

**THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM'S HISTORIC MCKIM
BUILDING TO UNDERGO FIRST MAJOR INTERIOR
RESTORATION SINCE ITS CONSTRUCTION IN 1906**

*BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED ROOMS OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
WILL PROVIDE INCREASED EXHIBITION SPACE FOR THE DISPLAY OF
MASTERPIECES FROM THE MORGAN'S COLLECTIONS*

**McKim Building Closes June 1, 2010
Reopens to the Public on October 30, 2010**

New York, NY, May 13, 2010—Beginning in June 2010, The Morgan Library & Museum's iconic McKim building will undergo the most extensive restoration of its interior spaces since its construction more than one hundred years ago. Providing new and expanded exhibition space for the institution, the project will enable the Morgan to share more treasures from its world-renowned permanent collection with the public. The building, designed by the firm of McKim, Mead, and White, was once the private study and library of financier Pierpont Morgan. It is considered one of New York's great architectural treasures and its interiors are regarded as some of the most beautiful in America. The building will reopen to the public on Saturday, October 30. All other areas of The Morgan Library & Museum will remain fully operational during the course of the project.



Mr. Morgan's Library. Photography by Todd Eberle. © 2006 Todd Eberle.

Following the Morgan's successful 2006 expansion by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano—the largest in the institution's history—the \$4.5 million refurbishment of the 1906 McKim building's majestic interiors will restore and refresh the historic center of the institution. The project encompasses all of the McKim's rooms and exhibition spaces. Key components include new lighting throughout the building to better illuminate its extraordinary murals and décor; the opening of the North Room to visitors for the first time; installation of new exhibition cases to house rotating displays of masterpieces from the Morgan's collections; restoration of period furniture and fixtures; and cleaning of the walls and applied ornamentation.

“The McKim building is the heart and soul of The Morgan Library & Museum,” said William M. Griswold, the Morgan director. “Not only does it embody the taste and vision of the museum’s founder and patron, Pierpont Morgan, but its beautiful rooms over the years have become synonymous with all that makes the Morgan special. No visit is complete without a tour of the McKim building and now, with this ambitious project and the installation of some of the Morgan’s outstanding treasures, that experience will be greatly enhanced.”

Room by Room Summary

Library (East Room)

Pierpont Morgan’s stunning, multi-tiered library, also known as the East Room, will be equipped with a state-of-the-art, yet subtle new lighting system; a newly installed, late-nineteenth-century Persian rug of the type originally in the room; and newly designed display cases that will be used to exhibit some of the Morgan’s most valued objects from its medieval holdings and renowned collections of rare books and literary, historical, and music manuscripts.

The revamped lighting will allow visitors to fully appreciate the splendor of the library’s decorative ceiling, the work of noted muralist Henry Siddons Mowbray (1858–1928), as well as the room’s grand fireplace and the sixteenth-century tapestry that constitute its focal point.

The inlaid walnut bookshelves that contain Morgan’s collection of rare books will be enhanced with non-reflective plexiglas, allowing visitors to better identify individual titles and to appreciate the beauty of the exquisite bindings.

An original pendant chandelier, preserved since its removal about 70 years ago, will be restored and re-hung at the entrance to the library, and seating will be installed to allow visitors to spend more time contemplating this extraordinary room.

Study (West Room)

The Study, or West Room, will be enriched by a more substantive display of works from the collection that surrounded Pierpont Morgan in the early 1900s when he used the room for personal business, as well as with objects that have been acquired since.



Mr. Morgan's Study. Photography by Todd Eberle. © 2006 Todd Eberle.

Another change will be to allow visitors to look into the vault that Morgan had built to house his favorite objects. A curtain currently shrouding the entrance will be removed, new lighting fixtures will be installed, and the shelves of the vault will be filled with original storage boxes as well as books and small works of art.

Additional works of sculpture will be exhibited on the low bookshelves lining the perimeter of the room and the lush, velvet-covered furnishings will be painstakingly reupholstered to evoke the atmosphere of the original study.

North Room

The North Room, the office of the Morgan's first director, Belle da Costa Greene, will open to the public for the first time and will be transformed to display the earliest works in the Morgan's collection, including objects from the ancient Near East, Egypt, Rome, and Greece, as well as artifacts from the early medieval period.

Bookshelves along the perimeter of the room will be converted to exquisitely lit cases to exhibit these items, which will include a selection of the ancient Near Eastern seals collected by Pierpont Morgan. The installation also includes jeweled and metalwork objects, dating from the second to the tenth centuries, from the collection of Morgan Trustee Eugene V. Thaw and his wife, Clare, as well as an eleventh-century jeweled book binding. The room will house a number of freestanding cases for additional objects as well.

The original chandeliers, removed two generations ago, will be refinished and reinstalled, allowing for the recently cleaned ceiling and upper tier of bookcases to be fully appreciated. Also, two Egyptian basalt votive figures will be on new pedestals flanking the room's fireplace.

Rotunda

The marble surfaces and mosaic panels that are signature features of the McKim Rotunda will be cleaned. New lighting will simulate the natural light that originally came through the oculus and will enhance the Mowbray-decorated apse, ceiling, and lunettes that depict figures from classical antiquity and the great literary epochs of the past.

The space will also be enriched with new display cases housing some of the Morgan's collection of Americana, including such great works as autograph letters by Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, the Morgan's life mask of George Washington, and copies of the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Star-Spangled Banner*.

About the Project Team

Jennifer Tonkovich, curator of Drawings and Prints at The Morgan Library & Museum, is coordinating the reinstallation of collection objects in the McKim building.

Exhibition Design: Stephen Saitas, Stephen Saitas Designs

Stephen Saitas Designs, New York has designed more than 175 installations and exhibitions in museums, galleries, historic houses, and libraries since the firm's establishment in 1982. Recent projects include the reinstallations of the European and American collections for The Huntington, San Marino, CA; and the reinstallation of the American Wing period rooms for The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Lighting Design: Richard Renfro, Renfro Design Group, Inc.

Renfro Design Group, Inc., established in 1998, is an architectural lighting design firm. Recent projects include the Bloch Building addition to The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art; Craig Thomas Discovery Visitor Center at Grand Teton National Park; and The American Wing Gallery at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Architect of Record: Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP

Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners, which worked with the Morgan on its 2006 expansion, has been responsible for the restoration and revitalization of many significant buildings and sites, including Grand Central Terminal, Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Rockefeller Center, the Empire State Building, Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse, and the Rubin Museum of Art.

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, more than a century after its founding, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. Located at Madison Avenue and 36th Street, with a world-renowned collection that ranges from Rembrandt to Picasso, Mozart to Bob Dylan, Dickens to Hemingway, and Gutenberg Bibles to Babar the elephant, The Morgan Library & Museum maintains a unique position among cultural institutions in New York, the nation, and the world.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum

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. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

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 is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey

through August 1, 2010

Magna Carta

through May 30, 2010

*Written in Stone: Historic Inscriptions from the
Ancient Near East, ca. 2500 B.C.–550 B.C.*

through September 5, 2010\

Defining Beauty: Albrecht Dürer at the Morgan

May 18–September 12, 2010

Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design

May 21–August 29, 2010

Mark Twain: At Home and Abroad

September 17, 2010–January 3, 2011

Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968

September 24, 2010–January 2, 2011

Degas: Drawings and Sketchbooks

September 24, 2010–January 23, 2011

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