

## How do Artists become Famous?

Based on the Reith Lecture 2013 "Democracy Has Bad Taste"

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/radio4/transcripts/lecture-1-transcript.pdf>

and Wikipedia on Edvard Munch

Take the two artists Edvard Munch and Grayson Perry how did they become famous?

Grayson Perry is a living artist born 1960. He is famous for ceramics, textiles and his alta-ego –Claire. This year he gave the Reith lectures. The first one describes the Art world and is called "Democracy has Bad Taste"

".....historically I think the art world has been fairly inward looking because it can operate as a fairly closed circle. In many ways there are many artists who are very successful who don't need the public at all."

"So I'm starting with this lecture and it's called Democracy Has Bad Taste, because I want to talk about the issue of quality because I think this is one of the most burning issues around our—how do we tell if something is good? And who tells us its good?"

"Now there's no easy answer for this one.....I mean we have financial value, popularity, art historical significance, or aesthetic sophistication. You know all these things could be at odds with each other."

"And so I did a bit of research myself and I think I have found the 21st century of the Venetian Secret and it is, I'll give it to you now, it's a mathematical formula. What you do, you get a half decent non-offensive kind of idea and then you, you times it by the number of studio assistants and then you divide it by, you divide it with an ambitious art dealer and that equals number of oligarchs and hedge fund managers in the world. And that is the ideal formula for art in the 21st century."

Edvard Munch(1863-1944) was born in a rustic farmhouse in the village of Ådalsbruk in Løten, Norway, to Laura Catherine Bjølstad and Christian Munch, the son of a priest. Christian was a doctor and medical officer who married Laura, a woman half his age, in 1861.

His mother died of TB when he was 5

Christian's positive behavior toward his children was overshadowed by his morbid pietism.

"I inherited two of mankind's most frightful enemies—the heritage of consumption and insanity."

Munch received his father's ire for his relationship with Hans Jæger, the local nihilist who lived by the code "a passion to destroy is also a creative passion" and who advocated suicide as the ultimate way to freedom.[16] Munch came under his malevolent, anti-establishment spell.

He wrote that his painting *The Sick Child* (1886), based on his sister's death, was his first "soul painting", his first break from Impressionism. The painting received a negative response from critics and from his family, and caused another "violent outburst of moral indignation" from the community. Only his friend Christian Krohg defended him.

In 1889, Munch presented his first one-man show of nearly all his works to date. The recognition it received led to a two-year state scholarship to study in Paris under French painter Léon Bonnat.

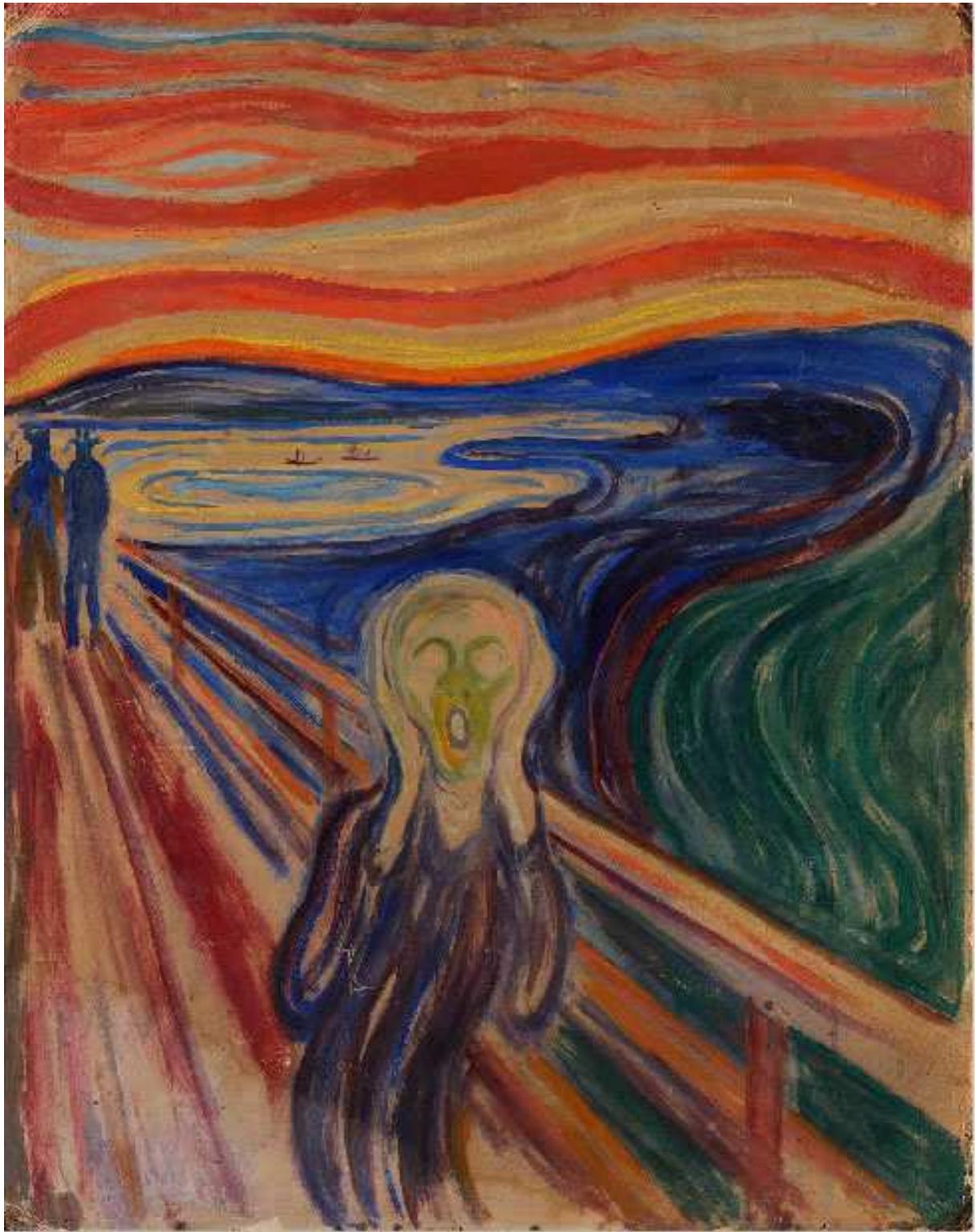
In Paris Munch recorded little enthusiasm for Bonnat's drawing lessons—"It tires and bores me—it's numbing"—but enjoyed the master's commentary during museum trips.

