

Press Contacts

Michelle Perlin  
212.590.0311, mperlin@themorgan.org

Patrick Milliman  
212.590.0310, pmilliman@themorgan.org

**THE MORGAN COLLABORATES WITH LONDON'S  
COURTAULD GALLERY TO EXPLORE THE BEAUTY  
AND INNOVATION OF BRITISH AND  
GERMAN ROMANTIC LANDSCAPE DRAWING**

EXHIBITION FEATURES WORKS BY ARTISTS SUCH AS  
J.M.W. TURNER, SAMUEL PALMER, CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH  
AND KARL FRIEDRICH LESSING

**A Dialogue with Nature: Romantic Landscapes from Britain and Germany**  
May 30–September 7, 2014

**\*\*Press Preview: Thursday, May 29, 10–11:30 a.m.\*\***  
RSVP: [media@themorgan.org](mailto:media@themorgan.org) (212) 590-0393

**New York, NY, April 4, 2014**— At the close of the eighteenth century, while wars and revolutions rocked Europe, landscape art began a quiet transformation. British and German artists were pioneers in forging a new type of landscape, abandoning the certainties and formulas of the past in favor of a revitalized representation of the natural world. *A Dialogue with Nature: Romantic Landscapes from Britain and Germany* (May 30 – September 7) traces the unfolding of this new Romantic sensibility with a selection of drawings, watercolors, and oil sketches chosen from the renowned collections of the Morgan Library & Museum and London's Courtauld Gallery—capturing its beginnings in the Age of Enlightenment to its full flowering in the Romantic art of J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851) and Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840).



Joseph Mallord William Turner (British, 1775–1851)  
*On Lake Lucerne, Looking Towards Fluelen, 1841 (?)*  
Watercolor over graphite  
The Courtauld Gallery

These Romantic artists delighted in the particular rather than the general, and found pleasure in things transitory more than things permanent. They accepted the subjective nature of our experience of reality and celebrated the individual imagination. Perhaps above all, they



Caspar David Friedrich (German, 1774–1840)  
*Landscape on Rügen with Shepherds and Flocks*,  
1809/1810  
Pen and black ink, brown wash, graphite, and opaque  
white watercolor  
The Morgan Library & Museum, Thaw Collection

understood and explored the inherent tension between direct observation of the visible world and that of the imagined—a tension that Caspar David Friedrich aptly summed up as a “dialogue with nature.”

It is relatively rare to see British and German drawings of this era side-by-side. The more than thirty works in the exhibition were chosen not only to exemplify Friedrich’s words, but also to offer a fresh look at stylistic similarities and differences in the approaches of the two schools.



Thomas Girtin (British, 1775–1802)  
*The Eruption of Mount Vesuvius*, 1800  
Gray wash, over graphite  
The Morgan Library & Museum, Thaw Collection

“We are delighted to partner with the Courtauld in presenting this exhibition,” said William M. Griswold, Director of the Morgan Library & Museum. “Its unparalleled holdings of British drawings complement the Morgan’s strength in German works on paper. This is the first in a projected series of collaborative projects in which the two institutions will present focused exhibitions that are open and exploratory in nature rather than broad, definitive statements on a subject.”

## **The Exhibition**

“Everything tends towards landscape.” —Philipp Otto Runge, 1802

As the German artist Philipp Otto Runge (1777–1810) suggested, landscape emerged as the Romantic genre par excellence. As the eighteenth-century model of the universe as a static mechanism was gradually rejected in favor of a more organic view of the natural order, so artists abandoned the landscape formulae of their forebears in favor of a new and distinctive treatment of landscape art. Artists turned to sketching out of doors and desired to be seen working *en plein air*. The sketches and studies made from nature began to be highly valued as the expression of a direct encounter with the natural world. But plein-air studies of landscape scenery alone could not satisfy the new desire for fidelity to nature. The details of landscape—plants, trees, clouds—had to be studied intently as individual elements before a landscape art that was truly faithful to nature could be forged. Nothing was too insignificant and the value of such intense scrutiny is reflected



Johann Georg Wagner (German, 1744–1767)  
*Wooded Landscape with Stream and Oxcart on Road*, 1760s  
Pen and brown ink, black chalk and gray and brown wash  
The Courtauld Gallery



Carl Philipp Fohr (German, 1795–1818)  
*The Ruins of Hohenbaden*, 1814/15  
Watercolor  
The Morgan Library & Museum, Thaw Collection

in these drawings that explore the natural world in all its aspects: from studies of transitory clouds and shadows, to the solemn dignity of ancient trees.

