122. The Scream. Edvard Munch. 1893 C.E. Tempera and pastels on cardboard.

**Form:**
Tempera paint on cardboard: mixing traditional, high-quality tempera paint with flimsy, industrial everyday cardboard

Vibrant, strong color contrast

non-naturalistic, skewed proportions, everything swirls into itself

lots of movement and uncertainty: this is to represent the feeling of the moment (SYMBOLISM)

**Symbolist Characteristics:**
Munch sought to express internal emotions through external forms

dream-like, non-naturalistic

key elements (symbols) are exaggerated and purposefully overshadow details that are not important to the essence of the painting

color is key

**Content:**
androgynous, elongated figure screams with hands pressed to its face in the foreground

two figures walk along the bridge into the background

sea swirls into the sky, everything is streaked and blended and sketchy

power of natural forms calling to an individual

**Function:**
Semi-autobiographic: an expression of the themes that preoccupied Munch:

relationships, life, death, dread

recounts an experience he had when walking with friends

struck with a sense of melancholy at the shocking sunset

how to portray grappling with the intense cry of nature?

A study in different mediums

twenty of a series of four renditions of the same scene, called “The Frieze of Life”

each using different surfaces and materials (this final one being tempera on cardboard)

wanted to experiment with these different mediums to see how they may represent a story or a feeling differently

(see “function” for semi-autobiographic context)

Relation to Synesthesia (the synthesis of the senses): some people may associate a smell with a musical note, or a color with a smell. The Scream’s swirling synthesis of the forces of nature may reflect some understanding of or relation to synesthesia (or maybe just a general sense of being overwhelmed and pulled in different directions by natural senses)

(see “symbolist characteristics” for context of the artistic movement)