The images as *text* reflect back on the subject who has performed certain movements. Through these movements this individual is disclosing something with the images. The details in the images are kept to a minimum

⁹⁵ W. J. T. Mitchell, 'What Do Pictures Really Want', *October* 77, 1996, 81.

⁹⁶ Mieke Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto, Buffalo and London 2009, 18-31.

as the narrator has suppressed irrelevant information. Since the narrator is not visualized in the paintings, we can only extract information about this agent through the signs he uttered in the paintings. What we are seeing is not a stable and objective depiction of a room. It is, rather, a reflection of how the narrator *perceives* or *conveys* the space.⁹⁷

In the following sections I outline three theoretical positions crucial to this dissertation: seriality, narratology, and painting as performance. Before we continue on examining the details of Bal's theory of narratology, I want to take a closer look at what *Det grønne værelset* is. Up till now I have discussed which paintings may be considered part of *Det grønne værelset*. But what is this selection of images? Is it a picture *cycle* as has been suggested,⁹⁸ or one of Munch's many *series*?

Seriality

The term *series* can be defined as a grouping of a number of related or similar things, or events arranged in temporal or spatial order, or sequence. For example, a set of books, maps, or periodicals published in a common format or under a common title comprises a series.⁹⁹ In the visual arts the term *series* is applied quite broadly, not being confined to a fixed content or definition. It can refer to variations on a theme or a subject, such as Claude Monet's *Wheatstacks* (1890-91, ill. 126-128) and *Water Lilies* (started late in the 1890s); to versions of the same image, such as Giorgio De Chirico's *Disquieting Muses* (1945-60); to documents of a process, or stages in a printing plate – *états* or *étapes*, such as Edgar Degas' *Leaving the Bath* (1879-80, 20 states); or to pictures that together form a story, such as William Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* (1733, ill. 129a-h) or Max Klinger's *Ein Handschuh (A Glove)* (1881, ill. 130-132). It is important to keep in mind that in the case of repeated images or versions, there need not be a "primary" and a lesser quality image.¹⁰⁰ A common denominator for artists working with series, according to David Lee, is that "the organization is essentially serial and the content involves repetition."¹⁰¹ I see this definition as being too narrow. Charles Stuckey outlines two general

⁹⁷ Peter Verstraten, *Film Narratology*, Toronto, Buffalo and London 2011, 36.

⁹⁸ Eggum, 1977, 72.

⁹⁹ *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, Avenel 1994.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Stuckey, 'The Predications and Implications of Monet's Series', *The Repeating Image: Multiples in French Painting from David to Matisse*, ed. Eik Kahng, Baltimore 2007.

¹⁰¹ David Lee in *ARTnews* 66, no 8, December 1967, p. 42-54; here after Eik Kahng, ed. *The Repeating Image: Multiples in French Painting from David to Matisse*, Baltimore, 2007, 16.

characteristics of works that constitute serial art: (1) works in series are made at approximately the same time, although with some artists this is not the case. Munch, for instance, worked on his *Livsfrisen* over several decades. (2) Stuckey finds that the term “series” should be limited to images that are not created or duplicated as a result of market demands for a certain style or subject matter.¹⁰² This is a relevant distinction, as some artists have repainted a certain image or images in a particular style when these have proved to be profitable. These should not be considered “series,” according to Stuckey. He goes on to mention two possible motivations for artists working in series: conceptual (showing the stages in the development of an image, something that concerned Henri Matisse in the 1930s), or decorative (the multiplication of a single image in order to partly or completely surround a space so as to create a mood, for example Vincent van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* (1888) or Puvis de Chavannes’ *The Sorbonne* (1889).¹⁰³ But, as Stuckey points out, “While the presentation of the related works as an exhibition ensemble seems integral to the fulfillment of series art, Monet, his predecessors, and his successors have seldom required that works in a particular series remain together.”¹⁰⁴ It appears that it was important for many artists in the decades prior to 1900 to execute series, but they were not preoccupied with securing one buyer for the whole set. We know that Munch sold several of his original paintings intended for *Livsfrisen* and later painted new versions of them.

It appears that the latter part of the nineteenth century was a period when “series fever swept through the French art world,” as Charles Stuckey states.¹⁰⁵ Such a preoccupation formed the context for Monet’s immensely successful exhibition in May 1891. Stuckey has traced the fascination with series back to 1859, when Charles Baudelaire wrote an installment in *Revue française* about Eugène Boudin’s quick landscape sketches (ill. 134-136). Stuckey also points to the high demand for *cartes de visite* (patented in 1854). André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri discovered that the photographic plate could be exposed section by section, to create gridded multi-image prints showing the sitter multiple times. These were often cut up into the fashionable

¹⁰² Stuckey, 2007, 84.

¹⁰³ Stuckey, 2007, 84; Jennifer Shaw, *Dream States. Puvis De Chavannes, Modernism, and the Fantasy of France*, New Haven and London 2002.

¹⁰⁴ Stuckey, 2007, 84.

¹⁰⁵ Stuckey, 2007, 85. Stuckey points to what he calls a “steady flood of art based on variations”

illustrated calling cards and were popular collectors' items (ill. 139).¹⁰⁶ By the 1860s Gustave Courbet had created groups of images based on similar themes, such as his four uniform-sized canvases of the *Source of the Loue* (1864, ill. 137-138). Courbet also exhibited a group of seascapes from Trouville in April 1866.¹⁰⁷ In 1873 in Paris, James Abbott McNeil Whistler exhibited a number of similar-format views of the Thames.¹⁰⁸ The Impressionists showed picture series at most of their group shows.¹⁰⁹

Painting variations had, prior to this, been associated primarily with copies or reproductions intended to make money. After Monet's exhibition in May of 1891, there was a "flood of series art incidents."¹¹⁰ Amongst them were Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's well-known lithographs of the dancer Loïe Fuller (1893). Munch's budding serial interest in the early 1890s was, thus, not unique amongst modern artists.

Munch's series or groups of paintings cannot be defined by a finite number, as some are very loosely structured. The largest, and most extensive, is *Livsfrisen*. Starting out as 6 paintings in 1893, it swelled to 20 paintings and 36 graphic prints and watercolors exhibited for the last time in 1918. He worked on *Livsfrisen* for 30 years.¹¹¹ It was an ongoing project that never reached its completion. It is also an elusive series, since over the years Munch sold some of the images and painted new versions to replace them. He also included different images in the series at various exhibitions. Still, even in its somewhat elusive form, this series is one of the central works in Munch's oeuvre. Other series have never been exhibited at all, or only in fragments. *Det grønne værelset* has been shown, partially, a few times, most recently in the 2011-12 exhibition *L'Œil moderne/The Modern Eye*, the 2013 anniversary exhibition, *Munch 150*, and in the 2015 exhibition at Munch-museet titled *Melgaard + Munch*. Munch also made a portfolio series of graphic prints, such as *Alfa & Omega* (1908-09) and *Speilet* (commenced 1897 but not completed).¹¹² In other words, series were, for Munch, a lifelong preoccupation.

¹⁰⁶ Stuckey, 2007, 96; see also Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph*, New Haven and London 1985.

¹⁰⁷ According to Stuckey these were shown at Luquet's gallery at 79, rue de Richelieu in Paris. No catalogue for the exhibition exists. The source of the information is contained in a letter from Courbet to his friend Urbain Cuénot. Stuckey, 2007, 100, and 123 note 32

¹⁰⁸ Stuckey, 2007, 104.

¹⁰⁹ Stuckey, 2007, 105-118.

¹¹⁰ Stuckey, 2007, 118.

¹¹¹ Heller, 1969; Eggum, 2000.

¹¹² Torjusen, 1978.

It seems that viewing his own images together at exhibitions spurred Munch to identify common qualities in them and to organize them into groups.¹¹³ He had already seen French artists do that in 1891, and it may have influenced his thinking as he observed the effects of his own paintings when mounted together.¹¹⁴ Spectators crave coherence and seek to create meaning in what they behold. Seeing paintings in a series triggers our need to find a narrative. In modern art the artwork is not necessarily autonomous, and its meaning must be found elsewhere. What if there is no narrative uniting the paintings in *Det grønne værelset*? Is it possible to have a series without an internal story?

Narratology

Mieke Bal's theory of *narratology* is usually applied to literary texts as a means of analysis and comparison. A narrative work consists of the physical piece itself, such as all the words on paper (e.g., a novel), the moving images onscreen (film), an art installation including all its components, or a painting. This is a finite, structured whole, and it is called the *text*.¹¹⁵ The *text* consists of signs, symbols and/or markings that convey the *story* to the spectator in a specific order. These symbols (letters, paint strokes, etc.) are uttered by someone: "This agent cannot be identified with the writer, painter, composer or filmmaker. Rather, the writer withdraws and calls upon a fictitious spokesman, an agent technically known as the *narrator*."¹¹⁶ The *story* is the content of the *text*, the specific manner in which the plot elements are ordered: for example, the sequence in which the events in a book are presented to the reader if she proceeds from beginning to end. As the reader encounters the work, she constructs a logical and chronological order of events, even if they are not presented in a temporally chronological manner in the *story*; the reader is able to untangle this temporal web independently. This chronological reconstruction of events according to a causal logic is, in the theory of narratology, called the *fabula*.¹¹⁷ For example, there are many versions of the folk tale of Cinderella: novels, operas, illustrations, comic books, and films. They

¹¹³ Heller, 1969, 36.

¹¹⁴ Heller, 1969; Berman, 1989.

¹¹⁵ Mieke Bal emphasizes that this does not mean that the text itself is finite, but that there is a first and a last word to be identified, or a first and a last image of a film, or frame of a painting. Bal, 2009, 5.

¹¹⁶ Bal, 2009, 9.

¹¹⁷ See Bal, 2009, 5; Verstraten, 2011, 12.

are told in different ways, so the *story* varies. But the *fabula* remains the same, regardless of the structure used to tell it. Whether we experience the *story* as one of many versions, we as spectators understand that Cinderella comes from highly unfortunate circumstances and has to deal with a seemingly impossible situation. After a period of neglect, her fortune changes and she receives recognition and good fortune.

Mieke Bal describes three characteristics that are helpful to identify in a *text*. They are usually found in works to which the theory of narratology can be validly applied: 1) There are (at least) two types of “speakers” who utter the signs in the work (one narrator and one actor), 2) it is possible to distinguish, and describe, the three levels of a narrative text: the *text*, *story*, and *fabula*, and 3) the content is conveyed to the reader as a series of connected events. These are caused by actors and presented in specific ways.¹¹⁸

This theory has been used to analyze narrative films, and to some extent other visual media. Mieke Bal has indicated that it is applicable to visual art, but might be most useful in comparisons between literary texts and their cinematic adaptations. I seek to understand *how* Munch narrates in his series in general, and specifically how this is done in *Det grønne værelset*. Mieke Bal suggests that a great deal can be understood when doing parallel analysis of novels and their adaptations to films.¹¹⁹ Peter Verstraten has offered some insightful narratological readings of the film adaptations of *The Comfort of Strangers*¹²⁰ and *The Virgin Suicides*.¹²¹ Such studies show that a successful film adaptation is “not a matter of “illustration” or of “faithfulness.” “Translation’ of a novel into film is not a one-to-one transposition of story elements into images, but a visual working-through of the novel’s most important aspects and their meanings.”¹²² The adaptation of a narrative work in another medium is not a matter of just converting the signs in the story, scene by scene.

Most of Munch’s groups of paintings, or series such as *Livsfrisen*, are not based on literary texts. An exception here is the group of watercolors commissioned by Max Reinhardt for his production of Henrik Ibsen’s *Gengangere* in 1906 (ill. 15-24). Munch

¹¹⁸ Bal, 2009, 9.

¹¹⁹ Bal, 2009, 167.

¹²⁰ Ian McEwan, *The Comfort of Strangers*, London 1981. Adapted to a film directed by Paul Schrader in 1990. See Verstraten, 2011.

¹²¹ Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, New York 1993. Adapted to a film directed by Sofia Coppola in 1999. See Verstraten, 2011.

¹²² Bal, 2009, 167.

was asked by Reinhardt to provide the so-called *Stimmungs-Skissen* (mood sketches) for a production of the play at the *Kammerspiele* theatre in Berlin.¹²³ Although Munch knew the play well, and had seen other stagings of it, he did not choose merely to depict individual scenes.¹²⁴ Some of his sketches can be connected to scenes in the play, while others cannot. It is, therefore, not possible to categorize them as specific scenes, stage designs, or just mood sketches. Reinhardt's initial request did not specify a series of fifteen pieces. Munch has clearly found this project interesting and applied a personal narrative style in order to convey the play's *fabula*. How did he narrate? If his series were not linear narratives, what were they? It is my contention that they must be viewed as a form of *hybrid* narratives. The story of the play is well known and will, therefore, function as a point of comparison for Munch's images, a way to study his narrative choices.

Case: *Gengangere*, Ibsen and Munch

How did Munch choose to narrate Ibsen's *Gengangere* visually in his sketches for Reinhardt? Ibsen called this play a family drama. The story takes place within 24 hours and is set in Mrs. Alving's living room. The play has three acts and five characters: Mrs. Alving (the widow of Captain Alving), her son Osvald (an artist who returns to his childhood home after many years' absence), Pastor Manders (Mr. Alving's long time friend), Regine (Mrs. Alvin's housekeeper), and Engstrand (a carpenter and Regine's father).

There are nine different scenes from this play crystallized as "moods" in Munch's sketches.¹²⁵ In 2000, some effort was made to identify the specific act/scene which Munch's different *Gengangere*-sketches may have illustrated. In the exhibition *From Stage to Canvas: Ibsen's Plays Reflected in Munch's Work* at Munch-museet, curator Petra Petteresen assigned five of the sketches from 1906 to particular scenes.¹²⁶ Joan Templeton, on the other hand, has suggested that Munch's sketches must be viewed as

¹²³ Templeton, 2008, 40.

¹²⁴ Langslet, 1994; Eggum, 1998; Templeton, 2008.

