

Tuberculosis throughout History: *The* ARTS



Birth of Venus, Sandro Botticelli. Simonetta Cattaneo de Candia Vespucci, known as “la bella Simonetta,” was renowned for being the greatest beauty of her age, and she is believed to have been the model for *Birth of Venus* and several other paintings. She died from tuberculosis in 1476.

Uffizi Museum

The Sick Child, Edvard Munch. The artist completed six paintings and a number of pieces under this title. Munch returned to the theme of tuberculosis and death repeatedly over his 40-year career.

Göteborg Museum of Art



The Dead Mother, Edvard Munch. The artist lost his mother to tuberculosis when he was 5 years old in 1868. His sister, Sophie, died of tuberculosis 9 years later.

Munch Museum



Facing Death, Eugeen Van Mieghem. The artist drew his dying wife and muse, Augustine Pautre, who was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1904. Van Mieghem continued to draw Augustine until her death a year later.

Eugeen Van Mieghem Museum



Flora, Rembrandt van Rijn. In 1642 at the age of 29, the artist’s wife, Saskia van Uylenburg, probably died from tuberculosis after the birth of their fourth child. Among Rembrandt’s most moving works are his drawings of Saskia when she was sick and on her death bed.

State Hermitage Museum

Camille Sur Son Lit De Mort (Camille on Her Death Bed), Claude Monet. In his own words: “[My first wife] stares out from her shroud’s hood, half sunken in ice blue eyes as if lying in a frozen pond. She smiles slightly, but not from my comforting words. God help me, but at the time, I could only think of how to balance the blues and the grays.”

Musée d’Orsay

