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**THE ART AND POETRY OF NATURE—NEW MORGAN
EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT’S
INFLUENCE ON LANDSCAPE AND GARDEN DESIGN**

*SHOW INCLUDES MAGNIFICENT PRINTS AND DRAWINGS BY EUROPEAN AND
AMERICAN LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS, INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL PROPOSALS
FOR CENTRAL PARK BY FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED AND CALVERT VAUX*

**Also Featured are Works by J. M. W. Turner, William Wordsworth, John Ruskin,
and Other Leaders of the Romantic Movement**

Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design, On View May 21–August 29

****Press Preview: Thursday, May 20, 2010, 10 a.m. until noon****

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New York, NY, March 5, 2010—

Scenic vistas, winding paths, bucolic meadows, and rustic retreats suitable for solitary contemplation are just a few of the alluring naturalistic features of gardens created in the Romantic spirit. Landscape designers of the Romantic era sought to express the inherent beauty of nature in opposition to the strictly symmetrical, formal gardens favored by aristocrats of the old regime.



Joseph Constantine Stadler (active 1780–1812) after Humphry Repton (1752–1818). *The General View from the Pavilion, folding aquatint in Repton's Designs for the Pavilion at Brighton*. London: Printed for J. C. Stadler and sold by Boydell and Co., etc., 1808. Bequest of Julia P. Wightman, 1994; PML 152316

The Romantics looked to nature as a liberating force, a source of sensual pleasure, moral instruction, religious insight, and artistic inspiration. Eloquent exponents of these ideals, they extolled the mystical powers of nature and argued for more sympathetic styles of garden design in books, manuscripts, and

drawings, now regarded as core documents of the Romantic Movement. Their cult of inner beauty and their view of the outside world dominated European thought during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

This important episode in artistic and cultural history is the subject of *Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design*, on view from May 21 through August 29, 2010, at The Morgan Library & Museum. The exhibition features approximately ninety highly influential texts and outstanding works of art, providing a compelling overview of ideas championed by the Romantics and also implemented by them in private estates and public parks in Europe and the United States, notably New York's Central Park.

“The landscapes represented in the exhibition are extraordinary in every respect; they are novel, beautiful, and often breathtaking in scale,” said William M. Griswold, director of The Morgan Library & Museum. “One can follow the genesis and dissemination of new design approaches from their beginnings in the private estates of the European aristocracy to the great city parks of America, where Central Park is perhaps the best example. Drawings and literary works from the period offer viewers interesting and unexpected connections with a wide range of prominent artists in the forefront of Romanticism.”

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

Drawn from the Morgan's holdings of manuscripts, drawings, and rare books as well as lavishly illustrated landscape albums from private and other public collections, the exhibition attests to the artistic creativity and intellectual ferment of the era, a time when technological advances in book production greatly enhanced the transmission of ideas. Steel engravings in William Cullen Bryant's *Picturesque America* (1872–74) helped to celebrate the scenic splendors of this country. Lithographs in Prince Pückler-Muskau's *Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1834) depict the improvements he made in his vast estate at great expense—his “parkomania” eventually drove him into debt and compelled him to sell the garden paradise he had created.

Also on view are two manuscript “Red Books” by Humphry Repton (1752–1818), the leading landscape architect of his time and author of theoretical treatises greatly admired by Pückler and other European connoisseurs. In these publications and the Red Books (known for their characteristic red bindings), Repton developed a technique of showing before-and-after views of picturesque scenery so that his readers and



Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) and E. C. Miller, *Archway under Carriage Drive*, lithograph, frontispiece in *Third Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park*, January 1860. New York: Wm. C. Bryant & Co., 1860. Collection of Elizabeth Barlow Rogers.

clients could see at a glance what he expected to accomplish.

The proposals of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux for the design of Central Park can be seen in their famous “Greensward” plan (1858), a large and detailed pen-and-ink drawing they submitted to a competition organized by the park commissioners. For their prize-winning “entry no. 33,” they also prepared presentation boards with the “present outlines” in photographs attributed to Mathew Brady and the “effect proposed” in oil sketches made by Vaux. Two of the twelve presentation boards are on display.

The exhibition includes literary manuscripts for important Romantic and Pre-Romantic works, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s hugely popular novel, *Julie, ou, La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), which introduced highly influential theories of landscape design. Equally influential was Alexander Pope’s *Epistle to Lord Burlington* (1731), a verse satire admonishing wealthy proprietors of country estates to scorn self-indulgent follies and respect the “Genius of the Place,” the natural beauty of the terrain. Here, too, the author’s original manuscript will be shown.



Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), *Moonlit Landscape*, watercolor on paper; moon cut out and inserted on a separate piece of paper; laid down on cardboard, ca. 1830. Thaw Collection: 1996.150.

Landscape art of the Romantic era expressed a reverence for nature and aesthetic ideals also apparent in garden design of that period. Among the drawings on view are such Romantic masterpieces as Caspar David Friedrich’s *Moonlit Landscape* (ca. 1830) and J. M. W. Turner’s *The Pass at St. Gotthard* (1843), which formerly belonged to the art critic John Ruskin. Turner’s drawing is shown in conjunction with Ruskin’s manuscript of *Modern Painters*, which defends the work of Turner—just one of many cultural connections revealed in this exhibition.

