The Morgan Library & Museum

Press Release

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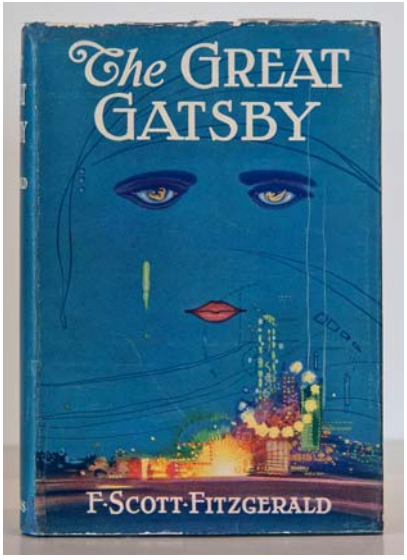
THE MORGAN CELEBRATES MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE WITH AN EXHIBITION OF MASTERWORKS FROM THE WORLD'S GREATEST PRIVATE COLLECTION

WRITERS INCLUDED IN THE SHOW RANGE FROM FITZGERALD, FAULKNER, AND HEMINGWAY TO JACK KEROUAC, TONI MORRISON, AND JOHN IRVING

Gatsby to Garp: Modern Masterpieces from the Carter Burden Collection
May 20–September 7, 2014
Press Preview: Monday, May 19, 10 – 11:30 am
RSVP: media@themorgan.org: (212) 590-0393

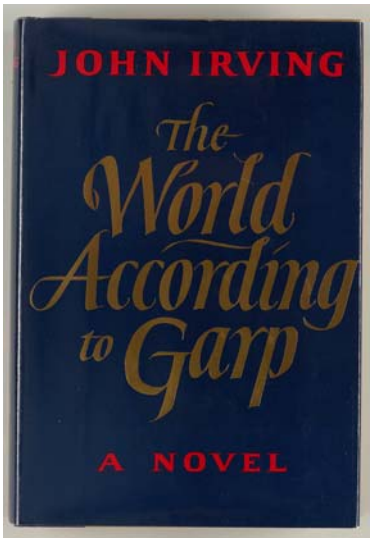
New York, NY, April 2, 2014—Between 1973 and 1996 Carter Burden, a former trustee of the Morgan Library & Museum and onetime New York City councilman, assembled the greatest collection of modern American literature in private hands. In doing so, Burden revolutionized the market in modern first editions by paying record prices for copies in the best possible condition and with notable attributes such as authors' annotations and presentation inscriptions. The depth and breadth of his holdings were truly extraordinary—spanning the twentieth century and including focused concentrations on such movements as the Lost Generation, the Beats, and the Harlem Renaissance.



F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940)
The Great Gatsby
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925
Collection of the Estate of Carter Burden

Beginning in 1997, after Burden's sudden death the previous year, his family has made a gift to the Morgan of twelve thousand volumes from his collection. *Gatsby to Garp: Modern Masterpieces from the Carter Burden Collection*, on view from May 20 through September 7, brings together nearly one hundred outstanding works from the collection, including first editions, manuscripts, letters, and revised galley proofs. Authors

featured in this unparalleled exhibition are some of the twentieth century's most celebrated—William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Allen Ginsberg, Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, John Irving, Henry James, Jack Kerouac, Norman Mailer, Toni Morrison, Sylvia Plath, Ezra Pound, Philip Roth, J. D. Salinger, Gertrude Stein, John Steinbeck, John Updike, Tennessee Williams, and Richard Wright, among others.



John Irving (b.1942)
The World According to Garp
New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978
Advance Review Copy
Purchased on the Carter Burden Fund, 2014
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

Gatsby to Garp examines the vibrant American literary landscape of the twentieth century, a period that encompassed a remarkable explosion of creativity, and explores such topics as language and style, geography and setting, literary identity, and relationships among writers. By looking at the literary output of the entire century through a series of vignettes, connections emerge—sometimes unexpectedly. These writers explored the possibilities of authorial voice through stylistic experimentation, investigations of literary setting and examinations of psychological realism. The exhibition offers particular emphasis on the concept of "firsts"—as it pertains to book production and format and to literary movements and experimentation. It will also include a number of notable authors' photographs, including several from the Morgan's unique collection of photographs of artists and writers by Irving Penn.