¹²⁵ There are 13 sketches extant today of Munch's 1906 sketches for the stage designs to the production of Ibsen's *Gengangere*. (Woll 699-711). Two of these do not show any figures. Woll 701 is an illustration of the stage interior with the furniture, doors, and window in the background; Woll 711 is an illustration showing the landscape view intended for the large window in the background. The remaining 11 images show various clusters of figures. Two of the images have been executed in two versions: Woll 699 and 700 shows the interior, and three figures; Woll 709 and 710 show Osvald in his chair and his mother Mrs. Alving slumped next to it.

¹²⁶ Templeton, 2008, 164 note 12.

mood sketches, and cannot be identified as illustrations of specific acts in the play.¹²⁷ This is, indeed, what Reinhardt's assistant commissioned from Munch in his initial letter. Reinhardt's memorandum stated that he wanted *Stimmungs-Skissen*.¹²⁸ By that time Reinhardt had already hired a set designer, and he himself was more than capable of envisioning the individual scenes and instructing the actors in their roles. He did not need Munch to illustrate the specific scenes. Although Munch was reluctant to undertake Reinhardt's project at first, it seems that he gradually got more interested in it, and went beyond Reinhardt's initial instructions. The sketches ended up being exhibited in the theatre lobby during the run of the production, and Munch was credited on the theatre playbill as a contributor to the decorations (ill. 116).¹²⁹

Munch's cousin, the painter Ludvig Ravensberg, traveled to Berlin to support his friend prior to the opening night. Ravensberg wrote to Christian Gierløff that Munch has "painted a series of scenes from *Gengangere* (fifteen pieces) which will be hung in the theatre."¹³⁰ It appears from this that the final images were understood, at least by Ravensberg, as *scenes* from the play and not merely general mood sketches. Ravensberg's letter indicates that there were 15 pieces. Today we know of a total of 16 (including drawings), but three of them are so rudimentary that they most likely were not exhibited (ill. 15-24). It seems that two of the exhibited pieces have been lost.¹³¹

In order to find out if the individual sketches adhere to the *story* of the play, it is necessary to identify the different figures and discuss particular details of the depicted scenes. The watercolor sketches are fairly crude, but they do include important elements such as the light/darkness outside the large window in the background (thus indicating the time of the day and helping to position the scene within the overall story of the play), and the lit lamp on the table (this is mentioned as lit by Regine in act 2). These two elements are important factors when trying to identify which scenes or parts of the play the images depict. In addition, the number of figures is, of course, crucial to a scene-by-scene identification process. But here, too, difficulties arise. It is not always

¹²⁷ Templeton, 2008, 49f.

¹²⁸ Templeton, 2008, 40.

¹²⁹ Lampe, 2012, 110f, see also fig. 45.

¹³⁰ "Han [Munch] har ogsaa malt en række scener af gengangere (15 stykker) som skal ophænges i Theatret. Her har Munch ladet figurenes forskellige stillinger udtrykke hvad der foregaar, og det er en mægtig stemming over de fleste, skuespillerne har studert disse meget saa Munch foruden at være arrangør ogsaa er instruktør." Letter from Ludvig Ravensberg to Christian Gierløff, October 26 1906, MM T 2702, Munch-museet.

¹³¹ Templeton, 2008, 43.

easy to identify the characters, or even their gender, as, for example, in the middle huddle of figures in Woll 705 and the figure in the foreground to the right in Woll 706 (seen in three-quarter view). In most of the images the figures do not have facial features, which reduces their identification to their clothing. The only figure who stands out is Regine in Woll 702 and Woll 703. She is the only one dressed in color: red top and blue skirt. Her hair is loosely gathered on top of her head. The others are dressed in black. Mrs. Alving can be distinguished by her skirt and hair bound in a tight knot at the base of her neck. The three men are more problematic. The identification becomes, to some extent, a process of elimination and exclusion. A key work in this process is Woll 700 (and its paler version, Woll 699). Two men and a woman are present in the scene. The woman, to the right, is clearly Mrs. Alving (distinguishable from Regine primarily through color, as mentioned). The two men are clean-shaven and wear dark suits. The one to the left is wearing a suit with a white shirt. He appears to be in the process of joining others. Being a Pastor, it is likely that Manders would be dressed completely in black – a customary everyday dress for protestant ministers. This, then, must distinguish Pastor Manders from Oswald, for otherwise they are depicted as very similar, clean-shaven figures with short hair. The assumption that the man in white shirt is Oswald is confirmed when we look at the images of him on the sofa, and the images of the play's last scene, with Mrs. Alving beside him and slumped in the chair (Woll 707, 708, 709, 710). The third man in the sketches has a long beard, which must be the distinguishing feature of Engstrand, the carpenter and Regine's father (at the beginning of the play).

It is, to some degree, possible to identify a few of Munch's images as illustrations particular scenes. In Woll 699 and 700 the composition shows two men and a woman, Mrs. Alving and Pastor Manders to the right and Oswald to the left. The positioning of the figures with a distance between Oswald and the two others, could indicate that he is entering the room and joining them. This action takes place in act 1 of the play, where Pastor Manders sees Oswald for the first time after his return from Paris. In Woll 709 and 710 Oswald is sitting in a chair, with his mother next to it. This is clearly the last scene of the play (in act 3).

Yet many of Munch's images for *Gengangere* are inconsistent when compared to Ibsen's play. In Woll 703, Munch has depicted all the characters together. Apart from

Regine, placed to the right, they are huddled around the table. Their large shadows occupy close to half of the picture's surface. In the background the window is dark. In the play there are no scenes where all the actors appear together. There is, however, a short period at the beginning of act 3 where Pastor Manders and Engstrand leave and Oswald enters. Chronologically this takes place in the early morning, and the fire has been put out. What Munch has depicted in Woll 703 seems highly charged, and there is no indication of daybreak in the background. Munch has not depicted a fleeting, transitional moment of Ibsen's third act. So the sketch does not seem to be a visual representation of any specific moment in Ibsen's play.

Woll 705 is also difficult to identify in Ibsen's play. Here we see four figures. Two of them are placed behind the table and seem to merge. It is difficult to identify their genders. To the right we see the bearded man. He is clearly Engstrand. To the left is another male figure. In the background the window is dark, and the lamp on the table is lit. Engstrand does not appear in many of the play's scenes, and he is never present together with Oswald. This is, therefore, not an illustration of a scene from the play.

As we have seen, Munch's sketches for Reinhardt's production appear to be rather static, and they do not depict a narrative arc, or a pregnant moment. Munch does not narrate literally, by transferring the *story* scene-by-scene. The images are not interconnected in the sense that they depend on each other to convey the *fabula*. Munch's narrative is a hybrid that forces the spectator into action – to find new ways of interacting with the paintings. In similar ways, *Det grønne værelset* is a difficult group of paintings for the spectator to relate to and decipher, and only makes sense through the active participation of the spectator, and all her senses.

Paintings as performance

Munch lived in France for extended periods in the 1890s. He was in Paris for the important Monet exhibition at Durand-Ruel in May 1891, and it is likely that he saw the *Wheatstacks* series then. He spent most of 1896 in Paris, completing by April of that year *affiches de theater* (theatre program) for the production of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* at Lugné-Poë's Théâtre de l'Œuvre. It is likely that Munch became familiar with new forms

of visual entertainment emerging in Paris and experienced them first hand that spring.¹³²

The visual culture spectacles in fin-de-siècle Paris are well documented.¹³³ There were many venues where Parisians of all classes could indulge their appetites for new visual excitement. Some of the more elaborate entertainments were pricy, but illustrated journals, the mutoscope, the morgue, and the wax museum, as well as smaller toys such as praxinoscope and zoetrope intended for use at home, provided cheaper forms of visual excitement or, at times, scandal (ill. 145-153). Panoramas and dioramas created spectacles of elaborate historical battles or even sea voyages complete with rocking floor and blowing wind.¹³⁴ The Musée Grévin was one of the most popular venues, with spectacular wax exhibits of current affairs. Starting from 1892 it also showed Emile Reynard's *Théâtre Optique* – a projection of hand drawn images, an early form of animation (ill. 150).

There are some relevant points of contact between Munch and the new visual media.¹³⁵ On his first trip to Paris in 1885, he stopped in Antwerp (Belgium). The World's Fair, the Exposition Internationale d'Anvers, was taking place in the city, and one of Munch's paintings was included in the Norwegian pavilion. The Antwerp fair was not the largest or most impressive; it has been overshadowed by the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris with the spectacular Eiffel Tower as its landmark. In November 1889, Munch saw Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show at the Paris fair, and possibly the Hagenbeck Circus.¹³⁶ He devoted the majority of a letter to his family to an account of the "Bilbao Bill [sic]" show.¹³⁷ He seemed fascinated by the village of native American Indians and the scalp of an Indian chief whom Buffalo Bill had defeated. At Antwerp, he saw, among other things, a Congolese village. These attractions, were not, of course, based on optical tricks used by the praxinoscope, zoetrope, mutoscope, or other

¹³² Munch exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Indépendants in April, and the series *L'Amour* at Sigfried Bing's Salon de l'Art Nouveau in May. In this period Munch had contact with a number of people. Amongst these were Swedish author and playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912), Julius Meier-Graefe (1867-1935), Sigbjørn Obstfelder (1866-1900), Vilhelm Krag (1871-1933), Frederick Delius (1862-1934), Thadée Natanson (1868-1951), William Molard (1862-1936), and Stephane Mallarmé (1842-98).

¹³³ See Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge and London 1992; Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception. Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, Cambridge and London 2001; Mark B. Sandberg, *Living Pictures, Missing Persons. Mannequins, Museums, and Modernity*, Princeton and Oxford 2003; Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities. Early Mass Culture in Fin-De-Siècle Paris*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1999; Lisa Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market. Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-De-Siècle France*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2001.

¹³⁴ Schwartz, 1999, chapter 4.

¹³⁵ Lathe, 1983, 191ff.

¹³⁶ Mai Britt Guleng, 'Edvard Munch - fortelleren', *eMunch.no - tekst og bilde*, Oslo 2011, 223f.

¹³⁷ Letter from Edvard Munch to his father, Christian Munch, dated 11.1889, MM N 722, Munch-museet.

“animated imagery.” But spectacles of the unknown “other” were very popular in this period of constant demand for new visual diversions. The ethnographic shows, such as those at the World’s Fairs, and the Hagenbeck Circus catered to this hunger.

With the development of new visual spectacles, the role of the spectator changed. Reinhardt and others in his era challenged the traditional relationship between audience and performers. The performance was no longer restricted to what was happening onstage. Now actors conspired with the audience to transform the theatre space into a different world or reality.¹³⁸

Max Reinhardt altered the traditional distanced position of the theatre audience at his *Kammerspiele* theatre. By eliminating such architectural design elements as the orchestra pit, he included the spectators in the action. His productions featured events happening among the audience and actors moving through and interacting with it.¹³⁹ The spectators were forced to choose and prioritize their impressions, and reposition themselves in relation to the actors, thereby partaking in the creation of the performance.¹⁴⁰ In Reinhardt’s theatre the performance was what occurred *between* actors and spectators, as Erika Fischer-Lichte emphasizes.¹⁴¹

In article 4, I argue that *Det grønne værelset* can be viewed as a virtual reality, and Munch’s figures can be seen as avatars. Avatars are visual representations of the self, and they become an extension of the player’s physical self.¹⁴² An avatar in computer games can be altered at a click of a button, and navigate in the virtual world at the player’s whim. In this sense the player’s identification with the avatar is closer than the audience’s identification with a character on stage.¹⁴³ There is a sense of being in the game, and at the same time outside it.¹⁴⁴ The player becomes a participant, and in this sense, a character. The boundaries between spectator and actor get blurred: “the player

¹³⁸ Jessica Wood, ‘Gaming and Performance: Narrative and Identity’, *Performance Perspectives. A Critical Introduction*, ed. Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat, New York 2011, 120.

¹³⁹ Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance. A New Aesthetics*, London and New York 2008, 33.

¹⁴⁰ Fischer-Lichte, 2008, 33.

¹⁴¹ Fischer-Lichte, 2008, 33.

¹⁴² Wood, 2011, 118.

¹⁴³ Steve Dixon, *Digital Performance. A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, Cambridge 2007, 601; Wood, 2011, 119.

¹⁴⁴ Jon Dovey and Helen Kennedy, *Game Cultures. Computer Games and New Media*, Maidenhead 2006, 113; Wood, 2011, 119.

does not so much perform *in* it [the video game] as *perform* it.”¹⁴⁵ In this way the player becomes a part of the narrative.

Jessica Wood has argued that theatre performances and computer games share similarities in that they take place within given boundaries and outside of every day life. They have characters, a set and a plot, but the role of the audience differs. In computer games the viewer becomes an active agent.¹⁴⁶ Munch’s *Det grønne værelset* is neither a theatre performance nor a computer game. However, the role of the viewer of his paintings has many similarities to that of the audience in Reinhardt’s theatre and a player in a computer game. The experience of Munch’s paintings can be compared to that of a performance or a theatrical event, with the spectator becoming both an audience member and a performer.

According to Peter Brook (1972), every empty space can become a stage.¹⁴⁷ The implication is that theatrical events can take place anywhere: in the streets, galleries, parks, public and private places, etc.¹⁴⁸ Willmar Sauter describes the concept as “the interaction between performer(s) and spectator(s), during a given time, in a specific place, and under certain circumstances.”¹⁴⁹ He goes on to say that the spectator does not need to be fully aware of what is happening, and the performers do not need to expose their act to the spectator.¹⁵⁰

As I discuss in article 1, there is no set order, or *story*, to the paintings in *Det grønne værelset*. The narrative depends on the spectator’s movements. The order in which we encounter the paintings affects the narrative, and the experience becomes individual, different for each viewer.. As in a computer game, the beholder of *Det grønne værelset* can affect the narrative quite substantially and become part of it.¹⁵¹ In this blurring of the real and the virtual the spectator can allow herself to be immersed into the virtual world before her. The transparent membrane of the picture plane allows us to be in two places at once, caught in the claustrophobic green room, yet safe from the

¹⁴⁵ Wood, 2011, 120.

¹⁴⁶ Wood, 2011, 121.

¹⁴⁷ Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*, Middlesex 1972, 11. See also Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York 1959.

