

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art  
Washington, D. C.

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FOR RELEASE: Sunday Papers of  
April 6, 1947.

WASHINGTON, April 5: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announces the opening on Sunday, April 6th, of a special exhibition of woodcuts, lithographs and etchings by Paul Gauguin and Edvard Munch. It is an interesting juxtaposition, for the two artists had much in common, although Gauguin was considerably older than his Norwegian colleague. Both were influenced for a short time by Impressionism, but gradually developed their own decorative patterns which were vehicles for a personal symbolism. Gauguin withdrew to Tahiti where he found in the strange local gods and the luxuriant tropical landscape material to express his revolt against stupidity. Munch painted and drew his nervous tragic figures against a northern melancholy light. Both artists were precursors of modern art and, as such, misunderstood in their own time and are not too well known in this country even now, especially in their graphic work.

Gauguin began to make prints in 1888, probably as a result of a rubbing which he took from a piece of carved wood. He experimented with wood and metal, using the formal print mediums in a new and unconventional manner. Eleven lithographs, which were first shown in Paris in 1889 with a group of Impressionist and Synthetist paintings in opposition to the official art of the World's Fair, are included in the exhibition. Printed on bright yellow paper they represent scenes in Brittany, Arles and Martinique. Then there are a number of rare woodcuts which were made during Gauguin's first trip to Tahiti in 1891-93. Some of these prints are versions of his paintings of the same period, The Spirit of the Dead Watches, Night and Thanksgiving. The later woodcuts, made during his second trip to the South Seas, are represented by Changing Homes, Love and You will be Happy and a number of small pictures which were remembrances of Brittany.

The forty Munch prints included in the exhibition provide an excellent cross section of the artist's work in woodcutting, lithography and etching. There are a number of his very accomplished portraits in which the essential features of the sitter and a psychoanalytical interpretation of character are combined. Perhaps the most striking are the large heads of the writer, Strindberg, the poet, Mallarme, and the Self-portrait. Munch's understanding of the anxiety and apprehension of man is evident in the lithograph, The Cry, and the beautiful etching, Moonlight. A study of a Panther and Two Girls at the Shore show his feeling for the natural world. The Dream and the Vampire are examples of his preoccupation with symbolism.

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The prints by Gauguin are lent anonymously to the exhibition; the graphic work of Munch belongs to the Rosenwald Collection of the National Gallery of Art. The exhibition will close May 30th.

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