By 1892, Munch formulated his characteristic, and original, Synthetist aesthetic, as seen in *Melancholy* (1891), in which color is the symbol-laden element. Considered by the artist and journalist Christian Krohg as the first Symbolist painting by a Norwegian artist, *Melancholy* was exhibited in 1891 at the Autumn Exhibition in Oslo. In 1892, Adelsteen Normann, on behalf of the Union of Berlin Artists, invited Munch to exhibit at its November exhibition, the society's first one-man exhibition. However, his paintings evoked bitter controversy (dubbed "The Munch Affair") and after one week the exhibition closed. Munch was pleased with the "great commotion", and wrote in a letter: "Never have I had such an amusing time—it's incredible that something as innocent as painting should have created such a stir."

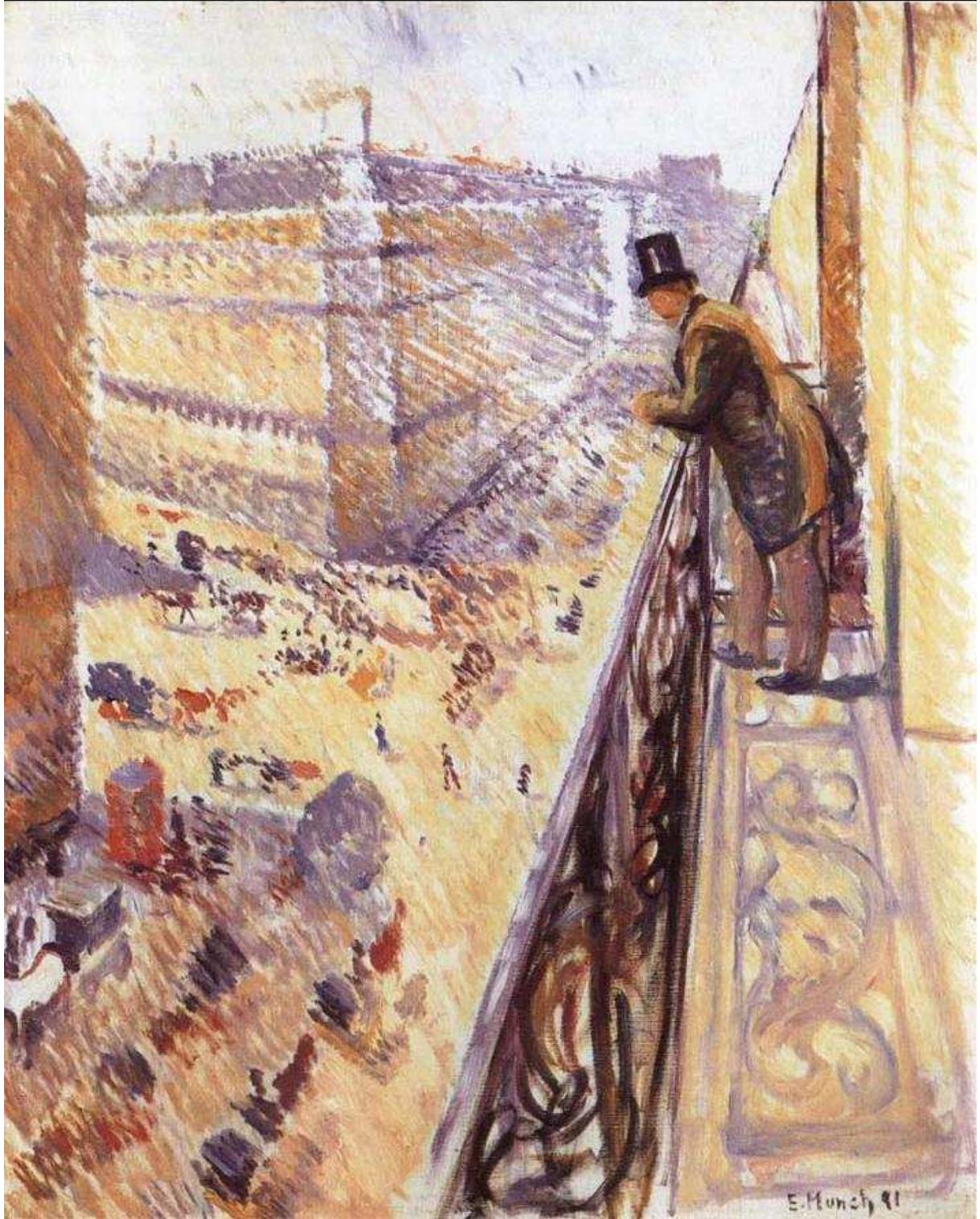
Some Edvard Munch's Work







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Some of Grayson Perry's Work





