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THE MORGAN CELEBRATES ACQUISITION OF THE COMPLETE THAW DRAWINGS COLLECTION WITH AN EXHIBITION OF OVER 150 MASTERWORKS

*Artists Range from Mantegna, Rembrandt, Goya, and Turner to Degas,
Matisse, and Picasso*

Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection

September 29, 2017 through January 7, 2018

Press Preview: Thursday, September 28 10:00 – 11:30 am



Francisco Goya (1746–1828), *Leave it all to Providence (Dejalo todo a la providencia)*, 1816-20, black ink and gray wash, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 1999.22.

New York, NY, August 30, 2017 — The Thaw Collection is considered among the foremost private collections of drawings assembled over the last half century. It was first promised to the Morgan in 1975 by Eugene V. Thaw, now a Life Trustee, and the museum received the full collection of 424 works in early 2017. In honor of this extraordinary gift—one of the most important in the history of the museum—the Morgan presents *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection*.

On view from September 29 through January 7, 2018, the exhibition includes more than 150 masterworks from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. A partial list of artists represented includes Mantegna, Rubens, Rembrandt, Canaletto, Watteau, Piranesi, Fragonard, Goya, Turner, Ingres, Daumier, Degas, Cézanne, Redon, Gauguin, van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, and Pollock.

“It is difficult to summarize in a few words what the acquisition of the Thaw Collection means to the Morgan but ‘transformative’ may be the best single way to describe it,” said Director Colin B. Bailey. “The great range of artists, schools, and regions represented is remarkable. Moreover, the quality of the individual drawings reflects Gene Thaw’s exceptional critical eye—and his keen intellectual curiosity. Over the years Gene’s passionate commitment to the Morgan has never wavered and we can think of no better way to honor him and his late wife, Clare, than to present this exhibition of some of the greatest works from their collection.”

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition is organized in a series of sections that illustrate key moments in the history of draftsmanship while also highlighting the work of artists whom the Thaws collected in depth, among them Rembrandt, Goya, Redon, and Degas.

I. The Renaissance and the Rise of the Artist

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a dramatic shift occurred in the theory and practice of drawing. It came to be conceived not merely as a mechanical practice but as an intellectual one associated with invention. Artists made many more preparatory drawings than ever before, and even the most sketchy, exploratory sheets came to be sought and preserved by a new class of collectors and connoisseurs.

Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506) was among the leading lights in the new generation of intellectual artists in the Italian Renaissance. His study of *Three Standing Saints* in the Thaw Collection is one of the treasures not only of the Thaw Collection, but of the Morgan’s Italian drawings collection as a whole. In the later fifteenth century, sketching like that seen in this sheet would become the defining feature of Renaissance draftsmanship, but this is a notably early example, and a rare survival from one of the most important artists of the period.



Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506), *Three Standing Saints*, ca. 1450-1455, pen and brown ink on paper toned with red chalk, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 1985.100. Photography by Steven H. Crossot.

Alongside the rise of the working drawing, Renaissance artists also created new categories of drawings that were independent pictorial works, and important examples by Albrecht Altdorfer (ca. 1480–1538) and Jörg Breu (ca. 1510–1547) are included in this section as well.



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669), *Four Musicians with Wind Instruments*, ca. 1638, pen and black ink and brown wash, and red and yellow chalk, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 2004.42.

II. Looking at the World in the Seventeenth Century

While maintaining the intellectual approach to drawing that began in the Renaissance, seventeenth-century drawing represents a revitalized interest in both observation and imagination. Often specializing in a particular subject, artists looked closely at the world around them. This naturalism can be found in many genres ranging from Claude Lorrain's landscapes to Saenredam's church interiors to Nanteuil's portraits. The greatest artists of the age, including Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), focused not only on the appearance of their subjects, but also on the emotional states evoked in the stories of these figures.

Four Musicians with Wind Instruments (ca. 1638) shows Rembrandt's experimentation with an elaborate

technique that included pen, ink, wash, and a rare yellow chalk. The lively procession of musicians in old-fashioned costumes seems to celebrate a prominent wedding or festivity. Though Rembrandt's bravura style suggests that he drew these lively figures from life in the street, recent evidence suggests that he recorded them in the studio by placing models in front of a mirror.



Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727–1804), *Scene of Contemporary Life: The Picture Show*, 1791, pen and brown and black ink and wash over black chalk, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 2017.253.

III. Contemporary Life and Fantasy in Eighteenth-Century Italy

In the eighteenth century, Italian artists developed new and distinctive types of drawings. Infused with sparkling light and even, at times, a sense of humor, these works showcase subjects that dance on the edge between fantasy and reality. Artists were also eager to illustrate astonishing views of their cities along with many imagined scenes, or *capricci*. Giovanni

Domenico Tiepolo (1727–1804) also produced sheets and series of independent drawings, which were avidly collected by a growing number of connoisseurs. In his series *Scenes of Contemporary Life*, *The Picture Show* (1791) illustrates an itinerant showman or storyteller with a guitar slung over his shoulder, attracting a crowd that contains both sailors and aristocrats. In this intriguing scene, the showman presents a picture mounted on the wall before him, but it is not clear what it represents or which story is being told.

IV. Artists Drawing Everywhere: Rococo and Enlightenment in France

In Paris and at the French Academy in Rome, drawing was a firmly established element of academic practice, but it also became a valuable tool for artists who worked mostly outside the Academy, such as Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), who produced a vast repertoire of life studies that he kept in albums for future use. These artists grew to prefer natural chalks and the exquisite effects they produced. They developed an interest in the individual and the foreign as well, which can be seen in Watteau's study of a Persian soldier. Watteau drew *A Member of the Persian Embassy* (1715) after the Persian envoy Mehmet Reza Bey and his retinue arrived in Paris to pay a visit to Louis XIV on February 7, 1715. Watteau sketched many of the members of the embassy during their six-month stay, vividly portraying their exotic clothing in drawings of red and black chalk. He drew this slender young man with a thin mustache wearing a peaked fur-trimmed cap and cloak at least twice.



Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), *A Member of the Persian Embassy*, 1715, red and black chalk, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 2000.54.

V. Visionaries: British and German Romantic Drawings

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, drawing in England and Germany became a forum for social issues and deeply subjective explorations. Artists valued expression over academic



J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851), *The Pass of St. Gotthard, near Faido*, 1843, watercolor over graphite, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 2006.52.

correctness. As drawing societies formed, it became common practice to produce, exhibit, and collect drawings. Artists embraced watercolor as a medium and investigated subjects related to literature, philosophy, history, and religion with a particular fervor. As Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), Philipp Otto Runge (1777–1810), and William Blake (1757–1827) began

earnestly exploring spirituality, Samuel Palmer (1805–1881) and J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851) searched for the divine in sublime mountain landscapes or a single oak tree.

On a tour of Switzerland in 1842, Turner traveled the Gotthard Pass in the Alps and made a rapid sketch that he showed to John Ruskin on his return to England: Ruskin promptly commissioned a finished watercolor from Turner, a work that Ruskin later described as “the greatest work he produced in the last period of his art.” *The Pass at St. Gotthard, near Faido* (1843) illustrates the melting ice that would turn the Ticino River into a torrent capable of sweeping rocks downstream.

VI. Revolutionary Artists

After the disruptive political and social upheaval that followed the French Revolution in 1789, the traditional art world established by the ancien régime collapsed; in its place, new systems, paths, and possibilities for becoming a successful artist emerged. Artists fluidly adapted varied practices and materials of drawing to their individual circumstances.

The prevalence of finished pictorial sheets suggests that drawing was held in high standing. In sketchbooks and independent sheets, Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) explored ideas for his ambitious projects, and Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) produced scenes he would revisit and revise over the years. Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) made incisive and amusing vignettes for his private albums, such as *Leave It All to Providence* from the Black Border Album (1816–20). Although the caption may carry a sardonic tone, here Goya shows empathy for the downtrodden and an awareness of the larger forces at play in life.

VII. From the Quotidian to the Sublime: Drawing in France After the Revolution

By the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists worked closely with dealers to produce a remarkable variety of finished drawings for sale at art markets and galleries in Paris. Artists were often politically engaged, creating scenes of modern life that were often infused with pathos or humor.



