Opening or closing doors?

About the Displaying and Contextualization of Originals and Reproductions of Munch's "The Scream"

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Figure 1: Munch Museum, Oslo. Reproductions in the museum's shop. 2023. Photographed by the author.

Figure 2: National Museum, Oslo. Reproductions in the museum's shop. 2023. Photographed by the author.

Lila Mae waited for someone to give her an answer. No one did.
Lila Mae cleared her throat and said in a thin voice, “Fulton is trying to trick the reader.
An elevator doesn’t exist without it’s freight.
If there’s no one to get on, the elevator remains in quiescence.
The elevator and the passenger need each other.”

About the “Dilemma of the Phantom Passenger”,
Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist*, 101-102.

Abstract

The displays of the versions of "The Scream" by Edvard Munch in Oslo's new art museums are the focus of this thesis. They are displayed in two very different ways, since the Munch Museum's versions are presented in their own room, and only one at a time can be seen, whereas the National Museum's "Scream" can be viewed in a classic setting. Originals and reproductions are treated differently in the museums, and especially in the case of the Munch Museum, it points towards an *iconizing* of the original. The compromise between security, conservatory reasons, accessibility and contextualization, resulting in an innovative display in this particular case, relies on the aura of the artworks and heightens their position as originals even more. While only one original can be seen at a time, reproductions of "The Scream(s)" are provided, which also serve as the only way in the room to see all of them together. The National Museum, on the other hand, has embedded its "Scream" in a wider context ("Frieze of Life") and without particularly highlighting the painting. With the specific display chosen in the Munch Museum, a sort of spectacle of doors opening and closing, of revealing and unveiling, is presented to the visitor. This framing and staging highlights the works on display in their importance, while a distance to the viewer is created. "The Scream(s)" are displayed as something valuable, to be kept secret, which might contribute to an increased popularity in the future, as the example of similar artworks shows.

Acknowledgments

When finishing my previous Master's thesis, I was quite sure about not writing another one. Months of research, sleepless nights, thoughts popping up while doing something completely different… After submitting it, I felt relieved, but at the same time, the whole thing seemed to be so unreal. In the end, I was proud of myself and of what I had achieved, but it was good that it was over.

Weeks later, I started doing research again, on another topic, and I got really curious about Digital Humanities, how art museums prepare themselves for the future, and also how art and culture are changing through technology. I followed many conferences and attended talks, read a lot of books and articles. In 2021, I discovered that there was a program I could study to find and develop answers to the questions I had. I applied for *Screen Cultures* and got accepted. I moved to a new city, alone, leaving my husband behind in Trondheim to finish his PhD.

Now, in 2023, I cannot believe the time of this program has almost passed and that a new beginning is ahead. I am looking forward to this with many ideas, knowledge, and thoughts in my mind, and with this thesis, on paper, too.

I want to thank everybody who contributed to this thesis. Especially Stefan, who encouraged me to apply to the program and just go for it, and who was and is always there for me. I am glad for all the discussions we have had and can't wait for more fortune cookies. I would not have gotten this far without you.

I want to thank my parents. Your support and interest in what I do is so important to me. Thanks to my sister Bettina, who will always find words of motivation, sympathy and humor to distract or cheer me up.

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Introduction

The year I moved to Oslo, in 2021, the new Munch Museum (they refer to themselves as MUNCH, but I will use “Munch Museum” for better readability) was about to open. I was very excited and lucky to get tickets for the opening weekend, which I attended with a friend who is as art- and museum-enthusiastic as I am. What we were about to see was different, very different to our previous experiences in museums: it did not feel like being in a museum, we were transported to the different exhibition floors on escalators, walking on gallery floors which enabled a high degree of flexibility for new exhibitions, and when we finally came to the floor where “The Scream(s)” are shown, we were exhausted (unfortunately, we had agreed on making our way from top to bottom, which means we had already seen most parts of the museum). “The Scream”-room was the darkest room on the whole exhibition floor, and many visitors were either entering or leaving the “chamber”. I remember that my friend and I were both not really keen on walking in there, since we thought of the installation already as a kind of “spectacle” for attracting visitors and not leaving a strong impression for us inquisitive art historians.

The “Scream”-room consists of three versions of “The Scream” held by the Munch Museum. Each version sits behind a display window with automatic doors, occupying the middle of each wall. Every hour, only one version is visible. Thinking about the experience inside “The Scream”-room now, it was effective: it is quite dark, and the artworks appear from darkness, when the displays open. The shifting of the artworks leaves the visitor in awe since what one was viewing at one moment would disappear the next. Maybe one does not even get to see all three versions exhibited in the room, as it was possible during the opening weekend, when the displays opened and closed in a 15-minute rhythm. While being there, a close study of the originals was not easily enabled, since barriers and protection measures are installed and one has to keep some distance. Also, the captions are on one wall together with photographic reproductions of “The Scream(s)”, allowing the visitor to see all of them together, side by side, attracting people who want to read more about the artworks and looking at the versions’ reproductions more closely.

For a while, I did not know what to make out of this presentation in the Munch Museum – not until the National Museum in Oslo opened, which has a version of “The Scream” in its collection (from the previous National Gallery), too. There, it is a very classic form of display, not highlighted, but presented in line with other works by the artist. Moreover, it is just mounted to the wall without being in or part of a specific piece of interior architecture or display.

These two museums and their different presentations of "The Scream" by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1862-1944) are the central elements of this study. The motif of "The Scream" will be discussed here, and it is worth noting that there is no single "Scream" by Munch, there are many. The focus of this thesis will be especially on the three versions on display at the Munch Museum – a painting, a drawing and a print – and the one painting to be found in the National Museum, as well as reproductions of those. The originals are on display in the two art museums in Oslo, either presented in a specifically derived interior architecture, or displayed in a new manner, based on classic traditions. Since these iconic artworks attract a broad audience, concepts had to be derived for their new presentation, as is the case with many other "famous" and desired artworks which I will discuss. Not only the presentation, its visibility to the audience and its embedding in (permanent) exhibitions needed to be considered, but the safety and conservatory factors (the material), were also of concern.

My research questions concentrate on the artworks in the museums being originals but also on other forms of their circulation, which means reproductions (Fig. 1 and 2). What I am asking here is: *What kind of display did the museums choose for these famous artworks? How can the visitors experience them in the museum, and besides that, what are the possibilities to see them in other media?* The first part of this thesis is focused on the historical overview of original artworks and reproductions, and how scholars from the beginning of the 20th century negotiated the relations between them. I will discuss where artworks and reproductions were situated and accepted in art history and cultural or visual studies and what their positions are today. Especially photographic reproductions are playing a role here, but it seems like a common understanding that they could never take the role of the original today, and should not – something I will address in the last chapter of the literature review, which concentrates on the original's unquestionable importance in and for the museum.

This leads to the next part of the thesis. Chapter 2 discusses the past presentation of "The Scream(s)", which I will bring back to mind through historical accounts of the presentations. In the following, I will explain the necessities and ideas coming along with a new display and talk about the different categories that needed to be compromised, according to the literature and the curators from both museums I have interviewed.[1] With the examples of "The Scream(s)", as they are displayed in the two museums of this study, the Munch Museum and the National Museum in Oslo, I am investigating what these museums' current strategies for presenting and displaying original artworks are. Chapter 3, therefore, concentrates on theoretical possibilities and solutions in practice

1 These interviews were approved by the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, Sikt.

(security and conservatory reasons, accessibility, context and thematic embedding of the artworks) and includes a discussion of *iconization*, an aspect both curators mentioned.

In exploring these displays and the contextualization of "The Scream(s)", *I am asking how the originals are "framed", and how certain values are being (re-)produced* in the last chapters, following up on the original research question of how the artworks are displayed in the museums. The "framing" involves a discussion of the original artwork's being an icon as well as the importance of the *aura*. I am concentrating on the question of where a potential reproduction of the artworks can be situated in the museum and where it is accepted by the institution.

Finally, I will also come back to discuss the title: Are the museums presenting "The Scream(s)", merely opening or closing doors for the interested public? Furthermore, with this opening and closing of doors, *what and how are the museums, especially the Munch Museum with its innovative display for the three versions of the artwork, enabling visitors to see and experience it?* Thus, the last chapter will focus on the techniques of secrecy and how doors play an important role in the display.

1. Definitions and literature review

Art museums are institutions to show, preserve and do research on artworks from different times. According to ICOM guidelines,

> "[a] museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing."[2]

The last decades have brought changes in museums, to an extent in their displaying of artworks, since more possibilities to exhibit them and their reproductions are available: not only an analog reproduction, a material one, is possible now, artworks can be reproduced digitally as well. This leads to new challenges, and throughout history certain views seem to have been repeated, especially the discussion of the reproductions' status and its significance regarding the value of the original.

2 ICOM, "Museum Definition," International Council of Museums, last modified 24 August 2022, https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/. This is the new museum definition from 24 August 2022.

In this chapter, I am going to discuss what can be considered as reproduction and give a brief historical overview. A literature review of important scholars writing on originals and their reproductions will highlight central positions and oppositions. One of the most important essays to discuss will be Walter Benjamin's "The Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproductions" from 1936. Writings on the subject of art and reproductions include several other art historians and critics from the first half of the 20th century, many of them accentuating the attempt to democratize access to art through its reproductions. The discussion of the second half of the 20th century will focus on new media and their use of reproductions. Contemporary theories of museums' presentations of artworks and their reproductions and how digital technologies are being introduced and used in museums will highlight the activities and ambitions in the last years.

1.1 What are original, reproduction, facsimile, copy, aura?

A thesis focusing on originals and reproductions can not start without defining its vocabulary. Let us have a look into some dictionaries first, to see what is stated there. In the *Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*, the *original* counts as "[a] work of art which the artist made himself, as opposed to copies by other hands"[3], whereas *reproduction* is explained as "[a] copy of a work of art, especially one made by mechanical means (e.g. casting, photography.)"[4] However, there is also the term *copy*, regarded as "[a] duplicate of an already existing work of art, usually not made by the artist who created the original."[5] It gets more complicated and we are also entering a gray area here when including the term *replica*, which means "[s]trictly, an exact copy of a painting or sculpture done by the artist who created the original." but also, "[an] object exactly reproducing another object, usually one by a different hand."[6]

I had to consult other dictionaries to make clear distinctions here. The *Dictionary of Art* (edited by Turner) surprisingly had no entry for *original*, and discusses it only in opposition to reproductions, to which it dedicates an extensive chapter, first concentrating on the term *reproduction*; after this, a long entry about the *reproduction of works of art* can be found. Without an original, there is, too, no reproduction. A reproduction, it can be read there, is an

> "object made as an exact copy of an earlier original. 'Copy', 'replica' and 'reproduction' are often used interchangeably: however, a reproduction is usually distinguished by the

3 *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*, New Edition, ed. Edward Lucie-Smith. Series Thames & Hudson World of Art (London, Thames & Hudson: 2003 [1984]): s. v. "Original", 158.
4 *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*, s. v. "Reproduction", 184.
5 *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*, s. v. "Copy", 64.
6 *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*, s. v. "Replica", 184.

> exact simulation of materials, workmanship, construction, proportions, decorative motifs and condition of an original in a public or private collection, or in a publication."[7]

This discussion of reproductions is of a very general matter, since it is not focused on an oil painting, for example. Nevertheless it delivers thoughts that are of importance when thinking about reproductions today, especially when talking about the "desire" leading to the demand for owning an example of a masterpiece, albeit a poster of the bespoken oil painting. It also mentions the democratic process enabled by reproductions (or copies), which is significant: "Through copies many can enjoy some of this aesthetic, cultural and social values that a masterpiece represents."[8] This is something that probably the reader has encountered already, that the impression of an artwork is so strong that one wants to take it home to look at it for longer and more often.

The dictionary is getting clearer when it comes to *reproductions of works of art*, where it is concerned with the mechanical or semi-mechanical methods of reproductions. And it also approaches a more contemporary understanding of reproductions, in the sense of the circulation of reproductions in different media today, a multiplication of means to visualize contents seen in the museum, for example. "Unlike the handmade copy or duplicate, reproductions are created in multiple copies, each one theoretically identical"[9] as one can read in the text. It also declares that "the vast majority of reproductions are executed in a medium different from their originals and on a smaller scale, as for example most engravings or photographs after paintings."[10] The postcards of "The Scream", as depicted at the beginning of the thesis, are prime examples for reproductions. The "faithfulness" of reproductions and the question of the "authenticity of the aesthetic experience"[11] reproductions bring along, is central in this discussion about originals and reproductions and will be more explored in the following chapters.

The way and form in which reproductions are circulating in the media today cannot be explained without the medium of photography, and also its "immediacy" and "objectivity"[12] that it seemingly embodies. Photography is, in this view, tied to the artwork in a "documentary" mode, although it is the one taking the photograph who decides the cut-out and what (not) to include in the photograph. When thinking about reproductions of artworks, it is also trust and quality of the reproduction, which the museums or publishers are responsible for in the case here. Artworks in

7 *The Dictionary of Art, Raphon to Pome, ancient, §II: Architecture*, 26, ed. Jane Turner, London (Macmillan Publishers Limited: 1996): s. v. "Reproductions" by C. Peter Kaellgren, 226.
8 *The Dictionary of Art,* 226.
9 *The Dictionary of Art,* s. v. "Reproduction of works of art" by Trevor Fawcett, 227.
10 *The Dictionary of Art*, 227.
11 *The Dictionary of Art,* 227.
12 *The Dictionary of Art,* 228.

museums have a given motif, form and body that should be included, or specific sections such as details in a painting, which can be viewed in reproductions of details.

This thesis mainly concentrates on originals *in* museums and reproductions *in* and *by* the latter. It is, therefore, concerned with the public sphere, although experienced by private individuals. This discussion will include questions of consumption and mass media, the material aspects of the original artwork and its transferred states and medium in the cultural industry, in this case also shaped by tourism.

1.2 Literature Review: Views from the 20th century

Today, reproductions in museums are common for every one of us, and museums make use of them in various ways. They integrate them into the material and media to lure us to come to the institution; they place them on social media or advertise in the public space. Inside the museum, photographic reproductions guard us to the desired masterpieces we want to see. But when it comes to the exhibition rooms, to the places of knowledge and aesthetic experience in the art museum, reproductions can not be found that often. Those are the places reserved for the pure and enriching experience of the artworks, where they are supposed to speak for themselves, in most cases.

Over the years, certain points of view, often opposing, in the presentation of artworks and their connection with reproductions can be made out. The following section will concentrate on how scholars thought about these tensions between the "real" masterpiece – the original – and a probable reproduction in different media, in regard to their presentation in museums or collections.

I will start with a comparison by the art historian Erwin Panofsky, since his point of view has been progressive for his time, and is of importance still, or especially, a century later. His essay "Original and Facsimile Reproduction", first published in 1930, as a response to a then-current debate on the value and position of facsimile, highlighted what the author saw as facsimile reproductions' abilities and constraints.[13] *Facsimiles* closely resemble the originals, they "imitate" them in even using the same (or almost the same) materials. They can be considered as "quasi-authentic substitutes"[14] - but need to state who made them, not to be counted as a *forgery*. Here, we have a strong distinction between humans and machines manipulating the work to reproduce another artwork. With the facsimile, considered as an exact copy – because there is another original

13 Erwin Panofsky, "Original and Facsimile Reproduction," 1930, trans. Timothy Grundy, *Res* (Cambridge, MA), no. 57/58 (2010): 330-338.

14 Ernst Rebel, *Druckgrafik: Geschichte und Fachbegriffe* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2009[2]): 184. Translated from German by the author.

– we are still in a discussion about the mastery to copy a work in the same manner and style. When taking reproductions in media like photography into account, we need to be precise in defining what they do – they copy in a (semi-)mechanical way. In Panofsky's article it is not always clear what he is exactly talking about, but I think that his view and definition of reproductions, in general, comes close to what we consider as photographic reproductions in museums today.

What I find specifically important in Panofsky's opinion piece is the statement, that the reproduction does not want "to directly replace the original."[15] What the producers of a reproduction intend, is, according to Panofsky, "to provide a *good reproduction.*"[16] His striking example comes with the comparison to a musical record: "A good gramophone record is not 'good' because it makes me believe Caruso is singing in the next room, but because it conveys the *musical intention* of his singing precisely."[17] Further, a reproduction of a Cézanne is not "good" because it makes the viewer feel that he or she is looking at the original, but because it transfers the visual artwork's *intention*.[18]

The debate about original and facsimile was initiated in Germany at the end of the 1920s, during the Weimar Republic. Dorner, a museum's director in Hanover, and Panofsky, among others, were involved in the broader discussion, with the magazine *Der Kreis* as the leading medium to distribute the opinions. There were two sides, advocating for either the substantial worth of facsimiles or (totally) against it, addressing it even as a "forgery" of the original. Sauerlandt, another German museum professional, who started the debate with an article in 1929, claimed that reproductions being fakes, especially when it came to the material the artwork was produced in, transformed into another.[19] An exhibition where original artworks were placed among reproductions, leaving it to the audience to guess which one was which, was like a thorn in the flesh for the author.[20]

Dorner was convinced by reproduction's worth: Since not even the ones with the trained eye could distinguish original and reproduction in the before mentioned exhibition[21], it was clear to him that (good) reproductions should have a right to be integrated into museums. As Uchill notes in her discussion on Dorner, he did not ignore the original's aesthetic and material value, but wanted to bring unavailable artworks closer to the public through reproductions ("the overwhelming majority

15 Panofsky, 332.
16 Panofsky, 332. Emphasis in original. Notable is, that he calls the "producers" of a reproduction not artists.
17 Panofksy, 332. Emphasis in original.
18 Panofksy, 332. He calls this "reproductive optics".
19 Rebecca Uchill, "*Original und Reproduktion*: Alexander Dorner and the (Re)production of Art Experience," *Future Anterior* 12, no. 2 (2015): 13-14. Here, it was about sculptures, about stone into metal.
20 Uchill, 14.
21 Uchill, 14.

of people cannot frequently come into contact with outstanding works of ancient art").[22] Dorner's opinion is, therefore, not so much unlike Panofsky's, since his key to the artworks' experience, the "spiritual creation of the artwork as such"[23] comes close to Panofsky's emphasis on the artworks' *intention*. Central to Dorner's argument are the aesthetic qualities of the artwork. He sees these qualities not limited to the artwork, the object alone, but also its surroundings, the *atmosphere*: "the fundamental recontextualization of every object inserted within a museum was as much a violation against originality as facsimile replica"[24] - what can be understood as a legitimization of both, I would argue.

The discussion about originals and reproductions was a polarizing and political one. It included the question of the material, which, exemplified by facsimile plaster casts, started the debate, according to Panofsky.[25] He goes on to further argue that there is a distinction in art about the importance of the material:

> "In some genres of art the products are first and foremost formed material, while there are other genres of art whose products are first and foremost materialized conceptual forms. In general, we distinguish between the 'arts and crafts' in the first case and the 'fine arts' in the second."[26]

This statement led him to challenge the one brought up by Sauerlandt, speaking about the "incomparability" of originals and reproductions, when executed in different materials. I want to add here that Panofsky noticed from early on, that they cannot or do not have to be compared and stand, each one of them, for themselves. He also adds, in a footnote, what he considers the future of reproductions: "[T]he facsimile reproduction needs to do precisely what it does best (and will do in a more perfect manner, once it has been mechanized in its entirety): Not to be an object of deception, but the basis of an aesthetic transformation."[27] Who would have known at that time that decades later, technology would have implications on the experience of the material artwork, and even the digital against the material artwork would be a point for discussion?

From the question of the material I will now move on to another point that played a vital role in the discussion of reproductions: the immaterial, represented in the focus on the visual and the "auratical". Kurt Karl Eberlein, in 1929, regarded technical reproductions as "falsifying surrogates" of the original[28], thinking they could never show or mediate what the artwork's essence

22 Uchill, 19-21.
23 Dorner, cited in Uchill, 23: opposing the *Einzelheitswert* of material and uniqueness, as Uchill notes.
24 Uchill, 25.
25 Panofsky, 334. He sees these as "hybrid" forms of reproductions, from marble sculpture to plaster cast.
26 Panofsky, 335.
27 Panofsky, 336, Footnote 5.
28 Michelle Henning, "With and Without Walls: Photographic Reproduction and the Art Museum," in *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies: Museum Media 1, vol. III*, ed. Michelle Henning (Oxford: John Wiley

truly demonstrated. Although there are political spheres separating Eberlein and another author of his time, Benjamin, they both include the notion of *aura* in their discussions on artworks and their reproductions.[29] Walter Benjamin is one of the well-known critics of technical reproducibility, and his essays represent what reproductions could be seen as during a time when the -isms were culminating and political turmoil was not afar anymore.

Walter Benjamin dedicated the mechanical and technical reproduction a whole essay: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", written in the 1930s. What he puts into the focus of the discussion between the original and its (mechanical) reproductions is the concept of *aura* as a characteristic inherent to the original. In general, Benjamin admits that the artwork was always reproducible.[30] Already in the first chapter, he talks about the human's ability to reproduce art: be it students' work to copy the Masters, or for the matter of circulation. However, mechanical reproduction with means of the time he is writing the essay, brings new aspects into discussion, although this form of reproduction is not new: now nearly everything can be reproduced.[31]

> "Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes."[32]

What gets challenged in the 20th-century's technical virtues to reproduce artworks is the here and now of the original, its *Echtheit*[33], whereby reproductions devalue this notion of the original's here and now[34], since they are available almost everywhere. Concluding further, I do not need the museum to see the artwork I am craving for, I can simply view its reproduction in a book (or online catalog or different other sources). Ruth Pelzer illustrates reproductions ability with the photograph of postcards at a newsstand, each showing a different detail of Renaissance art faces (Fig. 3). With this example, she accentuates Benjamin's statement of the fact that "technical

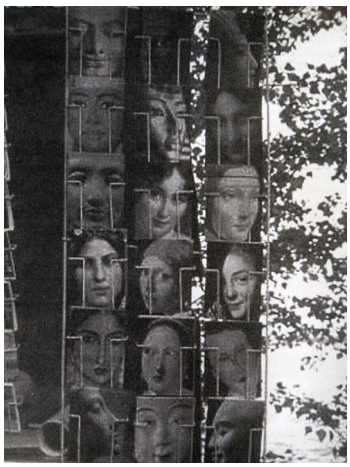

Figure 3: Postcards. Kiosk stand, Paris. Courtesy of Ruth Pelzer.

& Sons, Ltd., 2015): 581.

29 Uchill, 27.

30 Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010 [1936]): 9.

31 Benjamin, 9.

32 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,"(1935) trans. Harry Zohn, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969): 3.

33 Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,* 13.

34 Benjamin, 15.

reproduction can place the copy of the original into situations which the original itself cannot attain."[35]

Yet, what Benjamin develops and holds very dear in this essay, is the term *aura*. Even the best reproduction of an artwork cannot attain the *Echtheit.* The postcard example makes clear how mobile the reproduction can be, and that it is also able to provide a closer look, as well as a change of situation and location; we can encounter it anywhere. As a result of the reproduction, the singularity of the artwork, its anchoring in a tradition, gets lost; which means its aura. Further, the actual reproduction is always refreshing what it passes on.[36]

The critic Carl Einstein thought differently about reproductions than Benjamin, and took a radical position around the same time Benjamin was writing his essay: As Haxthausen explains, Einstein's argument laid down the fact that everything was always changing, he denied an object "stability and durability."[37] This was maybe a phenomenon of the times, but also part of his (political) worldview, as he ascribed the artworks of some of his contemporaries, like the cubists[38], a transforming quality that other art with its traditional forms and repetition of motifs did not have (for him). Haxthausen explains this with the cognitive purpose of art for Einstein: "[…] by changing artistic form one transforms human vision as such, and by changing our visual construction of reality we have the potential to remake ourselves and the world."[39] Therefore, the art of past times that was additionally, replicated and multiplied by copies, could not embody these qualities for him.