### **Nature and Imagination**

The Romantic spirit was above all manifested in an extraordinary visionary capacity, a rejection of the Enlightenment's focus on sterile materialism and its faith in the power of reason and the innate benevolence of man. In the visual arts, Romanticism was marked by a novel exploration of two worlds: that of nature, and that of the imagination. While fidelity to nature was praised in landscape, there was also a sense in which the imaginative power of the artist could probe beyond the world of mere appearances to capture the essence of things. Artists responded by escaping from the confines of simple imitation of nature and turning to things both above and within. Artists like Samuel Palmer in Britain or Caspar David Friedrich in Germany strove to capture this new vision and to use landscape art to express profound sentiments that had once been thought the exclusive province of the exalted genre of history painting.



John Robert Cozens (British, 1752–1797)  
*A Ruined Fort Near Salerno*, c. 1782  
Graphite, watercolor and opaque watercolor  
The Courtauld Gallery

### The Romantic Sublime

Nature, once perceived as dependably constant and explicable by universal rules, came to be seen by the Romantics as a living force that developed through time in a progressive and dynamic way. This dramatically altered perceptions of the place of humanity within nature. Human life was increasingly recognized as being implicated in this developmental order rather than simply standing over and apart from nature. Where earlier artists strove to tame nature and present an image of the world as ordered and benign, the Romantics now sought to depict the terrible immensity of nature and the power of the natural world when pitted against the frailty of human culture. The vastness of mountains or the forces of untamed nature became the preeminent Romantic obsession.



Samuel Palmer (British, 1805–1881)  
*Oak Tree and Beech, Lullingstone Park*, c. 1828  
Pen and brown ink, graphite, watercolor, opaque watercolor and gum glaze  
The Morgan Library & Museum, Thaw Collection



Joseph Mallord William Turner (British, 1775–1851)  
*Mont Blanc, from above Courmayeur*, c. 1810  
Watercolor and graphite  
The Courtauld Gallery

### The Morgan – Courtauld Partnership

The Morgan Drawing Institute, established with a generous gift from Trustee and noted collector Eugene V. Thaw, will regularly partner with The Courtauld Gallery's IMAF Centre for the Study and Conservation of Drawings. Together, the two institutions host a Morgan-Courtauld Fellow and undertake joint projects to advance the study and appreciation of drawing. The first Morgan-Courtauld Fellow was Matthew Hargraves, a curator at The Yale Center for British Art, and one of the organizers of this exhibition.



Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (German, 1809–1847)  
Sketchbook, 1837–39  
Graphite  
The Courtauld Gallery

## **Public Program**

### **GALLERY TALK**

*A Dialogue with Nature: Romantic Landscapes from Britain and Germany*

Matthew Hargraves, Morgan Courtauld Fellow and Yale Center for British Art

**Friday, June 13, 6:30 pm**

### **Organization and Sponsorship**

*A Dialogue with Nature: Romantic Landscapes from Britain and Germany* is organized by Matthew Hargraves, the Lowell Libson Morgan-Courtauld Fellow at the Drawing Institute at the Morgan Library & Museum for 2012–13 at the Drawing Institute at the Morgan Library & Museum and Curator for Collections Research and Head of Collections and Information Access at the Yale Center for British Art, and Rachel Sloan, Assistant Curator of Works on Paper at The Courtauld Gallery. Jennifer Tonkovich, Curator in the Morgan's department of Drawings and Prints, is coordinating the installation.

This exhibition is a program of the Drawing Institute at the Morgan Library & Museum. Additional support is provided by the Rita Markus Fund for Exhibitions and Lowell Libson Ltd.

The exhibition is accompanied by an eighty-four page catalogue with an essay by Matthew Hargraves and entries for each individual work by Rachel Sloan.



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.