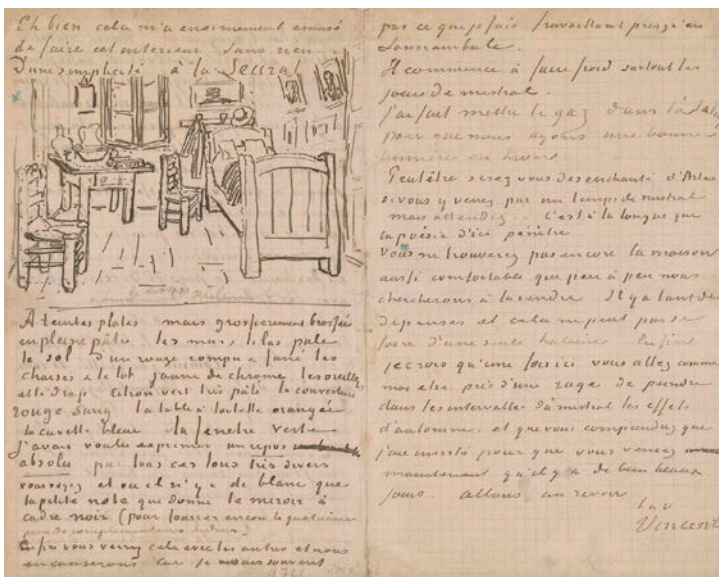
Top: Francisco Goya (1746–1828), *Leave it all to Providence (Dejalo todo a la providencia)*, 1816–20, black ink and gray wash, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 1999.22.

Bottom: Odilon Redon (1840–1916), *The Fool (or Intuition)*, 1877, charcoal with black chalk and fixative on light brown paper, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, 2010.120.

In the same era, independent artists like Odilon Redon (1840–1916) experimented with materials and developed a personal and unconventional visual language that rejected realism and embraced dark visions and emotions. Beginning in the late 1870s, Redon entered an extremely productive creative period in which he worked almost exclusively in black chalk. These so-called *noirs* began to convey an esoteric symbolism, drawing on a broad range of sources and references. *The Fool* (1877) portrays a figure that has variously been described as an embodiment of intuition, the demon Mephistopheles, and an archetypal fool. It is one of Redon’s most enigmatic imagined portraits. Here, the fool subverts expectations: instead of looking comical, his penetrating gaze and threateningly lifted fingernail appear foreboding.

VIII. Charting New Territory: Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Drawings

Avant-garde artists in France during the late nineteenth century continued to use drawing for more varied purposes than ever: not only did they record observations from life and nature, but they also used drawing to replicate compositions, rework ideas, and produce finished works for exhibition and sale. They drew on diverse media, including modern manufactured materials such as the Conté crayon preferred by Seurat, which allowed for novel effects. Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) in particular used innovative techniques in watercolor and tested the boundaries of traditional materials, while Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas (1834–1917) expanded the definition of drawing: he used thinned oil paint and applied pastel over prints.



Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890), Letter to Paul Gauguin, 17 October 1888, with a sketch of *Bedroom at Arles*, pen and brown ink on graph paper, Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum, MA 6447. Given in honor of Charles E. Pierce, Jr., 2007,

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) developed a particularly modern role for drawing: he sent letters from Arles with sketches of paintings in progress to his Parisian friends. In a letter to Paul Gauguin (ca. October 17, 1888), Van Gogh extolled the attractions of Arles and chronicled his progress on one of his masterpieces from the period, *Bedroom at Arles*, even including a sketch. He described the colors and composition of the painting as well as his intention that it “express an absolute restfulness.”

IX. Modern Forms

Twentieth-century artists continued to depict traditional subjects in conventional materials—as is evident in the portraits of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), the still lifes of Henri Matisse (1869–1954), and the

landscapes of Piet Mondrian (1872–1944). But these artists also generated new forms as a response to modern life. They reflected new ways of seeing and thinking about space, time, and movement. Cubism perhaps best demonstrates this new approach, as Picasso, Juan Gris (1887–1927), and Fernand Léger (1881–1955) began to challenge the very notion of drawing with inventive techniques such as collage.