"The quality and scope of Carter Burden's collection of twentieth century American literature is truly remarkable," said William M. Griswold, Director of the Morgan Library & Museum. "We are deeply grateful for the gift of his collection to the Morgan and extraordinarily pleased to present a selection of works in this exhibition. He had a singular eye for books of true distinction and also understood the importance of collecting works representative of major themes and movements in American letters."

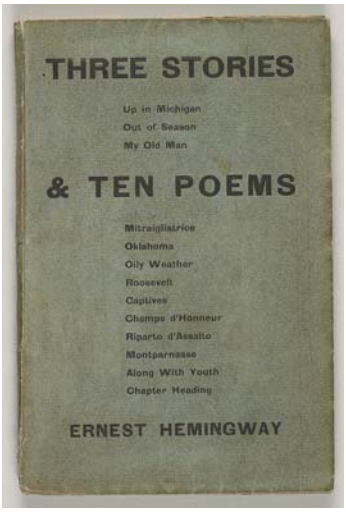
THE EXHIBITION

Precursors

We work in the dark - we do what we can - we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion, and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art. — Henry James

Henry James's importance to modern literature cannot be overstated. Deeply rooted in the realist traditions of the previous century, his thematic concerns and stylistic developments are threaded through the soul of the twentieth. Gertrude Stein remarked that he was "the only nineteenth century writer who being an American felt the method of the twentieth century." Carter Burden realized that he could not focus his collection on twentieth century writing without a foundation in Henry James, who, as a transitional figure, helps us contextualize what would come later. Along with William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway, Henry James was one of the three cornerstones of Burden's collection. James's thematic preoccupations—slowing down narrative time and exploring the inner lives of his American characters in European settings—profoundly influenced later authors, and the writings of this expatriate are an essential reference point to keep in mind when examining twentieth century literature. Experimenting with language and form in new ways, the writers on view in the main gallery explore similar themes of identity and the interiority of fictional characters; geography and the impact of physical setting on identity and what it means to be American; and temporality, or the exploration of psychological time.

Photograph of Henry James inscribed to Emerson Smalley, [1899]
Gift of Mrs. Walker Cain, 1995
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014



Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961)
Three Stories & Ten Poems
[Paris]: Contact Publishing Co., 1923
The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

The Lost Generation

You are all a lost generation – Gertrude Stein

The Lost Generation came of age during World War I. A traumatic but unifying experience, its aftermath saw many young writers—

including Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and others—voluntarily exiling themselves from the American landscapes of their birth. These expatriates met during the War (Hemingway and Dos Passos both joined volunteer ambulance units), or shortly thereafter in Paris. Here, they came within the orbit of Gertrude Stein, and developed distinct authorial voices, taking up themes of alienation, extravagance, and mortality. Lavish decadence, whether in Paris or New York, was another important backdrop to set against the crisp prose of the young modernists—as exemplified by *The Great Gatsby.*