¹⁴⁸ Willmar Sauter, *Eventness. A Concept of the Theatrical Event*, Stockholm 2006, 13, and 16.

¹⁴⁹ Sauter, 2006, 12.

¹⁵⁰ Sauter, 2006, 12.

¹⁵¹ Wood, 2011, 119.

forces at play in that other world.¹⁵² According to Erika Fischer-Lichte, Max Reinhardt “pushed for new spatial compositions in his productions that forced the audience out of their occluded position in the proscenium theatre and enabled them to realize new ways of interacting with the actors.”¹⁵³ It is my contention that Munch attempted to do the same with *Det grønne værelset*. I argue in article 1, 2, and 4, that his paintings require participation and action from the spectator to complete them.

Methods

In this dissertation I question how Munch used pictorial space, constructed identities, and created a story. I have wanted to understand Munch’s experimental paintings as a critical practice. It has been less important to me to understand what the paintings in *Det grønne værelset* meant, than to probe the meaning of the paintings themselves. My primary concern in this process has been to come to grips with the physical facts and basic data of this series.

In order to study the repetition of elements in Munch’s paintings, as identified by Mai Britt Guleng (in 2011) in Munch’s many versions of *Vampyr*, I traced and collected a number of pre-determined parameters in a FileMaker database which included all of Munch’s paintings until 1908 (Woll 1-824). The parameters are primarily linked to the positioning of the figures in the compositions, such as arm(s) in front of the body, arm(s) along the sides, erect frontal women, lying figures, and strong facial features/make-up. In addition, there are parameters of specific characteristics, such as red hair, ruffled hair, male facial hair, nudity, and so on. I have also included known figure constellations in Munch’s oeuvre, such as the grouping of two men and a woman, man in woman’s hair, and compositions with a foreground figure and background action. In addition, I looked at the use of transparency (in figures), double (or split) figures, heads that are not connected to a body (or “floating heads”), and flat/dark bodies. And I traced the elements in the room itself, such as green walls, wallpaper patterns, round table, and couch. Lastly, the database contains information on the number of figures in each painting, and the distribution of gender (male, female,

¹⁵² Wood, 2011, 120.

¹⁵³ Fischer-Lichte, 2008, 32.

ambiguous). This allowed me to trace easily those paintings that contain certain parameters.¹⁵⁴

To study the nature of the space depicted in *Det grønne værelset* I found it beneficial to construct a to-scale model of the room. I focused on making a model based on three of the paintings: both the *Sjalusi*-paintings (Woll 783 and 784) and *Mordersken* (Woll 786). These three were chosen as they are the only paintings in *Det grønne værelset* that include sufficient information to venture a measurement of the dimensions of the back wall. In order to create the model, I took as a foundational assumption that the sizes of the figures relate to the room(s)' size in the same way as people relate to rooms in real life. I assumed that the height of the room(s) depicted in Munch's paintings is 3.0 meters, and the height of each person is 1.70 meters.¹⁵⁵ The couch can be assumed to be ca. 2.0 meters long. With this assumed basic information it is possible to make a to-scale model of the room depicted in *Det grønne værelset*.¹⁵⁶ When positioning the elements within the room according to the paintings, and attempting to re-create the point-of view in the paintings with a photographic camera, I was able to document the dimensions of the room, including its width to depth proportions.

It has also been important to locate Munch within the experimental worlds of his own paintings as well as the theatre and cinema of his time. Therefore historical research and mapping of Munch's movements prior to 1907 were part of the investigation. I had the opportunity to study documents gathered in connection with the exhibition *Munch og Warnemünde* (1999) at Munch-museet. By reading Munch's correspondence from 1907, as well as examining the pictures on postcards and names and addresses on letterheads, I was able to put together a timeline of his movements that year. This has aided me in understanding the specific period when he painted *Det grønne værelset*.

W. J. T. Mitchell's examination of what pictures want has been crucial in my thinking and critical analysis. *Det grønne værelset* is an unstable group of paintings. They offer a constant mental dialogue between what seems rational and what is elusive.

¹⁵⁴ This form of survey could not have been done without the publication of Woll, 2008.

¹⁵⁵ The statistic for men's average height in 1900 in Norway was 1.70 meters. See Statistisk sentralbyrå (Statistics Norway), <http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/tabeller/4-22.html> (accessed April 29, 2015).

¹⁵⁶ For this study I have created models of three of the paintings; both the *Sjalusi*-paintings, and *Mordersken*. These were chosen as the back walls in them are of approximately the same dimensions.

Viewed as a series, they seem to fall apart, for there is no coherent narrative uniting the paintings. The pictorial space appears sensible, disintegrates on close analysis, only to make sense again when recreated in a physical model. The figures can only be located, and only make sense, if theorized through the concept of post-human theory as avatars. In order to understand these paintings, it has been necessary to embrace their instability and to see it as part of Munch's artistic practice. Munch was a modern, experimental artist, and the inherent instability of *Det grønne værelset* reveals the complexity of his pictorial universe.

Concluding remarks on contribution

Edvard Munch's works are often read with an eye to discerning a fixed meaning. In this dissertation I identify the unstable qualities in his paintings so as to open new interpretative possibilities. With the title of the dissertation, *Serial Experiments*, I wish to point to what I see as the central aspect of *Det grønne værelset*. I am not aiming to identify fixed meanings, but rather to examine how Munch repeatedly experimented with notions of the real and the virtual. *Det grønne værelset* reveals his serial experiments with narrative, space, and identities.

Munch's interest in seriality coincides with developments in understanding of time and temporality, as well as new visual entertainments of the 1890s. My argument is that *Det grønne værelset* is a modernist experiment in which Munch manipulates our expectations of coherence and narrative. *Det grønne værelset* is a body of work that exaggerates Munch's experimentalism, demonstrates how well he controlled the artistic elements at his disposal, and in this way, operates as a means to consider the deliberative way that he composed his mature work.

In this dissertation I will discuss whether there is a coherent narrative uniting the paintings. The series invites the spectator to create a logical, structured whole through the use of the same space and furniture (the green room), color scheme, and formal characteristics (rough, hasty paint strokes and exposed primed canvas). Furthermore, I will explore if the room depicted in the paintings is one stable unit, viewed repeatedly, or whether they operate as distinctive spaces. Whether the images

show several rooms, or different interpretations of the same space, they depict malleable worlds with their own internal logic, imbued with information and meaning of their own. Perhaps as corollaries to the “mood sketches” that Munch produced for Max Reinhardt’s production of *Gengangere*, the paintings acts as experiments in the enhancement of mood.

Studies of Munch’s paintings have been overwhelmingly focused on figures as agents of narrative and action. I show that they, too, are Munch’s constructs. Munch carefully crafted his image through sophisticated exhibition strategies, his portrayal in the media,¹⁵⁷ and photographs.¹⁵⁸ In 1902 he posed as a disinterested genius sitting in his studio, looking into space, or getting dressed. A number of his loyal supporters promoted his art and reputation in Norway and across Europe, which enabled him to exhibit his work and make money through sales and commissions.¹⁵⁹ Munch appears to have negotiated quite effortlessly among his different identities, from that of an artist as a lonely genius, to a healthy Vitalist. I argue that the figures in his paintings were also part of his multiple self-projections.

Scholars have often assumed that the figures in his works with physical similarities to Edvard Munch(-the-person) and Tulla Larsen(-the-person) represented real people. I suggest that Munch deployed avatar-like, liminal figures who were both “Munch” and “not Munch,” and locate his works in a fluid state between self-confession and fiction. Through the “avatar” and “icon” lens, I seek to complicate the readings of Munch’s seemingly autobiographical works and to show their more inventive tropes.

Prospective areas of research

Beyond the scope of this dissertation, more work needs to be done on the unstable qualities of Munch’s oeuvre. The element of indeterminacy is an important, creative part of his artistic practice and deserves further study. Locating Munch within the larger context of European visual culture as it dealt with experiments in narrative and identity formation would be another fruitful avenue of research. Likewise, the role of the

¹⁵⁷ Berman, 2008; Clarke, 2003; Clarke, 2013; Heller, 1969; Messel, 2008; Yarborough, 1995; Berman, 1993.

¹⁵⁸ Lill-Ann Körber, *Badende Männer: Der Nackte Männliche Körper in Der Skandinavischen Malerei Und Fotografie Des Frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* Bielefeld 2013.

¹⁵⁹ Amongst these were: Jens Thiis (1870-1942, Norwegian art historian, and the first director of Najonalgalleriet), Jappe Nilsen (1870-1931, Norwegian writer and art critic), Julius Meier-Graefe (1867-1935, German art critic), Max Linde (1862-1940, German art collector), Harry Graf Kessler (1868-1937, German diplomat and art collector) and Gustav Schiefler (1857-1935, German art critic and collector). See Messel, 2008; Clarke, 2013.

spectator in completing Munch's paintings bears further investigation, as does the relationship between Munch's works and modern visual media, including new understandings of the nature of sight.

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135. Eugène Boudin, *Cloudy Sky*, ca. 1854-60, pastel on paper, Musée du Louvre (Paris).
136. Eugène Boudin, *Sky at Sunset*, ca. 1854-60, pastel on paper, Musée du Louvre (Paris).
137. Gustave Courbet, *Seacoast (Marine)*, 1865, Wallraf Richartz Museum (Cologne).
138. Gustave Courbet, *Marine*, 1866, The Norton Simon Foundation (Pasadena).
139. André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, *The Legs of the Opéra*, ca. 1864, albumen print carte de visite, George Eastman House (Rochester).
140. John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52, oil on canvas, Tate (London).
141. Henri Matisse, *Red Room (Harmony in Red)*, 1908, oil on canvas, The State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg).
142. Henri Matisse: *Harmony in Red*, in process, photographed in color in 1908.
143. Vincent van Gogh, *The Night Café*, 1888, oil on canvas, Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven).
144. Edouard Vuillard, *Mother and Sister of the Artist*, 1893, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art (New York)
145. The "crime de Pecq," *Le Journal illustré*, June 18, 1882,
146. Morgue interior, with inset of the child, *Le Monde illustré*, August 15, 1886,
147. The crime, "L'histoire d'un crime," Musée Grévin, 1882
148. The arrest, "L'histoire d'un crime," Musée Grévin, 1882
149. Advertisement Praxinoscope-Théâtre, c. 1880.
150. Emile Reynard, *Théâtre Optique*, 1892.
151. Interior of the 'Mutoscope', 1897
152. Zoetrope, n.d., University of Exeter Library.

153. 'Maréorama', 1900, Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris.
154. Eadweard J. Muybridge: *Dropping and lifting handkerchief*, ca. 1884–1887 (detail), collotype print.
155. Étienne-Jules Marey, *Movements in Pole Vaulting*, 1885/95.
156. Georges Méliès, *Les Cartes Vivantes (The Living Playing Cards)*, 1905, stills.
157. Lumière *L'Arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat (The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat)*, 1896, stills.
158. Theda Bara in publicity shot for *The Fool There Was*, 1915, William Fox Vaudeville Company.

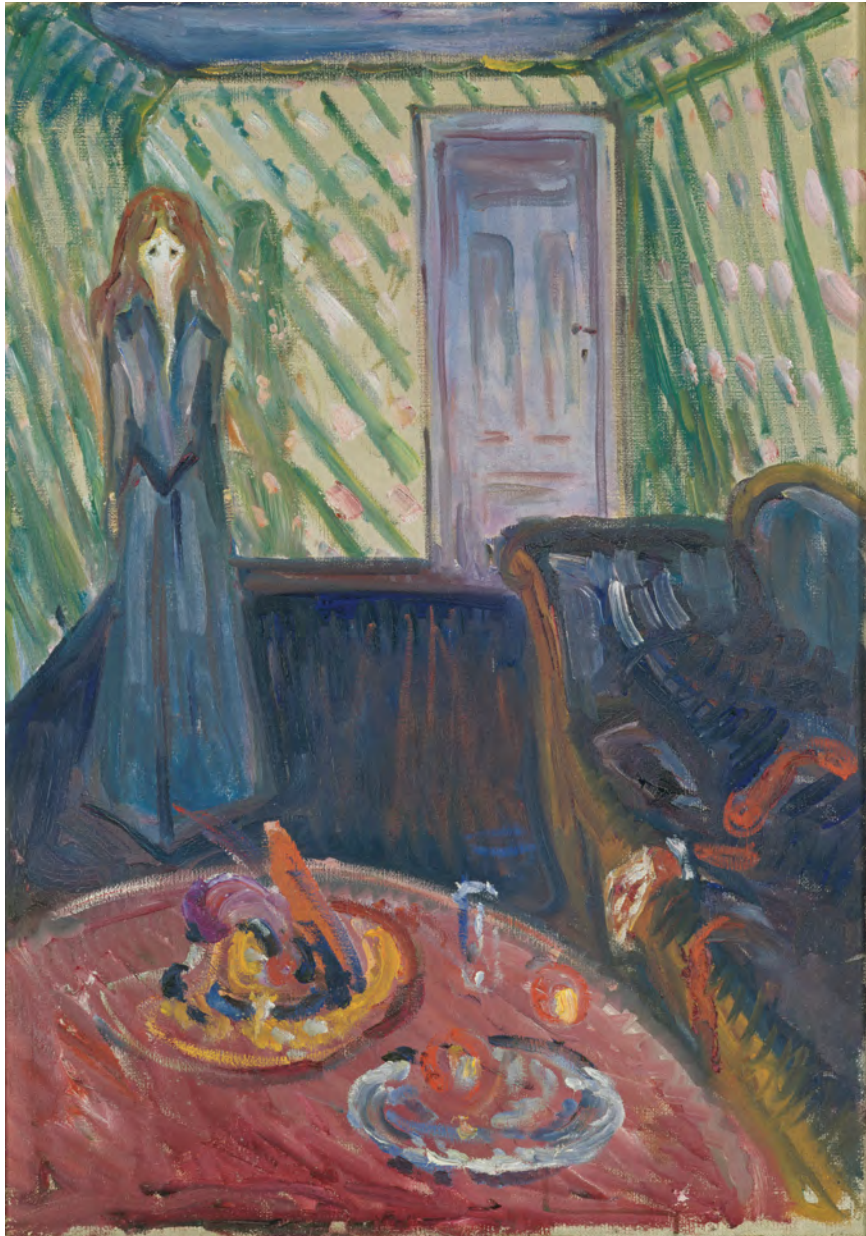














Kasse 9

Gammelt Mand.
 Warnemünde -
 Dübener

2) To nye Kunder
 he Rygge

3) Jalousi det grønne
 Voulse

4) Van. Ausgandskand

5) lidt Skand. billeder

6) Bekendte Mand

8a

Vindbarne med
 Dyrer Warnemünde

8) Jalousi det grønne
 Voulse

9) Blomster Vandet
 det grønne

11) Den skudte

11) Småpige. Alleen

12) Skand. an
 gandskand

13) Ausgandskand

8b

14) Mordskan
 det grønne Voulse

11) Silopjæskand ud

16) Bekendte Mand
 (Det Billedet
 ind)

