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THE MORGAN PRESENTS NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORING ROME THROUGH THE EYES OF ARTISTS AND WRITERS OF THE ROMANTIC ERA

City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics
June 17 through September 11, 2016

New York, NY, April 27, 2016—During the one hundred year period from 1770 to 1870, often called the Romantic Era, hosts of artists traveled to Rome and witnessed the most dramatic transformation of the Eternal City since ancient times—from papal state to the capital of a unified, modern nation. Painters such as Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and J. M. W. Turner, writers such as John Keats and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and a coterie of early photographers were among those who documented the city's historical sights and monuments amidst what amounted to a massive project of urban renewal.

City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics, a new exhibition at the Morgan Library & Museum opening June 17, explores the broad sweep of artistic responses to this extraordinary period in Rome's history. Featuring a variety of media—including drawings, prints, books, manuscripts, letters and photographs—the show demonstrates the continuing hold magnificent ruins and scenic vistas had on artists, even as the need for new government buildings and improved transportation would alter some of these sights forever. At the same time, the exhibition looks at work by individuals who found the changing contemporary scene alluring and who captured the evocative interaction between daily street life and the layers of Roman history forever in the backdrop.



Thomas Hartley Cromeck (1809–1873), *The Via Sistina and the Palazzo Zuccaro from the Trinità dei Monti*, Watercolor over graphite, with scraping, 1830. The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of the Fellows. Photography by Graham S. Haber.

“Today, we are fascinated by how rapidly cities change and how neighborhoods go through a cycle of development and destruction, which seems to occur almost overnight,” said Colin B. Bailey, director of the Morgan Library & Museum. “*City of the Soul* brings us to such a moment in one of the world’s greatest cities, Rome, seen from the vantage point of artists, writers, and photographers. The Morgan’s diverse collections of art and literature, supplemented with select loans from public and private sources, allow us to tell this story in a particularly engaging manner.”

THE EXHIBITION

I. The Greatest Theater in the World

In the nineteenth century, Italian nationalist and founding father Giuseppe Garibaldi characterized the view of Rome from the Janiculum Hill as “the greatest theater in the world.” Garibaldi’s metaphor embraces the full sweep of history, the rich interplay of past and present, and it was this urban palimpsest that so attracted Romantic-era artists and writers. Many were drawn to the city’s ruins and eternal qualities, while others sought out the current social and cultural milieu.

Turner’s *Interior of St. Peter’s Basilica* employs transparent washes to capture the atmospheric effects of the grand structure. The flood of light descending from Michelangelo’s dome seems almost palpable as it casts into relief the spiral columns of Bernini’s baldachin in the distant crossing. Turner understood that the titanic architecture of St. Peter’s is not so much an exercise



Left: Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851), *Interior of St. Peter’s Basilic.*, Watercolor, over traces of pencil, on board. The Morgan Library & Museum, Thaw Collection. Photography by Steven H. Crossot. Right: Robert Turnbull Macpherson (1814–1872), *The Spanish Steps*, Albument print, ca. 1856. Collection W. Bruce and Delaney H. Lundberg. Photography by Graham S. Haber.

in the deployment of mass and surface as it is about the molding of space, which flows freely through the nave, aisles, and crossing. The artist introduces diminutive human figures to establish the colossal scale of the basilica, which was often criticized in the nineteenth century.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the Piazza di Spagna became the hub around which hotels, lodging houses, and shops catering to tourists and foreign residents were situated. Robert Turnbull Macpherson's ca. 1856 photograph *The Spanish Steps* shows this center of activity. In 1820 John Keats spent the last three months of his life in a house overlooking the steps—partially visible on the right. The piazza was also the center of the artists' quarter. The Caffè Greco, where Macpherson regularly met with other photographers and artists, is nearby. The concentration of foreigners and artists around the Spanish Steps also attracted a picturesque population of beggars and models.

II. Speaking Ruins

Romantics approached Rome's history and monuments more emotionally and less analytically than their Renaissance and Enlightenment predecessors. The association of ruins entailed much more than crumbling masonry and marble fragments. In the mid-eighteenth century, fresh from a trip to Rome, Giovanni Battista Piranesi remarked, "Speaking ruins have filled my spirit with images." Lord Byron, after a visit to the Colosseum, would evoke living nature amidst the decrepit structure. "Dead walls rear/their ivy mantels," he wrote.



Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875), *The Arch of Constantine and the Forum*, Oil on paper, mounted to canvas (lined), 1843. The Frick Collection, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Victor Thaw. © The Frick Collection.

Painting in oil, Corot shared certain concerns with early photographers, including the manipulation of contrast. *The Arch of Constantine and the Forum* (1843) represents a remarkable fusion of solid structure and intangible, atmospheric space. The arch anchors the left side of the composition. The oblique view casts into bold relief its projecting elements, especially the columns and attic statues. Balancing the arch on the right side are the massive ruins of the Temple of Venus and Rome.