I gave a hint to the qualities a reproduction could have, and what it could show and embody with the example of the Renaissance postcards. It can produce a detail of an original, to come closer to the "real" artwork, cognitively here at least, to address the whole work and let the viewer discover the specifics shown in the reproduction. Central here is the medium of photography, and photography's worth and central position in reproducing an original artwork. With its invention in the 19th century, photography's ability to capture traces of the "real" on photosensitive paper, glass or other material made it convincing as a kind of document, as a visual "proof". It served as a new competitor for other media and could, later, make an exact copy of an artwork in no time. The medium of photography was especially interesting to André Malraux in his "Museum Without Walls", 1947. There, the "process of metamorphosis", of a transformation, is central. He created a

35 Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006): 254, cited in Ruth Pelzer, "Technical Reproduction and its Significance," in *Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts*, ed. Matthew Rampley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005): 207.
36 Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,* 16-17.
37 Charles W. Haxthausen, "Reproduction/Repetition: Walter Benjamin/Carl Einstein," *October* 107 (2004): 47.
38 Haxthausen, 56.
39 Haxthausen, 55, and in Einstein's own words: "Through vision we change human beings and the world." (1931), cited ibid.

photographic album with reproductions of art[40] and called it a museum that "can [now] accommodate a potentially exhaustive display of the world's art."[41] Among other factors and truths he describes, the transformation of the displayed works' appearance is significant – small statues were depicted as if being of massive size and the other way around; moreover, the placement and side-by-side combination of the art of the world, not to be limited to the Western world only, and the emphasis on timelessness of art[42] in terms of their lasting longer than a human's lifetime. The "Museum Without Walls" was a big project, and with it, a democratization of art was intended. It could have served as a precursor for several of today's web catalogs and virtual art collections, waiting to be explored. For Malraux, the photographic reproduction could help as an extension of the *aura*, making comparison and awareness of details possible.[43]

To conclude this chapter, I want to summarize that a very limited or even restricting use of reproductions could be seen as prevalent for some scholars, even considering them as giving false expressions or being fakes. On the opposite side, there were many opinions showing an openness towards reproductions, in admitting them a place in the discussion of artworks, in being democratic and in sharing a form of aesthetic experience. Reproductions could serve for a better understanding of art, like in the last example of Malraux's "Museum Without Walls". Furthermore, in my art history studies, I would have been lost without reproductions, as words can only bring you so far in understanding visual artworks. Though, there is something to the *aura* of an artwork, which Benjamin stresses so intensively; this experience one can only have in front of the original. It is Panofsky, who wrote about the originals and reproductions in a defensive manner, when each of them stays on its side, giving a "warning" here: "[T]he enthusiasm for the original – in itself legitimate – can become a *source of danger* when the *authentic* experience is *overemphasized* to the *disadvantage* of the *sensual* experience."[44]

1.3 The role of reproductions (in museums) today, especially *photographic* reproductions

In the digital age, mass production is expanding into all contemporary culture. What Benjamin described as a dissemination of the image in the form of the new technical reproducibility, got

40 George Didi-Huberman, "The Album of Images According to André Malraux," *Journal of Visual Culture* 14, no. 1 (2015): 4.
41 Geoffrey T. Harris, "André Malraux," in *Key Writers on Art: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Chris Murray (London and New Work: Routledge, 2003): 214.
42 Harris, 215.
43 Henning, 592.
44 Panofsky, 337. Emphasis in original.

boosted into a sheer endless account of images in our times. Pelzer describes this increased quantities of reproductions by reference to "mass-'reproduced' media forms such as newspapers, cinema, magazines, radio, television, CDs, DVDs."[45] With computers, entering the homes of people from the 1980s on, and the Internet in the mid-1990s[46], the start of "easy reproduction" for everyone, a new copy-and-paste era was beginning to evolve, culminating in the question Lev Manovich asks today: "How to see one billion images?"[47]

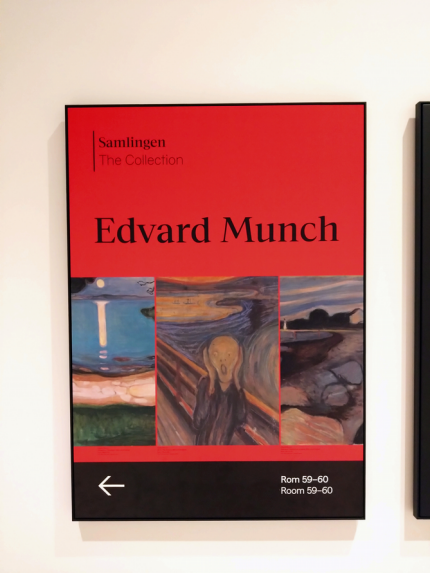

Figure 4: National Museum, Oslo. Information "screen". 2023. Photographed by the author.

I do not intend to analyze the distribution and form of famous artworks in popular culture in its whole here. In this thesis, my focus lies on how museums distribute their art and images and what forms of reproductions are evolving in relation to the original artworks (Fig. 4). Hence, I will concentrate on the tight connections between the artworks and the use of their reproductions, foremost by the institutions themselves.

To form a reproduction in another material than the original's inherent one, was already discussed in the 1930s, for example, by Panofsky. Facsimile reproductions meant that a copy or reproduction was formed in the *same* material, and that it could not be distinguished from the original in this form, as mentioned above.[48] Today, art museums make use of reproductions in many ways. What is not very common is the inclusion of facsimiles in the exhibition context equal to the original artworks. However, reproductions are included through other channels or modes of presentation. They can be placed in exhibitions, but would be rendered and displayed differently to the originals. One can find them in brochures, catalogs, on posters, websites, social media channels and on screens in the museum's environment. They appear printed, and one comes across them as merchandise; they are displayed in digital form and embedded in moving images.

An exercise in the discussion of media specificity, reproductions and their manipulation and transformation was given by John Berger in his television series "Ways of Seeing" for the BBC in 1972. In the book, published in addition to the series, as well as in the series itself, he concentrates on what images – his examples are foremost historical paintings, actually allow us to see and how

45 Pelzer, 198.
46 Pelzer, 199.
47 See Lev Manovich, *Cultural Analytics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020). And at the time of writing, this is even going further with the help of artificial intelligence.
48 Panofsky, 335: "[…] facsimile reproduction aims to emphasize the specificity of a 'particular' material and the specificity of the 'particular' form to an equal degree."

they can be manipulated by others, generally media, to focus on specific details or relationships. How an image, through its reproductions, can be transformed in its meaning is a central point given by Berger. The main technique and device making this transformation possible is, according to him, the camera. Not only did the camera allow us to see a painting without its context (the building, the place it was made for[49]), it made its *uniqueness* obsolete:

> "The uniqueness of every painting was once part of the uniqueness of the place where it resided. […] When the camera reproduces a painting, it destroys the uniqueness of its image. As a result its meaning changes. Or, more exactly, its meaning multiplies and fragments into meanings."[50]

Berger owes many of his insights to Walter Benjamin, whom he gives credit to at the ending of the show's first episode.[51] The term of the uniqueness of the painting can be traced back to Benjamin's term of *aura*, of this sensational quality only the original could possess and embody. How the meaning of a painting can change is exemplified by the television series: the artworks are eventually entering the audience's home by being on the TV screen; they can receive new or different meanings when the viewer is switching from one channel to another or when the audience sees only details of a much bigger painting. The movement of the television camera and accompanying sound could multiply a painting's meanings.

What follows after these reproductions is described by Berger with the new status of the original work: "The meaning of the original work no longer lies in what it uniquely says but in what it *uniquely is*."[52] The work of art is, therefore, defined by its rarity – its market value – and, further, its spiritual value, but especially the latter is, as Berger writes, an artificial one in modern times, since magic or religiosity are no dogmas anymore.[53] What makes it unique is mainly its material form and aura, resulting from this. The continuity of the original's importance and unique position is not lost at all, especially in our times, which is also discussed by Michelle Henning: "As numerous blockbuster exhibitions demonstrate, we are still in thrall to the thing itself, to the original artwork as an expression of individual genius, even in cases where the artworks themselves seem to militate against such a reading."[54]

The article by Michelle Henning, in its title "With and Without Walls", referring to Malraux's "Museum Without Walls", is very central in this discussion, and it deals with the

49 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 2008 [1972]): 19.
50 Berger, 19.
51 *Ways of Seeing*, Episode 1, directed by Michael Dibb, written by John Berger, featuring John Berger, aired 1972, BBC, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX_9Kk.
52 Berger, 21. Emphasis by the author.
53 Berger, 21.
54 Henning, 598.

integration and purposeful use of photography as a method for reproduction from early on. According to her, referencing Peter Walsh, we are already in the time of the "post-photographic" museum,[55] since photography is so natural an ingredient inside and by this institution that it might take more effort to imagine the museum without it. She states that photography in museums has helped to shape certain values and a concentration on visual attention.[56] Photographic reproductions have, according to her, been "instrumental in the transformation of the art museum"[57] and helped in making art history accessible to many, but this dissemination of art has not been limited to photography only, since before, other reproduction methods existed.

Let us take one step back. Reproductions are not new to the museum or to people who want to enjoy art. Forms of distribution have existed for years, and other reproduction methods, like woodcut or engraving, have been common for centuries. As Fyfe writes, photography "displaced not originals but an earlier culture of the reproduction that was rooted in handicraft-print making."[58] One change happening by photographic reproduction was, after trial and error, the speed of mechanical printing methods, which allowed a "wide circulation of prints", which also led "[p]ainting and photography [to] become entangled right from the start."[59] However, photographic reproductions did not reproduce in a perfect manner right from their beginnings, it was a process of adjustments. At the end of the 19th century, most of its deficiencies were overcome, and after the turn of the century, even the first good color reproductions became available.[60] What reproductions in and by museums, for example, in form of catalogs or postcards, made possible, was to take the art home or to study the art from home before visiting the museum.

Specifically interesting here is Henning's mentioning that, for a long time, "the distinction between (static) original and (mobile) copy" was held upright, although "many of the 'original' paintings in museums were born into, and inseparable from, the world of mass copy."[61] And, as I would argue, still, or again today, we see this distinction quite clearly, since to see the original counts as special, as an exciting moment; a process and value that was and is fueled by the reproductions we encounter. Ullrich is writing about this:

55 Henning, 577.
56 Henning, 577.
57 Henning, 577.
58 Gordon Fyfe, "Reproductions, Cultural Capital and Museums: Aspects of the Culture of Copies," *Museum and Society* 2, no. 1 (2015): 51.
59 Henning, 578.
60 Wolfgang Ullrich, *Raffinierte Kunst: Übungen vor Reproduktionen* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2009): 51.
61 Henning, 579.

> "Without the aura of the photogenic, that means without the completion as a reproduction, artworks' status would not have become that easy a fetish. The cult of the originals, therefore, is due to the photogenicity of its reproductions."[62]

This quote already shows how inseparable the original and its reproductions are, but too, that photography plays a role in showing us how good an artwork could look when we would see it for ourselves, as the original in the museum.

However, as a result of the circulation of reproductions, artists, but also museums, have to deal with what Ullrich mentions as greater forms of "staging".[63] When it comes to masterpieces, this "staging" is often a compromise, brought together by several factors, like conservation, security, accessibility and, of course, curatorial decisions, as I will explain by the example of "The Scream(s)" below. I want to highlight these thoughts as starting points for a concentration on why the original receives this cult-status today, especially with the presentation of it as something "precious", in the repeated context of this most valuable and unique object, once again enshrined. This cult status is, at the same time, dispersed by several reproductions and copies of it[64], circulating even in close vicinity to the bespoken original, in the same building. These reproductions on screens or guideposts can be found in both the Munch Museum and National Museum. The next section will now follow up on some examples and questions that were guiding thoughts when it comes to museums and their displaying of originals, and will also entangle the connection of cult, ritual and the experience inside the art museum.

1.4 The original artworks and their *unquestionable* importance in art museums

Imagine going to one of your favorite museums to see a specific work of art. What would you do if you would just stand in front of a facsimile, a reproduction, printed or on a screen? This can happen, sometimes. When an artwork is traveling and put on view in another exhibition, or is being restored, museums tend to hang a small reproduction in its place. Yet, many masterpieces are not

62 Ullrich, 75-76. Translated from German by the author. Original: "Ohne die Aura des Fotogenen, also ohne ihre Vollendung in der Reproduktion, wären Kunstwerke nicht so leicht zu Fetischen aufgestiegen. Die Verehrung der Originale verdankt sich somit nicht unwesentlich der Fotogenität ihrer Reproduktionen."

63 Ullrich, 96. He concludes further, in the original, that these greater forms are a demand: "Fotografische Reproduktionen erlauben aber nicht nur eine stärkere Inszenierung von Kunst, sondern fordern sie auch."

64 This is also described by Berger, however, with seemingly far more consequences: "What the modern means of reproduction have done is to destroy the authority of art and remove it – or, rather, to remove its images which they reproduce – from any preserve. For the first time ever, images of art have become ephemeral, ubiquitous, insubstantial, available, valueless, free." Ibid., 32.

traveling anymore, since they have to be displayed carefully, to preserve and secure them. Among them are the versions of "The Scream".

When we go to art museums, we expect, supposedly, to see the original artworks. However, reproductions play an integral part here as well: Many artworks are known from reproductions, and one is familiar with the motif, the artist, and its location, thanks to them. This can be seen as an introduction to a piece of art, a shaping of knowledge, an aesthetic experience. Almost the same can be said about the reproduction of an artwork which extends and intensifies the aesthetic experience one had in front of the original, a view one of reproductions' proponents already had in the 1930s: "While the authentic is an irreplaceable ingredient, it is nevertheless only one ingredient of the aesthetic act that results from standing before the original".[65] Then there are also the ones, like Berger, who argue about the original: "Its authority is lost. In its place there is a language of images. What matters now is who uses that language for what purpose."[66]

Gordon Fyfe states that in the art museum today, there is a "strong classification between originals and reproductions"[67] and because of this, "reproduction is either back-staged through the concealed labour of authenticity (e.g. restoration and historical research) or sited, at the exit, as something that departs the museum as a postcard."[68] The departure of this postcard is one that is now even created digital, since impressions leave their imprints on social media accounts and show the cult around the original in the virtual sphere. These are often created by the visitors, but also by the museums themselves. When it comes to the institutions, by my own account, many museums are still reluctant to use too much technology *around* their artworks, which might change in the future. The question of why reproductions are not put on a screen inside the exhibition rooms of art museums seems like an almost provocative suggestion to use technology, although they are welcome means for play and knowledge-making in other kinds of museums.[69]

Museums help to shape or maintain certain values connected or inherent to the original artworks they display. The aesthetic experience has a lot to do with the display in art museums. How museums frame their famous artworks inside and outside of the exhibitions pertains to their understanding of who they, as the institutions, are or want to be. Here architecture, design and the

65 Panofsky, 333.
66 Berger, 33.
67 Fyfe, 50.
68 Fyfe, 51.
69 A lot of literature on this topic can be found, for example Gerald Bast, "Changing Societies, Changing Art, Changing Museums?", in *The Future of Museums. Arts, Research, innovation and Society Series,* eds. Gerald Bast, Elias G. Caryannis, David F. J. Campbell, 5-13 (Cham: Springer, 2018). An overview of museums is followed by claims of what needs to be done to prepare museums for the future. Another scholar is Ross Parry, who published one of the earlier basic works on museum technology: *Museums in a Digital Age*. Leicester Readers in Museum Studies (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2010).

environment enter the discussion: "What we see and do not see in art museums – and on what terms and by whose authority we do or do not see it – is closely linked to larger questions about who constitutes the community and who defines its identity."[70] According to Duncan, art museums are not "neutral sheltering places for objects" but also not mainly concerned about their architecture and design, yet "complex entities"[71] for which certain rituals are of relevance. She concludes further that the "complexity of the art museum" is deriving from "its existence as a profoundly symbolic cultural object as well as a social, political, and ideological instrument."[72] Shaping the places for this ritual in the art museum can also serve as a justification to erect new buildings, as with the examples in Oslo which will follow.

The specific cult often produced around the masterpiece, and its symbolic value justifies the museum, according to Duncan, as temples or shrines of art.[73] How the museum as a host and home for the original artwork is worshiped by the visitor, which is most often measured by quantitative methods like visitor counts, can in many cases be explained by the (material and symbolic) value of the original work – a value that might not be reached by a reproduction. In Korn's article, "The Case for Holistic Intentionality", the economic reasons for museums' focus on attendance are mentioned, and she brings the big challenge for museums to the point in her chapter heading, since the stipulation of the institution and its visitors is focused on what she titles "balancing internal desires with external needs."[74] This is something I will also come back to at the end, the move away from a "further *iconizing* the artwork". What I want to stress regarding the museums and their display of famous artworks is that they, as cultural institutions, are determined by displaying them, while they are at the same time shaping this contextual embedding and – respectively – creating and controlling its demand (for example with time-slot tickets or limited access, in some cases).

Let us come back to the museums as institutions, as the home for artworks. In speaking about reproductions and them being mobile, maybe even democratic and easier accessible, one often forgets that already the artworks themselves are, frequently, taken out of other contexts or uses. Museums are creating experiences, and they are framing their artworks not only materially, but also contextually, through their placements and displaying. And too, a certain way of seeing is and has been shaped since the early days of museums, often concerned with contemplation, which

70 Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New Work: Routledge, 1995): 9.
71 Duncan, 1.
72 Duncan, 5.
73 Duncan, 13-15.
74 Randi Korn, "The Case for Holistic Intentionality," in *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift*. Second Edition, ed. Gail Anderson (Lanham, MD/Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2012): 216.

is referred to as the "aesthetic museum", where the visitor is absorbed by the artworks he or she is gazing at.[75]

This way of seeing or looking at the works in the museum is connected to the display and the architecture, as well as to the accessibility and *visitability*, which Dicks discusses in "Culture on Display". The cultural display is how artifacts or objects are exhibited and presented in and by cultural institutions, the framing of these objects or items, for example, in a museum. There, she notes the shift towards addressing the "ordinary visitor", happening in the late 20th century, which also meant that "culture moves outside the walls of elite institutions, and into the new, highly demarcated environments of visitable, consumerist space."[76] What this visitability entailed is that museums became more open, tried to connect objects and visitor's life and environment, in bringing culture closer to the audience. Especially the Munch Museum tries to establish the museum as a place for cultural exchange and a meeting point for different groups interested in art.[77]

The *experience* is central, as Dicks considers, together with interactions and spectacles, as a resource and symbolic content for the museum.[78] Yet the blurring of the museum experience and other sites of cultural display, including consumerist places, directs towards the entanglement of culture and consumption while making culture more "graspable"; moreover, the cultural display can shape the "model consumer".[79] The benefits of a less hierarchically structured culture (and cultural experience) is that it might be able to address more people. However, in the case of art museums, the mixing of artifacts of the art historical canon, allowing an aesthetic experience, with that of a spectacle, in the case of the Munch Museum the shifting versions on display, points to that of a consumerist practice of scarcity, a making or producing of something as rare. What this discussion needs to take into account, though, is tourism and how a museum is made to attract visitors, both from the own cultural community, as well as the traveling individuals. Dicks summarizes: "Display seeks to preserve culture as both spectacle and knowledge; it feeds both the eye and the brain."[80]

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75 Duncan, 16-17. Further: "Even in art museums that attempt education, the practice of isolating important originals in 'aesthetic chapels' or niches – but never hanging them to make an historical point – undercuts any educational effort." Ibid., 17.

76 Bella Dicks, *Culture on Display: The Production of Contemporary Visitability. Issues in Cultural and Media Studies* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003): 6-7. Her sociological approach into this topic of cultural display involves not only museums, but also other spaces where culture can be situated, like theme parks or nature. I am concentrating on the site of the art museum, but acknowledge that also those can be opened up and present their art outside of the institutions' walls.

77 This is communicated on the start-page, yet it differs what can be read in Norwegian or English: "Startpage", Munchmuseet, accessed 5 May 2023, https://www.munchmuseet.no/. On the Norwegian page, this caption can be found: "Et levende Kunstmuseum, med opplevelser for alle", which means "A vibrant art museum, built for great experiences", translated from Norwegian by the author.

78 Dicks, 2.

79 Dicks, 7.

80 Dicks, 13.

Finding the right balance between addressing the art enthusiast and the one who only randomly visits the museum, is key here.

In listing the main points which define cultural display nowadays, one of Dicks' arguments indirectly points towards the use or inclusion of reproductions. The use of technology in exhibitions, would, according to the author, promise intense experiences while distancing the viewer from the artifacts.[81] The argument is generally stated, but I want to keep it in mind, since it will serve as a point for discussion later on, considering art museums' reluctance to use (digital) screens or even reproductions intensifying the experience of the original artworks, with the example of "The Scream" as discussed here. There is the very visible juxtaposition of the original artwork on limited and guarded display and its reproductions, spread all over the museum's floors and (social) media, which might not be seen as representing something *belonging* together. The reproduction refers to the original, but is the original referring to its reproductions, too?

"Neither film nor television has been able to dislodge the attraction of the self-absorbed, lingering gaze in the museum."[82] According to this statement, in the book *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, Klonk gives an account of the art gallery interiors since the first public art galleries emerged, and how they were shaping experience, especially because of their locating between the private and the public sphere.[83] When I visit an art museum, I am in a public place, enjoying my private time in front and surrounded by the artworks, but I do have the opportunity to be part of various activities reserved for the public – tours, talks, and more. At the heart of her book is how art museums and their displays historically developed into what we imagine them to be today. Especially national galleries had a very distinctive appearance throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and as Klonk writes, by the mid-19th century, a certain standard had been established in Europe on how to hang art in galleries:

> "Pictures were hung on red or dull green walls, mostly in two tiers, although sometimes by necessity in more. The works were organised by schools and presented as products of the historical environment in which they were created. While subjective experience was emphasised, both artworks and visitors were conceived of as universal in the sense that the same set of visual and cultural determinants were assumed to govern all individuals, periods, and nations. Distinctiveness and individuality were valued, but only as variations on this basic theme."[84]

81 Dicks, 9.
82 Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009): 1.
83 Klonk, 3. As she highlights, the art museum is a place to meet other people, too.
84 Klonk, 49.

