

Press Contacts

Michelle Perlin
212.590.0311, mperlin@themorgan.org

Patrick Milliman
212.590.0310, pmilliman@themorgan.org

NEW MORGAN EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE WORK OF A LONG LOST RENAISSANCE ILLUMINATOR TO THE FRENCH QUEEN

EXHIBITION FEATURES A DIMINUTIVE PRAYER BOOK
AND BOOK OF HOURS CREATED IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Miracles in Miniature: The Art of the Master of Claude de France
May 30–September 14, 2014

New York, NY, May 22, 2014—In the first two decades of the sixteenth century, in the French city of Tours, one of the greatest artists in the long history of medieval and Renaissance illumination created a series of works that represented a remarkable last flowering of the hand-written and hand-painted book.

Forgotten for centuries, the artist came to be known as the Master of Claude de France—named after two jewel-like manuscripts he painted for Queen Claude de France (1499-1524), first wife of King François I: a tiny Book of Hours and an even tinier Prayer Book. *Miracles in Miniature: The Art of the Master of Claude de France*, on view at the Morgan Library & Museum from May 30 through September 14, is the first time the public can see these two stunning works together since their creation almost five hundred years ago.



Trinity and Adoring Choirs of Angels

Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
Prayer Book of Queen Claude de France; France, Tours, ca. 1517
The Morgan Library & Museum; MS M.1166 (fols. 24r-25)
Gift of Mrs. Alexandre P. Rosenberg, in memory of her husband
Alexandre Paul Rosenberg.
Photography by Schechter Lee.



Month of May
 Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
 Album of Calendar Miniatures, France, Tours, ca. 1517-20
 The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.1171, (fol. 5)
 Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2013.

Known for a style of utmost delicacy, the artist's signature palette of subtle lilacs, mauves, and roses, juxtaposed with chartreuse and royal blue, are applied in almost invisible brushstrokes. The exhibition will include not only the two eponymous books, but also a selection of additional works by the Claude Master, notably twelve calendar miniatures recently acquired by the Morgan, which also owns the Prayer Book. Loans from two private collectors and the Free Library of Philadelphia will also be on view, along with manuscripts by Jean Bourdichon, the Claude Master's teacher, and by Jean Poyer and Jacques Ravaud, two artists active in Tours who influenced him. Many of the Claude Master items have never been exhibited and represent newly discovered additions to the artist's body of work.



Annunciation, with the coat of arms of Queen Claude de France in the lower border
 Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
 Prayer Book of Queen Claude de France; France, Tours, ca. 1517
 The Morgan Library & Museum; MS M.1166 (fol. 18v)
 Gift of Mrs. Alexandre P. Rosenberg, in memory of her husband Alexandre Paul Rosenberg.

"The art of the Master of Claude de France is of such extraordinary quality it is almost impossible to imagine that it went unrecognized for hundreds of years," said William M. Griswold, Director of the Morgan Library & Museum. "Bringing his Prayer Book and Book of Hours together, along with several other pieces, represents a unique opportunity for museum-goers to experience the exceptional beauty and refinement of his work."

The Exhibition

The illuminator known as the Master of Claude de France was not "identified" until 1975 when New York rare book dealer H.P. Kraus acquired the Prayer Book and the Book of Hours and asked art historian Charles Sterling to write a monograph about their painter.



Border of Personal Emblems of Claude de France
 Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
Hours of Claude de France, France, Tours, ca. 1517
 Heribert Tenschert, Bibermühle (Switzerland)
 (fol. 87v)
 Photography by Ina Nettekoven.

Sterling named the artist and definitively established that the two manuscripts were created for Queen Claude, first wife of French King François I (1494-1547). The Prayer Book contains Claude's coat of arms three times and nearly every page is framed by a decorative *cordelière*, a personal emblem she inherited from her mother, Queen Anne de Bretagne. The Book of Hours, in turn, contains both Claude's and François's *cordelières* as well as several other personal emblems.