III. Rus in Urbe: Villas, Gardens, and Fountains

The ancient Roman poet Martial coined the phrase *rus in urbe* to characterize urban estates offering the pleasures of the “countryside within the city.” Prior to 1870, Rome’s garland of villas blurred the distinction between the city proper and the landscape of the Campagna beyond, and much of the city was given over to formal gardens and vineyards. Cattle even grazed on the site of the Forum.

The gardens of the Villa Borghese, situated just outside the Aurelian Walls, were a favorite subject for landscape painters of the nineteenth century. Gustav Wilhelm Palm’s *Entrance to the Giardino del Lago, Villa Borghese, Rome* (1844) depicts one of the allées defined by ilex trees, laid out in the 1780s by Prince Marcantonio Borghese. Statues from the family’s extensive collection of ancient sculpture define the entrance to a portion of the garden known as the *Giardino del Lago*.



Left: Gustav Wilhelm Palm (1810–1890), *Entrance to the Giardino del Lago, Villa Borghese, Rome*, Oil on paper, mounted to canvas, 1844. Thaw Collection, jointly owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Morgan Library & Museum. Photography by Schecter Lee. Right: Alfred-Nicolas Normand (1822–1909), *Statue of the Goddess Roma in the Gardens of the Villa Medici*, Salt print from a waxed paper negative, 1851. Collection W. Bruce and Delaney H. Lundberg. Photography by Graham S. Haber.



Left: Thomas Jones (1742–1803), *View of the Villa of Maecenas at Tivoli and the Villa d'Este at Tivoli*, Watercolor, with gouache, over graphite, 1777. The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased on the Sunny Crawford von Bülow Fund. Photography by Steven H. Crossot. Right: Louis-François Cassas (1756–1827), *Landscape with Arch of Drusus*, Pen and brown ink, and watercolor, over black chalk, 1778. The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by Pierpont Morgan. Photography by Steven H. Crossot.

Alfred-Nicolas Normand's *Statue of the Goddess Roma* (1851) is a photograph of a colossal sculpture in the gardens of the Villa Medici, the gift of a pope to a cardinal in the Medici family. In Normand's day, it was situated on the central axis of the garden so its silhouette could be viewed against the sky. The soft focus and grainy quality of Normand's prints produce remarkably atmospheric and painterly effects.

IV. Magick Land

In the nineteenth century, the rolling hills of the Campagna studded with ruins were mostly deserted. The landscape painter Thomas Jones poetically characterized this picturesque combination of nature and classical architecture as "magick land." The views offered countless prospects for artists.

Louis-François Cassas traveled extensively throughout the Mediterranean basin, producing drawings and watercolors that provided the basis for richly illustrated publications. He created a unique blend of archaeological site description with local color and dramatic reconstructions of ancient sites, such as *Landscape with Arch of Drusus* (1778). Depicting an arch on the Appian Way, Cassas in true Romantic spirit took liberties with his composition providing the structure with an expansive surrounding landscape which does not exist in reality.

V. Written from Rome

The Romantic image of Rome was as much the product of writers as of visual artists. The literary genre of the romance allowed novelists and poets to intertwine the real and the magical, the

present and imagined past, as in Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1860 Rome-based *The Marble Faun*, the last of his four major works.

The same might be said of travel diaries and letters, which mix description with impression. In a diary kept by Lord Byron, the great poet writes, "My first impressions are always strong and confused, and my memory *selects* and reduces them to order, like distance in the landscape, and blends them better, although they may be less distinct." A letter by British novelist Wilkie Collins written on hotel stationery in January 1864 provides a highly personal evocation of Rome at the time. He describes seeing Pope Pius IX while taking snuff and characterizes the basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere as "a mysterious, awful and ancient place."

VI. From Drawing and Etching to Photography

Upon their departure, many visitors wished to take back with them portable distillations of the Eternal City. Over time, engraving, etching, lithography, and, finally, photography – all of which were capable of producing multiple images – met this demand.

Piranesi, arguably the most inspired interpreter of Rome in any age, cast a long shadow that extended temporally well beyond his death in 1778. His iconic etching *View of the Ponte Sant'Angelo and Castel Sant'Angelo* (1750-51) presents a vista looking down the Tiber past the Castel Sant'Angelo and its bridge to the dome of St. Peter's. While Piranesi's work was often sold as loose sheets, tourists and collectors frequently had them bound in sumptuous folio volumes to take with them as they returned home.



Left: Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), *View of the Ponte Sant'Angelo and Castel Sant'Angelo*, Etching, 1750-51. Vincent J. Buonanno Collection. Photography by Graham S. Haber. Right: Gioacchino Altobelli (1814–after 1878), *The Tiber with Castel Sant'Angelo and St. Peter's*, Albumen print from glass negative, ca. 1868. Collection W. Bruce and Delaney H. Lundberg. Photography by Graham S. Haber.

