

Press release | April 2026

Maria Lassnig and Edvard Munch Flow of Paint = Flow of Life

27 March to 30 August 2026

The Hamburger Kunsthalle is for the first time showing works by Austrian artist Maria Lassnig (1919–2014) and Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863–1944) in a major double exhibition. Although the two artists are separated by half a century, they show some astounding parallels that allow us to trace Munch's influence on Lassnig's oeuvre and, conversely, to discover new aspects in the work of her predecessor. Nearly 200 paintings, works on paper, sculptures, films and photographs are presented on two floors of the Galerie der Gegenwart. They include famous paintings such as Edvard Munch's *Madonna* (1893–1895) and lesser-known works such as *Traditionskette* (1983) by Maria Lassnig, which plays a key role in the show.

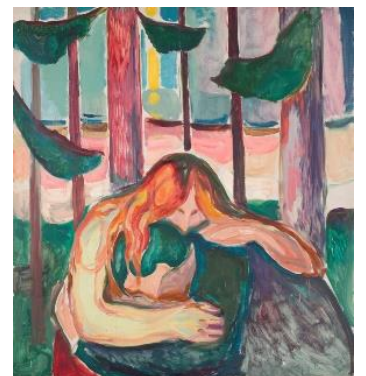
The exhibits provide insights into the two artists' biographies while painting a multifaceted picture of the period in which they lived. Munch and Lassnig not only shared an idiosyncratic handling of colour as an expressive element; intriguing similarities can also be seen in their lively brushwork and free-form experimentation with painting techniques. Under their artistic gaze, subtle sensations and unique levels of perception are transformed into a new type of imagery. Inner and outer worlds interact to create a keenly felt emotional tension that holds the viewer in its thrall. While Munch focused on major emotions – grief, despair, anxiety, anger, joy – Lassnig devoted herself in particular to physical sensibilities. The subtitle of the exhibition, *Flow of Paint = Flow of Life*, was taken from the title of an artwork by Lassnig that expresses the inseparable interweaving of art and life.

Divided into 13 chapters plus a prologue and epilogue, the exhibition takes visitors on a tour that extends outward from early self-portraits to double portraits, gender relations and more, culminating in the dimension of outer space. Exemplary themes such as images of women, the relationship between humans and animals, nature as an echo chamber, inner visions, hands, sickness and death as well as life cycles form individual stations on this choreographed circuit.

The exhibition at the Hamburger Kunsthalle is being mounted in cooperation with the Kunsthaus Zürich – the two museums with the largest Munch collections outside Oslo – and in collaboration with the Maria Lassnig Foundation in Vienna and the Munchmuseet in Oslo. Works brought together for the first time from these institutions are supplemented by loans from other international museums and private collections.



Maria Lassnig (1919–2014)
Married Couple, 2001
Oil on canvas, 100 x 125 cm
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus
and Kunstbau Munich, KiCo Collection
© Maria Lassnig Foundation / VG
Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2026



Edvard Munch (1863–1944)
Vampire in the Forest, 1916–1918
Oil on canvas, 149 x 137 cm
Munchmuseet, Oslo
© Munchmuseet, Oslo

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The varied **supporting programme** includes **audio tours** for adults in the Hamburger Kunsthalle app in German, English and Easy Language (German), spoken by Lina Beckmann and Mirko Kreibich (both actors with the Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg). A specially developed **staged reading** in cooperation with the Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg will take place on 11 and 25 June 2026. The Metropolis Kino is showing a **film programme** to accompany the exhibition in cooperation with the Hamburger Kunsthalle. **Lectures** and a *Life Talk* **panel discussion** in cooperation with the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and the Norwegian Embassy in Berlin will provide a broader perspective and delve deeper into various aspects of the exhibition. In addition to **public guided tours**, **tandem tours** with a focus on body awareness training will be regularly offered under the title *The Body in the Art of Maria Lassnig and Edvard Munch*, creating an in-depth experience of the show through a mixture of art-historical impulses and simple body-work exercises. The successful **Salon** event series continues on 16 April, featuring interesting guests addressing socially relevant topics in readings, performances, discussions and concerts. This *Salon* is dedicated in part to Lassnig's and Munch's body paintings.

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive **catalogue** (DISTANZ Verlag, 304 pages, 204 illus., German and English editions) with essays by the curators and other authors, an interview with American writer Siri Hustvedt, and texts written especially for the occasion by artists Andreas Eriksson, Sheela Gowda, Ulrike Ottinger, Ashely Hans Scheirl and Luc Tuymans. The catalogue is available in the museum shop for 38 euros as well as in bookshops (48 euros) and at www.freunde-der-kunsthalle.de.

Maria Lassnig and Edvard Munch: Flow of Paint = Flow of Life will travel from Hamburg to the Kunsthaus Zürich in a slightly modified form (2 October 2026 to 21 February 2027).

Curators: Dr. Brigitte Kölle (Hamburger Kunsthalle); Prof. Dr. Hans Dieter Huber (Guest Curator); Dr. Sandra Gianfreda (Kunsthaus Zürich) | Assistant Curator: Dr. Johanna Hornauer

An exhibition of the Hamburger Kunsthalle and the Kunsthaus Zürich.

in cooperation with:



Dr. Carsten Brosda, Hamburg Senator for Culture and Media: *»There are few things those of us working in the public sphere struggle with more than emotions. And it is emotions that form the focus of the works left behind by Edvard Munch and Maria Lassnig – half a century apart. Their images compel us to empathise with what we see, thus teaching compassion. This ability to share the feelings and emotions of another person is one key to successful coexistence among diverse individuals – something that is, unfortunately, often lacking at present. In this remarkable double exhibition devoted to Maria Lassnig and Edvard Munch, the Hamburger Kunsthalle juxtaposes the perspectives of the two artists in an unprecedented fashion, inviting visitors to engage emotionally with their works.«*

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