This paved the way for artists like Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) to experiment with levels of abstraction and to explore the subconscious and the irrational. *Untitled [Drawing for P.G.]* (ca. 1943) is an important example of the fusion of primitivism and modernism that characterized Pollock's art in the first half of the 1940s. This drawing reveals the wide range of his sources, from the masklike figures, mythic animals, and pictographs of primitive art to the imagery and style of Paul Klee (1879–1940) and Picasso. This sheet is dedicated to Peggy Guggenheim, who played a vital role in fostering Pollock's career. The sheer diversity of his influences—from Native American art and Mexican mural painting to Picasso, Surrealism, and Jungian theory—indicates just how much drawing has evolved throughout the course of Western art.



Jackson Pollock (1912 - 1956), *Untitled [Drawing for P.G.]*, ca. 1943, pen and black ink and wash, green ink wash, red colored pencil, and orange watercolor pencil © 2017 The Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Eugene Thaw and the Morgan

One of the leading art dealers of his day, Eugene Thaw, who was born in Manhattan's Washington Heights neighborhood, initially was drawn to contemporary artists before focusing on major masters of the first decades of the twentieth century. He soon expanded his range to include earlier work, with a particular penchant for nineteenth-century French artists. Not long after his marriage to Clare Eddy in 1954, he was encouraged by his wife to keep some of the drawings for which he was particularly enthusiastic, and their private collection began to take shape.

Thaw acquired these great objects from a variety of sources: from art dealers and their galleries, through fellow collectors, at bookshops, and, perhaps most spectacularly, at auction. A major early purchase, in 1980, was the rare sheet by the Renaissance master Andrea Mantegna that set a record price for a drawing by the artist. Later, Thaw had the opportunity to acquire one of the last significant landscape drawings by Rembrandt still in private hands.



Eugene V. Thaw (left) with Morgan Director Colin B. Bailey, 2016. Photograph by Graham S. Haber.

The Thaws first became involved with the Morgan in the 1960s. The relationship deepened during the tenures of Morgan directors Charles Ryskamp (1969–86) and Charles E. Pierce, Jr. (1987–2007). In 1975, on the occasion of the collection's first exhibition at the Morgan, the Thaws announced that they were making a promised gift of their drawings.

Over the years Thaw has contributed other important works to the Morgan including a superb group of landscape oil sketches which the museum shares with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He also gave a collection of early Medieval ornamental objects currently installed in the McKim building's North Room, and a cache of nineteen illustrated letters by Vincent van Gogh to his protégé, Émile Bernard.

In addition to his gifts of art, Eugene underwrote the museum's state-of-the-art Thaw Conservation Center, which opened in 2002. He also endowed two galleries in his wife's name—most recently, the Clare Eddy Thaw Gallery in 2006. His donation in 2011 helped establish the Morgan's Drawing Institute, a center for the study of works on paper. In 2013, an additional gift endowed the position of the Eugene and Clare Thaw Curator in the Department of Drawings and Prints.

In discussing his passion for collecting and his gift to the Morgan, Thaw said, "All true collectors want a group of works that reflects their own taste and judgement of what's best. But critical to this drive or need to accumulate objects that excite the eye and mind, and to put them in order, is also the art of sharing them. I can think of no better place to do that than the Morgan Library & Museum."

Public Programs

CONCERT *Drawn to Song: The Glimmerglass Festival*

To parallel the history of draftsmanship in *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection*, artists from The Glimmerglass Festival will perform a program reflecting the history of the art song. Selections will include songs and poetry by composers and writers contemporary to the artists featured in the Thaw collection.

Wednesday, October 11, 7:00pm*

Tickets: \$25; \$20 for Morgan and Glimmerglass Festival members.

*The exhibition *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection* will open at 6:00 pm for program attendees.