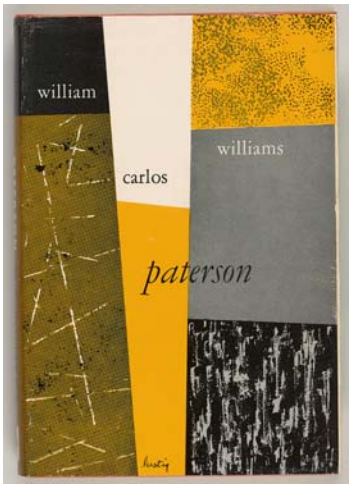
The "Roaring Twenties" also saw the birth of modern book design. Although the use of dust jackets was developed in the previous century, it was not until the second decade of the twentieth century that their design became graphically bold and colorful. Expressing both the themes of the narrative as well as the aesthetics of the distinct historical moment, Francis Cugat's bold art deco dust jacket design for *The Great Gatsby* is one of the most iconic in twentieth century American literature. The jacket's most prominent feature—the staring, melancholic eyes of a woman—influenced Fitzgerald's narrative: after reviewing an early draft of the design, while still in the midst of composition, he told his publisher that he had "written it into" the novel. Cleonike Damianake's evocative, but comparatively restrained, Hellenistic design for *The Sun Also Rises* is another important example of 1920s dust jacket design. Many designs were, however, anonymous and the artists remain unknown. Dust jackets—which are by their nature discarded, or easily torn or lost—were originally intended to protect a book's binding, and those that have survived are highly valued by collectors.

Inventions in Modernism

Make it new – Ezra Pound

Modernist American poetry was born overseas. T. S. Eliot's radical, evocative *The Waste Land*—central to the modernist canon—was largely composed and edited (drastically, by Ezra Pound) in England. Both poets, American-born, built their careers and sought to define and promote modernist verse from Europe, and both reached far beyond their native soil for lyric inspiration and theories of poetry. It was in a London café that Pound, along with Hilda Doolittle and Richard Aldington, formed the Imagist movement—which sought to treat the subject of a poem with a new directness and clarity, using "absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation." And it was from a Parisian salon that Gertrude Stein redefined our aural

comprehension of language and became a nexus for the modernist intellectual and artistic landscape of the early twentieth century. Her influence was immediately evident in the works of the young expatriates. Her writings affected a broad range of artists, including those that remained stateside, and modernist American poetry was not based solely abroad. Poets such as William Carlos Williams went on to experiment with new techniques as exemplified in his epic *Paterson*, and exerted lasting influence on second and third generation modernists. The poets of the Harlem Renaissance—who worked in a variety of forms, some highly experimental in the use of vernacular and poetic language—were also pivotal in the development of modern American poetry. But it is important to acknowledge as well that American poetry of this period was not only concerned with formal innovations. Edna St. Vincent Millay commanded the traditional sonnet and ballad; Robert Frost drew upon several traditional verse forms; and Pound made *The Cantos* his life's work.



William Carlos Williams (1883–1963)
Paterson
New York: New Directions, [1951]
The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

The Harlem Renaissance

I, too, sing America – Langston Hughes

Wallace Thurman (1902–1934), editor
Fire!!
Vol. 1, no. 1, [1926]
The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

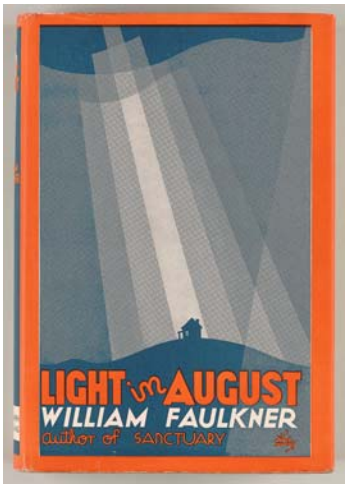
When Harlem was in vogue, the jazz clubs of 125th Street and Lenox Avenue hummed to the sound of Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, the streets were thronged with thousands recently arrived from the South, and a younger generation of writers was coalescing as the first black literary movement in America's history. Jean Toomer's highly experimental *Cane*— which combines poems and lyrical vignettes—was one of the first books of the Harlem Renaissance and a cornerstone of the movement. The movement was identified as such in Alain Locke's 1925 anthology *The New Negro* and was further defined in the daring single issue of *Fire!!*, to which nearly all of the movement's core writers, including Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, contributed. Some writers