Also, exhibition-makers were keen to have as few distractions as possible.[85] Throughout the decades that followed, the central motive of presenting universally to the public was superseded by creating a more intimate atmosphere, a more private experience.[86] To summarize the complete history of museum display would surpass this thesis, so I want to close this discussion with the white cube, which became dominant in the 20th century.[87] This specific form of display, "the conception of the art gallery as an adaptable container with bare white walls and a flexible, functional interior space"[88] goes, later on, hand in hand with the museum becoming more and more commercialized, as Klonk highlights by the establishment of the Museum of Modern Art in New York with its understanding of what a museum is and to whom it caters, eventually the "spectator as educated consumer."[89] In Klonk's account, this standard of " subtly lit, spacious white rooms" remained mostly unchanged and would only be turned into a "black box" by the inclusion of new media and screens.[90]

The last pages gave a strong impression that it is not only about *what* is exhibited in an art museum, but *how* it is exhibited.[91] In a world where we can simply press play on our own devices, or look at an artwork's reproduction online, the demand for a lasting experience inside the museum's walls seems to get stronger. A focus on visitor studies and the awareness that "[t]he museum is the sum not of the objects it contains but rather of the experience it triggers"[92] led, furthermore, to questioning the authority of museum's presentations and a shift from a universal wall text to interpretive technologies.[93]

That these technologies are often not situated (spatially) close to important artworks in art museums, and interpretive technology, as well as reproductions for a deeper or different understanding, are located in other media, will be discussed in the following study. The significant point is, to come back to the important originals here, their special status. Dominant in our times is a certain craving for *the* original, which is, as mentioned in connection to the ritual before, usually measured by visitor counts and constantly reaching new peaks.[94] The craving for the original can

85 Klonk, 49.
86 Klonk, 50.
87 Klonk, 13.
88 Klonk, 13.
89 Klonk, 135.
90 Klonk, 14-15.
91 In Klonk's words: "It is less what museums show than how they show it that puts into place certain visions of experience and not others, 11.
92 Peter Samis, "The Exploded Museum," in *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift*. Second Edition, ed. Gail Anderson (Lanham, MD/Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2012): 304.
93 Samis, 304-305.
94 The comprehensive Vermeer-Exhibition in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam in 2023 is one a example, it sold out extremely fast: "Vermeer-Exhibition," Rijskmuseum Amsterdam, accessed 8 May 2023, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/whats-on/exhibitions/vermeer.

also have much to do with the threat of fakes, and the promise of the "real" experience, credited by the museum.[95]

To summarize this chapter, it is essential to be reminded of the value adherent to the original artwork. I am speaking here not only of the material value but also of the symbolic one, resulting in these certain rituals in art museums, in an aesthetic, sensual encounter and a form of contemplation, as we are often confronted with in the institutions today. Architecture and the display of the artwork frame culture and shape *visitability,* creating an experience that addresses us sensually and enables knowledge transfer, attracting us cognitively. Display, historically, catered either a people or got more intimate, yet with the flexible and non-distracting white cube, and as we shall see, by the example of "The Scream(s)" in the Munch Museum, the "black box", it creates specific ways for experiencing culture. In the 20th and 21st centuries, "consuming" culture can also not be left out of this discussion, which points directly to making a distinction between the original and its reproductions, the one to be consumed in the museum, the institution, the others outside the exhibition rooms, which includes their virtual destinations, respectively. In the next chapter, I am discussing how these displays and ways of seeing in the museums, presenting "The Scream", look, and how the exhibition spaces and displays were developed and shaped when the museums moved from one place to the other.

2. "The Scream" on display

Two of Oslo's major art museums reopened at new locations in the past years. The Munch Museum at Bjørvika, and the National Museum at the former "Vestbanehallen", a train station, have something particular in common: both house versions of one of the most important artworks in history, "The Scream", by Edvard Munch.

In the Munch Museum, on its fourth of more than ten floors, three of the museum's versions – a painting, a drawing, and a lithograph (see also Fig. 1)– can be seen, but not at the same time, since they sit behind cabinets with doors, allowing only one to be open per hour. In the dedicated "Scream"-room (Fig. 5), the light is dimmed down and visitors can experience the opening and closing of the doors, and then they have time to look at the particular artwork on display for an hour. In the meantime, reproductions on one wall provide them with images of all three versions.

95 See for example the Basquiat-Exhibition at the Orlando Museum of Art, USA in 2022, where, admittedly, many of the exhibited artworks were fakes. Lianne Kolirin, "Former auctioneer admits helping to create fake Basquiat paintings," *CNN online*, 14 April 2023, https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/basquiat-paintings-auctioneer-fraud-scli-intl/index.html.

Since the opening of the museum in the autumn of 2021, this technologically enhanced display has been put in place.

Figure 5: Munch Museum, Oslo. "Scream"-room. 2023. Photographed by the author.

The National Museum in Oslo opened its doors in June 2022. Compared to the Munch Museum, "The Scream" is shown as very unpretentious there. The one version on display is situated in the Munch-room on the second floor of the museum. It is just one work among the others by the artist in this room, and there seems to be no hierarchy among the works – partly because it is only one version of the motif shown and since it already resides in a dedicated Munch-room. The museum has a wide variety of art, but "The Scream" is central to the collection's presentation. For example, there is a sign specifically indicating where to find the painting "The Scream", even with a small image of a photographic reproduction (whereas no reproductions are to be found in the Munch-room, see Fig. 4).

The version held by the National Museum is one of the two paintings of the motive, and importantly, the older one, from 1893; the one in the Munch Museum is dated to 1910?.[96] Interestingly, in early scholarly literature, there was no indication about "The Scream" being Munch's major work, as it is often experienced to be today.[97] The versions show a few differences and allow for slightly different interpretations – hence, there is no single "Scream". According to Bjerke, "*Scream* is now reproduced in the majority of basic books on art history – represented either by the version in the National Museum or by the lithograph – and is thus included in what can be considered as the established art historical canon."[98] Bjerke states in his article on "Scream as Part of the Art Historical Canon" that the Munch Museum's version "began its existence as a famous and somewhat controversial painting in an exhibition that toured in 1950-52."[99] This tour sent the work

96 Further, a sketch is on the backside of the painting in the National Museum, Oslo.

97 Øivind Storm Bjerke, "Scream as Part of the Art Historical Canon", in *The Scream: Munch Museum*, ed. Ingeborg Ydstie (Oslo/Bergen: Munch-Museum/Vigmostad & Bjørke AS, 2008): 13-15.

98 Bjerke, 15. For example in Ernst H. Gombrich's, *The Story of Art* (New York: Phaidon, 2006 [1950]): Illustration 367, a major work for a comprehensive art history, one can find the *lithograph* of "The Scream", 1895.

99 Bjerke, 13.

to Paris, London, and several places in the USA.[100] Several years later, the Munch Museum was opened, to give its "Scream" a permanent display there.

2.1 Aim and methodology

The aim of my study was to investigate how museums, as institutions, display their important and famous artworks, such as "The Scream". As this artwork, which comes in several versions, affords a specific display – particularly due to the popularity of the work and also the fragility of the material – the museums faced the challenge of giving it a meaningful, aesthetic and protective display when they were able to start from anew. With innovative concepts and new overall architecture as well as interior design, they could embed the versions of the artwork in a new manner and contextualize them for the new collection exhibitions.

The two display concepts discussed here could not be more different. The Munch Museum chose a rather experimental display, more or less following what other museums set in place, but with its own "twist", especially specific elements; the National Museum followed a more general, traditional concept for the display. Evidently, the reasons for the different displays stem from the distinctive characteristics of the institutions: the Munch Museum is a single-artist museum, whereas the National Museum is a classic, national art gallery, presenting, foremost, the history of Norwegian art (especially in the part of the museum where the focus is on the collection brought in from the National Gallery, which fused with the National Museum when the concept of a new museum, bringing several sites or institutions together, was made).

I started to do literature research in the first place, especially in exhibition catalogs and other published material by the two discussed museums, and consulted their websites and online appearance. Many field trips to the institutions let me discover more thoughts and ideas regarding their collection display, and forced me to rethink my research questions. The limited time for the original artworks and the reproductions, which could give more insights on – especially in the Munch Museum – things we can not see (right at the moment, in detail), as well as the provision of a similar original artwork in the National Museum, to be hidden times of the day in the other institution, kept me thinking how their different approaches can be interpreted.

Both institutions have their own libraries, where a lot of material can be studied. I was able to have a closer look at documents, which helped me shape my interview questions. I did interviews with the curators of both museums. My two interviews were qualitative, and semi-structured,

100 Bjerke, 13.

following guidelines on conducting interviews by Brinkmann and Kvale.[101] Semi-structured interviews allowed me to have a set of prepared questions, but also to be open to other directions coming up during the conversation. When the interview partner mentioned something that seemed of interest, I could follow-up on that.

The curators met me in the exhibition rooms, where we were close to the subject – or better said, object(s) – discussed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and afterwards (color-)coded, to highlight similarities or differences. Also, the discussed factors, important points for displaying the original, popular artworks, were partly derived from the interviews.

In general, my research was guided by personal experience that I have made, which also led me to choose the objects of study – a display of artworks that was surprising and somehow irritating, as described by the example of the Munch Museum. My background in art history and my interest and practical experience in culture, museums and museum studies shaped the approach I took; nevertheless, I tried to be objective in interpreting my research material – the interviews, documents, and scholarly works I have read throughout intensive literature research (which also involved the output of research groups and conference texts). The methodological approach conducted is, therefore, an *abductive* one – transferred from the social sciences as an approach "which starts from the empirical information (like induction), but into which theories and perspectives are drawn in advance of the research process."[102]

This approach of analysis looked worthwhile to me, since academic literature seems to be sparsely focused on the presentation of originals *today* and the new designs and solutions of displays in museums. Displays and exhibition design are frequently treated as matters of architecture and interior design. Further, the integration of screens or reproductions in art museums, in general, is very often visitor-centered and captures a lot of interest in the technological sphere (see, for example, the field of Human-Computer Interaction), but leaves out the perspective of the curators or other involved professionals, if not more or less separated from there.

The field of Digital Humanities, where contemporary museum studies can be located (in part), is a fast-growing one.[103] However, the literature and conferences in this field did not provide the particular insights I was looking for, on how the different actors involved in museums, especially art museums, think about the ongoing tension between the original and its digitized and

101 Svend Brinkmann & Steinar Kvale, *Doing Interviews.* Second, Qualitative Research Kit (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2018), https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529716665.

102 Aksel Tjora, *Qualitative Research as Stepwise-Deductive Induction. Routledge Advances in Research Methods* (Abingdon, Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2019): 15. See also: Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg. *Reflexive Methodology. New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2009), as referenced by Tjora.

103 See, among others, publications by Ross Parry, e.g. *Museums in a Digital Age, Vol. 10,* Leicester Readers in Museum Studies (New York: Routledge, 2010).

digital appearances, inside the museum as a location or the virtual realm.[104] Visitors' longing for the original artworks is often limited to discussions in the field of Tourism studies and mostly considers the "tourist gaze".[105]

Although there have been a few helpful discussions by scholars in the field of museum studies, only a few applicable concepts to the case study here could be made out. This might be because of the wide variety of art museums, their different collections and approaches to permanent and temporary exhibitions.

With the two examples of art museums in Oslo, which serve as the objects of my study, I want to contribute to a closer understanding of how, why, and especially what is made by a set of actors in a museum, for the visitor and with the broader background of an institution with a specific location and starting point. However, I will also refer to historical and traditional approaches and analyze how the contemporary display might differ or return to its points of departure.

2.2 The Scream(s) in the Munch Museum, Oslo

I will begin here with the historical account of the former Munch Museum in Tøyen, Oslo. The Munch Museum library has all the documentation and exhibition catalogs which provide views of the presentation of "The Scream" from before; there was even an exhibition in 2019, which presented the history of the old museum while the move to the new building and the new location was underway: "EXIT! Historier fra Munchmuseet. 1963-2019" ("Stories from the Munch Museum"). This exhibition draws from the museum's archives and everything in the background, which includes the politics, economy and cultural context, as well as the museum architecture and exhibition design.

As is well known, Munch gave all his art to the municipality of Oslo after his death in 1944, and the municipality's art collection director Johan H. Langaard had the vision of a museum

104 Of course there are exceptions, too. Several articles and conference papers show what is done by museums with originals and their reproductions on screens (for example the Gigapixel Museum by the Mauritshuis, The Hague: "Mauritshuis first gigapixel museum in the world," Mauritshuis, The Hague, 26 November 2020, https://www.mauritshuis.nl/en/press-releases/mauritshuis-first-gigapixel-museum-in-the-world/). During the pandemic, museums increasingly worked on their online appearances, which brought many changes in the accessibility of artworks, but the craving for the original might now be even stronger (as was mentioned by the Vermeer-exhibition in 2023). That it still is very complicated and almost unthinkable to move screens or reproductions close to the original artworks, can be studied at many cultural institutions.

105 See for example *The Routledge Companion to Media and Tourism*, eds. Maria Månsson, Annæ Buchmann, Cecilie Cassinger, Lena Eskilsson (London and New York: Routledge, 2021); and other discussions about "Cultural Tourism".

dedicated to the Norwegian artist.[106] This museum finally opened in May 1963. Braathen discusses this development in his article on "Det ideelle Munchmuseum" ("The Ideal Munch Museum"). Every generation has its own aesthetic visions, which become clear here in the architecture of the museum building and exhibition architecture. Braathen speaks about the "sober" and simple style, so important for Langaard; moreover, of not too many, but a focus on good materials, contributing to a lightness when strolling through the building, as well as a natural circulation inside and the concentration on one story.[107] The latter shaped the experience of the building in being a wide open space, interrupted only by artworks (Fig. 6 and 7).

Figure 6: Munch Museum, Oslo. Tøyen. Exhibition hall. Courtesy of Knudsens Fotosenter/ DEXTRA Photo.

Figure 7: Munch Museum, Oslo. Tøyen. Exhibition view. Courtesy of Knudsens Fotosenter/ DEXTRA Photo.

The young architects Gunnar Fougner and Einar Myklebust won the architectural competition, and although their drafts and building plans were adjusted in the ten years between planning and opening, the museum was considered too small already.[108] It laid out exhibition rooms which were overall connected on 900m^2.[109] What is striking about the museum's interior can be seen in views of exhibitions inside the museum from the early years, where they took the open floor plan as a base, and divided and grouped with the help of screen walls (Fig. 8), or "skjermvegger" in Norwegian.[110] The screen walls which were used from 1963 were modular, flexible canvas walls that stood on aluminum poles.[111]

106 Elisabeth Byre, "Exit! Et museum på vrangen," in *EXIT! Historier fra Munchmuseet 1963-2019,* eds. Elisabeth Byre, Josephine Langebrekke, Karen E. Lerheim and Kristin Valla (Oslo: Munchmuseet, 2019): 15.

107 Martin Braathen, "Det ideelle Munchmuseum," in *EXIT! Historier fra Munchmuseet 1963-2019,* eds. Elisabeth Byre, Josephine Langebrekke, Karen E. Lerheim and Kristin Valla (Oslo: Munchmuseet, 2019): 84-89.

108 Braathen, 89-90.

109 Jon-Ove Steihaug, "Munch's svarte løgner," in *EXIT! Historier fra Munchmuseet 1963-2019,* eds. Elisabeth Byre, Josephine Langebrekke, Karen E. Lerheim and Kristin Valla (Oslo: Munchmuseet, 2019): 127.

110 Braathen 94. He mentions how they quit with the established way to guide through an exhibition, which he calls "ålekasseprinsip" - referring to a kind of crate which was used in rivers or streams to catch eels.

111 Braathen, 94, original in Norwegian: "modulbaserte, flyttbare skjermvegger av lerret på søyler av aluminium."

Figure 8: Munch Museum, Oslo. Tøyen. Screen Walls. Courtesy of Knudsens Fotosenter/ DEXTRA Photo.

This flexibility proved to be important from the beginning.[112] The museum had a variety of exhibitions, and besides the presentation of its collection, 180 temporary exhibitions (in total) were shown. The first exhibition, however, had an extensive selection of the museum's collection on display, 340 artworks by Munch, half of it paintings.[113] The quality and pride of the museum must have changed in the time that followed. Over the years, the increasingly "shabby" appearance of the screen walls is mentioned, and in the 1970s they were replaced with simpler, less-exquisite-looking ones. In 1993, some upgrades at the museum were done, as well as an annex, but the exhibition halls started to wither more and more, as Steihaug mentions.[114]

The museum, in its early times, set the stage for chronological presentation of the artworks, where also a considerable difference between the presentation (and conservation) between paintings and graphical works was made.[115] Munch's paintings were, for the most part, displayed as significant single works, standing for themselves. One reason for this, as Steihaug writes, could be the exhibition architecture, the screen walls where the paintings were mounted.[116] Looking at those, their weight-bearing capacity might not have been too effective. In general, it seems that the paintings were spread out on the walls quite a bit, and the question is, if this was due to certain exhibitions' aesthetics or guidelines, or their weight.

112 Johan H. Langaard, "The Munch Museum, Oslo," *Museum International* 17, no. 1 (1964): 4.
113 Steihaug, 125.
114 Steihaug, 127.
115 Steihaug, 127. Until the 1990s, they were counted as separate groups in the discussed museum. This is why later on, it gets interesting in the combination of showing them together.
116 Steihaug, 128. Interesting, too, is his mention of the mounting along the lower edge of the paintings.

Nerdrum laments that, still in 2004, a kind of outdated presentation with old mobile walls was in use in the museum, and little security was installed.[117] According to these two factors, one can assume that it has been rather easy to enter the museum and steal artworks. The theft of "The Scream" and "Madonna" in 2004 was big in the news, worldwide. The public scream and shock lifted the status of "The Scream" as an iconic artwork even more.[118] Surprisingly, the museum opened two days after this happened again, puzzling the visitors with two other artworks as substitutes for the "naked spots" where the stolen ones previously were hanging. However, shortly after, the museum closed completely, reopening a year later, in May 2005, with more security measures taken and updates in the exhibition halls, meaning that important works were now protected by safety glass; and solid, fixed arrangements for the artworks were established in the exhibition halls.[119] The theft made clear how important the originals were in their symbolic value, especially "The Scream", and that they were irreplaceable. The two artworks were, finally, found again in August 2006.

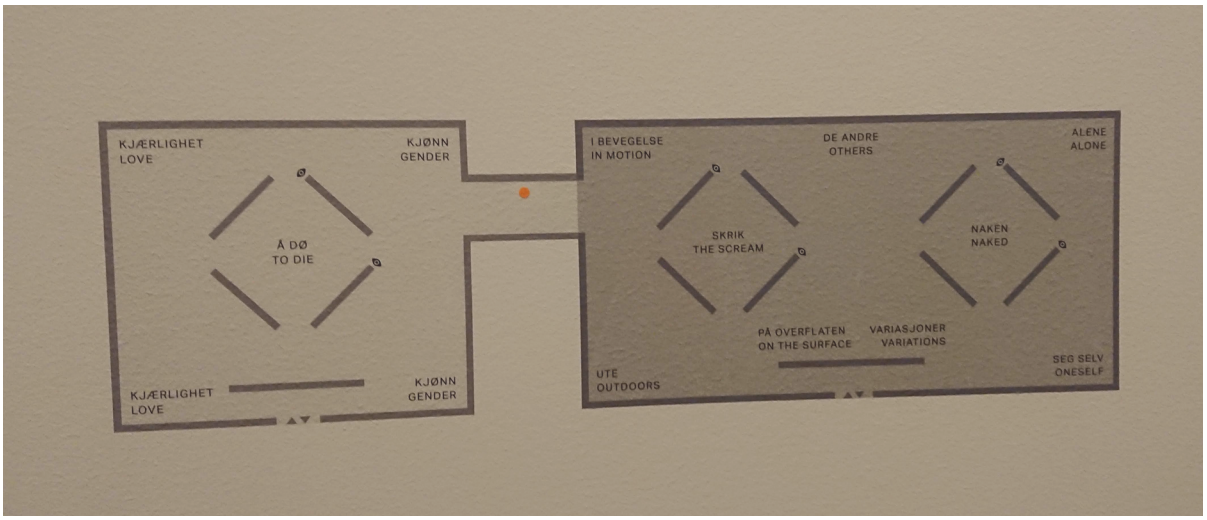

Figure 9: Munch Museum, Oslo. Map of the Fourth Floor. 2023. Photographed by the author.

With the new building of the Munch Museum in Oslo, a new installation of the versions of "The Scream" the museum is holding was possible. The curatorial team describes this new museum space as a "privileged situation to know that we could have a permanent or semi-permanent display."[120] The concept we see today is a "diamond-shaped" space in one of the permanent

117 Nora Ceciliedatter Nerdrum, "Kunstranet som skapte et ikon," in *EXIT! Historier fra Munchmuseet 1963-2019,* eds. Elisabeth Byre, Josephine Langebrekke, Karen E. Lerheim and Kristin Valla (Oslo: Munchmuseet, 2019): 236-37.
118 Nerdrum, 235.
119 Nerdrum, 242-243.
120 Ute Kuhlemann Falck (curator of the Munch Museum), interview by the author, 9 February 2023.

exhibition rooms of the museum[121], a tilted square or diamond with openings at the corners. When walking into that separated space, one is seeing one of the three versions of the famous artwork; each is devoted to one side of the square's walls, leaving one wall for the description of the artworks and their photographic reproduction in the form of photographic prints in a smaller size.

Although the other areas on the exhibition floor of the collection (Fig. 9), called "Uendelig" ("Infinite"), are given a quite open design, a bright colored and lighted architecture, the separated exhibition space for "The Scream" awakes a mystical atmosphere as well as a kind of "tomb"-like feeling. This is supported by the dark background, the walls painted in a dark tone, a dark blue, inside the room. The curator of the museum stresses the importance of the openings of the room, since these openings would enable the visitor to see glimpses of the rest of the exhibition while being in the separated space. "[T]his is the only work here in the exhibition which has its own room, but still – it's integrated – we have four openings – so it's very open and quite … humorous to some extent and surprising links can be made […]."[122] Until I have talked to the curator, I always thought about the "room-in-room" or "cabinet" as more separated than integrated into the rest of the exhibition, but I guess this *Raumempfinden* is quite personal, subjective. I am a keen exhibition-goer, but the curator had to make me aware of the connections to be made when looking out of the "through-ways" of the space, as she called them.

As I have mentioned, each of the three sides hosts one version of "The Scream", but every hour, only one of those versions is visible. This is what the museum states on the website: "[A] version of *The Scream* will always be on display, either as a painting, drawing or print. The other two rests [*sic*] in the dark."[123] The visitors are, therefore, prepared that not all of the versions of "The Scream" will be visible at once. The order of appearance is not a 1-2-3, but randomized.

But let us take a closer look at a picture taken inside the space, where one version is visible: mounted to the wall, one finds a kind of screen which hosts the "blinds" hiding or releasing the artwork, which is, itself inserted into the wall behind the blinds, in an alcove. All this happens in middle height, and with the railings in front of this "screen", it reminds of the view one has *into* a window of a house. In a historical overview of windows and glass, in her book *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*, Anne Friedberg mentions that the glass served as a separation between the private and the public space: "Glass was a material featured both transparency and protection,

121 Kuhlemann-Falck mentions that they have five exhibition spaces for the permanent collection, the others are shifting regularly; Ute Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
122 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
123 "Where Can I See the Scream?" Munchmuseet, accessed 18 November 2022, https://www.munchmuseet.no/en/The-Scream/where-can-i-see-the-scream/.

could keep the outside out and at the same time bring it in."[124] "The Scream(s)" are indeed all protected by glass, and we watch them while inside the separated space, however, a scene staged outside is the motif. Friedberg concludes the discussion of the window panes with the following: "Its transparency enforced a two-way model of visuality: by framing a private view outward – the 'picture' window – and by framing a public view inward – the 'display' window."[125] I want to leave one question open for now: With what kind of view are we confronted here?

Figure 10: Munch Museum, Oslo. "Scream"-room. One closed and one open display window. 2023. Photographed by the author.

It is a unique experience the visitor encounters when entering this room. Prepared to see the iconic artwork, he or she will be surprised by what version is on display at the time of walking in (Fig. 10). I was in the room now several times, sometimes seeing people being puzzled about not having all the versions on display simultaneously, I saw them making bets which version would appear next, some left the room when it was not the version they were interested in. Closer to the full hour, the room usually gets more crowded with people awaiting the artwork on display to change. When that happens, the blinds, or more "sliding doors", begin to close slowly and silently. The next version coming up does the opposite; its doors open slowly to uncover the artwork which was hidden before.

After following this process a couple of times, I realized that the whole movement seems to be inspired by elevator doors opening and closing. Moreover, they usually open in a vertical direction, not horizontally. Overall, this fits the museum's progressive architecture, since it is to be discovered moving around on countless escalators leading up to the exhibition floors in this architecture's vertical concept. The artworks by Munch, which the museum holds in its collection, lie more than a century apart from the new building, but even the concepts of the interior architecture are closely interwoven with the art, and are quite experimental, as also Munch was said to be.

124 Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006): 113.
125 Friedberg, 113.

Figure 11: Munch Museum, Oslo. "Scream"-room. Reproductions and captions. 2023. Photographed by the author.