GALLERY TALKS

Renaissance and Baroque Drawings

John Marciari, Charles W. Engelhard Curator and Department Head, Drawings and Prints
Friday, October 13, 1pm

Eighteenth Century Drawings

John Marciari, Charles W. Engelhard Curator and Department Head, Drawings and Prints
& Jennifer Tonkovich, Eugene and Clare Thaw Curator of Drawings and Prints
Friday, November 3, 1pm

Nineteenth-century French Drawings

Jennifer Tonkovich, Eugene and Clare Thaw Curator of Drawings and Prints
Friday, December 1, 1pm

Italian, Dutch, and Flemish Drawings

Ilona van Tuinen, Annette and Oscar de la Renta Assistant Curator of Drawings and Prints & Marco Bolzoni, Moore Curatorial Fellow
Friday, December 8, 7pm

LECTURES

***Collecting Drawings in the Twentieth Century: An Insider's Diary* Noël Annesley**

Noël Annesley, Honorary Chairman, Christie's Fine Art, London, began his career at Christie's auction house in London in 1964 and has followed the market in old master drawings for over half a century, witnessing its highs and lows and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Join us for an evening of behind-the-scenes tales of great collectors and the masterpieces they pursued. Organized by the Drawing Institute in conjunction with *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection*.

Wednesday, October 25, 6:30pm*

Tickets: \$15; \$10 for members; free for students with valid ID.

The exhibition *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection* will open at 5:30 pm for program attendees.

***Hans Calmann and the American Market for Old Master Drawings, 1937–1973* Jennifer Tonkovich**

Between the advent of the Second World War and the 1970s, the international market for old master drawings grew exponentially, supported by an emerging generation of professionally trained curators in America. At the forefront of this craze for collecting drawings was the German-born and London-based art dealer Hans Calmann (1899–1982). Jennifer Tonkovich, Eugene and Clare Thaw Curator of Drawings and Prints, explores Calmann's role during the vital decades of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s as American museums embraced the collecting and display of works on paper. Organized by the Drawing Institute in conjunction with *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection*.

Wednesday, December 6, 12pm*

Tickets: \$15; free for members and students with valid ID.

*The exhibition *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection* will open for program attendees.

ADULT WORKSHOPS

Drawing Greatness: Techniques of Ink and Wash

Join artist and educator Simon Levenson, National Arts Club drawing instructor, for this two hour drawing and painting workshop. Following an exhibition tour of *Poussin, Claude, and French Drawing in the Classical Age* and *Drawn to Greatness: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection* participants will explore various techniques artists employ when drawing with ink and painting with washes.

Friday, October 6, 6-8pm

Tickets: \$45; \$35 for members.

Sketching in the Gallery

Spend two hours sketching, drawing inspiration from works in the Morgan's current exhibitions. Professional artists and educators will be available to assist you. Open to artists of all levels.

Saturday, September 9, 11 am–1 pm

Saturday December 9, 11 am–1 pm

Susan Stillman, Artist and faculty member of Parsons The New School for Design

Saturday October 14, 11 am–1 pm

Saturday November 4, 11 am–1 pm

Simon Levenson, Artist and National Arts Club instructor

Tickets: Free with museum admission.

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Old Masters Rock: How to Look at Art with Children

Have you ever been unsure how to explain a work of art to a child? Learn how to talk about art as a family with author Maria-Christina Sayn-Wittgenstein Nottebohm. Join her for an informal talk about the fun, magical world of exploring paintings and drawings for children, in addition to a conversation in the Morgan's galleries so families can practice their observation skills. A book signing of *Old Masters Rock: How to Look at Art with Children* follows the program.

Saturday, November 18, 11 am–12:30pm

Tickets: \$10; \$5 for members. Each ticket is valid for one child and up to two adults; Program consists of a thirty-minute informal talk and a thirty-minute gallery conversation. A book signing of *Old Masters Rock: How to Look at Art with Children* follows the program. Appropriate for ages 6–14.

Organization and Sponsorship

Drawn to Greatness is organized by the Morgan Library & Museum, New York. The curator of the exhibition is Jennifer Tonkovich, Eugene and Clare Thaw Curator of Drawing and Prints.

Lead Corporate Sponsor:

Morgan Stanley

The exhibition and catalogue are also made possible by a major gift in honor of Eugene V. and the late Clare E. Thaw and in memory of Melvin R. Seiden, generous support from Cosima Pavoncelli, the Ricciardi Family Exhibition Fund, and the Franklin Jasper Walls Lecture Fund, and assistance from the ADA Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Clement C. Moore II.

Drawn to Greatness is a program of the Drawing Institute.

The programs of the Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



Council on
the Arts

The Morgan Library & Museum

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, music venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. A century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, and the 2010 refurbishment of the original library, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

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