

Colleague Peter Andreas Munch

During the 1880s, Edvard Munch painted a number of portraits of his family members. His father and brother were both obviously complacent models. Of his brother, who later became a doctor, eight portraits exist. Five of them are privately owned, and have been traded on the private art market in recent years.

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The Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association

Peter Andreas Munch (1 July 1865–15 December 1895) was the third child of Laura (1837–1868) and Christian Munch (1817–1889). The couple had five children over a short period, two boys and three girls: Johanne Sophie (born 1862), Edvard (born 1863), Peter Andreas (born 1865),

Laura Cathrine (born 1867) and Inger Marie (born 1868).

Peter Andreas was a year and a half younger than Edvard (1863–1944), and is described as being more robust than his elder brother. Like his older siblings he was named after his grandparents, but was



Edvard Munch: *Andreas Munch studies anatomy*. 1886. Oil on ungrounded cardboard. 62 × 74,5 cm. Munch-museet MM M 202 (Woll M 134). © Munch-museet / Munch-Ellingsen Gruppen / BONO 2012. Photo © The Munch Museum.

always referred to only as Andreas (1). While illness allegedly had put a stop to Edvard's opportunities for an academic career, his brother took on this role in the family – he followed in his father's footsteps and went to medical school (2). Andreas was enrolled at the university in 1884 at age 18, and graduated as a doctor in 1891 (3). The brothers appear to have had a good relationship, and they shared a room where Andreas studied and Edvard sketched and painted (2).

Andreas' short life

Andreas had difficulties in finding a permanent job as a doctor. His greatest wish was to travel to the distant tropics as a ship's doctor. He also considered emigrating (1). However, in 1894, things started rolling in several respects. Early in the year, at age 29, he became engaged to barely 21-year-old Johanne Kinck (1873–1960), whose father was a headmaster at Lillehammer. Andreas filled in for a local town doctor, and family legend says that Johanne Kinck came to the young doctor from Kristiania with a sprained ankle, which he examined with the comment: «Oh, what shapely legs you have, miss» (1).

In the autumn of 1894, Andreas had in fact considered trying his luck in America or in the Belgian Congo, but the encounter with Johanne's ankle put a stop to these plans. For a time, he had a trainee position at Rikshospitalet (the National Hospital in Kristiania) where he earned thirty kroner a month. He applied for several positions without success, but finally that autumn he found permanent employment as a doctor in Hadsel in the Vesterålen islands. He had not forgotten his plans to travel the world; he had only delayed them until he could save some money from his practice in Nordland county. He did not enjoy the first, lonely winter up there, he confided to Edvard. It was a «dreary and strenuous life», which he did not intend to endure for many years. First, he wished to save money for the wedding and to establish himself, and then make his way to the tropics and possibly settle there with his family (1).

The wedding took place in Lillehammer on 19 April 1895. Andreas was the first and only one of the Munch siblings to marry. Shortly after, the young couple left for Vesterålen. Johanne, became pregnant, but

Andreas was still not happy. It was only the thought of the alluring journey to the South – he was now considering a one-year holiday in South America – that kept him there (1).

But he never made it to South America. In early winter Edvard Munch's only brother fell ill. He developed pneumonia and died on 15 December 1895 at the age of 30, like his mother. Johanne was seven months pregnant, and was sent south to her family in Lillehammer. In her home town she gave birth to a daughter on 20 February 1896. This girl is Edvard Munch's only known close relative of the next generation. Andrea (1896–1980) was named after the father she never had a chance to meet. The death of seemingly the most vital of the siblings was a profound shock to the entire family. Christmas 1895 was a very sad time (1). Andreas Munch is buried at the Krist cemetery in Oslo (4, 5).

«Andreas studies anatomy»

The painting *Andreas Studies Anatomy* is in the Munch Museum (Fig. 1). It cannot be dated with any certainty, but in the museum's archives it has been dated to 1883. When the picture was used as a front-page illustration for the book *Doctors and Society*, published on the occasion of the centenary of the Norwegian Medical Association, this date was given (6). However, the painting differs from the numerous small pictures of Andreas that were made during 1882/1883 in terms of both technique and motif, and it is assumed that it was painted at a later time. Since Andreas began his medical studies in 1885, it has now been dated to 1886 (7).

According to Langaard & Revold, this is «a sketch, which in its style shows an association with Munch's older colleagues, with their refined, French-inspired naturalism, although a remarkably mature work, so plain and firm in its composition, so refined in its precise balancing of hot and cold nuances» (8).

The portraits of Andreas

Edvard Munch painted a total of eight portraits of his brother. The first seven were most likely painted during the period 1882/83–1886. We have no definite information for dating the last one. It is a repetition of a previous motif, and it is believed to have

been painted for the niece's 40th birthday in 1935, as a memento of her father (7). Three of the eight portraits of Andreas are found in Norwegian public collections: The Munch Museum, The National Gallery and Rasmus Meyer's Collections. The remaining five are privately owned, and during the period 2001–2007 they were all traded on the private market (7).

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The author has completed the ICMJE form and declares no conflicts of interest.

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Received 23 November 2011, first revision submitted 3 January 2012, approved 5 January 2012.

Medical editor: Siri Lunde.