During the hourly display of one version, information about the artworks and photographic reproductions are provided on the one wall of the space where no original "Scream" can be found. It is basic information and relatively small reproductions which can be consulted by the visitor. These enable the visitor to have a glimpse at the other versions, which originals "are hidden in darkness". Next to the "windows" or "cabinets", housing the original artworks, no labels or captions can be found, and no text is located there (Fig. 11). The curator explains: "[S]ometimes a lot of people stand in the room and then we didn't want that everybody congregates around the labels but rather should look at the work." The reproductions serve the function of giving "a sense that *there are three works*", too.[126]

Sure, this limited display is met with disappointment as well. Although, one has to understand the reasons behind this chosen form of display: out of conservatory reasons, the artworks cannot be on display continuously since they are sensitive to light, and due to the material – cardboard or paper – they have to be particularly protected from any impacts that could affect the

126 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.

pigments or the base.[127] However, is it only this concern that brought the museum to design a display this "spectacular"?

Another factor to consider is the museum's obligation as an institution to give the artwork a stage, displaying it (this does not mean displaying it continuously). Therefore, its content and prominence in art history play a role here. This is something not only the Munch Museum has to cope with, as the presentation of famous original artworks brings challenges to most museums. Recently, several attacks by climate activists threatened museums, and Oslo was no exception: On 11 November 2022, climate activists tried to stick their hands to the frame of "The Scream" in the National Museum, Oslo, but were stopped by a guard.[128]

What can be seen in the painting "The Scream"? What makes it so special? Already here, I am relying on reproductions – of course, I could write this description when I am inside the separate space in the museum, but there is nothing to sit on. I rely on the reproductions provided on the museum's website since I would believe that these come closest to the original in their possession. Both painted versions, the one from 1893 in the National Museum, and the 1910? version in the Munch Museum, are tempera and oil on cardboard. Their material is one of the reasons why the paintings are so sensitive to handle: a canvas would provide a better base layer, and the cardboard makes the paint crack easier. Also, Munch did not use the best quality of paints, as the museum states on its website to justify the limited display of the painted version.[129]

The painting shows a bald figure in the foreground, a figure with an open mouth, screaming (or aiming to scream), with the hands on its ears. While standing on a bridge or pier, the figure is wearing a nightgown only, while other depicted people in the background are taking a stroll fully dressed, as recognizable through the hat. Behind the bridge or promenade, occupying a great portion of the composition, the landscape of a fjord is possibly shown, with tiny recognizable boats and a red-orange sky, which could indicate dawn or sunset, but eventually a shifting of the light

127 See "Where Can I See the Scream?" Munchmuseet, accessed 18 November 2022: "Munch created all versions of *The Scream* on cardboard or paper, making them more fragile than oil paintings on canvas. In addition to climatic factors such as temperature, humidity and oxygen levels, light exposure must be limited. Light affects the colour pigments in the pictures, and also breaks down paper and cardboard over time. In recent years, the museum has conducted several research projects to establish how much light the various versions of *The Scream* can withstand each day. None of them can be exhibited all the time, so the pictures in this room are displayed on rotation. By doing this, we can ensure that future generations can enjoy and marvel at Munch's powerful motif."

128 Espen Alnes et al., "Miljøaktivister prøvde å lime seg fast i 'Skrik' - sikta for grovt skadeverk," *NRK online*, last modified 14 November 2022, https://www.nrk.no/kultur/miljoaktivistar-provde-a-lime-seg-fast-i-_skrik_-1.16176052. Nothing happened to the artwork or its frame, and the group gained publicity through a video taken and the media coverage. The prominent original artwork served as a target for attacks directed at governments and economic players in the globalized world. In Norway, the attack was a protest against the country's oil drilling politics.

129 "Researchers Have Found Out Why The Scream is Fading," Munchmuseet, accessed 20 November 2022, https://www.munchmuseet.no/en/about/conservation/researchers-have-found-out-why-the-scream-is-fading/.

(most likely sunset, because of the intense red tones). In my description here, I do not aim to provide an interpretation, as I am only referring to what I see in the painting, so I will leave open who that figure is or could be or a discussion of its emotional state.

In the canon of art history today, Edvard Munch is one of the most important artists attributed to Expressionism. The style of those painters – van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin – is often said to be experimental and rebellious since the pace of new forms and discoveries in art was quickening. Expressionists, therefore, experimented with a style moving away from "conventional likeness".[130] Already van Gogh mentioned a caricaturist style in speaking about his art, in accumulating his paintings with expressions of feelings. The art historian E. H. Gombrich writes on this matter: "It is the sober truth that our feelings about things do colour the way in which we see them and, even more, the forms which we remember. Everyone must have experienced how different the same place may look when we are happy and when we are sad."[131] About "The Scream", he notes:

> "It aims at expressing how a sudden excitement transforms all our sense impressions. All the lines seem to lead towards the one focus of the print – the shouting head. It looks as if all the scenery shared in the anguish and excitement of that scream. The face of the shouting person is indeed distorted like that of a caricature."[132]

This sense of caricaturist style may lead to the fact that the painting generates a lot of visitors and popular interest. It has something undecipherable, secretive. Another point which seems quite modern, which can be claimed by the Expressionist movement, is the display of ugliness as a way of expressing feelings and existential truth, the "real life".[133]

Seeing the versions of "The Scream" in "real life" entails learning about their size. The one in the National Museum is 73.5 to 91 centimeters, the Munch Museum's "Scream" measures 66 to 83.5. The former came to the museum as a gift. The Munch Museum collection today includes the artworks given to Oslo municipality by the artist (according to his will).

The whole process of the move from the previous location of the Munch Museum in Tøyen to the new building is well documented on the website and by the show *Vi flytter Munch (We move/ relocate Munch)*, which was produced by the Norwegian Broadcast Corporation NRK in 2021. Especially the design process of the "Scream"-room is interesting in that matter. Factors like that it could turn into a "circus" inside the room, too many people tightly together, and the final placement

130 Gombrich, 435-436.
131 Gombrich, 436.
132 Gombrich, 437. He discusses one of the print versions, the lithograph shows those lines even more distinct in the direction towards the screaming figure.
133 Gombrich, 437.

of the versions inside the alcoves are shown.[134] This brings me to another point in the discussion of the artworks' display: contrary to museums' attempts to reach new or more audience[135], which means that through temporary exhibitions, the popularity and appeal of an exhibition and its works have still to be generated, a desire in the visitors to see the exhibition has to be established; museum professionals have to find a *middle ground* to show famous artworks. These already attract the crowds, and controlling access and a satisfying presentation for everybody is more the issue.

As I have mentioned before, the formats of the motive are rather small. To see details, one must come very close, which is not easily possible inside "The Scream"-room. Additionally, when there are many visitors, it is sometimes hard to see the artworks. I assume that the railings shaping distance to the artworks were established to not only provide distance to the original[136] but also to make it easier for people to see while standing further in the back. Moreover, in the case one has to wait to get a glimpse at the originals, there are always their reproductions waiting on one side of the room.

From this very experimental form of display in the Munch Museum – where the process of establishing innovative architectural concepts and display solutions had its early start already with the erection of the former museum, I want to now move on to a museum with a history of more than a century, which presented and still presents its one version of "The Scream", a painting, in a different way.

2.3 The Scream in the National Museum, Oslo

As can be read on the National Museum's website, "in the new National Museum we continue the National Gallery's tradition of dedicating an entire room to his work (Room 60)."[137] The room can be seen in the statement's supporting image: interesting is the placement of the museum's version of "The Scream" - it is not placed in the center of the wall. It seems more that the shape and size of the paintings and frames were the leading design theme in presenting Munch's work, with the "Madonna" and "The Scream" sitting to the sides of the dancing ensemble (Fig. 12). In juxtaposing

134 *Vi Flytter Munch,* directed by Hilde Skofteland, aired December 2021-February 2022, eight-part television series, NRK1, https://tv.nrk.no/serie/vi-flytter-munch. "The Scream"-room appears mainly in the 3rd episode, further developments in the 4th and 8th.

135 As well as to hold the existing audience close. Audience development concentrates on these issues.

136 This construction can be seen at the "Mona Lisa" in the Louvre, too, but the crowds have to keep an even greater distance. See the museum's website, "From the 'Mona Lisa' to 'The Wedding Feast at Cana'," Louvre, accessed 8 April 2023, https://www.louvre.fr/en/explore/the-palace/from-the-mona-lisa-to-the-wedding-feast-at-cana.

137 "The Collection exhibition," National Museum, accessed 25 January 2023, https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/exhibitions-and-events/national-museum/exhibitions/2021/collection-exhibition/the_collection_presentation/.

all these works, the museum sets a strong example that the artist's oeuvre is not only to be focused on the one or two works everybody knows. Furthermore, it was presented in a likely manner in the former National Gallery.

Figure 12: National Museum, Oslo. Room 60. 2023. Photographed by the author.

Also in the National Museum (when thinking about the presentation in the Munch Museum), the artworks are placed in a room with dark backgrounds, with the surrounding walls dipped into dark black and blue color. A dramatic mood is evoked, but unlike the one in the Munch Museum. The ambiance is different because of the openness and size of the room. Even inviting to spend more time in there, some benches can be found to pause a little. A spot to dwell while being in a room with one such important and famous artwork might surprise when compared to the Munch Museum's presentation. In the National Museum, it might be possible because the prominence of "The Scream" is already shared with the Munch Museum, and the visitors not only come for that single work (as they might also not only do in the other, before-mentioned museum). Contributory to the atmosphere in the room is a seemingly unconstrained presentation of one of art history's most famous works – besides a sign and directions on how to get there, it is not highlighted throughout the museum. Compared to the presentation of the other versions, this presentation is not that spectacular, but classical.

The National Museum owns almost 60 paintings and a great amount of graphical works by Munch. The institution, with the first public collection of works by Munch, houses artworks which "represent a broad, yet highly significant spectrum of Munch's artistic career (1881-1920) and can

be described as the 'crown jewels' of the museum."[138] Exhibiting the artist's artworks since 1909, the institution dedicated Munch's works their own room already in 1924 (the artist was still alive!). In 1937, a new Munch-room came in its place, and this latter one can be seen as the model room for the exhibition in the National Museum today. As the curators explain, the idea of "The Frieze of Life" is central to this room.[139]

Figure 13: National Gallery, Oslo. "Kvadratsalen". Between 1919 and 1924. Courtesy of Nasjonalgalleriet.

Figure 14: National Gallery, Oslo. "De Unges Sal", Munch-wall. Around 1912. Courtesy of Nasjonalgalleriet.

The display in the former National Gallery is well documented by photographs. I want to briefly introduce some of the display concepts until the museum closed in 2019. An important name here is Jens Thiis (1870-1942). From 1909-38 many new paintings by Munch were acquired under his leadership since he was the director of the National Gallery from 1908.[140] In the so-called "Kradvatsalen" ("The Square Room", Fig. 13), a whole wall was dedicated to Munch, established by Thiis. He was acquainted with Munch and reorganized the permanent collection, letting Munch know in a letter: "You will have the best and finest wall all to yourself."[141] Therefore, Munch got his own wall in "De Unges Sal" ("Young Painters Hall", Fig. 14); a photograph shows how dense the paintings were mounted in 1912 – as Guleng mentions, frame against frame.[142] There were thoughts

138 Thierry-Olivier Ford, *Revisiting the Surface, Edvard Munch and varnishes. A group case study and non-invasive approach to conservation decision-making for painting collections*, PhD-Thesis (Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo, 2022): 1.

139 Mai Britt Guleng, Øystein Ustvedt, Wenche Volle, and Vibeke Waallann Hansen, *Mot ett nytt museum: Munch i det nye Nasjonalmuseet*, Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo. Video, 60min., streamed live 28 October 2021, 17:30-18:30, https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/utstillinger-og-arrangementer/andre-steder/arrangementer/2021/10/mot-et-nytt-museum-munch-i-det-nye-nasjonalmuseet/, 39'0"'.

140 Mai Britt Guleng, ibid., 25'35".

141 Thiis, cited in Nils Messel, "Edvard Munch and the National Gallery," in *Edvard Munch in the National Museum. A comprehensive overview,* eds. Øystein Ustvedt, Marianne Yvenes (Oslo: Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design, 2022): 10.

142 Mai Britt Guleng, *Mot ett nytt museum: Munch i det nye Nasjonalmuseet*, Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo. Video, 60min., streamed live 28 October 2021, 17:30-18:30, 27'30".

to give Munch his own room already early on (but there was neither enough space in the museum nor financial support), and only in 1924 (Fig. 15) was this finally possible.[143]

Figure 15: National Gallery, Oslo. First Munch-room from 1924. Photographed after 1932. Courtesy of Olaf Peder Væring/ Nasjonalmuseet.

Figure 16: National Gallery, Oslo. Munch-room after 1936. Courtesy of Olaf Peder Væring/ Nasjonalmuseet.

A Munch solo exhibition in Berlin's National Gallery in 1927 (according to Messel, Munch's fame had grown in the years after World War I) was the first impact for an exhibition on a temporary basis in the National Gallery: An exhibition of this kind was, as Messel writes in the National Museum's collection catalog, quite unusual for the institution. The part of the permanent collection situated on the first floor of the museum was taken out to make space for the Munch-show, which was very successful.[144] Stimulated by this success were first thoughts about a place, dedicated only to his artworks: "The exhibition of 1927 prompted a debate about improving the facilities for showing Munch's art. Soon, the idea that he should have a museum of his own […] was doing rounds."[145] As Messel continues, this was a wish the Norwegian artist had, too, since he wanted his pictures series, the "Frieze of Life", to have a permanent space.[146]

That some of these ideas were realized decades later, is well known. The collection of the National Gallery was growing, especially with works by Munch. Hence, from 1937 on, 18-20 of Munch's paintings were shown in the "Munch-room" (which was more like a hall and top-lit, Fig. 16) on the second floor of the National Gallery, on 162m^2, until the gallery closed for relocation in 2019.[147] This was an even bigger room for Munch's works then before, and the new location and

143 Messel, 13. He further writes, "At that time, the National Gallery was virtually the only national art museum worldwide to devote an entire room of its permanent collection to a living artist." Ibid.
144 Messel, 14-15.
145 Messel, 16.
146 Messel, 16.
147 Ford, 6.

presentation were also marked by a change in display.[148] They were to be looked at lined up from the bottom of the frames, with equal space between them.

The artworks shown by the National Gallery were experienced as a distinct group and collective presentation by the public. This was to a large extent a consequence of the funding director and his particular presentation of the works, often made possible by generous donations that were given to the museum, such as "The Scream". And too, "[n]o other artist has been treated with a similar level of attentiveness and interest by the nation's own museum."[149] As Mattias Ekman states, the presentation of the artworks in the National Gallery (in general) represented a "canonized Norwegian art history", and their spatial organization in the exhibition halls formed a cultural history and memory of these most important pieces of the collection, on continual display.[150] A reason for the new Munch-room in the National Museum to build upon this former presentation.

Another important influence in theme and hanging, that translates the past and context of some of Munch's works, are the picture series. I will mention more about this later. What is substantial here is that the design of the room where one picture series was shown, in Berlin in 1902, was reconstructed for an anniversary exhibition by both the National Gallery and the Munch Museum in 2013. This design was, again, picked up for the planning of the new Munch-room in the National Museum. The works in the 1902 "Frieze of Life"-exhibition, presented by Munch, were arranged in a frieze and with white canvas as a backdrop. In 2013, the year which marked Munch's 150th anniversary (he was born in 1863), both the National Museum and the Munch Museum carried out big exhibitions, where a great number of works, for example, parts of the "Frieze of Life" series, were shown together for the first time in many years (Fig. 17). Even some reproductions were (or, rather, had to be) included to make the series tangible for the public. How the people working in the museums had evaluated these reproductions, is analyzed in an article by Iranowska. For the exhibition, it was not possible to get a loan for all the paintings that had to be integrated into the visual narrative; five colored reproductions were made to be displayed in the exhibition.[151] Essential for the inclusion of reproductions was to provide the visiting public with the experience of viewing the exhibition as it was back at the time Munch displayed it. Described as a big chance to

148 Messel, 19. The paintings finally got more space – there are gaps in between them and they are not mounted in two rows anymore, above each other, or as ensembles closely together.

149 Messel, 7.

150 Mattias Ekman, "Architecture for the Nation's Memory: History, Art, and the Halls of Norway's National Gallery," in *Museum Making. Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions,* eds. Suzanne MacLeod, Laura Hourston Hanks and Jonathan Hale (London and New York: Routledge, 2012): 153.

151 Joanna Iranowska, "What is a 'Good' Copy of Edvard Munch's Painting? Painting Reproductions on Display," Culture Unbound 9, no. 1 (2017): 44. Guleng mentions in the interview I had with her, that also the carpenter was already done with the constructions for the gallery room, one more reason why the empty spots had to be filled with the works: Mai Britt Guleng (curator of the National Museum), interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

exhibit the famous artworks in this original manner, works like "The Scream" were even taken out of their gilded frames[152], which makes even more clear, how exceptional the exhibition was.

Figure 17: National Gallery, Oslo. Munch 150-exhibition. Reconstruction of "Frieze of Life" in the Munch-room. 2013. Courtesy of Nasjonalgalleriet.

This reconstructed exhibition of the "Frieze" shows similarities in the formal arrangement and mounting of the artworks today. The presentation in the National Museum abstains from the white canvas where the artworks had been mounted originally, presumably as a matter of unifying the design with the other exhibition rooms on this floor. In 2013, as mentioned, the artworks were shown without their frames, in a construction which was made specifically for the anniversary exhibition. What was kept of this presentation is more or less the sequence and gaps, the rhythm of works in different sizes and the concentration to place the works in a frieze-like manner, yet placed further down to allow the visitor to see them at the eye level.

What are these works now surrounding "The Scream"? The Munch-room displays famous works by the artist in the collection, but as mentioned, it gives suggestions for a narrated sequence. It starts, on the left-hand side, with the "Sick Child" and ends with the painting of the sick artist, when going around the room clockwise. Central is the wall opposite the entrance, where works from the "Frieze of Life" are displayed, among them "The Scream". "Frieze of Life" and its "mini-version", which can be seen in the National Museum, are "a kind of mini-story about the transgressions of the human being in relationship with … in love affairs"[153], as the curator tells me.

Furthermore, thanks to Munch's idiosyncrasy, there is not only one "Scream", but many. As

152 Iranowska, 48.
153 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

part of his series "Frieze of Life", Munch painted more than one "Scream" since he had to replace the first one, which was sold, to keep the narrative in the series intact. The paintings and the story, as well as the number of pictures shown, were not always the same in this series, but some themes were emphasized by the artist. As Guleng states, "Munch's picture series have some familiar similarities in themes, motifs, the depiction of the figures, rendition of time and space, sequence of events and atmosphere", yet "did not represent a fixed theme or purpose, but that meaning arises in the viewing."[154]

"The Scream" must have been important for the artist, and he was most likely quite satisfied with the first painting. A few changes in his later version can be made out, which are very visible when comparing details of the individual artworks.[155] The motif was developed through sketches and even in writing. Both painted versions of "The Scream" and the lithograph are well known, especially from the 1950s on, and Munch's works got popular outside of Europe after several exhibitions in the USA, with the first one dating from 1952. The National Museum's version, only seldom to be loaned, was part of an exhibition in Washington, D. C. in 1978, too.[156] Munch's artworks were being continuously reproduced in books, and throughout the following years, "The Scream" got more attention and began to stand out in Munch's oeuvre – exaggerating its position in 2006, when "The Scream" was at the center of the publication for the Munch-show of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, without any of the paintings being on display there.[157] As a result of this canonization, its embedding in a bigger narration – like the "Frieze of Life", is often forgotten and might be considered subordinate in its singularity of depiction, of this sheer impossible, very unusual motif for the time it was executed.

With the National Gallery's merging into the National Museum and the new construction of the museum's building, came the challenge of how to show "The Scream" to the public. The artwork's key position in art history is, once more, expressed by the text on the website of the museum: "In terms of its fame, this painting now rivals works such as Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (1503) and Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (1888). Few artworks have inspired filmmakers, cartoonists and other artists to the extent that *The Scream* has done."[158] The new presentation and display of the

154 Mai Britt Guleng, "Narratives of The Frieze of Life. Edvard Munch's Picture Series," in *Edvard Munch: 1863-1944 (Exhibition catalog Munch 150),* eds. Mai Britt Guleng, Birgitte Sauge and Jon-Ove Steihaug (Milano: Skira Nasjonalmuseet and Munchmuseet, 2013): 138.

155 Biljana Topalova-Casadiego, "The Two Painted Versions of Scream. An Attempt at a Comparison based on Technical Painting Characteristics," in *The Scream: Munch Museum,* edited by Ingeborg Ydstie (Oslo/Bergen: Munch-Museum/Vigmostad & Bjørke AS, 2008): 87-99.

156 Bjerke, 14.

157 Bjerke, 15.

158 "Edvard Munch and 'The Scream' in the National Museum," National Museum, accessed 24 October 2022, https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/stories/explore-the-collection/edvard-munch-and-the-scream-in-the-national-museum/.

Munch-room had to fulfill some demands, and the whole exhibition design in the museum was made with the company Guicciardini & Magni Architetti, which won the competition; a well-established firm for exhibition architecture for the big project. The staff in the museum worked closely together with the exhibition architects, to form "spatial narratives", and, as can be read in the catalog documenting the process, to tie the experience together and to "create[s] a spatial and visual framework for the audience in the encounter with the works and takes care of our diverse audience through specifically designed elements."[159]

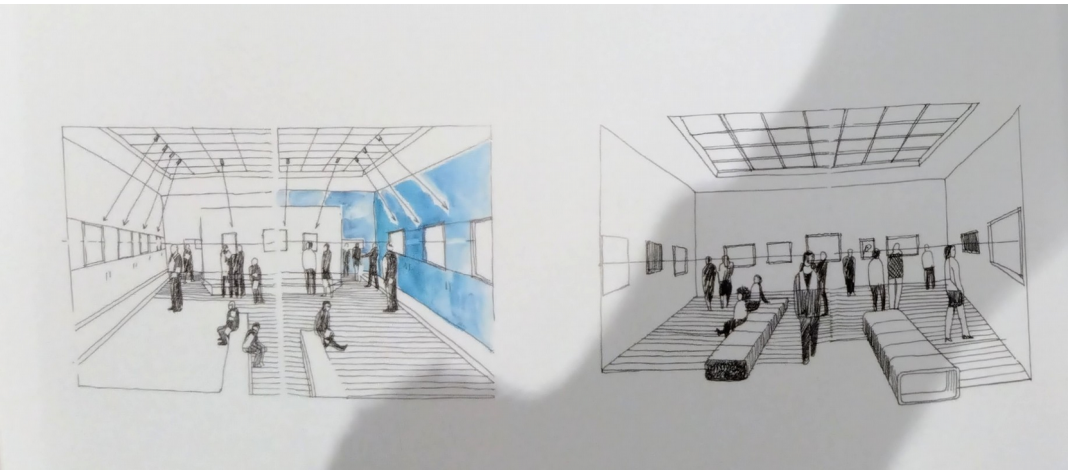

Figure 18: Guicciardini & Magni Architetti. Sketches for the Munch-room in the National Museum, Oslo. Courtesy of Guicciardini & Magni Architetti.

Therefore, it was central for the developing teams not to focus on one specific work in the design of the display, but rather to view it as a kind of ensemble. Of course, in the case of "The Scream", a few factors had to be taken into consideration, which will be explained in the next chapter. Overall, a certain harmony and balance were key to the Munch-room, housing the most famous work of the artist: Nothing should stand out too much, and this is emphasized in the description of the Munch-room: "Even the glory of Norwegian art, Edvard Munch himself, […] to whom a simple room is reserved, is included in the narrative development with his debut works, without any discernible celebratory emphasis."[160] Design proposals by the architects visualize how the idea of a free-standing wall was given up in favor of a classic orientation towards the exhibition room walls in a frieze-like manner (Fig. 18). A little detail on the right sketch reveals that it was quite clear which of the paintings would be "The Scream" since a figure's head is indicated for one of the blank frames, the second one to the right of the front wall.