17) 7 ammerkener

18) Små billeder Skand

19) Den skudte Gut
 Warnemünde

23) Skand. Skand

8c

28/

2. Småpige med
 gut Baggrund

28

To Mand g
 Kunde (det grønne Voulse)

29 Barndom og Arbejdning

30 To Mand g. er
 Kunde (det grønne
 Voulse)

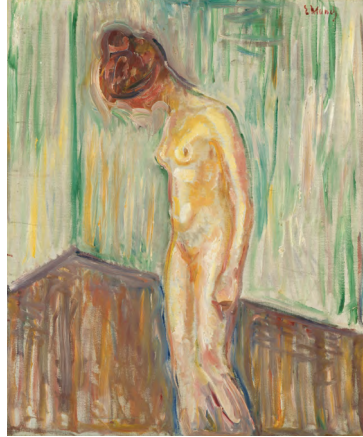
31 Portret af Fru Karl
 Skand. Part

Mand's det Bildet

8d



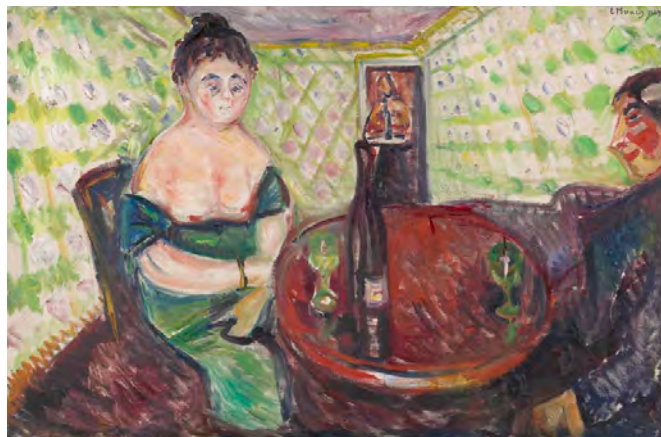
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97



95



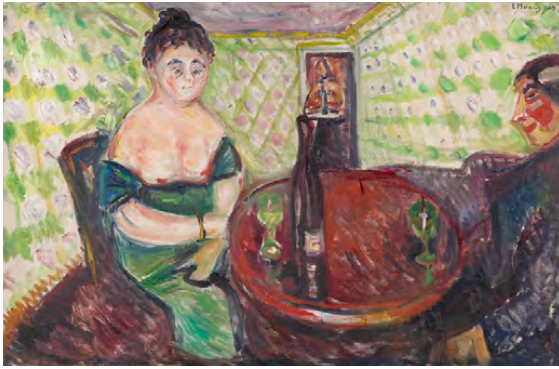
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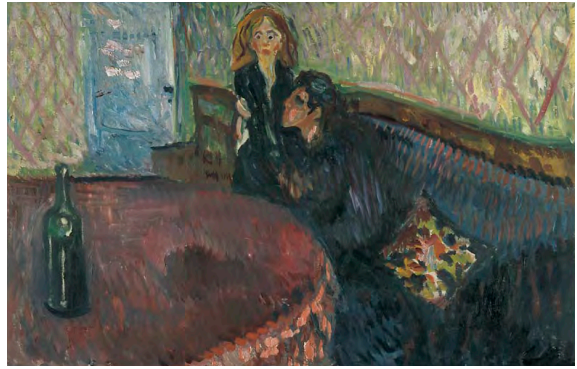
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6



1



5



7



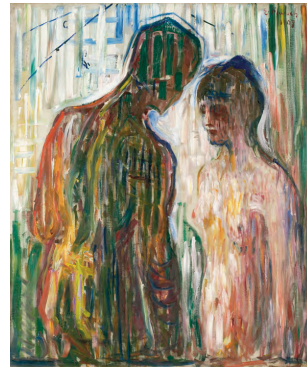
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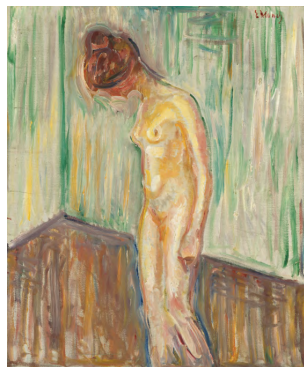
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76



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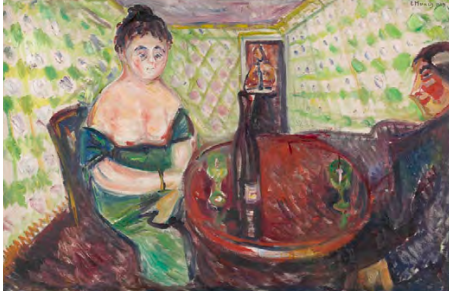


7



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#2



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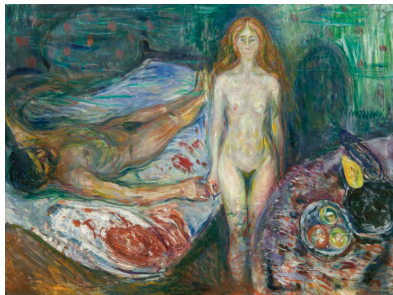


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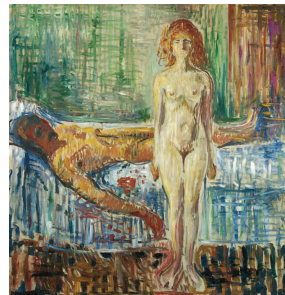


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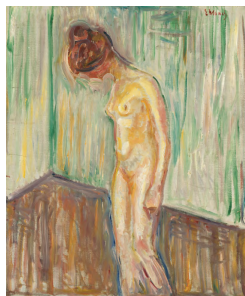
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97



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97



2

#4

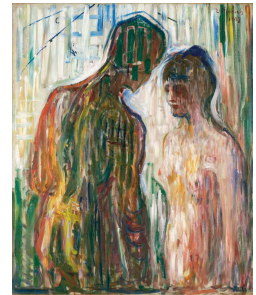


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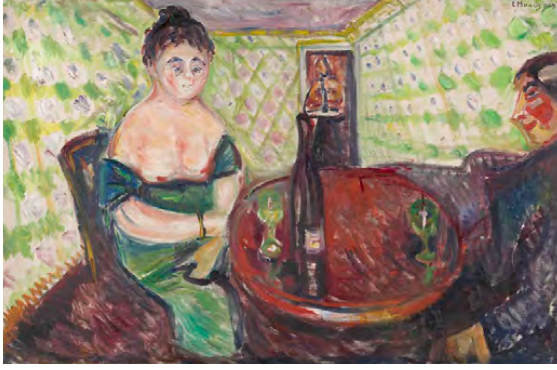
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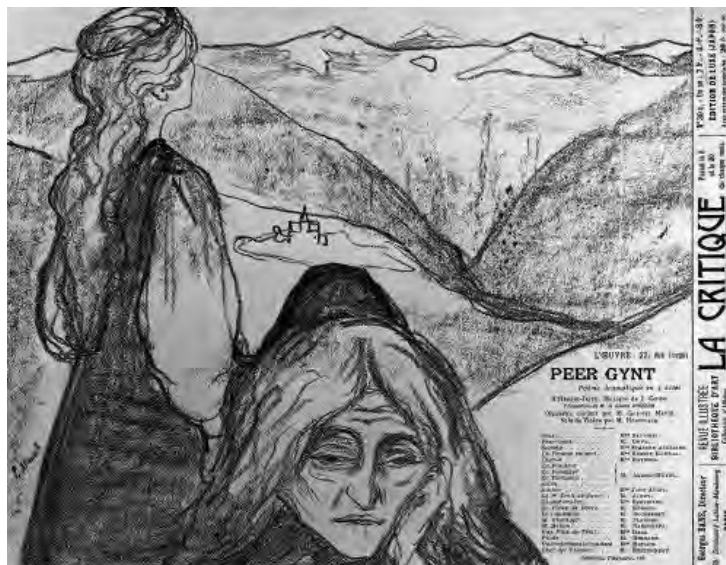
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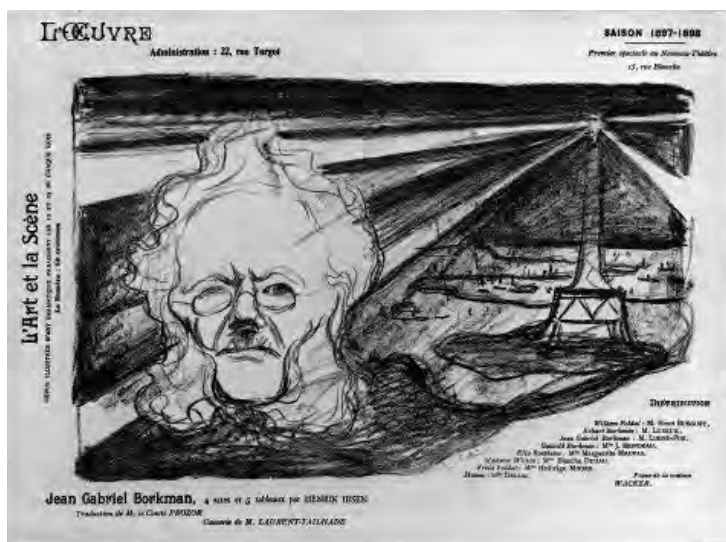
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27