associated with the movement, such as Countee Cullen, wrote in a seemingly more traditional manner, but although aesthetically varied, Harlem (or New Negro) Renaissance writers consistently viewed race, identity, and the African American experience in ways that broke from earlier forms and gave expression to a new sense of cultural identity. Writing concurrently with the Lost Generation (*The Great Gatsby* was published within months of *The New Negro*), Renaissance writers were also concerned with representations of authentic experience and voice. This interest in folk ways and vernacular met with resistance from the literary establishment, which found the writings of Wallace Thurman and Jean Toomer and the drawings of Richard Bruce and Aaron Douglas to be vulgar and shocking. What this generation was, certainly, was *new* and deeply influential: the young writers and artists came "bringing gifts" of modernist creativity and exerted lasting influence on the landscape of twentieth century American literature.

American Spaces

I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it ... It opened up a gold mine of other people, so I created a cosmos of my own.– William Faulkner

The space in which an author composes, the setting in which characters reveal themselves, the places (linguistic, psychological and geographic) that writing explores—are all bound up in literary expression. What does it mean to write from or about a place? The Harlem Renaissance drew writers to northern Manhattan; the Lost Generation coalesced in Paris; and the first generation modernist poets crossed paths in London. But when not bound together by a distinct literary movement, or by thematic focus or stylistic experimentation, what does it mean to write from a place then? Writing firmly from American soil, these writers of the first half of the twentieth century turned their focus to immediate surroundings and used regional settings to explore questions of identity, place, and circumstance. Willa Cather left Nebraska decades before penning her lyrical descriptions of the prairie in *My Ántonia*, while William Faulkner hardly left central Mississippi, the site of his fictional



William Faulkner (1897–1962)
Light in August
New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas, 1932
The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

Yoknapatawpha County. John Steinbeck and James Agee documented the realities of the Depression-era rural South and West while Daschell Hammett and Raymond Chandler evoked the gritty underworld of urban California. They used writing for different ends, but regional geography served them all as a fulcrum, and the varied landscapes and social realities of the United States provide a setting for close examinations of character, of language, of psychological time—and of real external pressures.

Crisis and Identity

The world can make it very difficult for a man to live his life as he feels he should, or as he knows he must.– James Baldwin

Sylvia Plath (1932–1963)
The Bell Jar
London: Heinemann, 1963
The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

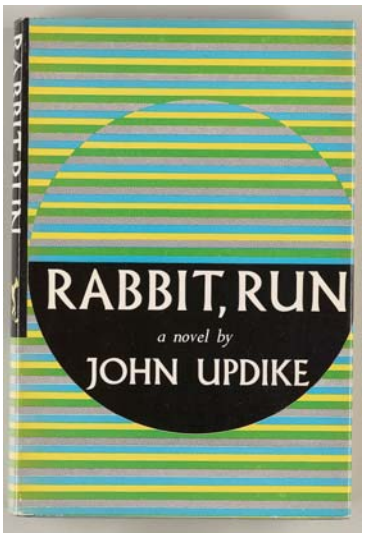
Tennessee Williams, New York, 1951
Photograph by Irving Penn;
© Conde Nast
Purchased as the gift of Richard L. Menschel and with the support of the Horace W. Goldsmith Fund for Americana and the Margaret T. Morris Fund, 2007.
The Morgan Library & Museum

The trauma of conflict shapes the literary landscape. The Lost Generation came of age concurrently with the First World War, and, in the decades following the close of World War II, American writers again struggled to identify and come to terms with a changed world. They reacted to shifting political and social pressures and treated these struggles—along with other interior or psychological ones—with newly explicit frankness. Responding to the crisis of war and ensuing cultural conservatism; the anti-Communist fervor of the McCarthy Era; and continued social and racial injustice, these authors looked at what it meant to come of age in a traumatized world, and they took on themes of gender, sexuality, race, and politics. Several works in this section have been banned at some point—or were published under pseudonyms (as with Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*), or incomplete (as with Richard Wright's *Black Boy*)—and are emotionally incisive, autobiographically-driven examinations of interiority and psychological realism. Authors' correspondence and photographs can help us understand their published works, as an illuminating letter from James Baldwin and an entry from Tennessee Williams's diary show. The critical

exposure and personal vulnerability portrayed by these writers resonated with contemporary audiences, and continues to do so. The works of Mailer, Salinger, Plath, Baldwin and others provide an opportunity to examine the ways that war and trauma directly and obliquely influence literary development and even to draw comparisons to our own current era of conflict and social injustice.