ORGANIZATION AND SPONSORSHIP

Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design is organized by John Bidwell, Astor Curator and Department Head of Printed Books and Bindings at The Morgan Library & Museum; Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, founding president of the Central Park Conservancy and president of the Foundation for Landscape Studies; and Elizabeth S. Eustis, a faculty member in the Landscape Institute of the Boston Architectural College.

This exhibition is underwritten by the Johansson Family Foundation.

Generous support is provided by Janine Luke and Melvin R. Seiden, as well as by The Bodman Foundation, Charles C. Butt, The Chilton Foundation, the Heineman Foundation for Research, Educational, Charitable and Scientific Purposes, Inc., and Deutsche Lufthansa AG.

The catalogue is made possible by The Foundation for Landscape Studies; the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts; Patrick and Elizabeth Gerschel; Furthermore, a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund, Inc.; the German Consulate General in New York; the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York; and the Andrew W. Mellon Fund for Research and Publications.



The Morgan exhibition program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

PUBLICATION

The catalogue for the exhibition, which was prepared by co-curators Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, Elizabeth S. Eustis, and John Bidwell, contains a book-length essay along with numerous color illustrations and descriptions of more than eighty objects in the exhibition.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Music and Dramatic Reading

In the Romantic Garden: An Evening of Literary and Musical Works

Join us for an evening of dramatic readings and music inspired by the Romantic Movement and literary manuscripts featured in the exhibition. Actors Paul Hecht (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, 1776*), Barbara Feldon (*Get Smart, Smile*), and Richard Easton (*The Invention of Love, Revolutionary Road*) will recite works by Emerson, Goethe, Rousseau, Coleridge, and Wordsworth with musical interludes performed by musicians from The Julliard School. **Friday, June 25, 7:30 PM**

Lectures and Discussions

Great Romantic Landscapes: Central Park and Olana

This panel of expert historians and historic landscape stewards will explore the relationship between two of America's greatest nineteenth-century Romantic landscapes: Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Central Park, and Olana, Frederic Church's villa and landscape garden. Speakers include Sara Cedar Miller, Central Park Conservancy Historian and Photographer and author of *Central Park: An American Masterpiece*; Katherine H. Kerin, Olana Landscape Curator; Evelyn D. Trebilcock, Olana Curator. Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, President, Foundation for Landscape Studies, will moderate. This program is cosponsored by The Olana Partnership, Central Park Conservancy, and Foundation for Landscape Studies. **Wednesday, May 26, 2010, 6:30 PM**

How Romantic is Now? Spotlight on Contemporary Landscape Design

Leading landscape architects and practitioners discuss the influence of the nineteenth-century landscapes of Frederick Law Olmsted and others on their work. Participants include Douglas Reed, Partner, Reed Hilderbrand; Michael Van Valkenburgh, Principal, Michael Van Valkenburgh & Associates; Thomas Woltz, Partner, Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects; and Patrick Cullina, Vice President of Horticulture and Operations, the High Line; in conversation with Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, President, Foundation for

Landscape Studies. This program is cosponsored by the Foundation for Landscape Studies. **Wednesday, June 2, 6:30 PM**

Films

The Secret Garden

(1993, 101 min) *Director:* Agnieszka Holland

Based on the classic children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, this feature film tells the story of orphaned Mary Lennox (Kate Maberly), who has been sent to live with her uncle (John Lynch) in a gloomy house in Yorkshire, England. Mary stumbles upon a neglected garden and enlists the help of a local boy, Dickon (Andrew Knott), to bring it back to life, creating a magical and healing place. The cast of this enchanting tale includes Heydon Prowse as Mary's sickly cousin Colin and Maggie Smith as the housekeeper, Mrs. Medlock. **Saturday, July 17, 2 PM**

A Man Named Pearl

(2006, 78 min) *Director:* Scott Galloway

A Man Named Pearl is the inspiring story of self-taught topiary artist Pearl Fryar, who transformed his three-and-a-half acre garden in Bishopville, South Carolina into a wonderland of beautiful and unusual abstract shapes. Fryar's garden has not only had a positive economic impact on his impoverished town, his artistry makes a simple and compelling statement about community, diversity, and love. **Friday, July 23, 7 PM**

Family Program

Story in the Garden

Escape into the world of romantic gardens with Tricia Martin, President, New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Following a tour of the exhibition, children will translate garden and park illustrations from their favorite stories into models using task board, foam board, a variety of mosses and lichen, and other materials. Please bring a favorite book to provide inspiration for the art project. Appropriate for ages 6–12. **Saturday, June 12, 2–4 PM**

Adult Workshop

Romantic Rooftops

This hands-on workshop, led by Tricia Martin, President, New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, will focus on translating the ideals of the romantic garden into practical designs for sustainable New York City rooftop gardens, exploring the timelessness of important pervasive patterns such as gateway, allegory, juxtaposition and borrowed landscape. After a short tour of the exhibition, the participants will be provided with material to construct a portable model of a rooftop garden. **Friday, June 18, 6:30–8:30 PM**

Gallery Talks

Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design

Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, President, Foundation for Landscape Studies, and John Bidwell, Astor Curator and Department Head, Department of Printed Books and Bindings, The Morgan Library & Museum
Friday, June 4, 7 PM

Guided docent tours of the exhibition are available for visitors.

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. More than 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 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.