159 Mai Britt Guleng, "A Collection and its Stories," in *Guicciardini & Magni Architetti. Exhibition Design National Museum, Oslo,* eds. Claudia Conforti, Karin Hindsbo, Mai Britt Guleng. (Milan: Electa Spa, 2022): 13.

160 Claudia Conforti, "The Songlines," in *Guicciardini & Magni Architetti. Exhibition Design National Museum, Oslo,* eds. Claudia Conforti, Karin Hindsbo, Mai Britt Guleng (Milan: Electa Spa, 2022): 17.

3. Framing and staging the original – guiding factors for the presentation

In the previous chapters, I explained the aim and focus of this thesis. Further, I gave an introduction to the field by speaking about the differences between originals and reproductions and the different positions of scholars. In hindsight, these positions are sometimes reflected by the displays of artworks, which was the reason to present the previous displays of "The Scream(s)" together with the current displays and to show how new ideas were cultivated. This chapter will be oriented on thoughts I had about the presentation of the artworks, in connection with literature and insights I have gained from the interviews. In the beginning, the theoretical concepts will be explored, something that allows to dream about how to exhibit without constraints, but I will finally concentrate on the most important factors to be compromised in displaying "The Scream(s)" in the new museums.

3.1 Theoretical possibilities

In my interviews, I started with the question about the curator's first thoughts, plans and ideas regarding the presentation of "The Scream" in a new building, where they could start "from scratch". They worked in teams, and many concepts and plans were proposed; some had workshops and worked closely together with interior- and graphic designers or architectural firms. Some aspects to consider were practical matters, which will be explained below. One concern that was particularly emphasized, by both curators, was that "The Scream" and the new presentation could contribute to increasing its iconic status.

This last point is an ongoing concern among scholars and curators in general. One has to just think about how the status and the way we look at something changes when it is presented as neatly framed or preserved in a decorative display. Also, the viewer's focus is led and channeled. What is eventually contradicted in a concern around the issue of "iconizing" an artwork even more is the expressed status and value – the display's "framing" and the artwork as a "raw" material, which it, of course, never is. That it can never be seen as "raw" is what I learned through the interviews with the curators of both museums. What is always transported to a new form of display, materially, is the artwork's frame (its literal frame), and to take the painting and its frame apart, is a challenge that both museums will be faced with in the time to come. For example, some of the National Museum's

paintings by Munch are still shown in their gilded frames, sometimes taking up more space than the artwork itself. Some museums with historical collections are considering or already displaying their artworks in less-distracting frames, and according to the curators of both the National Museum and the Munch Museum, this will be a task for them in the next years. Another aspect they face, especially for the National Museum, is the frames' values as cultural and historical artifacts themselves. This is of less concern for the Munch Museum, as most of its collection came directly from Munch's atelier and was not framed at all.[161]

To make another point clear here (the network of the institution as well as its visitors) means I have to go back in time quite a bit, to cabinets of curiosities or the *Wunderkammer*. These precursors of museums today existed in Europe from the 16th to the 18th century, and due to "a lack of rational classification" at first, they were "just full of wonder."[162] With the epistemological shift in their times of establishment, the Enlightenment and scientific exploration to come, these conglomerates of objects and things by the cultural elite, served as one of the first platforms of knowledge transfer. As Nelson writes, these cabinets "were sites for collecting and generating object-centred knowledge in the early days of empiricism, but they were equally dependent on text-based ways of knowing and disseminating knowledge."[163] Furthermore, nature was deeply linked with the art in these cabinets, which means natural objects and artificially created things were sitting side by side. Additionally, cabinets of curiosity "embraced the notion that the world exists to be containable in one room or cabinet."[164]

Let us pause a little and think about what this means for the art museum and the aura of the artworks we can possibly find there. On the one hand, we have the aesthetic experience an artwork provides, triggered, let us say, by its aura. The artwork can make us curious as well, about what we can see on it, in what it depicts. However, when experiencing this, we are at the same time relying on the knowledge we already have or gain about the art, which not only shapes our excitement about it, but also extends our interest in it. And in the art museum, we can have a look at the labels and captions, clarifying what we wonder about, and giving us information.

This thinking, of course, stems from our modern understanding of (art) museums. Deriving from the *Wunderkammer*, museums were established, and with them, a particular form of display. Just remember the illustrations in the previous chapter, depicting the National Museum in Oslo in its early days. Museums became accessible to the public, and the artworks were grouped in rooms,

161 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.
162 James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium,* Revised edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009): 8.
163 Brent Nelson, "The Museum as Knowledge Environment," *Scholarly and Research Communication* 6, no. 3 (2015): 1.
164 Putnam, 10-11.

classified, labeled; possibilities to rest in the gallery rooms were provided. Charlotte Klonk makes the case here with the national galleries, which became established throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, appearing in very "distinctive" ways, becoming quite uniform in their appearance.[165] A "minimum of surrounding distractions"[166] is another example of what became prevalent during the 19th century. So, in Europe, there was more or less an agreement on how to display artworks; there might have been a few exceptions.

With the opening for the public, a democratization of access to artworks – and knowledge – was beginning. Museums today go even a bit further. The object, in most cases, is still the starting point, but it is often embedded in a much bigger context and already "prepared" for the visitor. Another important aspect of art and its presentation is especially the fact of a certain blurring of "boundaries between 'mass culture and high culture'"[167] as Putnam claims for the mid of the 20th century, which endangered art "of losing its 'true' value, becoming a mere commodity or decoration, accumulated in museums without offering critical reflection."[168] Furthermore, the museum as a business on top of its function as a cultural institution, as exemplified by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, led to a focus on art and knowledge about it – on "production", as well as its "distribution", which entails not only the exhibition itself but everything around it.[169]

This last point is more timely than ever, and countless examples could serve as reference points to how art museums try to reach the audience in new and sometimes questionable ways. Also Putnam states that a form of spectacle often serves art museums well and even puts their research efforts and "original mission" of provision of knowledge into the background.[170]

3.2 Solutions in practice

The tasks and ambitions of museums are manifold in our times, and how they generate interest in visitors, too. A national museum, by collecting, researching and conditioning a nation's art and art collection, might have different duties and solutions than an artist's museum like the one for Munch, even though it was initiated by the municipality of Oslo. These distinctions between the museums are visible and will be taken into account. What follows in this next part of the chapter – solutions for the new museum buildings and interiors in practice – are detailed reflections and a

165 Klonk, 42-43.
166 Klonk, 49.
167 Putnam, 26-27.
168 Putnam, 26-27.
169 Putnam, 28.
170 Putnam, 184.

description of the reasons which resulted in the displays of "The Scream(s)" we are seeing today. The literature and interviews about these solutions allowed me to group the motives why the displays were made in these ways into three themes: security and conservatory reasons, accessibility and design, and lastly, context and thematic embedding.

3.2.1 Security and conservatory reasons

"Why Steal a Masterpiece?" - the title of this article by Martin Bailey already points to the impossibility of this endeavor, and yet, shortly written after "The Scream" and "Madonna" were stolen from the Munch Museum in 2004, the author suggests some probable motives. According to Bailey, thefts of art icons are rare, but there have been several "major losses" in that time. He ascribes masterpieces, besides other stolen art, a certain problem: "They cannot be sold anywhere, since no auction house or dealer would touch them, so they have no open-market value. There is little a villain can do with their stolen world-famous Munch or Monet."[171]

The motives listed in the article revolve around art stolen to order, to receive a ransom or reward, to be used as an underworld currency or to make political demands. Regarding the theft in the Munch Museum, Bailey speaks about "trophy crime". "*The scream* is an iconic image and the decision to take another version of the painting seized ten years ago helped to ensure that the recent crime received international attention."[172] He points to the fact that the theft in 1994 in the National Gallery happened during the Winter Olympics and the later one in the Munch Museum while there were the Athens games.[173]

The theft of the artworks resulted in broad coverage in news media all over the world. As Runhovde summarizes, "severe deficiencies in the security around the exhibited artworks" were exposed in both cases.[174] Further mentioned in her article is the fact that the two described thefts were not the first or only ones. In conducting interviews with museum staff – conservators, curators and security personnel, she was able to underscore that the museum's "inadequate or absent situational security measures have made the art a suitable target" and provided "increased opportunity" for it to be stolen.[175]

171 Martin Bailey, "Why Steal a Masterpiece?" *Apollo* 160, no. 512 (2004): 44.
172 Bailey, 46.
173 Bailey, 46.
174 Siv Rebekka Runhovde, "Risking Munch. The art of balancing accessibility and security in museums," *Journal of Risk Research* 24, no. 9 (2021): 1113. She mentions the note which was left by the thieves, saying "Thanks for the poor security," ibid., 1119.
175 Runhovde, 1123.

Making the artwork accessible to the visitors of the museum but at the same time protecting it (not only from theft or vandalism) is key, but as Runhovde further writes, it is also a question of how museums, then, display their artworks in the galleries.[176] It is essential how the visitors are meant to move through the museum, and in the former Munch Museum's case, it was developed on a "single-floor arrangement", where "visitors have to enter and leave by the same door", and that also served as a way of saving costs on too many guards.[177] In continuing to provide an artwork for the public to see, security upgrades were necessary over the decades the museums served their visitors – but due to poor security management, especially the Munch Museum had to learn to upgrade the security through various occurrences. Already 1988, "Vampire" was stolen, with the thieves later confessing to having attempted to take "The Scream" (but broke the wrong window). Only in 1991, the security was upgraded, due to a donation from a Japanese oil company, while the museum's director had asked politicians for money to upgrade for years.[178]

In August 2004, the artworks in the Munch Museum were still displayed in more or less the same ways as described earlier, with screen walls in the open exhibition halls. A single barrier was installed to enter the museum with a valid ticket.[179] The theft of "The Scream" and "Madonna" is described as "dramatic" since it involved armed intruders and the thieves' getaways in bright daylight.[180] Measures after this incident in the Munch Museum, were sliding doors and a form of "airport security", as Runhovde's informants described it.[181] The measures in the new museum have been literally translated to the building of the Munch Museum since the entrance, including the security check and escalator ways, remind many people of airports. Hence, much has been done to improve security, and even more in the new buildings.

Both museums have visible and invisible security measures when it comes to the presentation of the artworks, the displays of "The Scream". In the Munch Museum, one can find physical barriers in the form of railings, even though the artworks are behind safety glass. However, as the curator in the museum stresses, they need the one-meter distance from the artworks. Additionally, always just one of the "windows" is open, and a guard is placed inside the room. The physical barriers are not just to protect the artworks but are a security measure for visitors too, to avoid them "getting into the mechanism" of the closing window (Fig. 19). The curators and conservators are, in general, concerned that something could happen when a lot of people are inside

176 Runhovde 1114-1115.
177 Langaard, 4.
178 Runhovde, 1118.
179 Nerdrum, 236.
180 Nerdrum, 239.
181 Runhovde, 1121-1122.

the room, or if somebody is taking a selfie in front of the artworks and is moving backwards. The museum does not place railings in front of artworks in the rest of the exhibition rooms, besides “The Scream” and the works in the “Monumental”-room on the sixth floor, where they have similar railings in front of the works, which are of huge size.[182]

Figure 19: Munch Museum, Oslo. Display of "The Scream", closed. 2023. Photographed by the author.

The situation in the National Museum looks quite different, but they are not less concerned about the security of their artworks on display. They never intended to have a physical barrier in the Munch-rooms (or the other rooms). So, they chose to integrate a more intuitive system for the visitors to keep their distance from the artworks, in the form of copper lines activating an acoustic alarm. Although this solution gives the visitor the feeling of being closer to the artwork, the results could be heard in the recording I made during my interview – many beeping sounds, since some people did not realize where to stop while getting closer or standing in front of the artworks. According to the curator, extra invisible security triggers silent alarms only the guards can hear. Moreover, the security management of the museum is consistently evaluating security and taking into account when to expect a lot of visitors.[183]

On top of the audible signals for protecting the artworks, security cameras are usually installed in the museums to have a control over the situation. Another measure for security, as told by Runhovde, is that today, the most valuable art in the National Museum is placed “furthest into

182 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
183 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

the room and away from the staircases"[184], which indicates why they chose the specific layout for the Munch-rooms, with the ante-chamber and the church-like entrance, to enter the room through one entrance opening only, as the curator of the National Museum tells me.

The theft of important artworks like the different versions of "The Scream" has not only left the public puzzled, because it was done that easily. The fear of the public and the museum professionals, was not only not getting the artworks back or finding them again, it was also a worry that damages could have happened during the theft and transport, but also while the stolen artworks were stored and hidden somewhere. Fortunately, the theft in the National Gallery in 1994 and the one in the Munch Museum in 2004 resulted in a return of the artworks back to the institutions. However, the condition of the artworks was critical (even before, because of their sensitive material) – especially "The Scream" in the Munch Museum was threatened of being damaged.

The threat to damages was, however, not only external – by theft or vandalism, it was also internal, since the deterioration of the Munch Museum building was visible already in 1988, as Runhovde cites from a newspaper article.[185] And interestingly, it began even before the museum was erected. Munch left his artworks to the city of Oslo, and after his death, artworks remained in his winter studio in Ekely, Oslo; among them, the Munch Museum's version of "The Scream".[186] The institution itself – or at that time, the professionals from the municipality, checked the condition of the artwork in 1952 for the first time, according to the conservators in the before mentioned article.[187]

I want to bridge the concerns of security in the museums now with particular conservatory matters since they are connected in many ways. Important in this regard, is to remind the reader of two things that make it difficult to display Munch: First, the fact that the two paintings of "The Scream", both in the National Museum and the Munch Museum, are executed on cardboard. Second, the versions are unvarnished, and the later one, in the Munch Museum, is less covered with oil paint than the National Museum's.[188] The National Museum's version from 1893 shows an unvarnished paint surface and only locally applied "transparent layer/ surface finish", according to

184 Runhovde, 1119.
185 Runhovde, 1118.
186 Gry Landro, Biljana Topalova-Casadiego and Magdalena Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, "The Conservation of the Munch Museum's Scream. Examinations and Observtions," in *The Scream: Munch Museum,* ed. Ingeborg Ydstie (Oslo/Bergen: Munch-Museum/Vigmostad & Bjørke AS, 2008): 63.
187 Landro, Topalova-Casadiego, Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, 63.
188 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.

Ford.[189] Many of Munch's works are unvarnished,[190] although this is not a "formula" as the artist was experimenting a lot.[191]

Figure 20: Edvard Munch. "The Scream". Different layers of the version in the Munch Museum. Courtesy of Munch Museum.

"*Scream* combines elements from traditional easel painting and art on paper and is to begin with a complicated vulnerable object."[192] In describing the material of the artwork (Fig. 20), the conservators of the Munch Museum note that "the painting support is composed of cardboard, pasted onto a rigid fibre board, which in turn is glued to a wooden support frame", although the time of transferring the cardboard to the board is not known to the museum.[193] Here, they also state that the cardboard's material is of a rather common nature (it is grayish-brown and has a mat finish).[194] The painting is described as mixed media, since the conservators found tempera as well as oil; further, the coating of the paint is in parts dense and opaque, in others thinly applied to the surface.[195]

The Munch Museum's version of "The Scream" "shows natural signs of aging", yet suffered from damages; and due to the material it is executed on, it has presumably gotten darker.[196] The stain in the lower left corner, as a result of the theft in 2004, was caused by a water-based liquid and is a particular concern of the conservators in the Munch Museum, besides other areas of the painting with scratches, loss of paint or other damages.[197]

The (restoration and) conservation of an artwork like "The Scream" is a transitional process, and one that might never be finished since the artwork's material is subject to changes. Art museums are institutions tasked with taking care of the works in their collection, and further research in the institutions is conducted consistently, as both museums' publications show. Making the artworks accessible while taking the precautions and care needed to provide them to the public in the future, requires new concepts and adjustments from the light situation to accessibility.

189 Ford, 210.
190 Biljana Topalova-Casadiego, "Tekniske aspekter ved Edvard Munchs malerier," in *Edvard Munch Samlede Malerier Catalogue Raisonné*, 425-458 (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2008), cited in Ford, 12.
191 Ford, 12.
192 Landro, Topalova-Casadiego, Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, 57.
193 Landro, Topalova-Casadiego, Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, 58.
194 Landro, Topalova-Casadiego, Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, 58.
195 Landro, Topalova-Casadiego, Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, 60-61.
196 Landro, Topalova-Casadiego, Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, 65.
197 Landro, Topalova-Casadiego, Ufnalewska-Godzimirska, 65-70. Moreover, dirt appears on the surface of the artwork, especially after its return in 2006. "The degree to which the surface has been soiled is considerable and came about during the handling and storing of the painting in the course of the two years it went missing." Ibid., 70.

3.2.2 Accessibility and design

The before mentioned visible and invisible measures of security and conservation influence the design of the interior architecture and display, and therefore, how they can be experienced by the museum's visitors. Both museums embody, on the inside and outside, the fact that the impression of their architecture and the design is important to them. Due to their sizes and their formation as architectural artifacts standing out in the cityscape, they are already shaping the visitor's impression when entering. Since the museums' interiors were planned new and could be created "from scratch", of course, with limitations, the museums' teams worked on different concepts, on a compromise of security, conservation and curatorial decisions.

"We always kind of knew that we wanted to show 'The Scream' permanently and then the question is, what is 'The Scream'"[198], as curator Ute Kuhlemann Falck from the Munch Museum puts it. Since, they have two versions in color – the painting and the drawing – and two (respectively 6) lithographic versions, they were not sure which one should be on permanent display. However, they felt, tellingly, that the one executed oil on cardboard, "The Scream" from 1910?, would be the one people wanted to see, but were also thinking of the importance of showing the earliest one as well as the one people knew best during Munch's time – the lithograph. "So it was quite soon clear that we actually want to show all three."[199] They were thinking about different solutions to do this since the light exposure posed a problem. One of the earliest ideas was to rotate the works and show one version for several months and then another one, but the team saw that "this wouldn't be quite fair for people coming only once in their lifetime to Norway."[200] After a "long process", they came up with the idea of showing one of the three present works at a time, in an hourly rhythm. In general, the curators are quite satisfied with the idea, although "sometimes, it can be a bottleneck, during the tourist season, when a lot of people just want to see that, and … then it can be crowded."[201]

Both curators that I have interviewed were keen to show "The Scream" or Munch's mini-"Frieze of Life" in a special atmosphere, an atmosphere that was partly derived due to the necessary dim light situation for the sensitive works and partly to underscore the emotions transported by the paintings. Both museums use a dark tone for their background walls in the rooms where "The Scream" is displayed, contributing to this atmosphere. The curator of the Munch Museum gave a detailed description of the light situation: "I think what's very crucial here is the

198 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
199 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
200 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
201 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.

lighting – I don't know whether you notice it – you know when it closes it dims down, goes off, and also when it's opening, light comes slowly up and then when it's fully open you have the full light."[202] This is described in the wall text, and resources on the website also highlight why the versions of "The Scream" can only be shown for a limited time.[203]

The situation in the National Museum applies to the whole Munch-room, since the artwork there is not especially "highlighted" or separated, but shown in the same manner as the other paintings (the light on "The Scream" is carefully adjusted for the sensitive painting[204]). When I have asked Mai Britt Guleng, curator of the National Museum, if people are sometimes surprised to see "The Scream" this way, she replied: "They sometimes ask about it, and are worried that we don't take good enough care of it. Because the Munch Museum have been very clear, about why they have this solution. And … some people are concerned that we don't take the light sensitivity into consideration. But of course we do."[205] The curator walked me through the gallery rooms to point out the light situation in the Munch-room as well as other gallery rooms. The ceiling consists of a grid with artificial daylight panels behind it. In the Munch-room, this artificial daylight is turned off since the artworks are sensitive to light, whereas in other exhibition rooms, such as one of those showing landscapes by Norwegian painters, the artificial daylight is turned on. This difference in the light situation is two-fold: not only does it protect fragile works, it contributes to the atmosphere, and helps to create a more intense one for the Munch-room, where "it also gives a very intimate feeling, that it's like you're invited into each work, because they seem to be glowing."[206] And eventually, the situation for viewing the landscapes is similar to being outside, in the "broad daylight."[207]

For both museums, the overall "skeleton" of the interior architecture was decided before further planning inside the particular galleries was made. The Munch Museum designates itself with modular exhibition galleries, where the rooms are flexible – but the most important difference was that they finally had several exhibition floors to show more exhibitions simultaneously, while the most important works are on display continuously.

202 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023. They are using 35 LUX there, usually 50 LUX for works on paper, but for "The Scream" even less.
203 See also the website of the museum, where they inform about the research they have done to find out how much light is appropriate for "The Scream" – coming to the conclusion, that they can not be displayed all the time: "Where Can I See the Scream?" Munchmuseet, accessed 18 November 2022, https://www.munchmuseet.no/en/The-Scream/where-can-i-see-the-scream/.
204 Mai Britt Guleng, email message to the author, 21 May 2023.
205 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.
206 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.
207 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

Figure 21: Munch Museum, Oslo. "With Eyes Closed - Gauguin and Munch". Exhibition view. 2018. Courtesy of Munch Museum/ Ove Kvavik.

Manthey Kula, an Oslo-based architectural firm, has been working with the Munch Museum already before their commission to do the interior architecture in the new museum's exhibitions.[208] In 2018, they designed the exhibition architecture of "With Eyes Closed – Gauguin and Munch", focused mainly on the graphical works of the artists, which they arranged in "three unique spaces."[209] In this exhibition, they already play with the dark theme, which lets the paintings "glow", a distinct red background color and the showing of works in series (or versions). Remarkably, they seem to use the room in the room concept here for the first time in connection with the Munch Museum, since a blue oval- or circle-shaped room is placed in one part of the exhibition hall ("Volpini", Fig. 21).

The result of this work by the architects, the presentation of "The Scream" in the Munch Museum now, probably satisfies curators, conservators and the security team alike. It is also built with foresightedness of a potential increase in visitors, as can be seen with many of these "iconic" artworks. Presumably, it can also lead to more people wanting to see the spectacular switching between the works on display and only concentrating on the technical "ingredients" of the presentation.

By contrast, most of the technical solutions leading to the presentation of "The Scream" in the National Museum, are invisible. The museum has a contemporary way of displaying the artworks, but the overall appearance is quite modest. What is uniting in both presentations was described as reducing clutter and distractions, which was explained as an important aspect in planning the exhibitions. The exhibition design in the National Museum, done by Florence architects Guicciardini & Magni Architetti, took into consideration that the interest in Munch's works could grow stronger in the coming years. After first proposals where "The Scream" took a prominent position in the room, it was decided to give this up in favor of presenting the "Frieze of

208 They have been involved with the presentation of "Puberty", after it was restored and shown in the Munch Museum (as a Mono-exhibition), but also with "Through Nature", 2014, a collaboration with the Natural History Museum which was located close by the former museum: "Collection exhibitions at the New Munch museum," Manthey Kula, accessed 20 March 2023, https://www.mantheykula.no/projects/munchmuseumpermanentexhibitions.

209 "With Eyes Closed – Gauguin and Munch," Manthey Kula, accessed 8 April 2023, https://www.mantheykula.no/projects/witheyesclosedgauguinandmunch.

Life" as central in the room.[210] They state: "The spirit of general sobriety and the desire for an equal treatment of the works prevailed over the temptation to highlight single works, in favour of a more balanced presentation […].[211]"

An interesting detail in the design of both exhibition rooms – the "The Scream"-room-in-room in the Munch Museum as well as the Munch-room in the National Museum – is the dark background both museums have chosen for the display. An answer to this is given by Guicciardini & Magni Architetti in their book accompanying the design of the National Museum, where they mention to have chosen this background color "for an abstract reading without temporal connotation, highlighting the absolute value of the artist's work"[212], which also fits a description of the display in the Munch Museum, since they even go without labels next to the artworks.

