

The Courtauld

Press Release

EMBARGOED until 10am Thursday 26 May 2022

**ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COLLECTIONS OF PAINTINGS BY
EDVARD MUNCH
SHOWN IN THE UK FOR THE FIRST TIME
FOR MAJOR EXHIBITION AT THE COURTAULD**

**The Morgan Stanley Exhibition:
Edvard Munch. Masterpieces from Bergen
27th May – 4th September 2022**

Press information and images: <https://bit.ly/35NZd1j>

- **An unprecedented opportunity to see major works from one of the world's great collections of Edvard Munch, providing an exceptional account of his artistic development.**
- **Shown together for the first time in the UK at The Courtauld - 11 have never been on display in the UK before.**
- **18 works on loan from KODE Art Museums in Bergen, Norway – home to one of the most important Munch collections in the world**
- **Collection charts Munch's rise to fame over three decades – from significant early paintings of the breakthrough years to major works of the 1890s that cemented his reputation as one of the great artists of the modern period.**
- **Exhibition includes works from the famous 'Frieze of Life' series – Munch's ambitious artistic project exploring profound themes of human existence.**
- **The exhibition is The Courtauld's second major international loan exhibition as part of The Morgan Stanley Series.**

A collection of significant paintings by Edvard Munch (1863-1944) have gone on show together for the first time in the UK in a new exhibition at The Courtauld.

The Morgan Stanley Exhibition: *Edvard Munch. Masterpieces from Bergen* showcases 18 seminal works by Munch on loan from KODE Art Museums in Bergen, Norway - home to one of the most important Munch collections in the world. The exhibition follows The Morgan Stanley Exhibition: *Van Gogh. Self-Portraits*, one of the most highly-attended exhibitions in The Courtauld's history.

Seen together for the first time outside of Scandinavia, the collection presents an exceptional overview of Munch's development as an artist, providing a rich and comprehensive account of his journey from the early breakthrough pictures of the 1880s which launched his career, through to the expressive and psychologically charged works of the 1890s for which he became known.

The remarkable collection was formed at the beginning of the 20th century by Norwegian industrialist and philanthropist Rasmus Meyer (1858-1916). An early champion of Munch's work, Meyer knew the artist personally. He astutely acquired major canvases that chart the development of the painter's

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unique expressive style that marks Munch as one of the most radical painters of the 20th century. At the time of Meyer's death in 1916, the canvases encompassed what was then the most comprehensive documentation of Norwegian contemporary art in any collection and the largest single group of works by Edvard Munch. The collection was gifted to the city of Bergen in 1916, and housed since 1924 in a purpose-built gallery in the heart of Bergen, part of KODE Art Museums and Composer Homes.

The exhibition at The Courtauld begins with important early paintings from the 1880s, when Munch was drawing on social realism, Naturalist techniques, and the legacy of French Impressionism to create his own style. This is exemplified by the artist's first major work, *Morning* (1884), painted when he was just twenty years old. Despite being controversial at the time for its unconventional style and its intimate subject, the picture helped to establish Munch's critical and public recognition as a modern painter and was exhibited at the Paris World Fair in 1889.

Another early highlight in the exhibition is Munch's large-scale canvas *Summer Night. Inger on the Beach* (1889), a powerful and evocative depiction of his sister Inger sitting by the shoreline of a fjord. This pivotal work has long been celebrated as the painting with which Munch found his artistic voice. *Summer Night* marks his move towards the expressive and psychologically charged output for which he became famous.

These early paintings launched Munch's career in Norway and internationally and set the stage for his ground-breaking paintings of the 1890s when his compositions became powerful projections of his emotions and psychological state. Major examples of these 1890s works form the larger part of the exhibition. Instantly recognisable by Munch's highly expressive handling of paint and rich colour, they include remarkable canvases from the artist's famous 'Frieze of Life' series, such as *Evening on Karl Johan* (1892), *Melancholy* (1894-96) and *By the Death Bed* (1895). Munch's 'Frieze of Life' canvases were intended to address profound themes of human existence, from love and desire to anxiety and death. The artist used his own experiences as source material to create visceral depictions of the human psyche, which he hoped would help others understand their own life. Munch's ambition to create paintings that operated on a deeply emotional and psychological level, marked him out as one of the most distinctive voices of modern art at the turn of the 20th century.