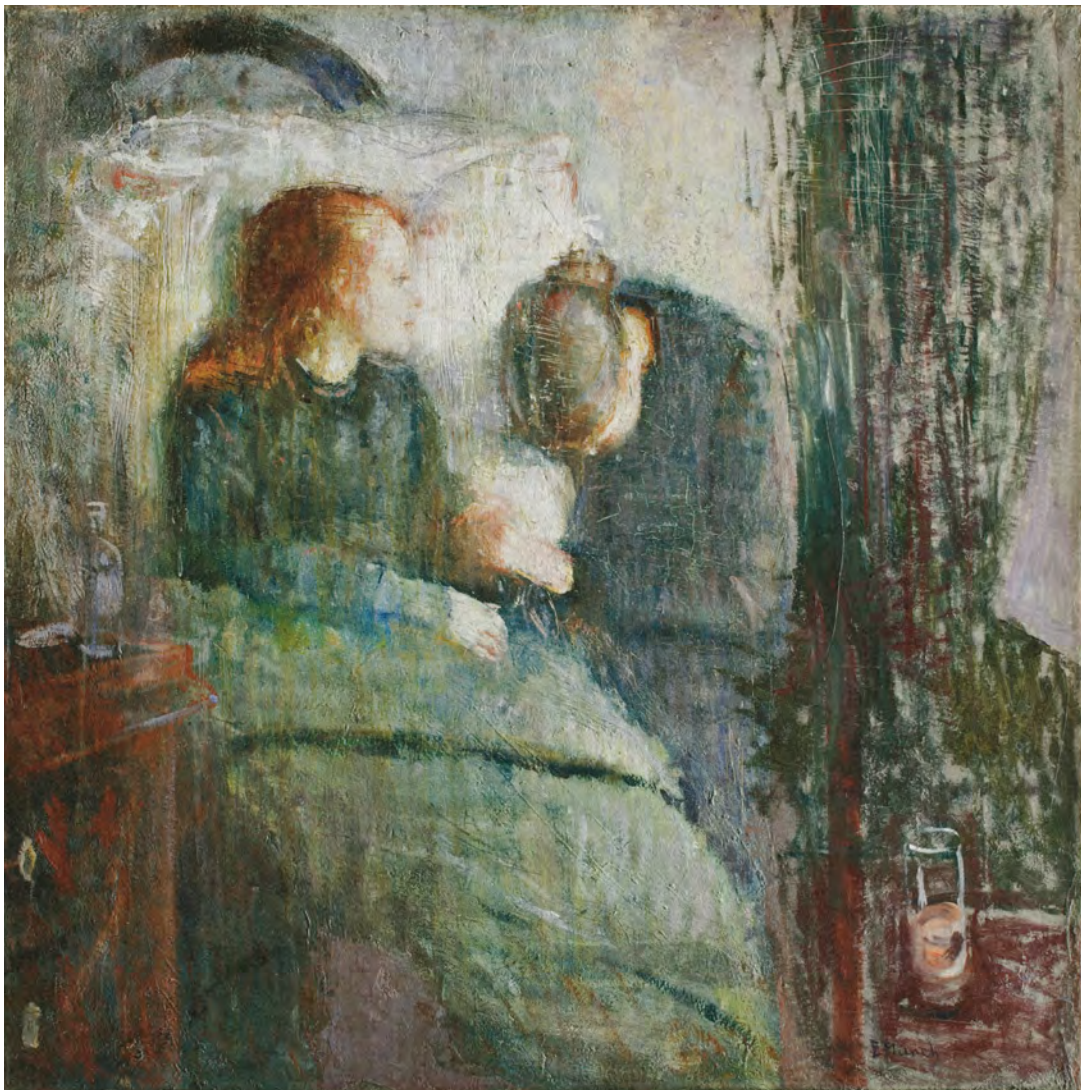
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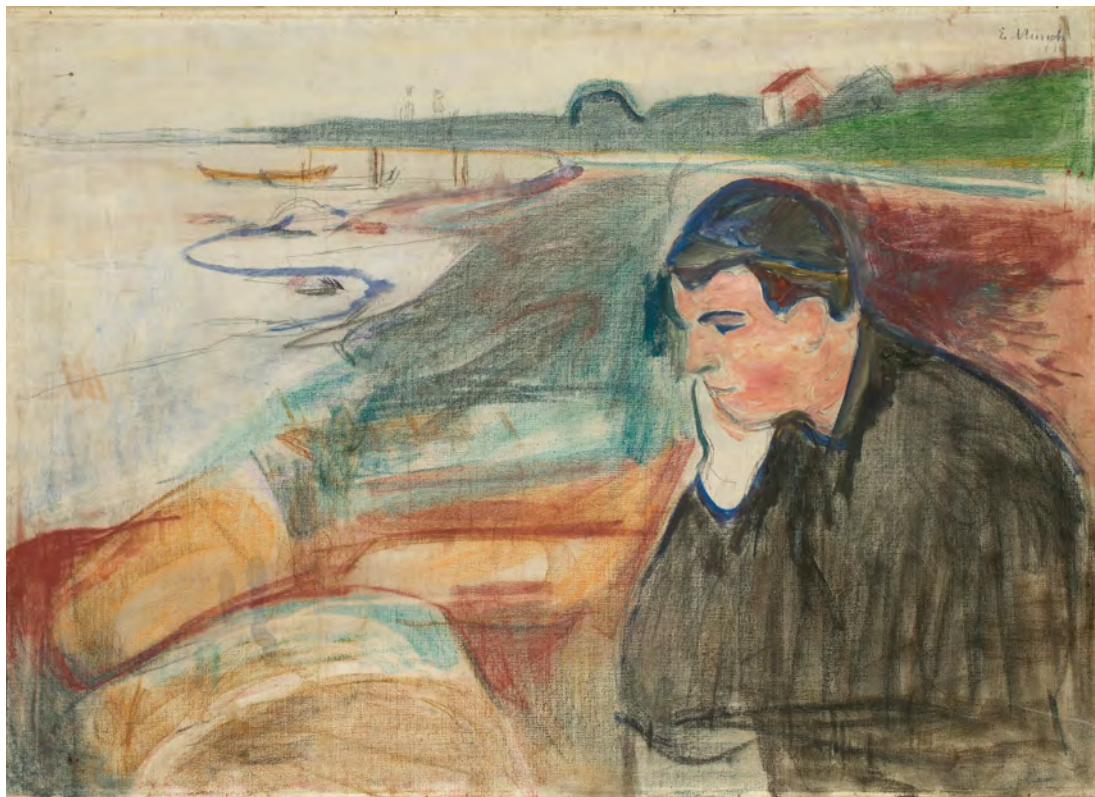
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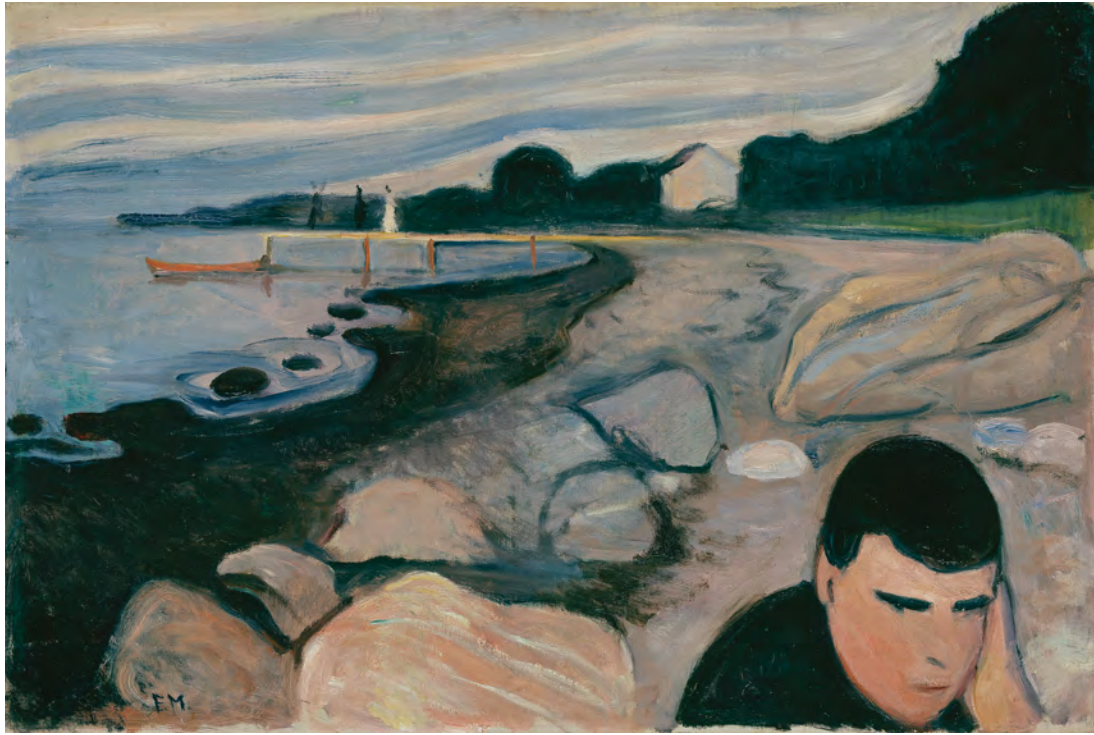
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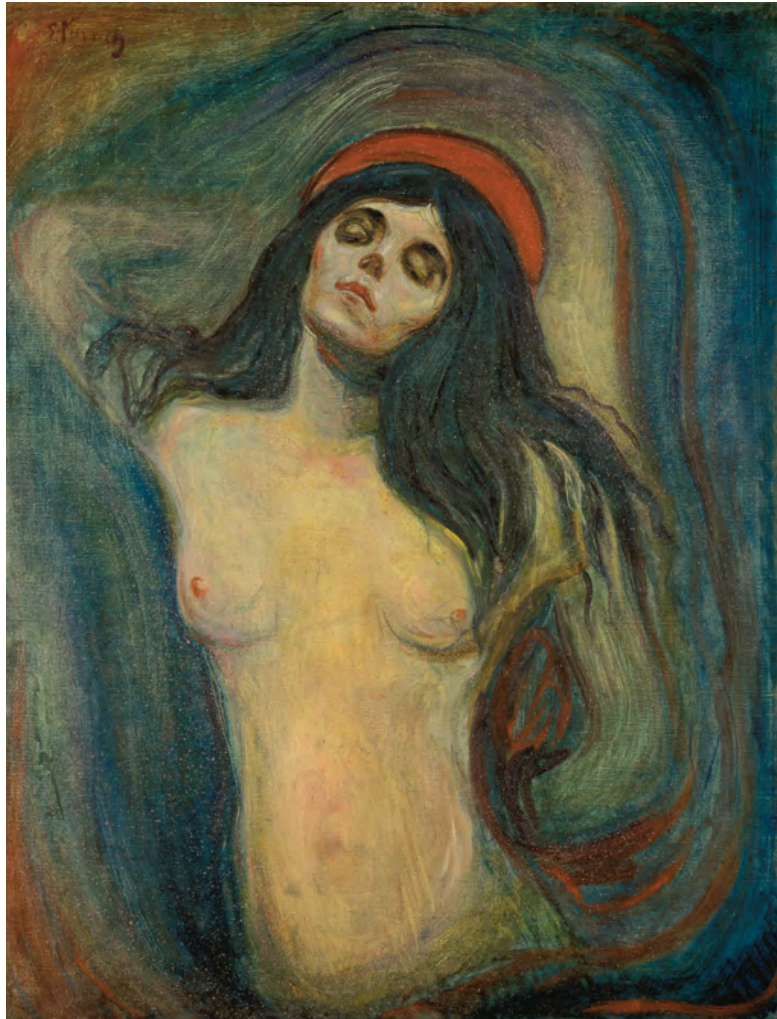
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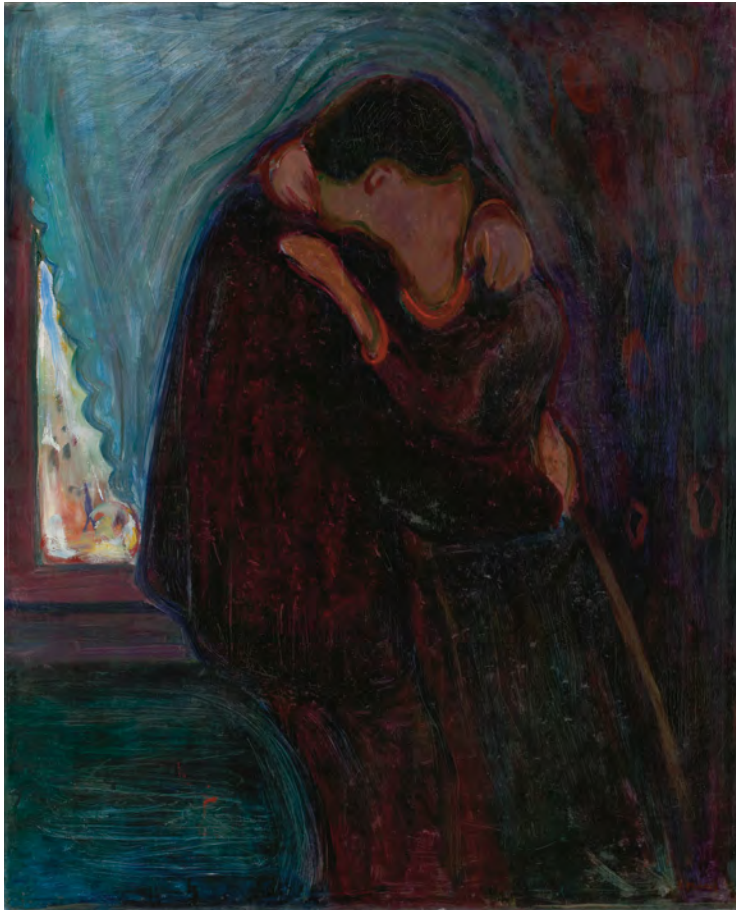
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60