It might be a certain trend to display iconic artworks with a dark background. The Salle des États in the Louvre, Paris, "Mona Lisa's" home since 1966, was redecorated and received a new dark blue color on the walls in 2019. This was done to "heighten[sic] the contrast with the rich palette of reds, yellow, oranges and greens in the Venetian masterpieces on display in this room."[213] Earlier, the background was quite on the contrary, a light cream-beige, already with a specifically designed display case to protect the artwork.[214]

The shift in this display of important artworks results in a shift of its context and embedding in either the oeuvre of the artist or the collection of the museum, which will be talked about in the following chapter.

3.2.3 Context and thematic embedding

The first time Munch's artworks were chronologically grouped, but at the same time in thematically defined rooms was the anniversary exhibition "Munch 150" organized by both the National Gallery and the Munch Museum, in 2013.[215] This exhibition was coordinated by both museums and seems

210 Guicciardini & Magni Architetti, "Munch: Rooms 59-60," in *Guicciardini & Magni Architetti. Exhibition Design National Museum, Oslo,* eds. Claudia Conforti, Karin Hindsbo, Mai Britt Guleng (Milan: Electa Spa, 2022): 202.
211 Guicciardini & Magni Architetti, 202.
212 Guicciardini & Magni Architetti, 202.
213 "From the 'Mona Lisa' to 'The Wedding Feast at Cana'," Louvre, accessed 8 April 2023, https://www.louvre.fr/en/explore/the-palace/from-the-mona-lisa-to-the-wedding-feast-at-cana.https://www.louvre.fr/en/explore/the-palace/from-the-mona-lisa-to-the-wedding-feast-at-cana.
214 "Musée du Louvre: Mona Lisa," Goppion Technology, accessed 11 April 2023, https://www.goppion.com/projects/mus%C3%A9e-du-louvre-salle-des-etats-showcase-for-mona-lisa. The technology is by Goppion, a company which was also involved in the design of display cases in some exhibitions in the National Museum, Oslo.
215 "With 220 paintings, the exhibition shows the largest amount of Munch's main works at this time. The highlight is the almost complete reconstruction of 'Frieze of Life' (1902) and the 'Reinhardt-Frieze' (1906-1907)," Translated from Norwegian by the author, see "Munch 150 (Nasjonalgalleriet og Munchmuseet)," National Museum, accessed 1 February 2023, https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/utstillinger-og-arrangementer/nasjonalgalleriet/utstillinger/2013/munch-150/.

like a “once-in-a-lifetime” show of bringing artworks together which were separated by both institutions. The exhibition in the National Gallery concentrated on earlier works by Munch, while the Munch Museum displayed the later creative period of the artist. This exhibition was only a few years before the museums planned and moved to the new buildings.

The Munch Museum saw a new beginning for exhibiting Munch in the new museum. In the previous museum, they had only one exhibition space, a row of rooms, which could not really be divided. They faced the problem that if they wanted to show something other than Munch, their “standard visitor would be disappointed.”[216] In the museum at Tøyen, when it came to the different versions of “The Scream” they have in the collection, the focus for display was on the painted version (tempera and oil on cardboard, 1910?). The National Museum owns the first painted version, which resembles the later one in many ways, but not entirely. The other versions of “The Scream”-motif also differ in some details and techniques. Especially the print version shows a different picture given by the medium and the lack of color.[217] The museum considered having a separate exhibition just on “The Scream”, because they knew that it would be the work most people wanted to see when coming there (initially, as I understood it, the plan was to display mainly the painting; what else was considered was not described in the interview). In fact, it was first planned to show “The Scream” on the seventh floor. But this idea was abandoned in favor of contextualizing the work more “to show that ‘The Scream’ is part of Munch’s oeuvre”, and to see that “it’s soundly connected to the rest of the exhibition.”[218]

Generally, the exhibition on the fourth floor, the location of “The Scream”-room, is concentrated on several themes in Munch’s works; thematically organized and, according to the curator, “not biographically or chronologically, and that’s a very conscious decision. Because we wanted to get away from these kind of myth- and storytelling around Munch’s biography.” She sees the problem of the latter in the orientation of the museum, since such one-artists collections would “tend[s] to be like a mausoleum.”[219] The museum was for some years compromising on providing Munch’s works, but, at the same time, tried to also make interesting and noteworthy connections with other (contemporary) artists, especially in juxtaposing the works of past and present. They

216 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023. This is why they had Munch-exhibitions during the summer, when most tourists could be expected, and would do something else in winter.
217 Rebel, 222-25. Already in the pluralism and the possibility of reprinting, the print version gives an idea of seriality, it is a lithograph and can be printed and be reproduced; its original sits on a flat plate, it is therefore only the imprint.
218 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
219 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.

made this part of their profile and use this established practice also today in making connections from Munch's art to art of our times "to underline how relevant Munch is for today."[220]

Figure 22: Munch Museum, Oslo. Vista out of "The Scream"-room. 2023. Photographed by the author.

Part of making Munch's works more tangible for the contemporary visitor is grouping the works into "general subjects", such as love, death, but also not isolating these themes. There was a certain thing I did not notice until the curator pointed it out to me: the openings on the corners of "The Scream"-room provide a vista toward more or less deliberately placed works, such as a painting of a dog or woodcuts and self-portraits (Fig. 22). What the curator wanted to emphasize here is that "Munch had humor", and by placing a dog right in the sight line out of the room, she understands this as a humorist, curatorial decision.[221]

However, this does not distract from the isolation, the separation that could be argued about the motive of "The Scream", housed in its own separate dark "chamber". The darker interior and the atmosphere produced by the sparse but targeted light, the for the visitor uncontrollable mechanism revealing only one artwork in coincidental order. The distance to the revealed artwork. The limited perception of the original artworks due to this dark and distanced display. I asked the curator about this very own display form for "The Scream" and if this was only possible and effective because of the three versions that could be on display – hinting to the question if the artwork had a right to have its own room. Her answer was that there would have been a different solution, if they were just going to display the famous painted version. "So if we only had one Scream, we wouldn't have done that. No purpose… No reason to do that […] for us it's really important to show all three."[222] Moreover, she specifically pointed to the light exposure as one central issue.[223] And of course, admittedly, the National Museum does not have the option to display it the same way as the Munch Museum does, since they have only one version, the painting from 1893.

The idea to put the graphic version together with the others did not come without being tested in the past. The works were first shown in combination after "The Scream" and "Madonna's"

220 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
221 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
222 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
223 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.

comeback in an exhibition from 2008, called "Gjensyn med Skrik og Madonna" ("Scream and Madonna revisited"):

> "The two paintings were mounted above each other on cantilevered walls. On a third wall, there were two lithographic versions of The Scream, side by side with the paintings Despair and Anxiety, both with the same undulating, red and yellow sky, and a row of sketches and prints connected to the motif Madonna."[224]

The seriality of motives proved to be effective for the museum. Although in a different form of display, in a simple grouped mounting, it is also done with other motives in the museum (for example, the nude woman paintings' variations, Fig. 23).

Figure 23: Munch Museum, Oslo. Edvard Munch. "Variations" of "Weeping Woman". Painted 1907. 2023. Photographed by the author.

Compared to the display of "The Scream" in the National Museum, which I will describe in the following, the display in the Munch Museum does not hide the fact that it stands out quite a bit. The National Museum has a very different presentation and concept of the rooms where Munch's works are situated. One of their aims was to transfer a former (independent) art museum – the National Gallery – into a conglomerate of museums under one roof, with different collections (or branches) united within the National Museum. When focusing on the presentation and embedding of "The Scream" in the National Museum, the institution kept the tradition of the Munch-room, as there was one already in the National Gallery. The hanging of the artworks in the new Munch-room of the museum is oriented on Munch's "Frieze of Life", a picture series about the "progression" of life and the feelings involved. It tells the visitor a story that was initially created by the artist himself, as the curator pointed out. She also told me that they "wanted to show Munch in a broader context", which means "to continue the tradition to show him in a separate room, but also to show him in context with other artists."[225]

The mini-"Frieze of Life" topic I brought up before is apparent in the wall opposite the entrance to the Munch-room. There, Munch's works which were part of the "Frieze" (there were several "Friezes", but what is referred to here is the exhibition in Berlin, 1902), are exhibited next to

224 Nerdrum, 244. Translated from Norwegian by the author. Original: "De to maleriene hang rett overfor hverandre på hver sin utkrågede veggflate. På en tredje vegg hang to litografiske versjoner av Skrik side om side med maleriene Fortvivelse og Angst, begge med den samme bølgende, røde og gule himmelen, og en rekke skisser og trykk knyttet til motivet Madonna."

225 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

each other, with “The Scream” among them. Remarkable is that “The Scream” is not at the center of these exhibited works nor in any other way standing out. It is just one part of a narrative, a story to be told by the artist, and the curatorial team wanted it to appear like this. They did not show the whole “Frieze of Life” series, since that would entail having loans from other collections, as it was done for the “Munch 150” exhibition. Nevertheless, even with the selection of the collections’ paintings, shown in a sequence, it is enabled that “the paintings talk to each other”; the motives offer a connection for the viewer, and translate a feeling. The curator explained:

> “[I] think that was something that was really important to Munch, the connection between the different paintings […] of course, it will not stay like this forever, but that’s what we chose to do with the opening at least, for a few years. It’s following the same kind of sequence that Munch used in his picture series, like the ‘Budding Love’, the ‘Love Blossoming’, ‘Anxiety’ and ‘Death’. So, it’s a kind of mini-story about the transgressions of the human being in relationship with […] in love affairs, according to Munch.”[226]

Figure 24: Belvedere, Vienna. Free-standing display of Gustav Klimt's “The Kiss”. 2023. Photographed by the author.

An interesting detail here is what the curator showed in a talk together with a conservator from the museum. This talk was streamed before the new museum opened. Speaking about the National Museum’s version of “The Scream”, they revealed its backside – even started the talk with the backside on view, where a sketch of what was later going to be the motive of “The Scream” can be seen. It is upside down, which could indicate Munch just “flipping over” the cardboard to start anew.[227]

In another talk the curatorial team of the Munch-room held, they mentioned plans about a free-standing wall in the room, which was planned to display “The Scream’s” front- but also reverse-side.[228] This would have been a kind of glass-encasing; the free-standing wall would presumably host the painting the same way it does for Klimt’s “The Kiss” in the Belvedere, Vienna (Fig. 24), besides that it would be for the visitor to walk around to see the back as well. A form of display like this would have made the painting very visible – it would have been the first thing to see when coming into the room. The team abandoned the idea – they did not want to contribute to the artwork’s icon status even more – and, too, to give weight to how Munch himself

226 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

227 Thierry-Olivier Ford, *Close encounters: The Scream,* Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo. Video, 60min., streamed live 12 November 2020, 14:00-15:00, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VFsfq5Byuc, 5’45”.

228 Vibeke Waallann Hansen, *Mot ett nytt museum: Munch i det nye Nasjonalmuseet*, Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo. Video, 60min., streamed live 28 October 2021, 17:30-18:30, https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/utstillinger-og-arrangementer/andre-steder/arrangementer/2021/10/mot-et-nytt-museum-munch-i-det-nye-nasjonalmuseet/, 13’08”.

would have wanted it to be seen. According to the curator, it was something the artist did not want to show: "Because he wasn't satisfied. He wasn't happy with the composition – because it wasn't strong enough. So he left it. He turned it around and started again."[229]

The emphasis on the artist's motivation is something that makes the museum and its task to display his artworks a very authentic one – also in the display of a mini-"Frieze of Life" in a way that could be found in galleries where the artist planned his exhibitions (for example Blomqvist, Oslo, but also the exhibition he had in Berlin, 1902). Guleng, the curator, mentioned that displaying the backside too "would show some of the process, the artistic process, but maybe it's not necessary to do it all the time – in a room."[230] That shows how very close they consider what the artist's intentions could have been, and integrate them in a subtle way.

I want to shortly concentrate on what the "Frieze of Life", Munch's picture series, is, to highlight the museum's motivations a bit more. In Munch's words: "The Frieze is intended as a sequence of decorative pictures, which together would represent an image of life."[231] The artist began with the first drafts for this series already in the late 1880s, and he exhibited it in various constellations and under various titles. Guleng mentions here the titles like "Love, pictures of life", "The modern life of the soul."[232] It was exhibited as named, in a frieze-like manner, and the order, as well as the number and the specific works shown, differed from exhibition to exhibition. The pictures in the series were meant to have a connection with each other, and Munch accentuated different aspects in the presentations. As Guleng writes further, "only a handful of motifs were always represented – Kiss, Madonna, Vampire, Melancholy, and The Scream"[233] - but they were often not from the same production period[234] since Munch sold some of the single paintings and executed them again, as is the case with the two painted versions of "The Scream" which can be found in the National Museum and the Munch Museum in Oslo. The first one was sold, and Munch had to replace it to be able to integrate it into his picture series again.

In her article, Guleng states why Munch was so eager to display his paintings as a series, and even for the reader today, his reasons are understandable: "By showing pictures as belonging together in a series, Munch hoped to make his art more cohesive."[235] In my interview with her, we also spoke about how tradition – the tradition of showing Munch in a similar manner to the former

229 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.
230 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.
231 Edvard Munch, 1918, quoted in Mai Britt Guleng, "Narratives of The Frieze of Life. Edvard Munch's Picture Series," in *Edvard Munch: 1863-1944 (Exhibition catalog Munch 150),* eds. Mai Britt Guleng, Birgitte Sauge, Jon-Ove Steihaug (Milano: Skira Nasjonalmuseet and Munchmuseet, 2013): 129.
232 Guleng, 129.
233 Guleng, 129.
234 Guleng, 129. This is also why the curator says that "'The Frieze of Life' - in the singular – never existed." Ibid.
235 Guleng, 130.

National Gallery – and national identity influence how Munch is seen and understood by Norwegians.

The relevance of the presentation and the memory of how it was shown in the National Gallery is something also Ekman stresses in his article "Architecture for the Nation's Memory: History, Art, and the Halls of Norway's National Gallery" from 2012. He highlights the importance of memory and maintenance of the aura at the historic site, as well as its function as nation-building and identity-shaping. His main focus is on the building, but also on how the collection was displayed.[236] This arrangement and organization of artworks and art history in the old museum proved to be important for the people:

> "The exhibition halls of the National Gallery have provided a place for the canon of Norwegian art history. The paintings have been placed in the halls similarly to how images were mentally assigned to spaces in the antique art of memory. The museum provides the national community with a mnemonic tool to assist the spatial organization of the most important artworks. With themes such as 'Munch' or 'Norwegian landscape' the halls sort and label Norwegian art history in a pedagogical and chronological manner."[237]

I am writing on this issue from the perspective of a Non-Norwegian, but I can understand this issue when comparing it to one of the nation-building museums in Austria, the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Art history there cannot be simply ripped off its spatial context of the museum's building – it is deeply integrated into the cultural memory, for example, where to find the bearded white man painted by Tintoretto, not at least because it was a whole book written about it. What would author Thomas Bernhard have done if he could not find this painting anymore?[238]

Through exhibitions, publications and lectures, the canon of art is steadily "reevaluated". When this is not done in a sensitive way, it can lead to protest and, in the case of the National Gallery, even to resignation. Ekman explains how in 2005, Sune Nordgren, the gallery's new director, originating from Sweden, initiated a major change to the selection of displayed art. "Nordgren had simply let artworks from the stores take the place of artworks in the *permanent* exhibition, remodelling the bonds between the canonized art and the exhibition halls."[239] This whole change of order and categories of the display was rejected by the public.[240]

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236 Ekman, 145.
237 Ekman, 153.
238 Austrian author Thomas Bernhard writes about this artwork in his book *Alte Meister* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).
239 Ekman, 154. Emphasis by the author.
240 Ekman, 154. Further writing, Ekman suggests that it was the *selection*, and not the collection, which mattered most to the public.

When it comes to Munch's works, the National Museum's curator I talked to, admits that many Norwegians, when asked about their favorite artists or paintings, would probably not name Munch. They would be proud of him, proud that he was Norwegian, but many paintings would be quite disturbing, and therefore "hard to have a relationship with."[241] Concluding with what I mentioned before, the tradition, cultural memory and aura as it was felt in the National Gallery, served an important function for including Munch into the artistic canon of the institution, but even more in making his works comprehensive to the viewer. The tradition with the Munch-room was continued, and new connections were made in showing him in context with other artists of his time and place.[242] For this reason, other works by Munch can be found in many rooms, contextualized with the works of other artists of his own country and time.

What is interesting in both museums, is that they set great store in avoiding too much clutter or distraction in their presentations, each museum in its own way. They wanted no distractions and a focus on the artworks, which led the Munch Museum to a very reduced labeling (which means they did not label the artworks on display directly, but only on the wall with the information and description) and the National Museum to experience the works as part of a series, discretely labeled and with a short introduction when coming into the room. The focus should be, first and foremost, on the art and aesthetics; idea, history and context, comes later. On the wall, which gives further information about the motif of "The Scream" in the Munch Museum, we learn that it originated while Munch took an "evening stroll", something more information is given in the catalog accompanying the exhibition.[243] There, it is more woven into a story, since it was most likely Munch's evening stroll with two friends when they had a view of the Oslo-Fjord during sunset. Although Munch was strongly affected by the strong colors of the setting sun, his friends, to his disappointment, were not too emotionally impacted. The impression Munch had, resulted in several works, where the strong colors on the Oslo-Fjord was drawn attention to. Among them is "Despair" (1894).[244]

Central for the Munch Museum in its presentation are the five versions of "The Scream" (two paintings, two drawings, the one lithograph), from which the museum owns one painting, one color drawing among others and several prints of the lithograph, as mentioned earlier. The exhibited drawing is considered as being executed before the painted version in 1893, and according to

241 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

242 Guleng mentions that some of the works in the ante-chamber, the room directly in front of the bigger Munch-room, show many of the works of Munch's earlier artistic career which were rarely or never on display. Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

243 "Skrik," in *Edvard Munch: Uendelig,* ed. Tor Eystein Øverås, (Oslo: Munch-Museet, 2021): 119-137.

244 Ute Kuhlemann Falck, "Skrik," in *Edvard Munch: Uendelig,* ed. Tor Eystein Øverås, (Oslo: Munch-Museet, 2021): 120.

Heller, all vital aspects of the motif – color, composition and the elaboration of the central figure – are already developed.[245] What it marks as a draft, a sketch, is the sketch of another motif on its backside, "Vampire" (1893). I would, therefore, consider it more as a sketch than a holistically equal version to the others on display.

However, it is set as the first version of "The Scream" in the order on the wall with the information and photographic reproductions in the Munch Museum. The National Museum has consciously chosen not to display the backside with its sketch in the exhibition in any form. As I reported before, the curator was convinced that it would not add surplus value together with the painted version; moreover, it was discarded by the artist in his move of simply turning it around and painting on the other side of the cardboard.

In the dedicated Munch-room in the Munch Museum, the painted version is presented as equally important, and in the wall text, mostly its artistic execution, in regard to the other versions, is highlighted. The catalog gives much more information, for example, the exhibition by Munch as a series – the central motivation for the display in the National Museum. Not a single word is said about the, for Munch, so important inclusion into the series "Kjærligheten" ("Love"), for which it served as the last image when it was first exhibited in 1893.[246] "The Scream" had a central role in the development of "Frieze of Life", referred to before. The series, which I have talked about already included (most likely) 22 paintings in 1902, and told about the experience of life and love before shifting to the negative feelings resulting in death, with "Scream" serving as the twist in the experience.[247]

No word can be read about the other painted version in the National Museum, although the Munch Museum's replaced the older one (for Munch personally). As Heller states, Munch has been reluctant to sell paintings from the series, although in 1902, "The Scream" must have been in possession of Olaf Schou, and then again owned by Munch. In 1910, Olaf Schou bought it from the artist once again and donated it, this time, to the National Gallery.[248] But Munch did not simply sell it without replacing it in his "Frieze of Life" with a new version: the one held by the Munch Museum. The later version was first exhibited in 1918, and Munch never sold it.[249]

245 Reinhold Heller, "Skrik," in *Edvard Munch: Uendelig,* ed. Tor Eystein Øverås (Oslo: Munch-Museet, 2021): 126.
246 Heller, 128.
247 Heller, 128.
248 Heller, 128.
249 Heller, 128.

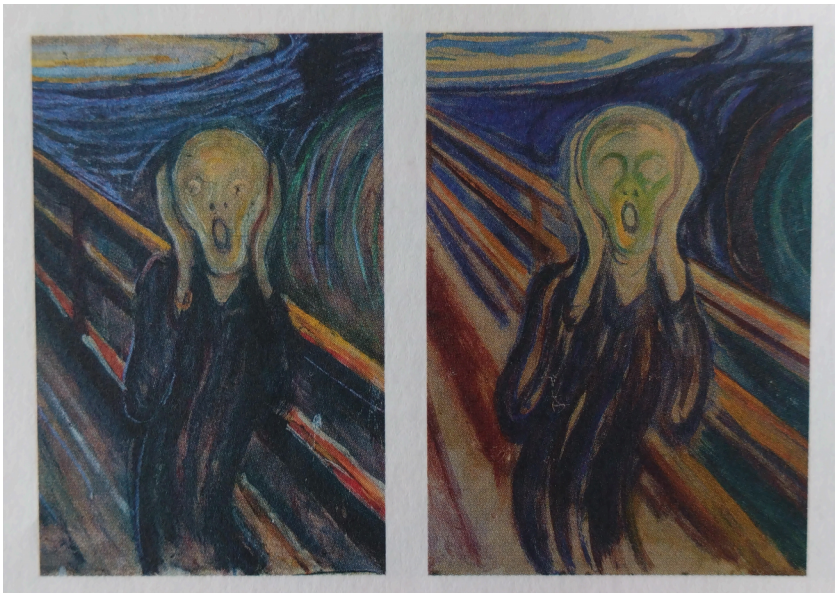

Figure 25: Edvard Munch. "The Scream". Details of the painted version in the National Museum (1893, left) and the Munch Museum (1910?, right). Courtesy of Munch Museum.

The two painted versions (Fig. 25) share many features, but in the central figure, the structure, artistic expression and affirmative use of color and medium can be distinguished. Topalova-Casadiego, a conservator in the Munch Museum, puts the – what seems like – direct approach of the paintings to the fore, "which can give the impression that they are executed in one uninterrupted process."[250] She speaks about the National Museum's version as one "created by experimentation and testing, both technically and composition-wise", while the later version held by the Munch Museum, would show a "mature mastery of the medium."[251] It is, indeed, striking how simple this version looks, both formally and in its materiality. However, the central figure in the foreground no longer has pupils, and is highlighted by green brushstrokes on the face.

To distinguish both versions' features, they would need to sit side by side. Only reproductions in catalogs allow that, since both museums are, understandably enough, focused on the versions in their respective collections. But there is one more version which was not talked about yet, the third version of "The Scream" in the Munch Museum, the lithographic one. The medium itself signifies already that many copies or prints can be made, and indeed, it is one version which can be found several times. The black-and-white graphic version is dated to have been created in 1895; in the execution of the figure, it resembles more the National Museum's version of the painting than the one it is displayed with. Interestingly, the artist did not create differentiating

250 Topalova-Casadiego, 91.
251 Topalova-Casadiego, 98.

fields (for example, by hatching) to create tonalities in the black-and-white, but long lines to serve his expression of the motif.[252]

The contrast of the lines in the last version discussed here, is matched by its contrast to the other versions on display: it comes without color, and is knowingly a version that was able to be printed and displayed or used many times already during its time (for example in the newspaper of the "Sosialdemokraten"). It also comes with its title in German, "Geschrei". In general, in the wall texts, the Munch Museum puts weight on the material of their versions on display. This is because all versions are executed in different materials, and they all imply different proceedings in the expression of the motif. Additionally, all versions have different modes of distribution, and not all of them might have been meant to be displayed to the public (see also the discussion about the sketch above, with the example of the backside in the National Museum).

