



EDVARD MUNCH'S STUDIOS
EKELY



The property after 1930

Edvard Munch's studios at Ekely in Oslo are today the most important and authentic site of material cultural heritage relating to the world-famous artist.

Edvard Munch was born on 12 December 1863 in Løten. In 1916, at the age of 52, he bought the eleven-acre horticultural property Ekely in the municipality of Aker. It was here that he died, twenty-eight years later, on 23 January 1944, at the age of 80.



Apple Tree in the Garden (1932-42)

Self-Portrait, *Between the Clock and the Bed* (1940–43)



Self-Portrait with the Spanish Flu (1919)



The place, the artist, and his art became closely connected early on. Munch's paintings and drawings reflected the surroundings at Ekely. Apple trees, the building of the new large studio, and the yellow Swiss-style villa soon become frequent themes in his work. Models came and went at Ekely, and the well-healed came to have their portraits painted by the master. During the final years of his life, he worked on the iconic masterpiece *Self-Portrait, Between the Clock and the Bed*. The interior of Munch's villa at Ekely becomes the story of his life and approaching death.



Edvard Munch aged 75 in 1938 at Ekely



As well as the Swiss-style villa, built by the district gardener A.M. Petterson in 1897, the property included a greenhouse and a few outbuildings when Munch took over. Munch then became an active developer himself, constructing new studio buildings to accommodate the production and storage of his art. Ultimately, there were eight different buildings on the property, four of which were used as studios – along with a number of outdoor workspaces.



Starry Night (1922-24)

After his death in 1944, Munch's will from 1940 showed that his entire artistic production and literary work would be bequeathed to the municipality of Oslo.

In 1946, the City of Oslo bought the whole Ekely estate from Munch's heirs. The so-called "Winter Studio" was used to collect, register, and preserve Munch's vast legacy until the completion of what was then the new Munch Museum at Tøyen in 1963.

Edvard Munch's home on the property was demolished in 1960.

In the early 1950s, forty-four artist residences were built on the site. From 1965, the artists at Ekely took over the running of the remaining studio building until the foundation, Stiftelsen Edvard Munch's Atelier, was established in 1990.



Self-Portrait at Ekely (1930)



The large studio

The graphics workshop



The small studio



The studio

The first workshop-and-studio buildings, referred to as the southern and northern studios, were built using panelled timber that lacked any form of insulation, and it soon became clear that an insulated studio with heating was needed, somewhere that could also be used during wintertime. So as early as 1918, Munch contacted architect Arnstein Arneberg about a new studio building. The architect was at the time busy working on the initial designs for the new town hall in Kristiania (now Oslo). Arneberg sketched a number of proposals for Munch's new studio.

The studio was built in two stages; the first between 1919–20 according to Arneberg's plans, the second using a design by Munch's friend the architect Henrik Bull, which was completed in 1929.

The studio building we see today has a simplified Art Deco style. After several rounds of renovation, the studio exteriors and the reconstructed outdoor studio now look as they did in Munch's time. Today the building consists of two studios, along with a modern meeting room and a graphics workshop on the lower floor.

The southern and northern studios ca. 1920–30



Edvard Munch in 1929

The garden

The whole area/property including the studios and all of the artists' residences are listed buildings. The studio garden is also protected by Section 15 of the Cultural Heritage Act and it is the foundation's responsibility to manage the garden as it might have looked in Munch's day. The garden is open to visitors all year round. Munch used the entire property as an outdoor studio and many of his later works depict the garden at Ekely.



The Arbour in Late Autumn (1926-30)



Spring Landscape (1923-24)



Woman with Poppies (1918–19)

About the foundation

Stiftelsen Edvard Munchs Atelier (SEMA) is a foundation established in 1990, which has owned and managed the building since. Its purpose is to preserve Edvard Munch's studio as an international cultural heritage site. Artists can apply to rent the two studios and the graphics workshop for professional art production. The foundation's board includes representatives of Ekely's artists, the Oslo and Akershus branch of the National Trust of Norway (Fortidsminneforeningen), the The Society of Oslo (Selskabet for Oslo Byes Vel) and the Munch Museum. The board itself appoints an additional member.

PARTNERS:

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Text: Ole Rikard Hoisæther

English translation: Matt Bagguley

Photos:

Cover and back Fin Serck-Hanssen

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Address: Jarlsborgveien 14, 0377 Oslo