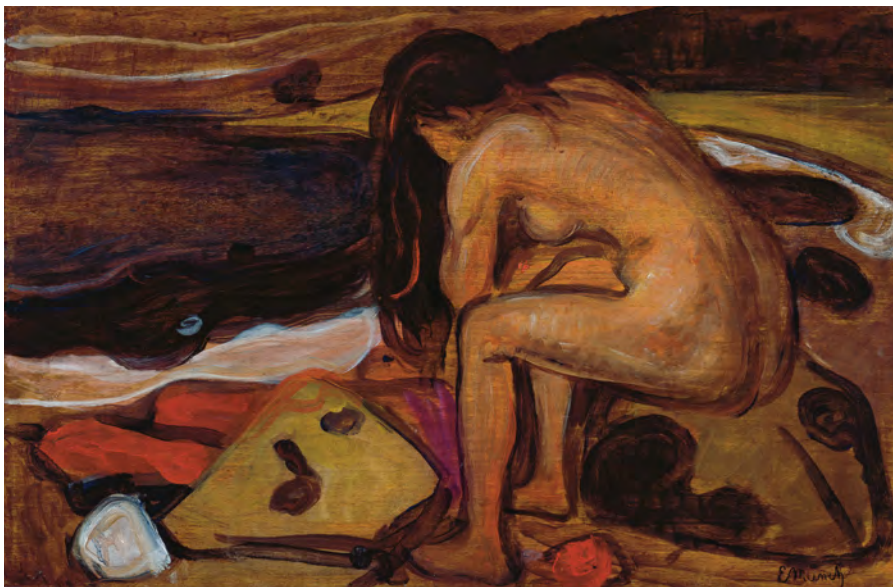
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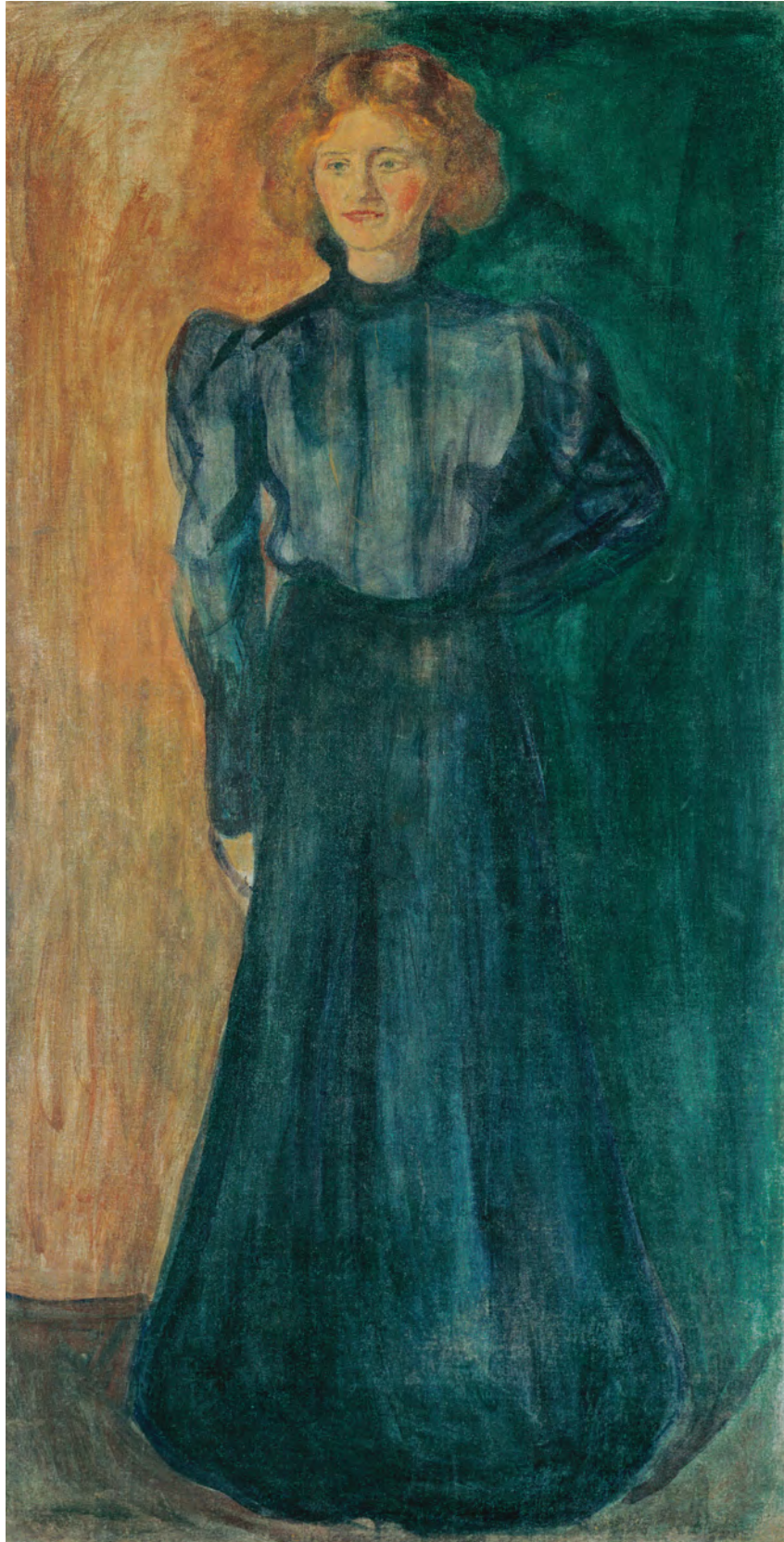
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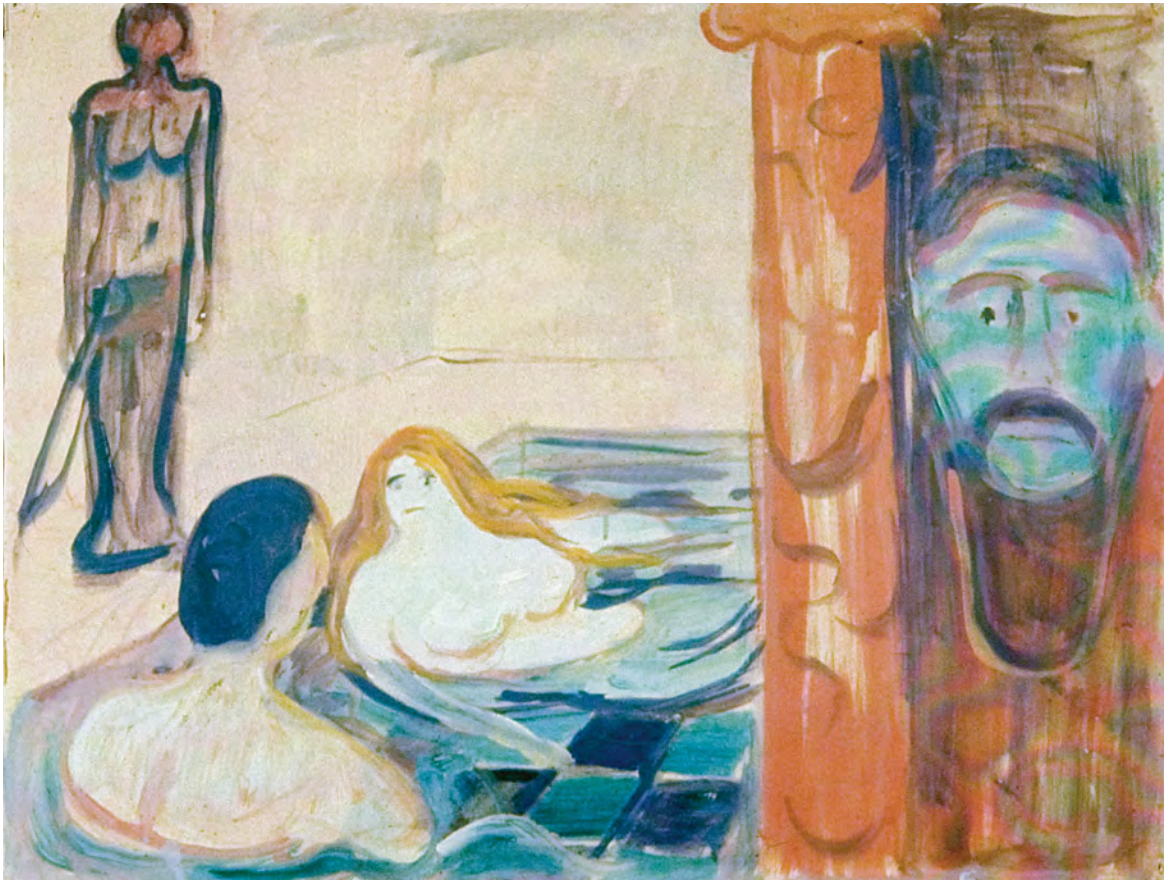


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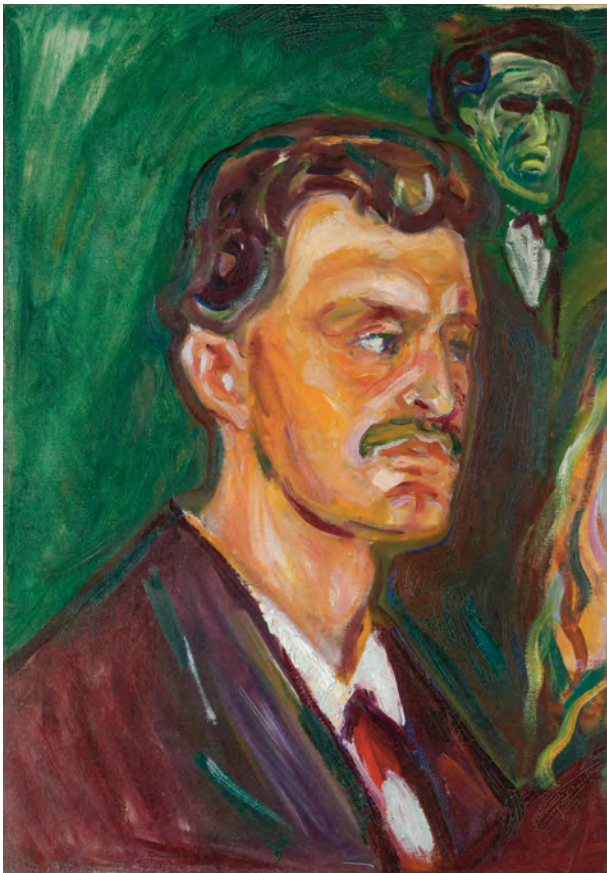
83



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89



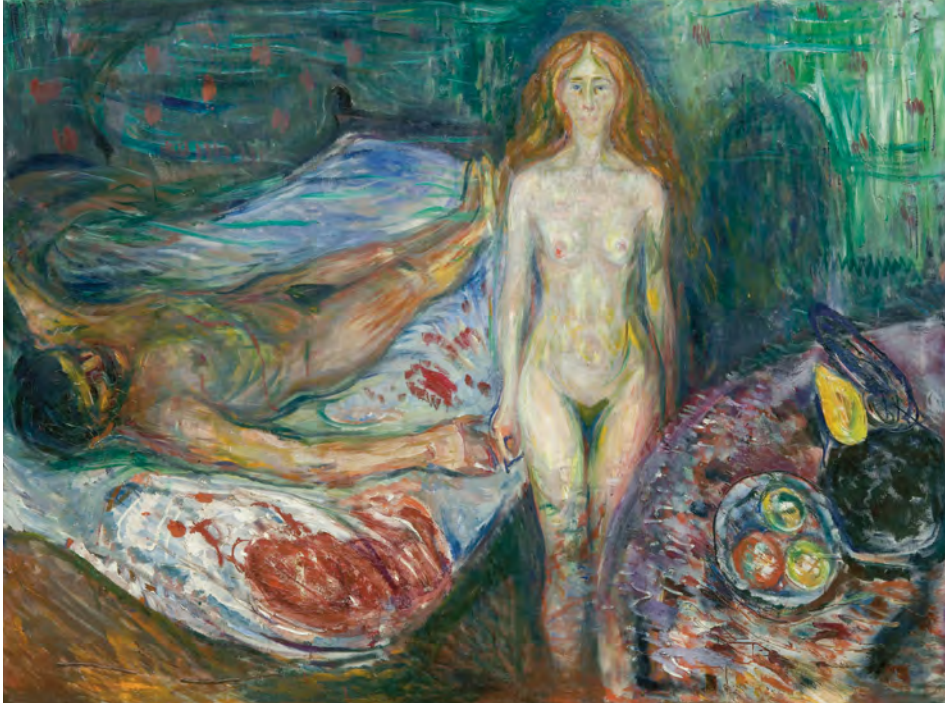
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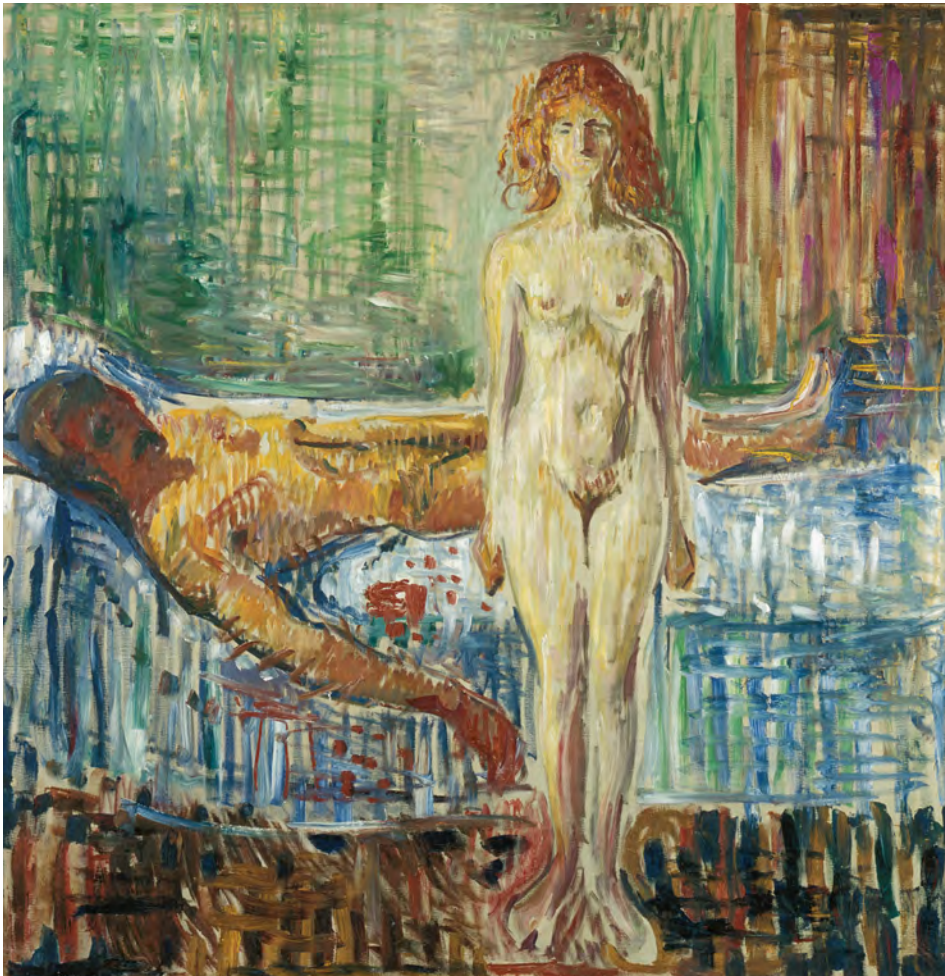
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92



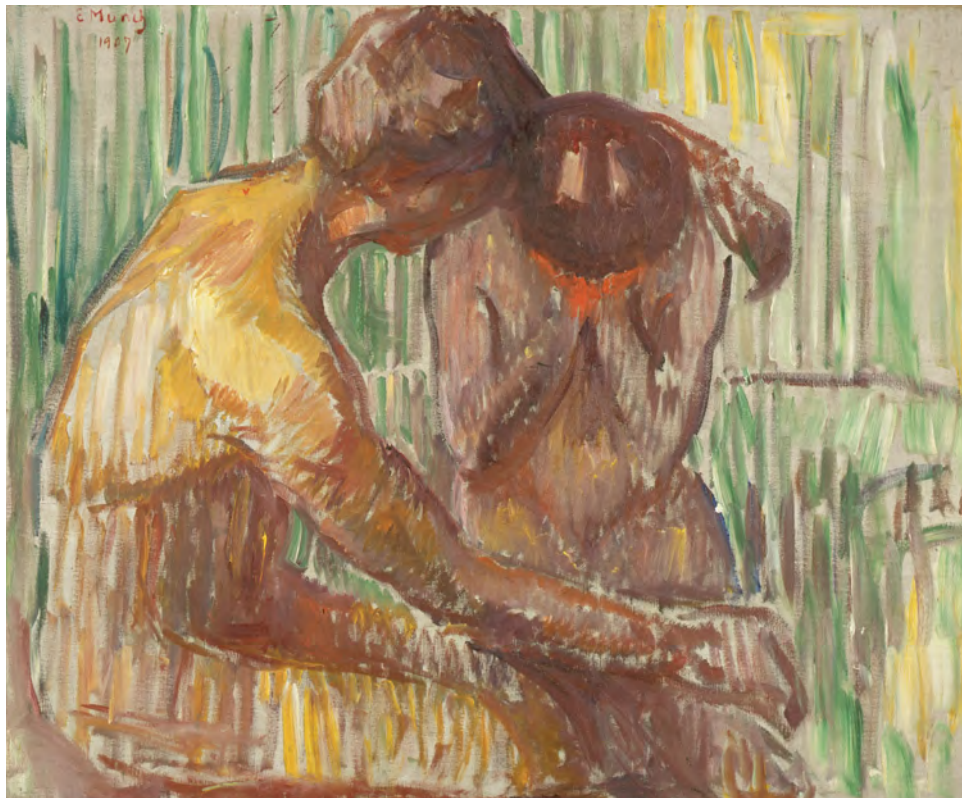
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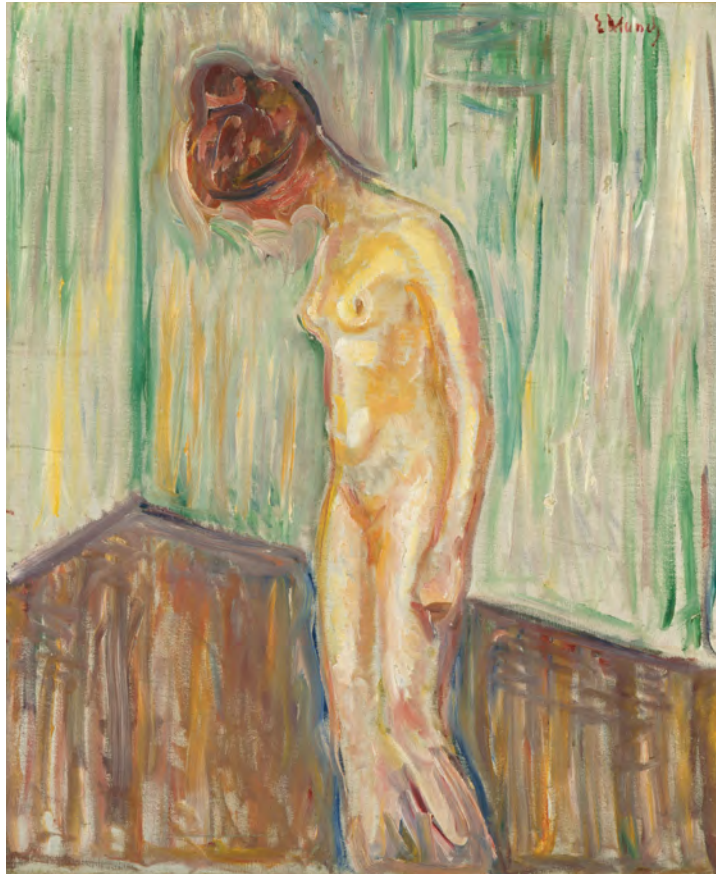
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98