I consider the relation between the versions in the Munch Museum, therefore, as a rather artificial one. Their display adds to this. The display in the Munch Museum is more of an *enhancement* (or even a supplement, an addition to the artworks per se); it creates something new, a novel object configuration or installation. The problem, there, is that the original artworks are shown in a manner unintended by the artist. Of course, this is negotiable since museums have these curatorial choices and can display their works according to their ideas; but in this case, we are dealing with a single-artist museum, primarily focused on the work of the artist it was dedicated to. Moreover, the versions on display might represent different values than when displayed as individual artworks and can not, without compromise, be considered egalitarian towards each other.

One reason why it is less experimental in the National Museum is that it is *already* a big step to move the National Gallery to a new building, so they could not make a display appearing too unfamiliar. The Munch Museum's possibilities lay a bit broader; an experimental, innovative design was already visible in the early days of the museum. For the new location, the curators in the Munch Museum did not or could not rely on a display from earlier on. One factor why novel designs for display could be more accepted in the Munch Museum is its orientation: as a one-artist museum, it was less obligated to follow the rules of a nation-formative museum with an (art-)historical canon. Its main works were still subject to display, however, in a more obviously inventive way.

252 Kuhlemann Falck, 130.

3.3 Against a further *iconizing* of the work

In this last part of the chapter, I will concentrate on an issue that was addressed many times in the interviews I had with the curators; as the title suggests, "a further *iconizing* of the artwork". "Icon" comes from the Greek word for "image", and historically, a byzantine icon, a Madonna on a golden ground, is the first to come to mind. Today, an icon can be found in many examples, such as the artworks listed as the most famous ones on the web. Icons are also constantly created, and by the next example, I want to visualize how museums are partaking in this process of iconizing.

"Once placed in a vitrine, an object is perceived in a completely different way by the viewer, as compared when it is viewed in its original context."[253] This statement by Putnam is not limited to a presentation of the works in art museums, but can be extended to selecting and displaying artifacts in other kinds of museums, be it the ethnographic museum, the natural history museum, a science center. One distinctive difference to the selection and display of works in the art museum is that the vitrine, the glass or other protective encasing or form of display is apparently a "next resort". I want to explain what I mean here by the example of the Mona Lisa in the Louvre, and how her presentation and display have changed – and *had* to undergo significant changes – over time.

Without a doubt is that the "Mona Lisa" is the most prominent artwork of our time. Leonardo da Vinci's painting of Lisa Gherardini found its permanent home in the Louvre, Paris, but there, it had to move from place to place to accommodate the museum's visitors. More than a hundred years ago, it was to be found just next to other historical artworks, and its presentation was not extraordinary. As Storrie notes, "Mona Lisa's" prominence arose or was "enhanced" during the time it disappeared for a duration of two years:

> "On the morning of 22 August 1911, the painter Louis Béroud entered the Salon Carré in order to make some sketches for a satirical painting of the recently glazed 'Mona Lisa'. […] Where the painting should have been there was a gap. The attendant suggested that the painting had been *removed for photography*. On investigation it emerged that 'Mona Lisa' was not in the photography studio and when the curator of the department of Egyptian Antiquities initiated a search it could not be found elsewhere in the building. By midday the police had sealed off the museum, allowing visitors out one by one. Eventually the glass and frame of the painting were discovered in a small access staircase but there was no trace of the painting itself."[254]

253 Putnam, 14-15.

254 Calum Storrie, *The Delirious Museum: A Journey from the Louvre to Las Vegas* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2006): 9. Emphasis by the author.

This empty space (Fig. 26) on the exhibition room's wall, where the painting was previously hanging, was even published in a magazine; it served as a metaphor for what was lost. Entangled in what followed in the story were the artist Picasso and the poet Apollinaire, but the whole circumstances of events should not concern us here. What is significant is how easy it was to remove the painting, as it was told.[255] Suddenly, in 1913, the "Mona Lisa" was offered to an art dealer in Florence, by a man named "Leonardo Vincenzo". Even though the art dealer did not think that the whole deal was meant seriously, but was reassured that it was, truly, the original, he notified the authorities.

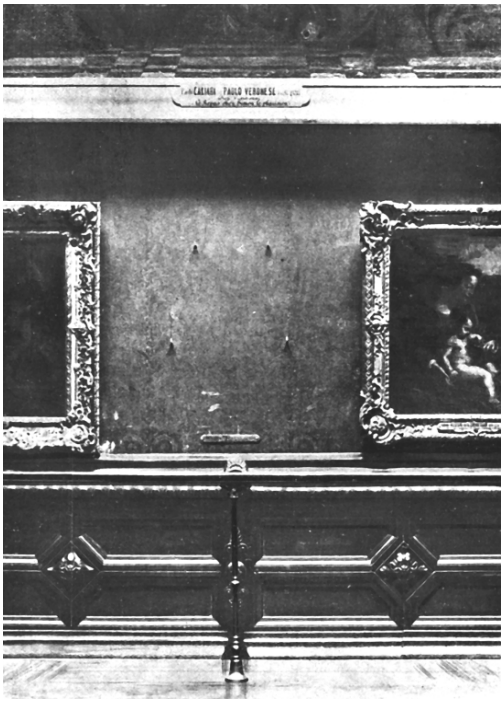

Figure 26: L'Illustration, 26 August 1911. Empty space where "Mona Lisa" was mounted, Salon Carré. Louvre, Paris. Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library.

> "The next day, Leonardo Vincenzo was visited in his hotel room by the dealer, accompanied by the director [of the Uffizi]. Here they saw 'Mona Lisa' being taken from a secret compartment at the bottom of a travelling trunk. […] The dealer, the director and the thief then took the painting to the Uffizi to verify that this was indeed 'Mona Lisa' and not a copy. Vincenzo was immediately arrested and his name was revealed to be Vincenzo Peruggia, a workman who had been engaged some years previously at the Louvre."[256]

Soon after another Italian, too, claimed to have stolen the painting, its motive entered the contemporary artistic canon, was used by Duchamp, a Dadaist and conceptual artist, and the Surrealists. This uptake of a motif getting famous through the media is something that we also see in the example of "The Scream".[257]

However, let us move back to the impression of the empty space in the gallery room and what the "Mona Lisa's" return to the Louvre unleashed in the cultural discourse. Storrie writes here that the painting's "absence changed its meaning forever – Leonardo's famous painting had encountered modernity", and further, that its "removal for photography" led to it being "endlessly reproduced mechanically". "'Mona Lisa' was packed up and concealed and, instead of being an object fixed in place both on the wall and in the imagination, it became nomadic. *It may never have returned.*"[258]

255 Storrie, 12.
256 Storrie, 14.
257 Storrie, 14.
258 Storrie, 15. Emphasis by the author.

Eventually, the cultural, (art) historical and political significance led to its appeal and prominence. The thief had asked for half a million lire, and that the painting would stay in Italy.[259] Prior to this demand, the painting had already resided in France for four centuries, since it was acquired in 1518 (shortly after the artist's final executions) by King François I when Leonardo da Vinci was visiting France.[260] It has been exhibited since 1797 (supposedly, after the French Revolution) when the Louvre started as a public museum. However, also Henning, referring to Storrie, asks the question, if the "Mona Lisa" disappeared long ago, and underscores the work's nomadic life once more, mentioning that it was shown in a few Italian cities before it returned to the Louvre, to France, in 1914.[261]

The precious symbolic and material values of an artwork are expressed in concerns which come to the surface after a stolen artwork, and with the "Mona Lisa" or "The Scream", something that is sooner or later seen as an "icon", is found again and returned. Is the discovered artwork the real one – is it the one that was hanging on that blank spot on the wall? Does the museum display the "real" artwork, the original it held before? Is it part of the museum's history and provenance? This was a concern that became apparent after "The Scream" returned. Both artworks, the "Mona Lisa" and "The Scream", were stolen and circulated in copies, especially in time of their absence. After the "Mona Lisa" disappeared, images circulated as photographic reproductions, with the artwork becoming very well known, and the media (especially print news) contributed to the fame by providing readers with the notion of mystery and sensation. Also "The Scream" was all over the media, but in its time, it was mainly television imagery, remarkable for spreading the motive all over the world.[262]

Several other parallels exist between the "Mona Lisa" and "The Scream", although their thefts are separated by many decades. In both cases, the empty space on the gallery wall in the museum was deemed to be significant. The Munch Museum opened a few days after the theft again, and the space where "The Scream" and "Madonna" had been on display, was filled with two other paintings. Cakes with pictures of the stolen paintings were still sold at the museum's cafe, as was done before.[263] This gives some impression of the museum trying to do as if nothing would have happened, although two of its most important works were gone – their reproductions, however,

259 Storrie, 14.
260 "From the 'Mona Lisa' to 'The Wedding Feast at Cana'," Louvre, accessed 8 April 2023, https://www.louvre.fr/en/explore/the-palace/from-the-mona-lisa-to-the-wedding-feast-at-cana.
261 Henning, "With and Without Walls: Photographic Reproduction and the Art Museum," 594.
262 Nerdrum, 239-242.
263 Nerdrum, 242.

were still circulating, be it in the form of photographic imagery in the news, in publications or as reproductions on sweet treats.

Another parallel might be the iconography and the motive: The artworks have a certain ambiguity, leaving the viewer much room for interpretation. Is "La Gioconda" smiling or not? What or who is that figure Munch painted in the foreground of his painting? The style of the paintings translates other characteristics which one comes across when looking at the works. Gombrich notes on the "Mona Lisa": "What strikes us first is the amazing degree to which Lisa looks alive. She really seems to look at us […] and to look a little different every time we come back to her."[264] In "The Scream", we are also confronted by a figure facing us, but uncertain if the figure even *looks* at us, is seeing us. Both artists knew how to address the viewer and capture the gaze.

Leonardo da Vinci was a famous artist already during his time, and he left important artworks. The "Mona Lisa", today ranking as number one of the most famous artworks of all time on several lists, was not considered to be Leonardo da Vinci's main work (nor might it be that today for experts and art historians). Edvard Munch became well known around the turn of the century, but his fame and knowledge about his art were limited to European countries for some time. After his death, Munch's international popularity was especially outgoing from the USA, where his work was first shown in 1952.[265] As knowledge about artworks spreads in the media – like the stories about "Mona Lisa's" theft, her return, or "The Scream's" thefts, it might have stipulated the interest in visitors for seeing these artworks for themselves. Munch's touring exhibitions generated interest in his art too, but although "The Scream" got more and more popular, it was far from the masses of people flocking to the Louvre to see the "Mona Lisa".

Moreover, as described, "The Scream's" motif and the dramatic theft contributed to how the display of "The Scream" changed over the years, as was already described in the previous chapter. I want to remind the reader again which aspects were being made to change displays and what the results were – conservation, security, accessibility – and context, as well as thematic embedding. The last point here is particularly interesting since it determines how the artwork will be experienced. What I first come upon when entering the galleries in the Munch Museum, is the outstanding display of "The Scream". What I see first in the National Museum's Munch-room, is a selection of his works, without especially highlighting one of them.

This brings me to a crucial question: How does an object tell me the mode of looking at it? How can it be revealed which is an object of value and which is not (who am I to judge if it is

264 Gombrich, 227.

265 Bjerke, 13. One of the more recent large exhibitions in the USA was in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2006.

sometimes not even clear to me where to sit down and what not to touch?). With the popular artwork of "The Scream", the last question can already be answered by its infectious spread through (popular) media, in the art historical canon, and its reproductions and reinterpretations. "The Scream" is, clearly, one of the best-known motifs of art. The Munch Museum's website provides information on how it got so well-known, and even considers Munch and "The Scream" as a brand.[266]

Even so, it was only after Munch's death in 1944 that the popularity of the image really took off.

MUNCH AS A BRAND

Early in the 1950s, several of Munch's paintings, including the Munch Museum's version of *The Scream*, were sent on an extensive international tour. At the same time, the first English-language book about Munch was published. All this was in the years following World War II. The atom bomb had been invented, divorce statistics were skyrocketing, and many feared a new war. Munch, who was sensitive to the psychological effects of the anonymity of urban life and alienation engendered by capitalism, was well in tune with the spirit of the age. In 1961, *The Scream* adorned the front cover of Time magazine in connection with an article on "The Anatomy of Angst".

Over the next few decades, *The Scream* found its way into both advertising and film. The motif's celebrity status was cemented by the American artist Andy Warhol. In 1984, Warhol created a series of screenprints titled *The Scream (after Munch)* – brightly coloured large-scale copies of Munch's lithograph. Warhol was famous for using images from popular culture in his art – everything from movie stars and politicians to everyday objects. By reproducing *The Scream*, he boosted the iconic status of the image, and showed at the same time that it could be seen as a mass-produced consumer product on a par with Mickey Mouse or a can of tomato soup.

A ROBBERY HITS THE WORLD'S HEADLINES

Sometimes one has to lose something – not just once, but twice – to understand its value. In 1994, in the early morning hours of the day the Winter Olympics were

Figure 27: Munch Museum, Oslo. "A Scream through Culture". Website. Courtesy of Munch Museum.

The depicted interpretation of Munch's "The Scream" by Andy Warhol, seen in this article on the Munch Museum's website (Fig. 27), makes clear how popular the motif became, and also, how independent from its original source. Not only photographic reproductions of the original artworks are circulating from the 20th century on, but also copies and reinterpretations as autonomous artworks, like the one by Andy Warhol.

Nevertheless, is it possible to *iconize* just anything, or does something need to be there already to make an icon of an artwork, like the famous aura which was talked about earlier? Fact is, that "The Scream(s)", particularly the painted versions, have a kind of icon status. The institutions know that, and how to treat and integrate these icons into the museum and its exhibitions is a very definite and formative decision. The institutions, as we have seen before, have different opinions about this. The curator of the National Museum argues about this process of thinking as follows:

> "We talked about having it in the middle of the room, or something, making it possible for people to see it from all sides. But we didn't really want to contribute to *iconizing* it more than it already is. Because it's in a way … we don't want to contribute to make it more worn-out, and because if you place it in the middle of the room, you say 'this is something special' and people wouldn't necessarily understand – that it's special because it's light-sensitive; but they would maybe think it's because it's the most important work. But we don't think it's the most important work. It's the most *known* work. And, of course, art historically, it stands out as something very, very special, and

266 "A Scream through Culture," Munchmuseet, accessed 20 May 2023, https://www.munchmuseet.no/en/our-collection/a-scream-through-culture/.

> breaking all the rules possible. In a way, but, art historically, there are several paintings here just as important or even more – maybe – to understanding what an artist was dealing with, or what Munch was dealing with, in his art, in the 1890s."[267]

The display in the National Museum's Munch-room, by not mounting "The Scream" in the center of the wall, and by equally distributing the attention on all the artist's works in the room, presents exactly this approach to the visitor. No additional encasing is mounted over the painting (in visible ways; it had another encasing in the National Gallery), and no additional barrier is installed in front of it. Although the Munch Museum, with its rotating display of the three versions of "The Scream" highlights this attempt of not *iconizing* the work too, this is not reflected in the form of display chosen. It is quite the opposite. By the "mysterious" revealing and hiding of the artworks, one after another, and the limitation of time to see each one of them, as well as through the atmosphere created in the dark room or cabinet, they are creating an almost immersive experience in there, a kind of "spectacle".

Another factor to be considered in this reflection on the presentation of famous artworks and their iconizing, is that the copies of these artworks are spread everywhere, while the originals become unmovable (in the sense of location and stimulating an emotion, I would argue). Photographic reproductions, like the ones next to "The Scream(s)" in the Munch Museum, are presented as easy to look at and access, while the originals prove to be limited and sometimes not possible to see. Storrie notes this, after the return of the "Mona Lisa" to the Louvre, with increasing measures to protect the icon, too: "Now the painting is impossible to see"[268], and he also refers to the reflections on the photographs people are taking in front of her now, something I realized as well when visiting the Louvre.

Just recently, "Mona Lisa's" display was restored once again since the ever-more-increasing audience challenged the accessibility and produced a crowd in front of the, in fact, rather small, artwork. It can still be seen in the largest room of the museum, the Salle des États, where it found its home in 1966. From 2005, it is "exhibited in a protective glass case, in solitary splendour in the room"[269] partly because of safety reasons, but also due to its material – it is painted on a panel of poplar wood. When looking at the display and its material – one could even talk about "museum furniture" here, since several interior-architectural elements are involved – it comes to the fore how the museum wants its visitors to look at it: from afar, standing behind the wooden girder, neatly arranged in a circle, with the same distance from everywhere around this measure for keeping

267 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.
268 Storrie, 15.
269 "From the 'Mona Lisa' to 'The Wedding Feast at Cana'," Louvre, accessed 8 April 2023, https://www.louvre.fr/en/explore/the-palace/from-the-mona-lisa-to-the-wedding-feast-at-cana.

distance. On hip height, there is even a table attached to the wall, coming out from the lower case of the display, most likely to not even allow to lean too close to the painting from there, standing in front of it. The whole provision looks more like an altar (or a counter of a municipal institution) since there are two borders to overcome to be very close to the icon: The first for the big crowds, and the second to the more "sacred" space. But the "Mona Lisa" still sits behind all this, encased in her glass box, which is protecting the painting. This glass box is much bigger than the actual painting, and is appearing like a window, an opening.

Figure 28: Musée du Louvre, Paris. Display of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in the Salle des États. 2019. Courtesy of Goppion Technology.

In 2019, the background walls were renewed and tinted in a dark blue (Fig. 28), a style feature which can also be seen in other museums, highlighting their icons. For some critics, the whole presentation around the "Mona Lisa" is troublesome, as art critic Jason Farago notes: "[…] the Louvre is being held hostage by the Kim Kardashian of 16th-century Italian portraiture"[270], noting that around 80 percent of the Louvre's visitors are only coming to see *her*. Further, the overcrowding which can be experienced when waiting for everyone's turn to catch a glimpse of the world-famous painting, the masses standing in the Salle des États, are noncontributing to the rest of the room, to the atmosphere of the room where several other artworks of "Mona Lisa's" time are on display.

> "The Louvre does not have an overcrowding problem per se. It has a Mona Lisa problem. No other iconic painting – not Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" at the Uffizi in Florence, not Klimt's "Kiss" at the Belvedere in Vienna, not "Starry Night" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York – comes anywhere close to monopolizing its institution like she does."[271]

In the future, the museum might face the problem of how to balance visitors' expectations but also provide a sustainable form of display. Some argue even taking "La Gioconda" down and not

270 Jason Farago, "It's Time to Take Down the Mona Lisa," *The New York Times online*, 6 November 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/06/arts/design/mona-lisa-louvre-overcrowding.html.
271 Farago.

showing her to the public permanently anymore, while others vote to have her in her own pavilion,[272] to separate her from the rest of the collection on display in the museum.

Figure 29: Belvedere, Vienna. Display of Gustav Klimt's "The Kiss". 2023. Photographed by the author.

"Mona Lisa's" architectural form of display is not a unique one, as I want to underscore with another example of a famous, popular artwork, Gustav Klimt's "The Kiss (Lovers)", 1907/08 (Fig. 29), which I briefly discussed in a previous chapter. Permanently on view in the Belvedere, Vienna, it stands out as the artist's most important work, and for many visitors, it obtained the reason for the visit to the museum (as the time-slot ticket sale points too).[273] Several rooms dedicated to Viennese Modernism, for which it serves as a prime example, finally lead to "The Kiss". Whereas all the other artworks, in Klimt's case paintings, are plainly hanging on the wall, "The Kiss" is sitting encased in a wall moved into the room. This built-in architectural element allows the artwork to be embedded into it, hanging in front of its own dark background, which sets it apart from the white of the other paintings. It is almost shielded from the visitors (since it is behind security glass, too), and added to this construction is once more a barrier in the form of a flat, more provisional appearing fence to signal the visitors to keep their distance. This barrier also protects the artwork from visitors taking selfies too close in front of it.

Let us take this function of taking selfies, as a visual proof of being there, although one maybe can not even see the original properly, as a thought to the final chapter, which will concentrate on art and how we are enabled (or not) to see and experience it by the example of the museums hosting "The Scream(s)".

4. The impossibility of digital screens accompanying the original?

In the past, access to the original in the museum was not a given thing, and many people depended upon the reproductions. Today, reproductions surround us; they can be almost everywhere, not just in printed books or postcards. We have reproductions on screens, produce pictures of the artworks

272 Farago.
273 "The Kiss by Gustav Klimt," Belvedere, accessed 30 January 2023, https://www.belvedere.at/en/kiss-gustav-klimt.

on our mobile devices. Therefore, I ask, how does the presentation of the artworks in the museum change? How playful can it get allowing the original to be shown in new ways? Moreover, what is reproductions' role in this process?

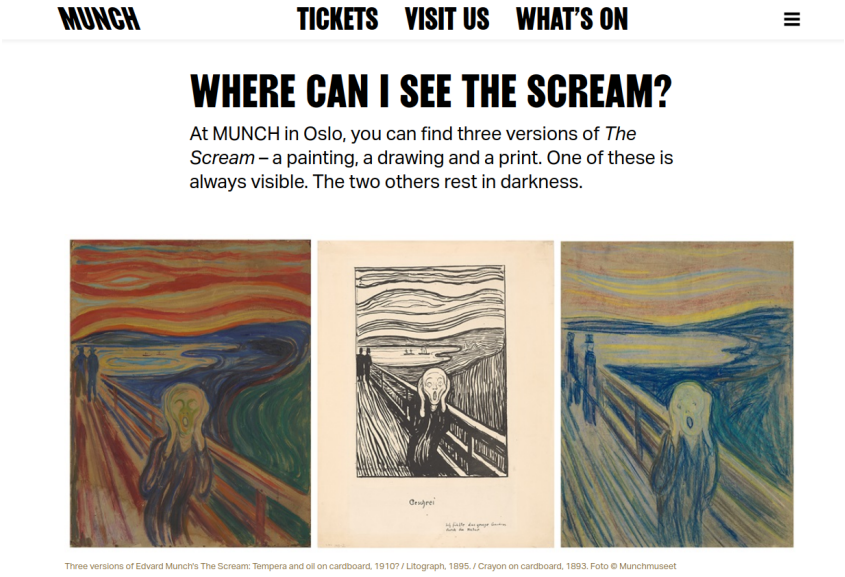

Figure 30: Munch Museum, Oslo. "Where Can I See the Scream?". Website. 2023. Courtesy of Munch Museum.

The highly profitable display of original artworks – economically, in tourism and culture – goes along with museums' obligation to care for the artwork, research it and provide its display. Works by artists like Munch can be represented as the national treasure they are associated with, which is especially recognizable with the (re-)opening of the two important museums in Oslo, described here. However, the display of the original is not the only thing the museum can or is offering to the visitors to experience and learn more about the displayed works. As an extension or addition to the canvas, or better, like in Munch's case, the cardboard and print, the museum can contextualize its originals in many ways. What reproductions, therefore, provided in the past and continue to do, is a democratic sharing of aesthetics, culture, information and knowledge. For museums today, this means a conglomerate made out of channels like the museum's website, information online, social media and more, in addition to the classic catalog in book format.

In the case of the Munch Museum, the reproductions are contextualized in many ways on the museum's website (Fig. 30): one can find general information about the motive and its versions, a guide to where it can be seen by the visitor, and among others, a story about why the painting and its motive became so famous in popular culture.[274] Overall, several points of contact are established through the website. The National Museum offers a short article on "The Scream" and other works

274 For example, "Where Can I See the Scream?" Munchmuseet, accessed 18 November 2022, https://www.munchmuseet.no/en/The-Scream/where-can-i-see-the-scream/.

by Munch besides the regular entry in the collection database (including details of the work, Fig. 31), which is accessible through the website.[275] Inside the exhibitions, both institutions share information about Munch and his works, but interestingly, as mentioned before, the information there is very reduced, and often one can gather only very basic information and knowledge about the works on display.