The immediacy of plein-air painting, in the form of watercolors and oil sketches, influenced early photographers, many of whom came to the fledgling medium from training in the fine arts. By 1870, photography had displaced prints and paintings as popular souvenirs of Rome, at precisely the time when other new technologies – the railroad and steamship – were making it possible for increasing numbers of tourists to visit the city. Gioacchino Altobelli shrewdly composed his ca. 1868 photograph of the Castel Sant’Angelo mindful of Piranesi. The picture brings the viewer close to the fisherman in the foreground, a “local color” element that would have been appreciated by the photographer’s customers—affluent tourists who were then flocking to Rome with their Baedekers.

Public Programs

CONCERT

Chamber Orchestra of New York

The Chamber Orchestra of New York with Music Director Salvatore Di Vittorio perform a musical program inspired by works in the exhibition *City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics*.

Rameau, Castor et Pollux Suite
Respighi, Ancient Airs and Dances N. 3 for strings
Di Vittorio/Liszt, La Villa d’Este at Tivoli (world premiere)
Mozart, Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 “Jupiter”

Thursday, June 23, 7:30 pm*
Tickets: \$35; \$25 for members.

*The exhibition *City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics* will open at 6:30 pm for concert attendees.

GALLERY TALK

City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics

*John Pinto, Howard Crosby Butler Memorial Professor of Art and
Archaeology Emeritus, Princeton University*

Friday, July 1, 6:30 pm
Tickets: All gallery talks and tours are free with museum admission; no tickets or reservations necessary.

FILM

La Dolce Vita

Director: Federico Fellino
(1960, 174 minutes)

In one of the most widely seen and acclaimed European movies of the 1960s, Federico Fellini featured Marcello Mastroianni as gossip columnist Marcello Rubini. Having left his dreary provincial existence behind, Marcello wanders through an ultra-modern, ultra-sophisticated, ultra-decadent Rome. A huge worldwide success, *La Dolce Vita* won several awards, including a New York Film Critics Circle award for Best Foreign Film and the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival. The short film *Trevi* (Corey Shaff and Richard P. Rogers, 1988, 17 minutes) precedes the screening.

Friday, July 15, 7 pm*

Tickets: Exhibition-related films are free with museum admission. Advance reservations for members only. Tickets are available at the Admission Desk on the day of the screening.

*The exhibition *City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics* will be open for program attendees before the screening.

LECTURE

Rome on the Cusp of the Modern Era: 1849–1870

David Kertzer and Megan Marshall

In 1849, Rome was under siege. Giuseppe Garibaldi and his followers rallied to the defense of the newly proclaimed Roman Republic, while a French expeditionary force fought to restore the pope. As the battle raged, the American correspondent Margaret Fuller was present in Rome and chronicled the dramatic events in her letters and dispatches. Explore this turbulent year and the events that eventually led to Rome becoming the capital of unified Italy with two Pulitzer Prize-winning biographers, David Kertzer, Dupee University Professor of Social Science at Brown University and author of *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* and *The Pope and Mussolini*, and Megan Marshall, Charles Wesley Emerson College Professor at Emerson College and author of *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life*. The program will be introduced and moderated by the guest curator of the *City of the Soul* exhibition, John Pinto, Howard Crosby Butler Memorial Professor of Art and Archaeology Emeritus at Princeton University.

Thursday, July 21, 6:30 pm*

Tickets: \$15; \$10 for members; free for students with a valid ID.

*The exhibition *City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics* will be open at 5:30 pm for program attendees.

GALLERY TALK

City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics

John Pinto, Howard Crosby Butler Memorial Professor of Art and Archaeology Emeritus, Princeton University

Friday, July 29, 6:30 pm

Tickets: All gallery talks and tours are free with museum admission; no tickets or reservations necessary.

FILM

Roman Holiday

Director: William Wyler
(1953, 119 minutes)

Filmed on location in Rome, *Roman Holiday* garnered an Academy Award for the 24-year-old Audrey Hepburn. On a diplomatic visit to Rome, Princess Anne (Hepburn) escapes her royal retainers and scampers incognito through the Eternal City. She meets American journalist Joe Bradley (Gregory Peck), who, recognizing a hot news story, pretends that he doesn't recognize her and offers to give her a guided tour of Rome.

Friday, August 12, 7 pm*

Tickets: Exhibition-related films are free with museum admission. Advance reservations for members only. Tickets are available at the Admission Desk on the day of the screening.

*The exhibition *City of the Soul: Rome and the Romantics* will be open for program attendees before the screening.

Exhibition Catalogue

Co-published by the Morgan Library & Museum and the University Press of New England, the accompanying catalogue will describe more the sixty objects in the exhibition and will contain more than eighty color illustrations.

Organization and Sponsorship

The curator of the exhibition and the author of this catalogue is John A. Pinto, Howard Crosby Butler Memorial Professor of the History of Architecture, Emeritus, at Princeton University. The organizing curator is John Bidwell, Astor Curator of Printed Books and Bindings.

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ROMA

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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, music 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, and the 2010 refurbishment of the original library, 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.

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