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**EUGENE V. AND CLARE THAW TO GIVE OIL SKETCH  
COLLECTION JOINTLY TO THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM  
AND THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART**

*Range of Artists Includes such Notables as Constable, Corot, and Valenciennes*

**Donation Continues Collectors' Deep Philanthropic Commitment to Two of New  
York's Major Institutions**

**New York, NY, January 23, 2009**—Noted collectors Eugene V. and Clare Thaw announced today the intention to give their collection of 135 oil sketches jointly to The Morgan Library & Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Thaws are longtime donors to both institutions and Mr. Thaw is a trustee of the Morgan and an honorary trustee of the Metropolitan Museum.



John Constable, *Hampstead Heath with Bathers*, ca. 1821-22, oil on canvas, The Thaw Collection, The Morgan Library & Museum. Photography by Schechter Lee.

Oil sketches are a fertile field of art historical inquiry. Mostly executed on paper adhered to canvas, they occupy a place literally between paintings and drawings. These small-scale works reveal artists' explorations of form, light, and color, and reflect the challenge of capturing the ephemeral elements of nature.

On January 23, the Morgan will present thirty-six sketches that chronicle the development of this practice during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the exhibition, *Studying Nature: Oil Sketches from the Thaw Collection*. The show will be mounted in the Morgan's Clare Eddy Thaw Gallery. An additional selection of forty oil sketches from the Thaw collection are on view at the Metropolitan Museum in the recently restored European paintings galleries.

"Gene and Clare Thaw have given generously to the Morgan for more than thirty years," said William M. Griswold, Director of the Morgan. "We are honored to receive this wonderful collection of oil sketches and look forward to caring for and displaying it jointly with the Metropolitan Museum. These works provide a glimpse into the world of the working artist, and will both give pleasure to generations of museum visitors and create an important opportunity for new scholarship."

“We are pleased that this collection of oil sketches will go to two museums with which we have had long and fruitful relationships,” said Eugene V. Thaw. “The Morgan is known for its outstanding work with drawings and the Met, of course, has one of the greatest paintings collections in the world. These unique works are related to both media so it is particularly appropriate that they reside at these renowned institutions.”

In 1975, the Thaws promised their superb drawings collection to the Morgan. Since that time, the Morgan has mounted five exhibitions of works on paper collected by Mr. Thaw, including a current show, *The Thaw Collection of Master Drawings: Acquisitions Since 2002*, simultaneously with the oil sketches exhibition.

*Studying Nature* begins with the late-eighteenth-century pioneers, such as Pierre-Henri Valenciennes (1750–1819), Simon Denis (1755–1813), and Francois-Marius Granet (1775–1849), continues with strong representation of nineteenth-century practitioners, including Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875) and John Constable (1776–1837), and concludes with the late stages of the oil sketch concurrent with the dawn of Impressionism, with works by Eugène Isabey (1803–1886) and Charles-François Daubigny (1817–1878). The show features works by French, British, German, Belgian, Scandinavian, and Italian artists working in both their native lands and abroad.

Among the works on view are Jean-Michel Cels’s *Clouds and Blue Sky*, one of a group of eight studies of clouds and sky that Cels executed between 1838 and 1842, and John Constable’s *Hampstead Heath with Bathers* (ca. 1821–22), a study of the sky emphasizing cloud morphology and weather effects. Using a distinctive palette of dark and light greens and gray with pink accents, Corot executed *The Hills of Genzano* while working outdoors during the summer of 1826; he later reprised the same view in a deliberately constructed composition with a rider and peasants. Such works reveal the wide range of technique and function of the landscape oil sketch during this period.

A day-long symposium devoted to new research on oil sketches, inspired by works in the Thaw Collection and presented by an international team of scholars, is scheduled for Saturday, January 24.

#### **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 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, 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.

### **General Information**

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405

212.685.0008

[www.themorgan.org](http://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 Monday, 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.