Stylistically, both works exhibited a sense of light and air, with delicate, but bright hues, and charming, doll-like figures. Claude herself commissioned both the Prayer Book and the Book of Hours around the time of her coronation in 1517. Since the 1970s, the Claude Master's oeuvre has expanded, with works in the British Library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the Huntington Library attributed to him, along with manuscripts and leaves from other public and private collections.

As more of his work has been identified, additional aspects of his artistic approach have been articulated. It is evident that the Claude Master preferred to work on a small scale and his figures are almost childlike, expressing themselves with quiet, restrained gestures. His forms tend toward less detail and more abstraction, and his borders are usually filled with flowers, antique candelabras, or Italianate architectural elements. Importantly, recent study has revealed his training under Jean Bourdichon, official court painter to four successive French kings. Other Tours artists, Jean Poyer and Jacques Ravaud, as well as the Italian illuminator Giovanni Todeschino, also influenced the Claude Master.

The Prayer Book

Claude's Prayer Book, with 132 scenes, holds a unique position in his overall work because of the rich use of historiated borders throughout. Such borders—where pictures are inserted around the text—are *the* defining element of the Prayer Book. Claude herself chose this design because the borders reminded her of a book she received as a child from her mother. The Prayer Book

opens with a series of Gospel Lessons followed by a sequence of illustrations of Christ's Passion. Prayers to the Virgin Mary constitute the next section where the influence of Leonardo da Vinci's famed *Madonna of the Rocks* can be seen in a miniature painting of a young Christ on Mary's lap gesturing towards a kneeling John the Baptist. The final section of the Prayer Book is the largest, comprising half of the total volume. It features a collection of Suffrages—petitions to individual saints—and is notable for the inclusion of Claude's patron, St. Claude. The final, particularly beautiful image in the Prayer Book is devoted to the Eucharist.

For the exhibition, the Prayer Book will be open to its only full-page miniature, a Trinity. It is an encoded picture. The pre-incarnate Christ vows to fulfill God the Father's pledge that he assume flesh and save mankind. Encircled with the *cordelière* of her husband, King François I, this Trinity alludes to Claude's hope that God would grant her and François a son—the next king of France.

All 132 scenes from the book will be viewable on a special screen installed in the gallery. In addition, each image will be available in an online exhibition on the Morgan's website, www.themorgan.org.

The Morgan was given the Prayer Book in 2008. It was presented by long-time supporter Mrs. Alexandre P. Rosenberg in memory of her husband. Measuring just 2 ¾ x 2 inches, the manuscript includes a bookplate by Pablo Picasso, whom Mr. Rosenberg knew personally and whose works he exhibited in his New York Gallery.



Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist, with the coat of arms of Queen Claude de France in the lower border

Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
Prayer Book of Queen Claude de France; France,
Tours, ca. 1517

The Morgan Library & Museum; MS M.1166 (fol. 15v)
Gift of Mrs. Alexandre P. Rosenberg, in memory of
her husband Alexandre Paul Rosenberg.
Photography by Schecter Lee.



Trinity

Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
Prayer Book of Queen Claude de France; France,
Tours, ca. 1517

The Morgan Library & Museum; MS M.1166 (fol. 24v)
Gift of Mrs. Alexandre P. Rosenberg, in memory of
her husband Alexandre Paul Rosenberg.
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2013

The Book of Hours

This manuscript includes the traditional Calendar, Hours of the Virgin, Penitential Psalms and Litany, and Office of the Dead. As with the Prayer Book, what sets this book apart is the artist's border designs. Every text page is surrounded by a border of the softest lilac against which float Queen Claude's signature emblems: white or gold scrolls inscribed with her mottos, armillary spheres, gold wings, gold ostrich features, and white rosary beads. Claude's white *cordelière* frames each folio and her and Francois's gold *cordelières* intermingle on many folios. The effect is extraordinary.

The book will be open to the Annunciation, which is framed by an elaborate architectural border that the Claude Master had learned to paint from Giovanni Todeschino.