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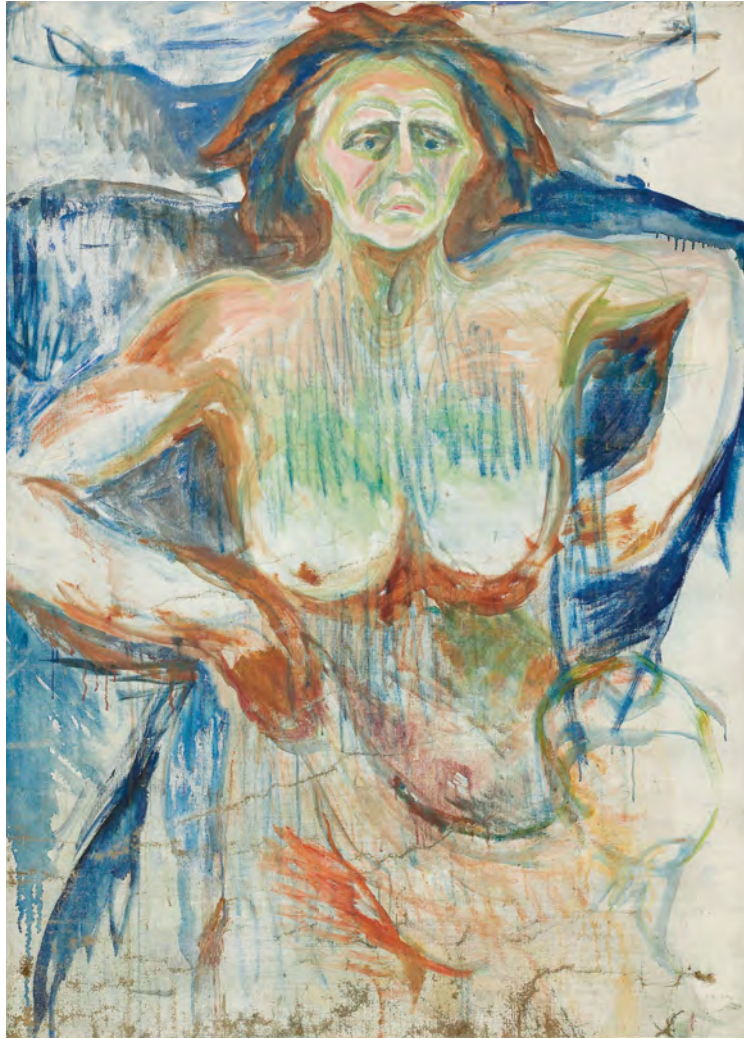
100



