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Draftsmen of the Medici Court
Drawings from the Morgan

February 29 through April 27, 2008

New York, NY, February 22, 2008—As a complement to its current exhibition *Michelangelo, Vasari, and Their Contemporaries: Drawings from the Uffizi*, The Morgan Library & Museum presents from its rich permanent collection a select group of related works by artists at the court of Duke Cosimo I dei Medici (1519–1574). *Draftsmen of the Medici Court: Drawings from the Morgan* is on view from February 29 through April 27, 2008 in the Clare Eddy Thaw Gallery.

In addition to appointing the artist-historian Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) to manage the redecoration of Palazzo Vecchio—an icon of earlier republican Florence and home to the ducal family—Cosimo engaged leading sixteenth-century Florentine artists in a variety of projects that celebrated his rule and ancestry. Francesco dei Medici (1541–1587), Cosimo’s eldest son and heir, continued this illustrious tradition of patronage.

The exhibition includes drawings by such masters as Andrea del Sarto (1486–1530), Vasari, and Francesco Salviati (1510–1563). Commanding and intense, the magnificent *Head and Shoulders of a Bearded Man* (1540s) by Salviati served as the basis for the figure of an apostle in the artist’s painted *Incredulity of St. Thomas* at the Louvre. Vasari’s two figure studies in black chalk and two ceiling designs in pen and ink for Palazzo Vecchio—including the elaborate ceiling design for the Sala di Lorenzo—illustrate the artist’s consummate skill as a draftsman and inventor of laudatory imagery. Also featured is Macchietti’s (1535–1592) stunning *Allegory of Charity with Five Children* (1560s/70s) on green paper, whose jewellike refinement reflects the decorative style of the paintings in the Studiolo of Francesco. A costume study by Bernardo Buontalenti (1531–1608), Giovanni Maria Butteri’s (1540–1606 OR 1608) *Allegory of Agriculture*—a rare study for part of a triumphal arch erected on the occasion of a Medici wedding (1565)—and Jacopo Zucchi’s (1540–1596) design for a catafalque, one of several erected throughout Italy upon the death of Cosimo in 1574, complete the selection.

The drawings are accompanied by personal letters by Vasari and Agnolo Bronzino (1503–1572) that describe their work for the Medici court. Two volumes from the 1568 edition of Vasari's *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects), the first written history of Italian art, frame the display thematically and visually. Viewed together, these rare examples of image and word reveal the central role that draftsmanship played in the artistic culture of the Renaissance.

This exhibition is made possible by Fay and Geoffrey Elliot.

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. 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.