

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## The Scream: To be sold by Sotheby's

### Lead

After the Mona Lisa, Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' and Monet's water lilies, paintings don't come much more instantly recognisable than 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch – and now there's a chance to have it hanging on your wall, writes Simon de Burton.

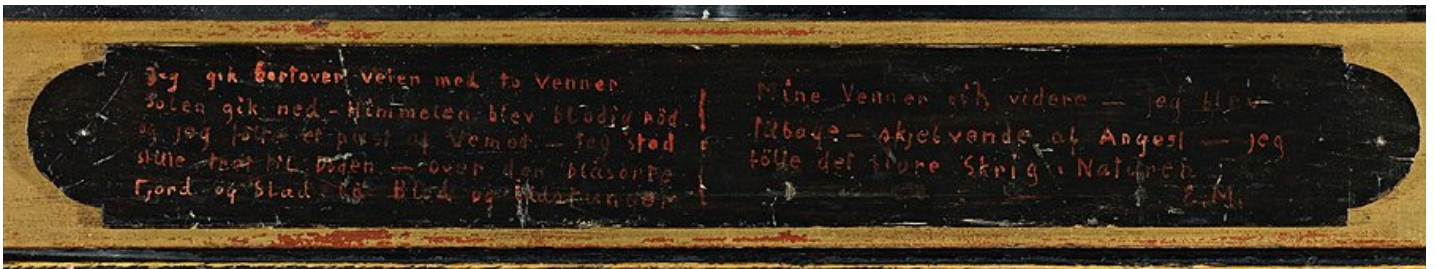
The only drawback is that you'll need at least the price of a brace of Ferrari 250 GTOs in order to be able to buy it, according to experts at Sotheby's where the celebrated image is set to fetch more than \$80 million as the star of its May sale of Impressionist and Modern Art in New York.

The 1895 pastel is being sold by Norwegian tycoon Petter Olsen of the Fred Olsen shipping line. His father, Thomas Olsen, was a friend and neighbour of Munch's and acquired The Scream directly from him more than 70 years ago – making this the first time it has been offered for sale on the open market.

Known around the world as an icon of modern art that has been reproduced on everything from posters to coffee mugs, The Scream was conceived as the central element of Munch's 'Frieze of Life' series and represents a moment when the artist was seized by an overbearing anxiety in the hills above Oslo.

The Norwegian symbolist created four versions of the work, the prime one being the 1893 oil in the National Gallery of Norway. A preliminary sketch is owned by Oslo's Munch museum along with a later oil from 1910. Both the former and latter were the subjects of high profile thefts, respectively in 1994 during the start of the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer and in 2004 when masked gunmen entered the museum and snatched both The Scream and another Munch work, Madonna. Both were recovered two years later.

The work being sold by Sotheby's is the only version of The Scream in private hands and the only one with its original frame, hand-painted by Munch and inscribed with his poem which details the anxiety attack that inspired it.



The sale of the work has aroused such interest that, within hours of it being announced, bookmaker Paddy Power was offering odds on how much it will eventually fetch. A cautious 2/1 says it will sell for \$75 - 100 million, while odds off 11/4 are offered on it smashing the \$100 million barrier up to a ceiling of \$125 million, with 6/4 being laid on it setting a new record for any work of art sold at auction – a distinction currently held by Picasso's 'Nude, Green Leaves and Bust' which went for \$106 million in 2010.

Regardless of what The Scream sells for, super-rich Olsen says he will put every cent of the proceeds towards establishing a new museum, arts centre and hotel on his farm at Hvitsten, Norway, which will be dedicated to the memory of Munch. It is scheduled to open next year to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the artist's birth – and guests will be able to stay at his former home next door, which Olsen is also paying to have restored.

The Scream will go on show at Sotheby's, London on April 13 and at Sotheby's, New York on April 27 in advance of the sale on May 2.

Photos: Sotheby's

### Gallery



**Source URL:** <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/scream-be-sold-sotheby%E2%80%99s>  
© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.