101



102



103a



103b



104



105



106



107



108



109



110



111



112



113



114



115



Kammerspiele
des Deutschen Theaters

Donnerstag, den 8. November 1906
 ~~~~~  
*Gröffnungs-Vorstellung* ~~~~~  
*Gespenster*  
 von Henrik Ibsen  
 Regie: Max Reinhardt

*Frau Helene Alving, Witwe des*  
*Kapitäns und Kammerherrn*  
 Alving . . . . . Agnes Sorma  
 Oswald, ihr Sohn, Maler . . . Alexander Moissi  
 Pastor Manders . . . . . Friedrich Kayßler  
*Regine, Dienstmädchen bei*  
 Frau Alving . . . . . Lucie Höflich  
 Jakob Engstrand, Tischler . . . Max Reinhardt

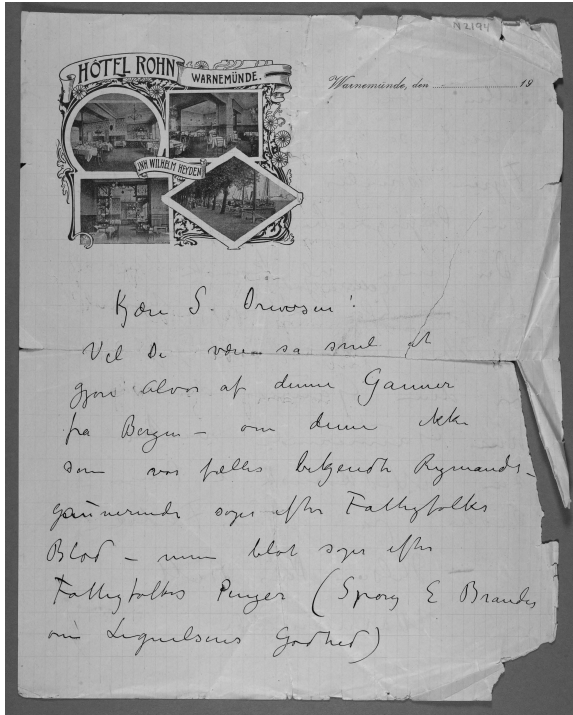
Das Stück spielt auf dem Gute der Frau Alving, in der Nähe  
 eines großen Fjords im westlichen Norwegen.  
 Die Dekoration ist nach Entwürfen von Edward Munch angefertigt.

Eintritt während des Spiels nicht gestattet.

Pause nach dem zweiten Akt.

Verlag und Inseraten-Aannahme: Paul Speier & Co., Belle Alliancestrasse 104  
 Druck: J. S. Preuss, Kommandantenstrasse 14.

116





|       |                  |       |         |
|-------|------------------|-------|---------|
| Title | Bule i Vaterland | Date  | 1882-83 |
| Wohl  | 82               | Notes |         |
| Type  | Interior         |       |         |

|                     |                                                                  |                                |                                                                  |                              |                                                                  |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No. figures         | 9                                                                | Arm(s) in front                | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Attraction                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Male                | 4                                                                | Arm(s) behind                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | Seperation                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Female              | 4                                                                | Arm(s) along sides             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Surrender / victim           | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Ambiguous           |                                                                  | Arm(s) above shoulders         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | 2 + 1 group                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| DF: Munch'?         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Arm(s) on hip                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Erect, frontal woman         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| DF: Tulla'?         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Hands interlocking             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Frontal figure (eyes + body) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| DF recognizable?    |                                                                  | Hand gripping arm              | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Lying figure                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Absinth             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Faceless                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Dark / flat body             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0            |
| Wallpaper           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | Red face                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Background action            | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Round table         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Pale face                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Floating head(s)             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Green in background | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Strong facial features/make_up | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Ruffled hair                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Green walls         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Facial hair, male              | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Red hair                     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Sofa                | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Transparency                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Double person                | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
|                     |                                                                  | Nude / nudity                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | Man in woman's hair          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 |

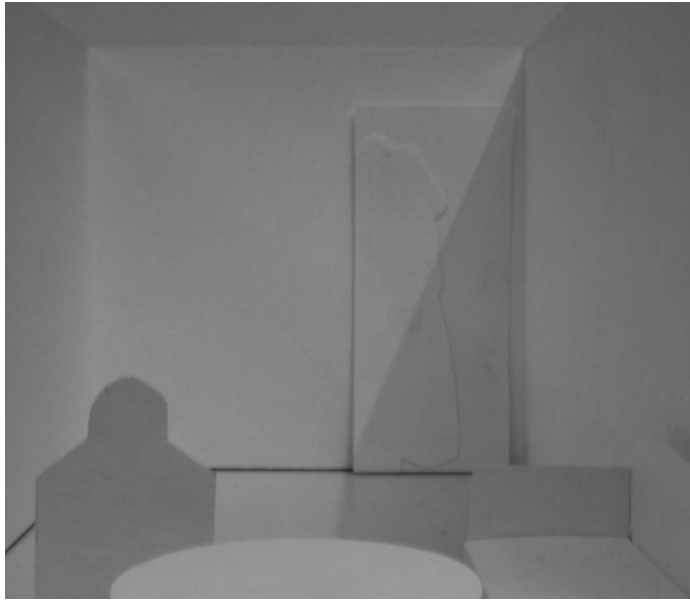
118

|       |            |       |      |
|-------|------------|-------|------|
| Title | Løsrivelse | Date  | 1896 |
| Wohl  | 393        | Notes |      |
| Type  | Exterior   |       |      |

|                     |                                                                  |                                |                                                                  |                              |                                                                  |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No. figures         | 2                                                                | Arm(s) in front                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | Attraction                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Male                | 1                                                                | Arm(s) behind                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Seperation                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Female              | 1                                                                | Arm(s) along sides             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Surrender / victim           | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Ambiguous           |                                                                  | Arm(s) above shoulders         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | 2 + 1 group                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| DF: Munch'?         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | Arm(s) on hip                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Erect, frontal woman         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| DF: Tulla'?         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Hands interlocking             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Frontal figure (eyes + body) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| DF recognizable?    |                                                                  | Hand gripping arm              | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Lying figure                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Absinth             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Faceless                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0            | Dark / flat body             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Wallpaper           | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Red face                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Background action            | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Round table         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Pale face                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Floating head(s)             | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Green in background | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Strong facial features/make_up | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Ruffled hair                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Green walls         | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Facial hair, male              | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Red hair                     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
| Sofa                | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Transparency                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Double person                | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 |
|                     |                                                                  | Nude / nudity                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 | Man in woman's hair          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 0 |

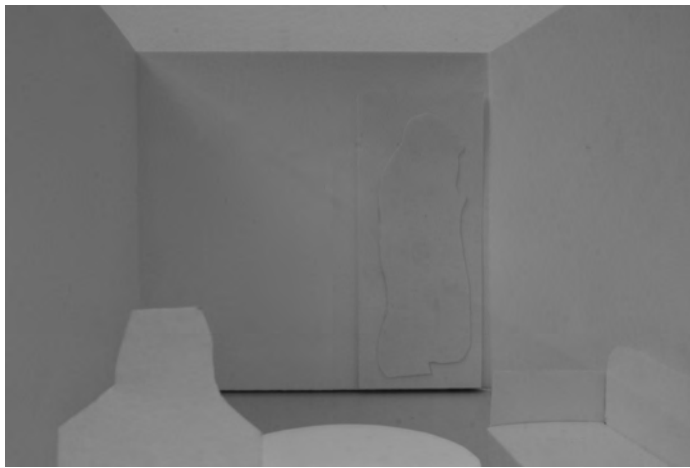
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120



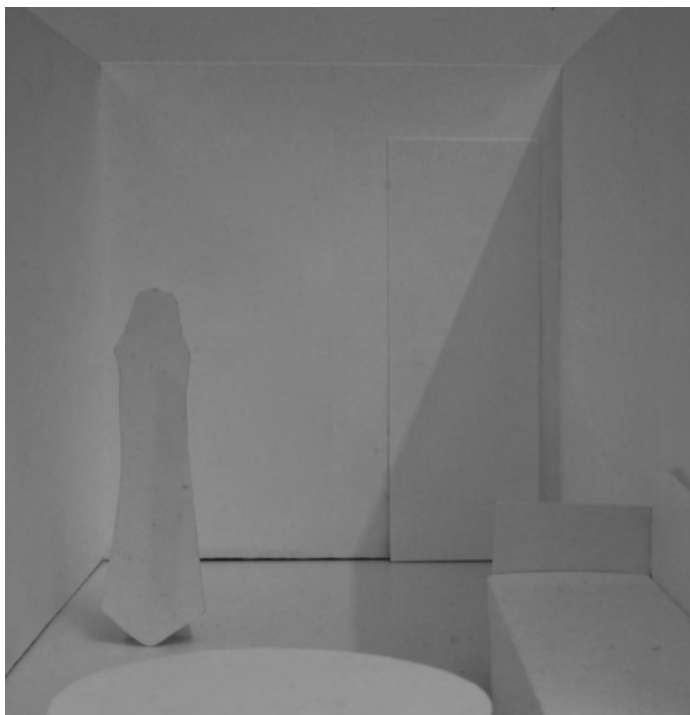
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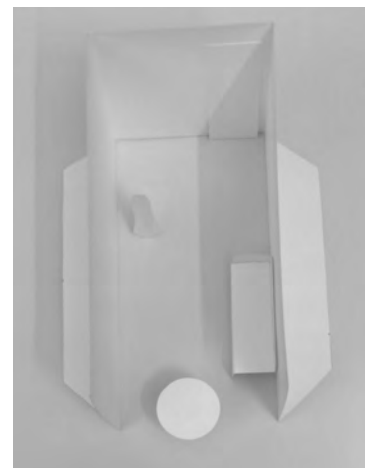
122



123



124



125



126



127



128



129a



129b



129c



129d



129e



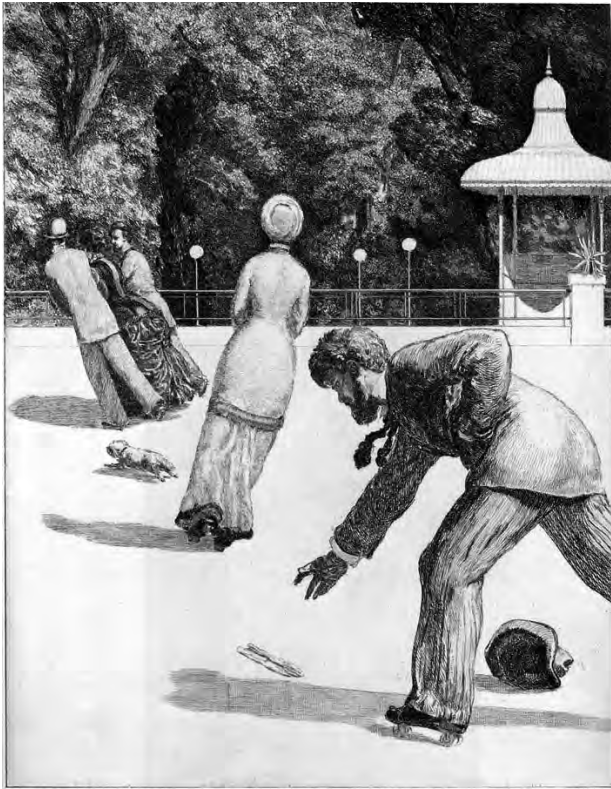
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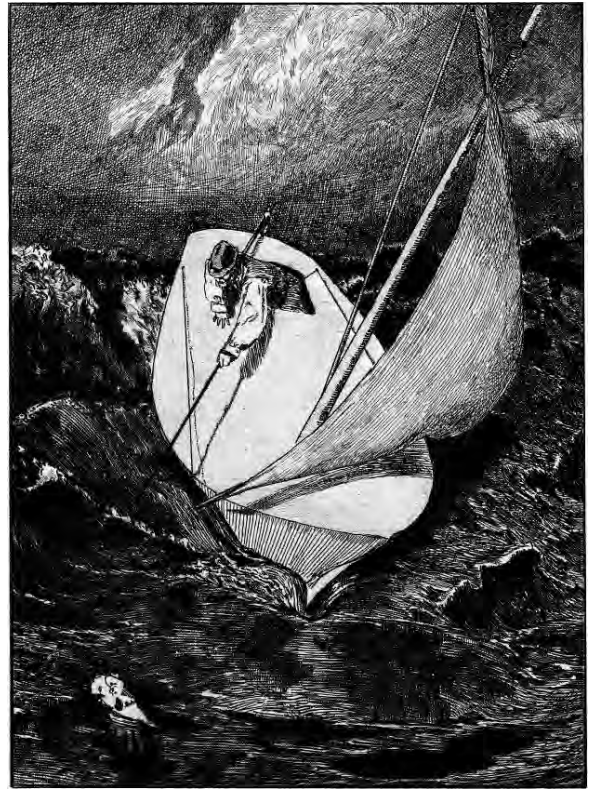
129g



129h



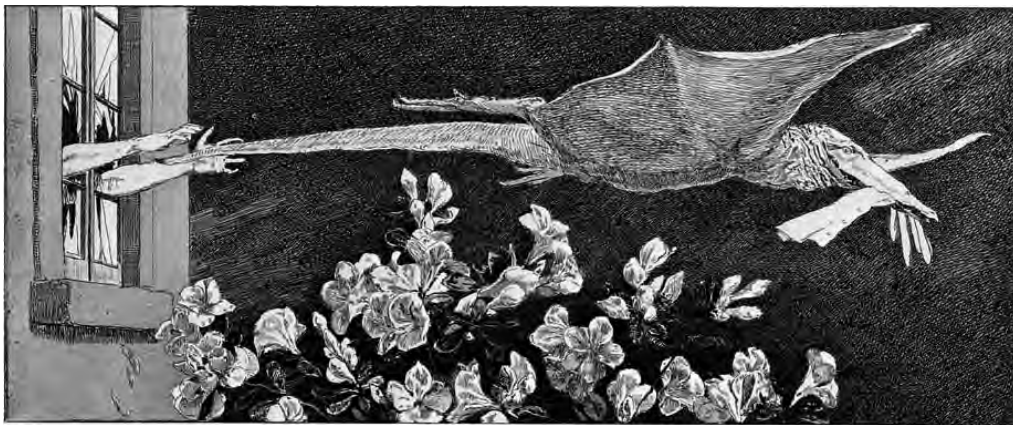
130



131



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135



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139



140





141



142



143



144





147



148

**PRAXINOSCOPE-THÉÂTRE**

MÉD. DE BRONZE EXP<sup>te</sup> UNIV<sup>te</sup> 1889



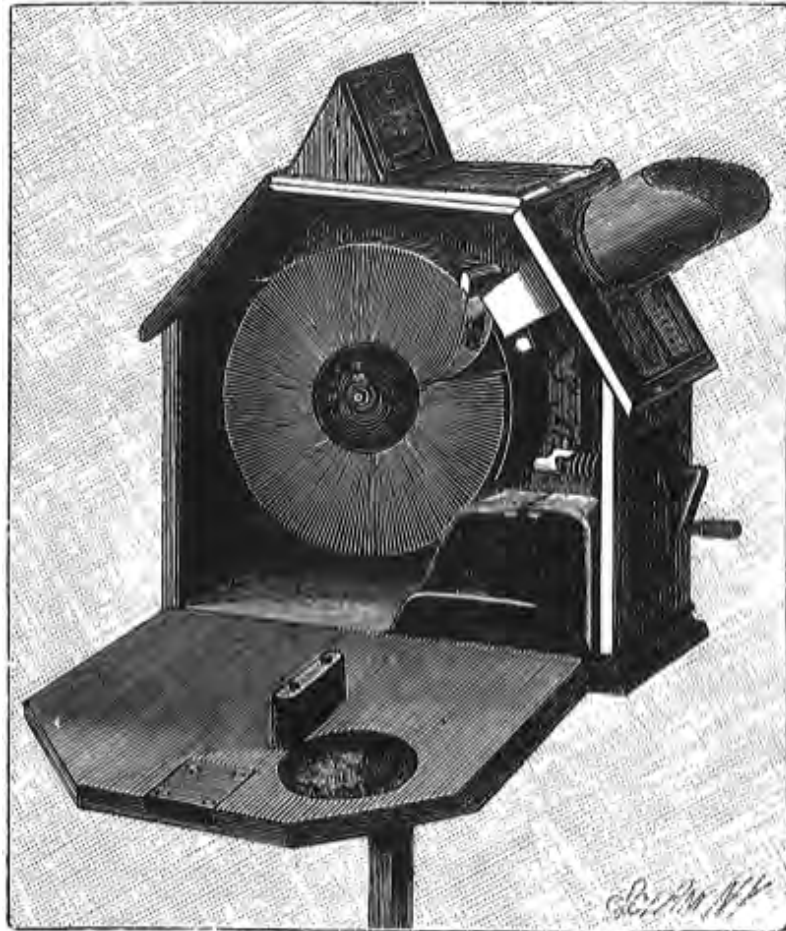
20 sujets parus (sur fonds noirs)
 
 20 sujets parus (sur fonds noirs)

*Le Praxinoscope-Théâtre, par une disposition très-simple, produit de curieuses scènes animées, où l'illusion du relief et l'attrait du décor viennent s'ajouter à l'illusion du mouvement.*

149



150



151



152

Exposition Universelle de 1900

# MARÉORAMA

HUGO D'ALÉSI

Au Coin de l'Avenue de Suffren & du Quai d'Orléans  
EN FACE DE LA GARE

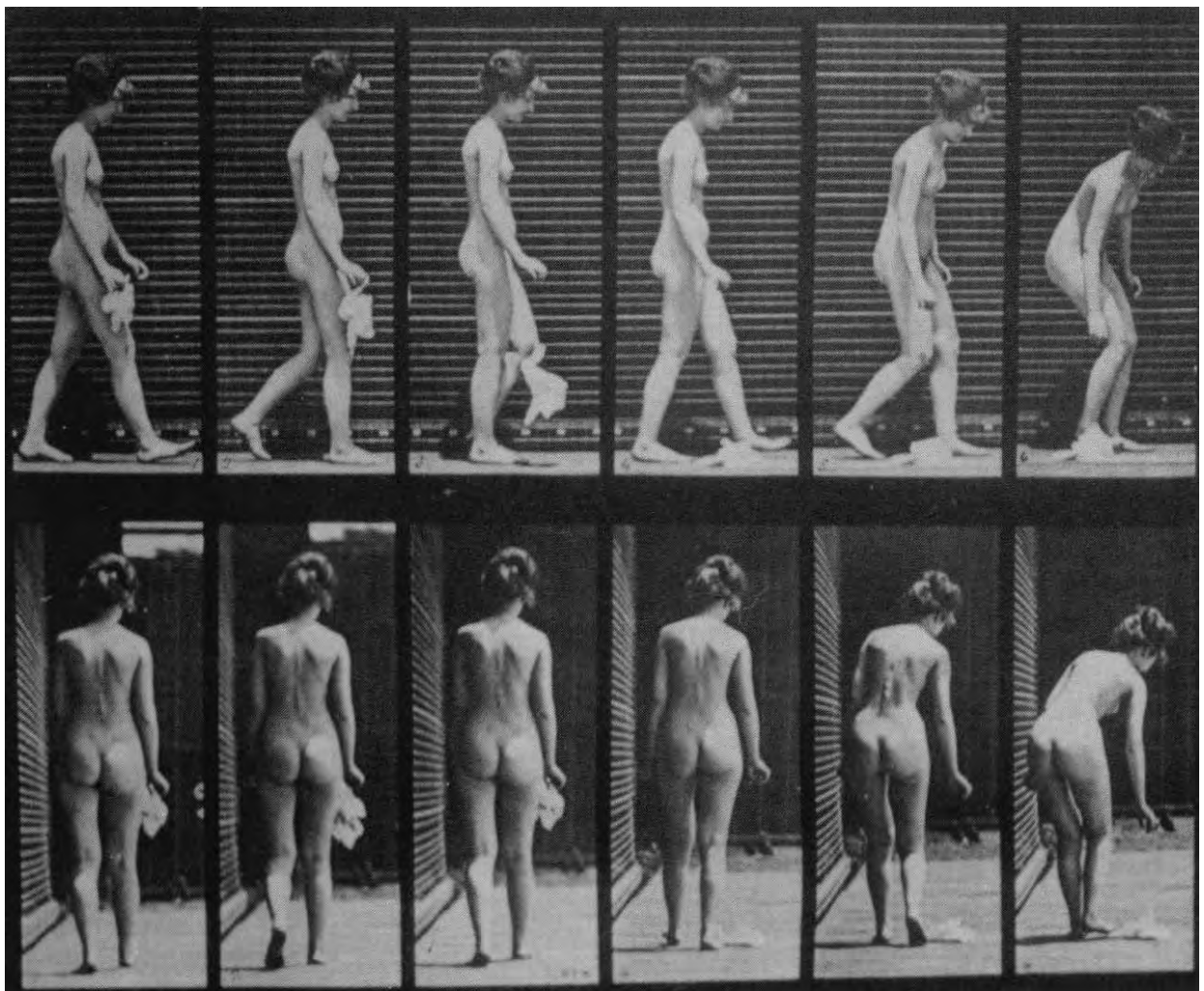


## ILLUSION D'UN VOYAGE EN MER

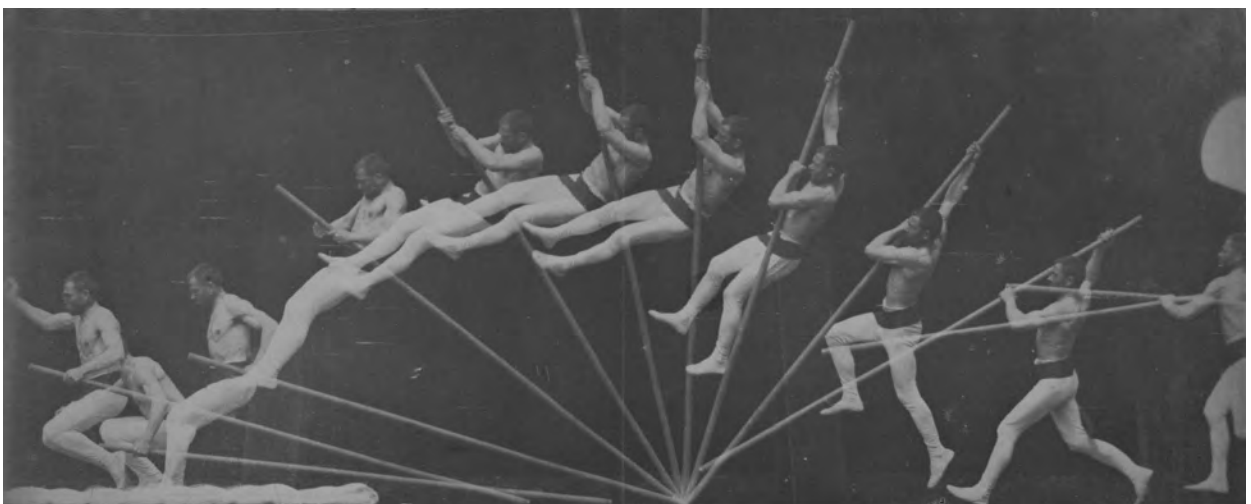
*A Bord d'un Vritable Navire*



Le Steamer fait Escale à  
Villefranche, Sousse, Naples, Venise, Constantinople



154



155







157



158