

THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM
MARKS REMBRANDT'S FOUR-HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY
WITH PAIR OF EXHIBITIONS

Shows Celebrate the Morgan's Outstanding Collection
of Rembrandt Etchings and Superb Holdings of Dutch Drawings

New York, NY, June 12, 2006—The Morgan Library & Museum is noted for having the finest collection of Rembrandt etchings in North America. This summer, the Morgan commemorates Rembrandt's four-hundredth birthday by mounting two exhibitions—*Celebrating Rembrandt: Etchings from the Morgan* and *From Rembrandt to van Gogh: Dutch Drawings from the Morgan*—on view July 15 through October 1, 2006.



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *Self-Portrait in a Cap*, acc. no. RvR 442.

Celebrating Rembrandt: Etchings from the Morgan

To celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (1606–1669), The Morgan Library & Museum presents highlights from its exceptional collection of Rembrandt etchings. Pierpont Morgan laid the foundation for this collection—the finest in North America—when he acquired his first Rembrandt etchings from Theodore Irwin, Sr., in 1900 and George W. Vanderbilt in 1906. Today the Morgan holds impressions of most of the three hundred or so known etchings by Rembrandt as well as multiple, often exceedingly rare impressions of various states. The exhibition showcases some of the most celebrated etchings from the collection along with a few lesser-known and rarely exhibited examples.

Renowned in the history of printmaking, Rembrandt's etchings are famous for their dramatic intensity, penetrating psychology, and touching humanity. Celebrating his unsurpassed skill and inventiveness as a master storyteller, the exhibition addresses some of the central and often recurring themes of the master's

work, including portraiture, the Bible, scenes from everyday life, the nude, and landscape.

Celebrating Rembrandt opens with a selection of Rembrandt's early portraits, created mostly while he was still a student in Leiden. His own face was often the focus of these spirited works, primarily exercises in lighting, technique, and, above all, expression. Sensitive renderings of the artist's own family—his elderly mother; first wife, Saskia; and son, Titus—are also on display. Biblical depictions, the largest and arguably most important category of Rembrandt's etched work, are also featured. Subtle shifts in mood and meaning will be illustrated in the different states of *Christ Presented to the People* and *Christ Crucified Between Two Thieves* ("The Three Crosses"). Other key highlights, such as *Adam and Eve*, *Jacob Caressing Benjamin*, *Abraham Entertaining the Angels*, and *Abraham's Sacrifice*, will demonstrate the unique perspective Rembrandt brought to these biblical accounts. Also showcased is the Morgan's pristine impression of one of Rembrandt's most ambitious compositions, *Christ Preaching*, popularly known as "The Hundred Guilder Print."

Rembrandt was fascinated with the social outcast and those on the fringes of Dutch society. Key examples of this genre on view include *Beggar Man and Woman Behind a Bank* and *Beggars Receiving Alms at the Door of a House*. Among the depictions of individuals participating in everyday activities are *The Skater* and an example of a more earthy nature, *The Monk in the Cornfield*. In his later years, Rembrandt continued to produce striking, often introspective portraits, such as the *Self-Portrait*, *Etching at a Window*, of which the Morgan possesses the rare first and second states. Etchings of friends and contemporaries include *Jan Six*, the Dutch patrician and collector, who is depicted reclining gracefully against a windowsill reading by sunlight.

A section on landscape etchings illustrates how Rembrandt captured the spirit of the Dutch countryside—often inserting charming hidden details—in works such as *The Three Trees*, *Cottages and Farm Buildings with a Man Sketching*, and *Landscape with Trees, Farm Buildings, and a Tower*.

Celebrating Rembrandt: Etchings from the Morgan is organized by Dr. Anne Varick Lauder, Moore Curatorial Fellow, department of Drawings and Prints, The Morgan Library & Museum. The exhibition is accompanied by a twenty-page illustrated publication, *Collecting Rembrandt: Etchings from the Morgan*, by Dr. Anne Varick Lauder. The essay traces the history of the Morgan's Rembrandt collection, relating some of the stories behind Pierpont Morgan's first purchases during the American Gilded Age while also showcasing the institution's important holdings of Rembrandt etchings.

From Rembrandt to van Gogh: Dutch Drawings from the Morgan

This exhibition presents highlights from The Morgan Library & Museum's outstanding collection of Dutch drawings from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. When Pierpont Morgan purchased the Fairfax Murray collection of old master drawings in 1909, he acquired one of the most substantial groups of Dutch drawings from the seventeenth century—the golden age of Dutch art—as well as important sheets by eighteenth-century artists. Since the Morgan's founding in 1924, the collection has grown significantly and now extends into the nineteenth century. The Morgan today preserves one of the most comprehensive groups of Dutch drawings in the country. Comprising approximately forty drawings spanning three centuries, the exhibition celebrates the contemporaneous publication of the catalogue raisonné of the Morgan's Dutch drawings.



Willem van Mieris, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, purchased on the Sunny Crawford von Bülow Fund, acc. no. 2001.46.

From Rembrandt to van Gogh opens with drawings by seventeenth-century artists active in Holland. Principal themes of Dutch art emerge in portraits by David Bailly and Jan Lievens, marine views by Hendrick Avercamp and Ludolf Bakhuizen, and pastoral scenes by Nicolaes Berchem. A concern for natural history is revealed in a drawing of tulips by Anthony Claesz. II and a study of a camel by Samuel van Hoogstraten. Genre scenes of alehouse interiors by Adriaen van Ostade reveal the humorous aspect of Dutch art. Rembrandt's achievement as a draftsman is represented by four sheets, accompanied by selections from the Morgan's rich collection of drawings by the artist's pupils, that serve to illustrate the master's influence. The Dutch landscape is a recurrent subject in exhibited drawings by Rembrandt, Jacob van Ruisdael, Abraham Rutgers, and Anthonie Waterloo.

The continuing tradition of draftsmanship during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is chronicled by a selection of sheets, including Italian landscape views by Isaac de Moucheron, a genre scene by Cornelis Troost, a powerful head study by Jacob de Wit, pastoral scenes by Aert Schouman and Jacob van Strij, and a watercolor view of the interior of the Oranjezaal (a room in the royal château Huis ten Bosch) by Tieleman Cato Bruining. A luminous *vanitas* image on vellum by Herman Henstenburgh and a robust study of flowers by Jan van Huysum are characteristic of the ongoing interest in still-life subjects. The exhibition concludes with landscapes by Johan Barthold Jongkind and by Vincent van Gogh, the greatest Dutch-born artist of the nineteenth century.

From Rembrandt to van Gogh: Dutch Drawings from the Morgan is organized by Jennifer Tonkovich, Associate Curator of Drawings and Prints, The Morgan Library & Museum. The exhibition is accompanied by the catalogue *Dutch Drawings in the Morgan Library: Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, by Jane Shoaf Turner, which documents, discusses, and reproduces the more than four hundred drawings from this period in the Morgan's collection.

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, musical and performing arts venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. Nearly 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, the Morgan reaffirms its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twentieth century.

225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street
New York, NY 10016-3405
(212) 685-0008
www.themorgan.org

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day

Admission

\$12 for adults
\$8 for students, seniors (65 and over) and children (under 16)
Free to Members and children 12 and under accompanied by an adult
Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m.
Admission to the McKim rooms is without charge during the following times: Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m.;
Friday, 7 to 9 p.m.; Sunday, 4 to 6 p.m.
Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop

Press Contacts

Patrick Milliman
Pam Angelopoulos
The Morgan Library & Museum
212-590-0312
media@themorgan.org