Twelve Calendar Miniatures

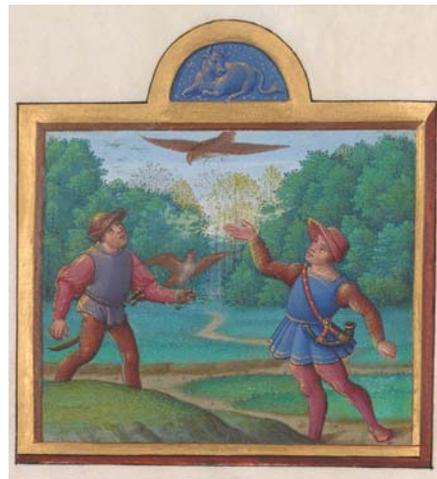
The exhibition includes twelve charming vignettes of the Labors of the Months surmounted by the Signs of the Zodiac that originally illustrated a calendar in a Book of Hours. The miniatures were removed in the nineteenth century (perhaps because their parent manuscript was damaged) and mounted into an album. They have been temporarily removed from the album for the exhibition. The Morgan acquired them at auction in 2010; this is the first time the suite has been exhibited.

The vignettes are part of a tradition that was already some 250 years old when the Claude Master painted this series. Calendars in Books of Hours were often illustrated with a suite showing agrarian activities appropriate to the month or season.



Annunciation

Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
Hours of Claude de France; France, Tours, ca. 1517
Heribert Tenschert, Bibermühle (Switzerland)
(fol. 14v)
Photography by Ina Nettekoven.



Month of April

Illuminated by the Master of Claude de France
Album of Calendar Miniatures, France, Tours,
ca. 1517-20
The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.1171,
(fol. 4)
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2013.

Thus, January shows a couple feasting and, in February, a man warming himself by a fire. April is illustrated by a scene of two youths falconing, and, in May, a maiden weaves a flower garland for her absent suitor. In June and July, the serfs are mowing and reaping. The fall months of October and November illustrate wine making and the feeding of pigs.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a 104-page, fully illustrated monograph, *Miracles in Miniature: The Art of the Master of Claude de France*, written by Morgan curator Roger Wieck, with a contribution by Morgan conservator Francisco Trujillo. The book includes a chapter citing all the known works by the artist and his followers.

Public Programs

CONCERT

Schola Antiqua of Chicago

The noted early music vocal ensemble Schola Antiqua of Chicago makes their New York debut in a concert featuring a rich array of early sixteenth-century devotional music inspired by the exhibition *Miracles in Miniature: The Art of the Master of Claude de France*. Curator Roger S. Wieck and musicologist and artistic director Michael Alan Anderson will provide commentary and project images of select manuscripts to contextualize the musical offerings. This concert is partially underwritten by the Eastman School of Music/University of Rochester and the Lumen Christi Institute.

Sunday, June 15, 2 pm*

Tickets: \$35; \$25 for Members

*The exhibition *Miracles in Miniature: The Art of the Master of Claude de France* will be open until 6 p.m.

GALLERY TALK

Miracles in Miniature: The Art of the Master of Claude de France

Roger Wieck, Curator, Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts

Friday, June 6, 6:30 pm

Organization and Sponsorship

The exhibition is organized by Roger Wieck, Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts at the Morgan Library & Museum.

It is made possible by Frances Beatty and Allen Adler, Caroline Sharfman Bacon, and an anonymous donor, with assistance from the Visiting Committee to the Department of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts. The accompanying publication is underwritten by the Andrew W. Mellon Research and Publications Fund.



The programs of the Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

The Morgan Library & Museum

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, more than a century after its founding in 1906, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. In October 2010, the Morgan completed the first-ever restoration of its original McKim building, Pierpont Morgan's private library, and the core of the institution. In tandem with the 2006 expansion project by architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan now provides visitors unprecedented access to its world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, and ancient Near Eastern seals and tablets.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405

212.685.0008

www.themorgan.org

Just a short walk from Grand Central and Penn Station

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

\$18 for adults; \$12 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, Café, or Dining Room.