The exhibition also includes *Self-Portrait in the Clinic* (1909), one of Munch's most impressive and introspective self-portraits, painted when he was undergoing treatment for emotional stress in Copenhagen. This powerful work marked a significant and lasting shift in Munch's style, as he adopted a brighter palette and started applying paint with loose, jagged brushstrokes that left parts of the canvas visible. Munch deployed this new approach to remarkable effect in *Youth* (1908), one of the paintings Meyer acquired directly from the artist. Its near-life sized depiction of a naked young man on the beach is full of a renewed sense of vitality that characterised Munch's work at this time.

Edvard Munch. Masterpieces from Bergen is presented in The Courtauld's Denise Coates Exhibition Galleries and is the second in The Morgan Stanley Series of temporary exhibitions at The Courtauld. The Courtauld's permanent collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces, on display in the adjacent newly refurbished LVMH Great Room, provide rich context for the exhibition, revealing some of the artistic inspirations Munch encountered during his experimental years in Paris from 1889 – 1892, where he discovered the modern styles of Gauguin, Toulouse Lautrec and Van Gogh.

The exhibition is the result of a partnership which saw The Courtauld and KODE presenting *Paul Cézanne: Masterpieces from The Courtauld* in Bergen in 2021.

The Morgan Stanley Exhibition: *Edvard Munch. Masterpieces from Bergen* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with contributions from experts from KODE and The Courtauld.

This exhibition is sponsored by Morgan Stanley, and supported by the AKO Foundation, with additional support from the Huo Family Foundation.

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Professor Deborah Swallow, Märit Rausing Director of The Courtauld, said:

“We are so excited to welcome visitors to this spectacular exhibition of Edvard Munch paintings, many of which have never been in the United Kingdom before.

“Our recently closed exhibition *Van Gogh. Self-Portraits*, one of the most successful in the history of The Courtauld Gallery, saw us work with partner organisations all over the world to achieve a show-stopping exhibition. I am delighted that we have been able to continue this collaborative approach by working with KODE, one of Norway’s most significant artistic institutions, to create an exhibition which will capture the imagination of visitors. I’d like to thank them once more for their support.

“I would also like to thank our Founding Partner Morgan Stanley, and our supporters the AKO Foundation and the Huo Family Foundation most warmly for making this exhibition possible.”

Dr. Barnaby Wright, curator of the exhibition: “This is an unprecedented opportunity to see the major works from one of the world’s great collections of paintings by Edvard Munch. Remarkable paintings from the famous ‘Frieze of Life’ series will undoubtedly be highlights, but I think visitors will also find Munch’s seminal early paintings extraordinary, if less familiar.”

“Munch is one of the most influential artists of the modern period and is still a touchstone for leading artists today. He was in turn influenced by the major Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists represented in The Courtauld Gallery’s iconic collection. *The Morgan Stanley Exhibition: Edvard Munch. Masterpieces from Bergen* represents a fantastic opportunity for visitors to see Munch’s work within the context of these famous artists who were so important to him in his formative years.”

Petter Snare, Director of KODE, said: “Last summer, The Courtauld’s masterpieces by Paul Cézanne was exhibited in Bergen, to great acclaim. I think I can speak on behalf of myself as well as the Bergen public that we are thrilled to return the favour.”

“With the Munch collection there is also the story of the collector Rasmus Meyer, and this collaboration between The Courtauld and KODE is in recognition of the importance of visionary collectors to today’s museums.”

Franck Petitgas, Head of International for Morgan Stanley said: “Morgan Stanley is delighted to partner with The Courtauld on Edvard Munch: Masterpieces from Bergen, the second in The Morgan Stanley Series of major exhibitions at the gallery. The rich collaboration between The Courtauld and the KODE Art Museum brings this thought-provoking exhibition to the UK for the first time and provides an unprecedented opportunity to experience one of the world’s most important collections of Edvard Munch’s paintings.”

Philip Lawford, CEO of the AKO Foundation, said: “The AKO Foundation has a profound and long-standing interest in promoting greater access to, and understanding of, Nordic art. We are therefore delighted to be able to support this exhibition, which will give the UK public a unique opportunity to experience some of Munch’s most important works.”