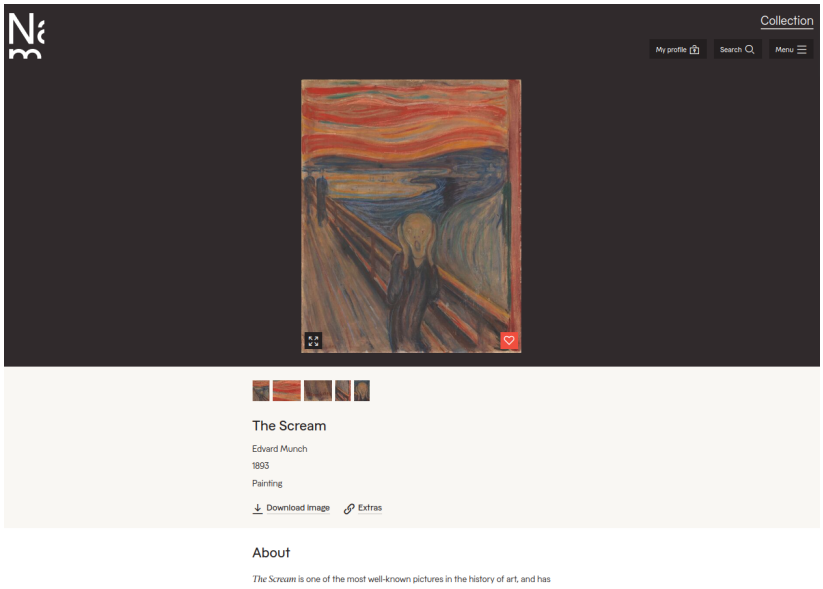

Figure 31: National Museum, Oslo. "The Scream." Website. 2023. Courtesy of Nasjonalmuseet.

The focus lies very heavily on the visual perception and sense-making through the visual information inside the museum. Therefore, especially in the Munch Museum, the mediation, the presentation of the artworks in a limited time frame and staged in the shifting display windows, has an even stronger impact. At the same time, it touches the viewer only in a superficial way, since the staging allows for a "show" and the barrier, as well as the protection cases, do only enable a close study to a certain degree. The reproductions on the one wall, hence, can serve as a "substitute" although the specific work is, technically, on display. This is not the case in the National Museum, where "The Scream's" presentation is in a more relaxed setting and does not have a physical barrier. Nevertheless, coming too close is, of course, unwanted there as well. Coming back to the "Mona Lisa" and her massive display, I would argue that the Munch Museum is close to heightening the artworks in "The Scream"-room at the same time as they want to concentrate on several of them equally. Through the spatial enclosure and temporality anchored in this display, the museum is, without a doubt, creating this urge for the visitor to see the works, to enter this specially designed

275 "The Scream," Nasjonalmuseet, accessed 20 May 2023, https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/collection/object/NG.M.00939.

room, to have been inside there to catch a glimpse of the opening and closing of the elevator doors presenting the artworks.

At some point, the whole show can get more important than the artworks themselves, instead of being the "door opener" for experiencing the original. Visitors take videos of the moments of "revelation", while many shoot a photo and document the originals as proof of having been there. The museum's visitors serve as the touch points for the dissemination of the artworks in producing their own reproductions, for example, in sharing their selfies and their experience in front of the original and inside the museum. In his book *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media,* Nathan Jurgenson puts it this way: "The original and its reproduction might be comparable to the real experience and its documentation in social media photography."[276] He coins the term "digital dualism" here, when visitors creating a reproduction themselves, a reconstruction of the moment they have been there *while being there*.

This social photo can serve as a visual proof of having seen the original. The museum experience itself is, though, accompanied by the display of the bespoken originals on several screens throughout the museum, on informational material and media, and of course, on the museum's merchandise and gift shop supply. The reproduction of the original is then shown either in total, cutouts, detailed, and in many cases alienated (Fig. 32).[277] But I want to bring this discussion back to the relation between the originals and their reproductions here, and to the possibilities pointing towards a future where technology is an integral part of the experience of artworks. My question is, therefore, once again: Why do the museums not use screens together with their artworks and only refer to the aura of the originals in many cases?

Figure 32: Munch Museum, Oslo.Reproduction of "The Scream" outside the Exhibition rooms. 2023. Photographed by the author.

The abundance of digital screens, and the circulation of reproductions in different media, is, in my opinion, another reason why the Munch Museum chose to display "The Scream" in the specific form of display that was already described extensively throughout the thesis. Nowhere else, when it comes to the display of famous artworks, could I find other examples for a display like the one in the Munch Museum. A particular aspect here is worthwhile to explore: the secret of what is behind the closed display

276 Nathan Jurgenson, *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media* (New York: Verso Books, 2019): 69-70.
277 Iranowska, Joanna. "Copying as Museum Branding: Souvenirs with Edvard Munch's Bedspread Pattern." In *Museums as Cultures of Copies: The Crafting of Artefacts and Authenticity*, eds. Brita Brenna, Hans Dam Christensen and Olav Hamran (London and New York: Routledge, 2019): 131-144.

doors. Is the secret part of the aura – to create this tension, the suspense for the visitor? I will draw on sociologist Georg Simmel's writings about secrecy to get closer to this uncovering of the display and what is waiting behind the closed doors, and why a reproduction could eventually not achieve this.

Simmel's text on secrecy adds to the seemingly rational visual experience or perception of the artwork another layer – the secret and the revealing of it. This mystical notion, together with the mechanical, technological apparatus where it is held, is bringing back a form of *Wunderkammer*. In Simmel's view, a modern society led to an objectification of culture, which "has sharply differentiated the amounts of knowing and not knowing essential as the condition of confidence."[278] The originals in the museums can be trusted; I know that they are the originals, and the reproductions are knowingly *not* the original, but *of* the original. This is the knowledge the museum mediates to the visitors, and it is built on trust. What makes Simmel's text even more striking regarding the display of "The Scream" in the discussed museums, is the notion of the secret and secrecy which is inherent in society. The secret is an "eminent aesthetic category" in modernity, to be found in our everyday lives, politics, science as well as art.[279]

As a sociologist, Simmel discusses mainly social relationships, public and private life, but many of his thoughts can be associated with, for example, what kind of relationships we as human subjects form with objects and in reverse. For him, secrecy is "one of the greatest accomplishments of humanity", since it extends life like something that lies bare in front of us could never do. According to him, secrecy lets us suspect a "second world alongside of the obvious world"[280], it rouses interest. What is the purpose of this second world, and how does secrecy in this work as a sociological technique?

One reason for an individual or a group for secrecy is, according to Simmel, "for magnifying the personality", even culminating in the form of "self-advertising."[281] Secrecy as a social technique functions in a peculiar way – its purpose serves the concealment of a possession one holds, but which is hidden from others, which leads to the assumption of it having a "special value."[282] In the case of the Munch Museum, the artwork is withheld spatially – it is encased and rests behind protective glass and doors – and can be viewed only for a limited period of time, which means

278 Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," *The American Journal of Sociology* XI, no. 4 (1906): 450. Thanks to Asko Lehmuskallio for suggesting this text by Simmel.

279 Ingo Meyer, "Simmels 'Geheimnis' als Entdeckung des sozialkonstitutiven Nichtwissens," in *Soziologie als Möglichkeit: 100 Jahre Georg Simmels Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*, eds. Cécile Rol, Christian Papilloud (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009): 115. Translated from German by the author.

280 Simmel, 462.

281 Simmel, 463-64. He refers especially to immorality in this case.

282 Simmel, 464.

withholding itself temporally, respectively. We cannot possess the original in many ways, and we feel the desire to do so due to the "[…] error, that everything secret is something essential and significant."[283]

Contributing to this secrecy one encounters when standing in "The Scream"-room, is the form of display, which can be connected to Simmel's mentioning of "phantasy", helping to highlight something by secrecy that it could otherwise not attain to this degree.[284] This secret would, according to him, create tension only to be released when, in the case of "The Scream", the doors open and we are allowed to see the artwork. Hence, we cannot possess the original, but we can inhabit the moment. However, as this demand for a revealing of the secret of the hidden culminates in unveiling, Simmel states that its concealment creates a raised value: "[…] just as the moment of disappearance of an object brings out the feeling of its value in the most intense degree."[285] This secrecy also sets barriers[286], and it finds literal application in the presentation of the artworks, the several versions of "The Scream", in the museum. The barriers created for different reasons fulfill their purpose of creating distance to the artworks, which are fragile in their making and state. They prevent visitors from coming too close and eventually harming the individual as well as the artwork in the Munch Museum, while hindering them from taking a close look. Time is another factor setting a barrier in rewarding those waiting for the revelation in time while not allowing others, arriving late, to see the previous artwork. The contrast to the presentation of the two museums, the Munch Museum and the National Museum and their "The Scream"-display gets even stronger here when considering secrecy through Simmel's text.

Moreover, the by the curator as "hourly rhythm" described sequence in which the originals shift in revealing themselves, enabled by the technical apparatus, can almost be seen as a ritual[287] or creating a ritual – as a method for showing and experiencing the artwork. As a method for showing, the unveiling is a constituent part of the display; the origins of this unveiling effect can be found in the theater display, among others. The Munch Museum includes a more contemporary form for the opening, the technologically more advanced one of elevators, as I was already referring to. We are dealing with two different temporalities here: The artworks as a constant, waiting as the "hidden" secret behind the closed doors, and the doors themselves, which are in a programmed rhythm, in a constant movement – all three (pairs) of them, creating a loop. The display itself enables the

283 Simmel, 465.
284 Simmel, 465.
285 Simmel, 465.
286 Simmel, 466.
287 Simmel speaks about the ritual in regard to secret societies in his text. It is important in constituting this secret societies, together with hierarchy. In the foreground are secret societies of religious-mystical or religio-ethical orders for him in the description, ibid., 480.

revealing and concealing of the original artwork each time of its opening and closing. Moreover, to the unknown visitor, this happens not constantly and seems more coincidental – as the visitor does not know which window/ door will open next – since this is externally controlled.

To frame these events in a more mysterious way: everything could happen behind the elevator doors. I want to refer to the quote at the beginning of the thesis, where I included a paragraph from a book I read during the writing process. The "Dilemma of the Phantom Passenger" is the dilemma of an individual pressing the button to call for the elevator but departing before its arrival, e.g. for taking the stairs instead. Engineer students in this work of fiction discuss what lies behind the elevator's doors when nobody is inside or waiting for the elevator cabin. Only when the doors open can one catch sight of what is happening in there, *if* there is something to be revealed, if it is even opening. One student suggests putting a camera next to the elevator to see what would be going on, but this idea does not seem to satisfy the professor; another one shouts out loud: "Just because you can't see it doesn't mean it's not there!"[288]

Who knows what lies behind the apparatus? Who knows if the artworks are really there, or which version of "The Scream" sits behind which window? Secrecy, therefore, is an essential ingredient for the display in the Munch Museum, although reproductions are provided in "The Scream"-room, on one wall. The form of display in the museum creates rituals for the visitors: To see all the versions on display, one has to come back every hour to catch a glimpse of one after the other. Not until one has seen what is behind all the closed doors are the secrets revealed to the visitor, and no other help to identify or substitute than the photographic reproductions, always there on the wall, serve a constant art experience. The knowledge about the famous artwork waiting behind the closed doors might imply an auratic experience, since the printed reproductions promise the visitor what can be discovered in the room if they are patient. Placing a bright screen with digital reproductions in this room would be counterproductive to keeping the originals "secret" and treating them as something special.

After discussing secrecy as a sociological technique here, I want to lastly move on to another "technique" immanent to the display in the Munch Museum, the "door logic". There must be a certain logic behind the intention to use doors (or windows) as a protection and interactive feature in the museum instead of a curtain or veil, a special case or forms of switching the light on and off. Bernhard Siegert discusses doors in his book about *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real*. For Siegert, "culture is a human-technoid hybrid"[289].

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288 Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist* (London: Fleet, 2017): 102.

289 Bernhard Siegert, "Door Logic, or, the Materiality of the Symbolic: From Cultural Techniques to Cybernetic Machines," in *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real,* trans. Geoffrey

Cultural techniques are, therefore, uniting the human, "technical objects" as well as "chains of operations (including gestures)", and can point towards the degree of the technical objects taking over in this process.[290] Doors, according to Siegert, are machines; not only products of architecture, enabling an opening or closing but also symbols for an inside and outside. Referring to Simmel, he points to the possibility of both functions inhabited by a closed door, its closure and the function of being opened.[291]

In the Munch Museum, we stand in front of these doors or windows, either revealing the artwork to us or pointing to the doors being closed. There will always be one display open, while the other two do not allow us to see what is hidden behind the doors. The doors and displays with the artworks are operated by these opening and closing-procedures, and a threshold to the objects and these sliding doors is symbolized in the museum by the barrier in front of it.

Siegert exemplifies what he means by the door logic with the example of 15th-century triptychs and their "distinction between inside and outside" by integration of "sacred and profane zones."[292] These also have to do with "spiritual vision and profane appearance" here, since spiritual vision did not need a door to enter while profane figures had to cross that threshold.[293] In the course of 15th-century art, this is going to be signalized by including the real hinges of the panel's frame as a "foldable object".[294] I will not roll out the whole story of the altar-panels he is describing here, but what seems worthwhile to think about, is the translation of these sacred and profane zones to the display of famous artworks today. Just recall the example of the "Mona Lisa" from before, with her extensive, distancing barrier stretching out all around her and her glazing and protective display. Also, in the Munch Museum, with the artworks held back in protective alcoves, behind safety glass, the sacred and profane zones are more than symbolically articulated.

Nevertheless, it symbolizes even more: what is behind the doors can only be revealed when opened, yet the barrier and protection measures inside "The Scream"-room are markers of it being important. As mentioned before, the institution is preparing the visitor for what to see there. However, there is this secrecy I have already talked about, and also the function which doors, according to Siegert, culturally had: "As long as doors functioned as operators of difference between inside and outside, they also helped to create, in line with the public-private distinction, an

Winthrop-Young (New York: Fordham University Press: 2015): 193. Further he writes: "It has always been so (and not only since the invention of the automatic door)." Ibid.

290 Siegert, 193.
291 Siegert, 194.
292 Siegert, 195.
293 Siegert, 196.
294 Siegert, 196. He writes: "This real object works as a foldable object and thus as a cultural technique."

asymmetry of knowledge. Doors produce an information gap […].”[295] He goes on, further, to discuss our “modern” doors, revolving or sliding doors, which naturally do not have handles anymore, and are translations of the movement of our times, which means being constantly mobile and sometimes even steered by an “invisible power.”[296]

Anyhow, the doors in the Munch Museum provide something that would, out of conservatory reasons, not be possible all the time: access to sensitive artworks, that can not be displayed all day long. Thus, the display doors are part of a display giving us information about the artworks that would otherwise, may not be visible at all or only temporarily be on display. Yet the way this is done recalls the big distinction in our times: In times of mass production, the unlimited access to reproductions and copies of artworks on our personal screen devices, the demand for the *real* thing, the original object, seems to get stronger. These are the objects that can only be discovered in the museum. There, they are – in theory – accessible to all, when slowly revealed in their hourly rhythm.

Conclusion

During the time of research and writing this thesis, I have visited “The Scream(s)” many times. Every single time, a new idea, especially in the Munch Museum, came to my mind, about what it exactly is that I encounter, that I see there in this separated exhibition room. Of course, several versions of “The Scream” are on display, but as mentioned, there is more to it. The reader will have noticed that I write about doors, as well as windows, being added artifacts or objects in displaying the artwork, but also protection measures. Certain feelings, from curiosity aroused by secrecy, to surprise by the slow opening and closing of doors, are coming up in the exhibition. The “door logic” allows for concealment and revelation, but never for a comparison of all the works, all the originals, together. This comparison is only given by the reproductions, situated on one wall of the exhibition room.

It could be neither door nor window. A door would allow us to enter, but we can only stay in front of the barrier to the artwork and its display. A window would enable us to see through, but we can only see inside it, merely the surface. A cabinet would allow us to open it (differently), to take something out, and the alcove, where the originals are situated, is not really deep.[297] Lastly, my

295 Siegert, 201.
296 Siegert, 202-203.
297 And too, this cabinet is not an accumulation of artifacts like *Cabinets of Curiosities*.

thoughts about elevator doors seem only to resemble the movement, the cultural technique of operating the display, here. Nevertheless, how the doors operate in this "chamber", with the famous artworks, in this process of opening and closing the display and therefore enabling access to the artworks, the possibility for the visitor to see them, is crucial for how to think about what they are, what value they have.

I have spoken about *iconizing* in this thesis, about how artworks are mediated in museums, about how they are displayed to the visitor. In the case of the Munch Museum, we see an innovative display that wants to compromise the factors that needed to be addressed, when the new museum and a new display for one of the most famous artworks were planned. Security, conservation and accessibility were key for displaying, but also the contextualization and theme the artworks would be placed in. All of these factors matter to the museum, and they matter in what is mediated to visitors – knowledge about the artworks, an aesthetic experience.

A central point in my thesis was addressing the relations between the (mobile) reproduction and the (static) original. (In a way, the display of "The Scream" provokes some disturbance in this argument: something moves here, admittedly.) Reproductions in museums have been discussed for a long time, and my literature review gave insights into how scholars and people working in museums thought about originals and photographic reproductions. For the ones, reproductions were welcome means for the distribution of knowledge and an aesthetic experience, while for the others, reproductions lacked aura and could never replace the original. These opinions might not have changed.

By describing the historical displays I wanted to underscore that the two museums discussed here, the Munch Museum and the National Museum, approached the presentation of their original artworks in different ways at different times, and that the importance and addressing of some factors played other roles than they do now. This refers back to the connection with reproductions – to see an artwork (in detail), to experience it, we basically do not need to leave our house anymore. Several possibilities – from zooming into an artwork to see the imprint of a tiny brushstroke, to virtual tours – allow us to "visit" the museum from home.

Moreover, today, reproductions surround us; they are easy to find, touch, and download; contemporary culture and technology have given us the opportunity to copy or transform them infinitely. In the museum, we often experience the counterpart of this experience: Many museums have a very scarce use of reproductions, especially inside the exhibition rooms with the originals, even when it comes to reproducing details of artworks. While museums sell merchandise, postcards, and posters, publish catalogs, and place the original's reproductions in different formats and

disguises on screens around the museums, reproductions in galleries are not often used. The Munch Museum uses reproductions in the "Scream"-room for the one reason to identify the artwork currently on display – the displays are not labeled to keep secret what could be revealed.[298] The National Museum uses kiosks with interactive screens in some other exhibition rooms, but for a classic presentation like in the Munch-rooms, they did not consider them.[299] This also translates these two museums' ambitions of how to display "The Scream(s)" and their two different understandings of not *iconizing* the artworks (too much).

How are the originals in the museums now "framed", as I was asking in the beginning? What are the values ascribed to the original artworks, communicated to the visitor through displaying them in certain ways? Although, for example, the idea of the Munch Museum to show all three versions of "The Scream" was to demonstrate that all of them are equally important[300], their presentation contributes to a different understanding, one that mediates that "The Scream" as a motif stands out quite a bit compared to the rest of the work by the artist. It *iconizes* the motif in its embedding in the separated space through its display and operating mechanism. An event-like character is created by this display, communicated to the visitors by the necessity of protecting the sensitive artworks, besides making it possible that at least one of them is visible when entering the room. However, the form of the artworks' "vanishing" behind the display doors, the creation of these opening- and closing rhythms, and the secrecy behind the display, make it a kind of "happening" when the display changes, every full hour.

The National Museum has a different approach to showing "The Scream". There, they have abandoned the idea of showing "The Scream" on a mobile wall in the middle of the room, which was one of the early proposals by the interior architects, where the artwork's backside would have been revealed, too.[301] They regarded the idea to present Munch's works without any disturbances or a form of display that would stand out much, as desirable. Furthermore, an integration of parts of his picture series, the "Frieze of Life" (in connection with keeping the tradition of the presentation in the former National Gallery alive) was decided for in the Munch-room. "The Scream" is to be seen as part of this picture series, displayed like the other works and not even in the center of the wall.

Nonetheless, both displays transport their artworks' *aura* as part of an aesthetic experience one can only have in the location of the museum. The interior architecture and provoked mood

298 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
299 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.
300 Kuhlemann Falck, interview by the author, 9 February 2023.
301 Guleng, interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

inside the exhibition rooms contribute to this. In the bigger picture, reproductions of artworks are no substitute or surrogate for the originals inside the museums. Visitors go to the museum to see the *real* artworks. Yet, inside the museum, when access or visibility is not a given feature all the time, or simply to show the way to the original, reproductions are welcome means for distribution of knowledge and visual information about the artworks on display. The Munch Museum, however, is a special case here. I want to return to the question if the museum is, in presenting "The Scream(s)", opening or closing doors to the experience of the artworks.

The display for "The Scream(s)" in the Munch Museum is, as described, a very innovative one. It compromises the demands of several of the museum's professionals (conservators, security personal, curators), and the expectations of visitors to see "The Scream". Nevertheless, to show the most famous version, the painting, is not possible all the time. Asking the question what "The Scream" really is, because they have several versions, the planning teams in the museum decided to show three versions in different media. These are to be found in a separated space inside one of the exhibition galleries, with always just one display window to be open. The intention to visualize the equal value of all the versions is there, yet this approach does not hide the fact that it is still the painting most people presumably wish to see. If they do not get to see the original, as a result of not being there at the right time, they only have the photographic reproductions provided in "The Scream"-room.

In this case, the reproductions amplify what the visitors did not see (what they have missed), because the artwork's doors were closed. Furthermore, the secret of what is waiting behind the other display doors, can only be revealed when experienced by the visitor. Thus, we are back at the dilemma with the phantom passenger, adding uncertainties to secrecy.

Limitations and further research

The research undertaken in this thesis was focused on two art museums in Oslo with similar artworks, meaning the famous versions of "The Scream" by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. Interesting in this case was that both institutions opened at new locations and with the chance for a new presentation of their collections. The thesis shows which guiding factors were playing a role for the museum professionals. The solutions found for new displays are very different in both cases, and especially the outcomes, resulting in what effects the displays have for the visitors of the museum, could be interesting to explore further, for example when focusing on quantitative or qualitative methods in visitor studies. It would be instructive for the museums, as well, to find out what their visitors think about the presentation of art in the museums.

Although I visited many other museums while doing research, I could not find any other art museum with a similar approach to displaying like the one in the Munch Museum. The examples coming close to this form of "staging" are mentioned in the thesis. Maybe this form of display can be found somewhere else soon, or another example for a surprising form of display, revealing artworks to the visitor in unexpected ways?

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The Scream: Munch Museum, edited by Ingeborg Ydstie. Oslo/Bergen: Munch-Museum/Vigmostad & Bjørke AS, 2008, 94.

Figure 26: *L'Illustration*, 26 August 1911. Empty space where Mona Lisa was mounted, Salon Carré. Louvre, Paris. Courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library.
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Figure 28: Musée du Louvre, Paris. Display of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in the Salle des États. 2019. Courtesy of Goppion Technology.
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Figure 29: Belvedere, Vienna. Display of Gustav Klimt's "The Kiss". 2023.

Figure 30: Munch Museum. "Where Can I See the Scream?". Website. Courtesy of Munch Museum.

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Figure 32: Munch Museum, Oslo. Reproduction of “The Scream” outside the Exhibition rooms. 2023.

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Mai Britt Guleng (curator of the National Museum), interview by the author, 17 February 2023.

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