

FACTSHEET

- Exhibition:** *Drawing Babar: Early Drafts and Watercolors*
- Press Preview:** Thursday, September 18, 2008, 10 a.m. until noon
- Dates:** September 19, 2008, through January 4, 2009
- Summary:** The creation of Babar, the protagonist of a family bedtime story that became one of the most successful children's series of all time, is the focus of a major exhibition only at The Morgan Library & Museum. On view are more than 170 works, including original manuscript drafts, sketches, and watercolors for the first book by each of Babar's two authors, Jean and Laurent de Brunhoff. The exhibition explores the working methods of two men—father and son—who, fifteen years and a generation apart, created an iconic fictional character, French in style but universal in spirit, whose green suit and yellow crown have become recognizable to children and adults throughout the world.
- Content:** The exhibition features an extraordinary series of drawings and manuscript material acquired by the Morgan in 2004, including nearly all surviving working drafts for *Histoire de Babar, le petit éléphant* (The Story of Babar the Little Elephant, 1931), the first book by Jean de Brunhoff (1899–1937), and for *Babar et ce coquin d'Arthur* (Babar's Cousin: That Rascal Arthur, 1946), the first book written and illustrated by Laurent de Brunhoff (b. 1925), Jean's son. The development of such iconic episodes as the marriage of Babar and Celeste and the purchase of his signature green suit is traced from preliminary pencil sketches to splendid finished watercolors. Also on view are a dozen first edition titles of the early Babar books and a selection of later watercolors by Laurent de Brunhoff.

Jean de Brunhoff *Histoire de Babar* collection:

- 54-page maquette (small book), complete with covers, title page, draft text and illustrations
- 55 preliminary drawings
- 32 final watercolors and printer's dummy pages

Laurent de Brunhoff *Babar et ce coquin d'Arthur* collection:

- 40 preliminary drawings
- 27 final watercolors and printer's dummy pages

Interactive Display

The exhibition includes a digital facsimile of Jean de Brunhoff's maquette for *Histoire de Babar*, a small illustrated booklet that he made at the mid-point of his composition process. An enhanced version of the facsimile, with full transcriptions of the draft text in French along with English translations is available on the Morgan's website. This is the first time the full contents of the maquette are made accessible to the public.

Catalogue: The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, also entitled *Drawing Babar: Early Drafts and Watercolors*, published by the Morgan and written by Christine Nelson, the Morgan's Drue Heinz Curator of Literary and Historical Manuscripts. The catalogue includes an essay by Adam Gopnik of *The New Yorker* and a foreword by William M. Griswold, the Morgan's director. A free family guide will also be available.

Organization and Sponsors:

The exhibition is organized by Christine Nelson, Drue Heinz Curator of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum.

Drawing Babar: Early Drafts and Watercolors is made possible by The Florence Gould Foundation.

Chilton Investment Company, Inc. is the corporate sponsor.

Generous support is provided by The Grand Marnier Foundation, T. Kimball Brooker, The American Society of the French Legion of Honor, Inc., Hubert and Mireille Goldschmidt, and Barbara and James Runde.

We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of the Consulate General of France in New York and the Cultural Services of the Embassy of France in New York.

Education and Programs:

The Morgan offers a number of special programs held in conjunction with its exhibitions. For more information, please contact the Education department at (212) 590-0333.

During the run of the exhibition the Morgan will present a full slate of events, including gallery tours, family and school programs, lectures, and a narrated concert presentation of Francis Poulenc's 1940 adaptation of *Histoire de Babar*.

About the Morgan:

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. 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 new 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.

Hours and

Location:

Tuesday to Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday, 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 and 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:

Adults \$12; children (under 16) \$8; seniors (65 and over) \$8; students (with current ID) \$8; free to members and children 12 and under (must be 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.

General

Information:

(212) 685-0008 or www.themorgan.org

For further information please contact:

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