

**THE FRED EBB BEQUEST OF
EXPRESSIONIST DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLORS ON VIEW AT
THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM**

****Press Preview: Thursday, April 19, 2007, 9 a.m. until noon****

New York, NY, March 6, 2007—An extraordinary collection of forty-three early-twentieth-century German and Austrian drawings by some of the leaders of the German expressionist movement and the Vienna Secession will go on view at The Morgan Library & Museum from April 20 through September 2, 2007.



Karl Hubbuch, *The Film Star Spends Two Minutes in Her Parents' Garden*, ca. 1932, The Pierpont Morgan Library, bequest of Fred Ebb, 2005.136.

The exhibition, entitled *From Berlin to Broadway: The Ebb Bequest of Modern German and Austrian Drawings*, is drawn from a collection formed by Broadway lyricist Fred Ebb (1928–2004), and includes drawings by Max Beckmann (1884–1950), Egon Schiele (1890–1918), Otto Dix (1891–1969), George Grosz (1893–1959), Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980), and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938). In total, twenty-two artists from the period are represented in the Ebb collection, which is shown in its entirety.

Most of the drawings and watercolors date from 1910 to 1925, when expressionism dominated the avant-garde in Germany and Austria. The exhibition will therefore be an important occasion to reassess the vital role this movement played in the development of modern art at the beginning of the twentieth century. The earliest work in the exhibition is a moving depiction of an old peasant woman by Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876–1907). Executed ca. 1899, it continues to reflect the realist tendencies of the second half of the nineteenth century.

At the other end of the chronological span of the exhibition, the most recent work is a drawing created by Max Beckmann in 1947, soon after his arrival in the United States, where he would spend the last three years of his life. This unsettling vision of a New York nightclub epitomizes the mood of many works in the exhibition, in which the figures appear to be hovering between happiness and tragedy. Urban entertainment, a frequent theme of German expressionism, held special significance for Fred Ebb and is also represented in his collection by a watercolor of street musicians by Grosz as well as by a humorous drawing by Karl Hubbuch entitled *The Film Star Spends Two Minutes in her Parents' Garden*.



Max Beckmann, *Nightclub in New York*, 1947, The Pierpont Morgan Library, bequest of Fred Ebb, 2005.122. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/IMG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

A particular strength of the Ebb collection is its large number of portraits, including a powerful self-portrait of Erich Heckel (1883–1970) in his studio (1912) and another by Schiele (1910) in which the disembodied head of the artist, with typically tormented features, seems to be floating in a dramatic, spare composition. The largest number of works by a single artist in the Ebb bequest is the eight drawings by Schiele, four of which are portraits. They display the tense poses characteristic of the artist. Other important figural compositions in the exhibition include the social and political satires of Grosz and Dix, whose *Pimp and Girl* (1923) is a vivid example of the combination of violence and eroticism frequently found in his depictions of the seamier side of urban life.

Expressionist artists often addressed similar subjects; their styles, however, could be widely divergent, ranging from the quickly sketched, angular forms of Kirchner's strolling figures to the delicate and decorative line of Gustav Klimt's (1862–1918) nudes. Many drawing techniques—pencil, charcoal, ink—are represented in the exhibition, which includes a concentration of watercolors, a medium that, in the words of the author of a recent catalogue “often conveys, in the grand period of German expressionism, the purest rendering of the spiritual essence of the epoch.”

“This superb collection formed by Fred Ebb and generously bequeathed to the Morgan underscores our commitment to acquiring and exhibiting twentieth-century art,” said Charles E. Pierce, Jr., Director of The Morgan Library & Museum. “We are grateful to Joan Fisher for

helping us obtain this collection. Most of the drawings in the collection have not been publicly exhibited for nearly thirty years and some have never been reproduced. As a group they offer new insights into a movement that had tremendous influence on modern art.”

Ebb began assembling his collection in the late 1960s, following the success of *Cabaret*, the Broadway musical he cowrote with composer John Kander in 1966. Kander and Ebb collaborated for forty years, producing many other musicals, notably *Zorba* (1968), *Chicago* (1975), *Woman of the Year* (1981), and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1992). They also composed popular songs, such as “New York, New York,” the title song of Martin Scorsese’s 1977 film of the same name. Ebb’s interest in German popular music of the twenties and thirties, reflected in *Cabaret*, which takes place in Berlin between the two world wars, led him to collect art of the period.



Erich Heckel, *Seated Man (Self-Portrait)*, 1912. The Pierpont Morgan Library, bequest of Fred Ebb, 2005.134. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

From Berlin to Broadway: The Ebb Bequest of Modern German and Austrian Drawings is organized by Isabelle Dervaux, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Drawings, The Morgan Library & Museum.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Morgan will publish a fully illustrated catalogue that documents the entire bequest. This publication, which will also include reminiscences of Fred Ebb by John Kander and an introduction by Isabelle Dervaux, will be an important contribution to the literature on German and Austrian expressionism.

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. 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 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

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.

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.

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