The Huo Family Foundation said: “The Huo Family Foundation is thrilled to be sponsoring the Edvard Munch exhibition. We hope it gives the public an opportunity to witness magnificent work by an artist whose pieces are truly awe-inspiring.”

The Morgan Stanley Exhibition: *Edvard Munch. Masterpieces from Bergen*

27 May – 4 September 2022

Opening Hours: 10.00 – 18.00 (last entry 17.15)

Weekend tickets from £20, Friends and Under-18s go free

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About The Courtauld

The Courtauld works to advance how we see and understand the visual arts, as an internationally-renowned centre for the teaching and research of art history and a major public gallery. Founded by collectors and philanthropists in 1932, the organisation has been at the forefront of the study of art ever since through advanced research and conservation practice, innovative teaching, the renowned collection and inspiring exhibitions of its gallery, and engaging and accessible activities, education and events.

The Courtauld cares for one of the greatest art collections in the UK, presenting these works to the public at The Courtauld Gallery in central London, as well as through loans and partnerships. The Gallery is most famous for its iconic Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces – such as Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* and Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. It showcases these alongside an internationally renowned collection of works from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through to the present day.

Academically, The Courtauld faculty is the largest community of art historians and conservators in the UK, teaching and carrying out research on subjects from creativity in late Antiquity to contemporary digital artforms - with an increasingly global focus. An independent college of the University of London, The Courtauld offers a range of degree programmes from BA to PhD in the History of Art, curating and the conservation of easel and wall paintings. Its alumni are leaders and innovators in the arts, culture and business worlds, helping to shape the global agenda for the arts and creative industries.

Founded on the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to engage with art, The Courtauld works to increase understanding of the role played by art throughout history, in all societies and across all geographies – as well as being a champion for the importance of art in the present day. This could be through exhibitions offering a chance to look closely at world-famous works; events bringing art history research to new audiences; accessible and expert short courses; digital engagement, innovative school, family and community programmes; or taking a formal qualification. The Courtauld's ambition is to transform access to art history education by extending the horizons of what this is, and ensuring as many people as possible can benefit from the tools to better understand the visual world around us.

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The Courtauld is an exempt charity and relies on generous philanthropic support to achieve its mission of advancing the understanding of the visual arts of the past and present across the world through advanced research, innovative teaching, inspiring exhibitions, programmes and collections.

The collection cared for by The Courtauld Gallery is owned by the Samuel Courtauld Trust.

About Morgan Stanley

Morgan Stanley (NYSE: MS) is a leading global financial services firm providing a wide range of investment banking, securities, wealth management and investment management services. With offices in 41 countries, the Firm's employees serve clients worldwide including corporations, governments, institutions and individuals. For further information about Morgan Stanley, please visit www.morganstanley.com.

About AKO Foundation

The AKO Foundation was established in 2013 by Nicolai Tangen, who had previously founded AKO Capital. Mr Tangen, a native Norwegian, is a graduate of The Courtauld Institute of Art. The AKO Foundation makes charitable grants towards causes which improve education, promote the arts, and combat climate change. <https://www.akofoundation.org/>

About The Huo Family Foundation

Since its inception in 2009, the Huo Family Foundation has funded projects in the UK, US and China. The Foundation's mission is to support education, communities and the pursuit of knowledge. Through its donations, the Foundation hopes to improve the prospects of individuals, and to support the work of organisations seeking to ensure a safe and prosperous future for all society. By supporting galleries, museums and centres for the performing arts, the Foundation hopes to make art more accessible, For more information visit www.huofamilyfoundation.org/

About KODE Art Museums and Composer Homes

KODE is one of the largest museums for art, craft, design and music in the Nordic countries. KODE has a unique combination of art museums and composers' homes, of contemporary art, historical objects, concerts and parklands.

The museums stewards almost 50,000 objects ranging from paintings, works on paper, sculptures, installations, videos, musical instruments, furniture and works of fine craft and design. KODE has world class collections of Edvard Munch and Nikolai Astrup, as well as several composer homes including Edvard Grieg's *Troldhaugen*.