Towards a Postmodern Landscape

If you surrendered to the air, you could ride *it.—Toni Morrison*

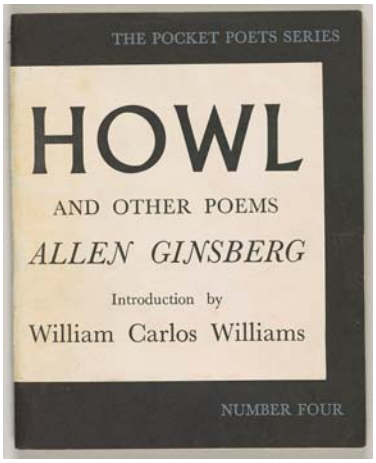


John Updike (1932–2009)
Rabbit, Run
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960
The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

American fiction of the 1960s, ’70s and beyond saw the emergence of postmodern literature, and the novels of this period can be sprawling, picaresque narratives. But they are also distinguished by insightful investigations of character and identity, and a kind of “tender, discerning study of the desperate and hungering in our midst,” as one reviewer characterized John Updike’s *Rabbit, Run.* Many of the works in this section are deeply autobiographical, and all are, of course, influenced by the cultural landscape in which they were written. Carter Burden, who built his library on a foundation of James, Hemingway, and Faulkner—all acknowledged masters of the craft—made his collection uniquely broad by continuing to acquire recent and contemporary fiction. Collecting the works of living writers, Burden was able to purchase original manuscripts and letters, and important pre-publication copies, such as the copy of Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon* that was used—and annotated—by Reynolds Price when preparing his *New York Times* review. He sometimes acquired works directly from the authors themselves, as we find in his correspondence with John Updike and an inscribed copy of Jeffrey Eugenides’ debut *The Virgin Suicides*—one of the last books that Burden added to his collection.

Developments in Poetry

New Art should not arouse hostility among the learned, but does, and always has.—Allen Ginsberg



Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)
Howl and Other Poems
The Pocket Poets series no. 4
San Francisco: City Lights Pocket Bookshop, 1956
The Carter Burden Collection of American Literature
The Morgan Library & Museum
Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2014

Experimental mid-century American poetry had strong links to—but significantly broke away from—the inventions (and subsequent traditions) of the earlier Modernists. Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams served as important literary examples and mentors to the younger generation, as evidenced in a copy of Robert Creeley's *The Immoral Proposition*, which he inscribed "with all love" to Williams. Williams also wrote the introduction to Allen Ginsberg's *Howl.* Some mainstream critics derided the explicit rawness and emphasis on natural expression over traditional poetic structures, and the first book to anthologize the experimental poets emerging in the postwar years was *The New American Poetry, 1945-1960*, edited by Donald Allen. This collection of counter-culture verse—which still stands as an important reference work—was Allen's attempt to bring to light the third generation of modernist poets who had been "long-awaited, but only slowly recognized," and it was here that the Beats, San Francisco Renaissance, New York School, and Black Mountain poets were designated the new avant-garde. Frequently publishing their work in small private press editions or now-ephemeral formats (Kerouac's is the only work in this section issued by a mainstream publisher), these texts are scarce in their original formats, even while they are today widely reprinted and continue to be influential.

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Gallery Talk
Friday, May 30, 6:30 pm
Exhibition curator Carolyn Vega will lead an informal tour of *Gatsby to Garp: Modern Masterpieces from the Carter Burden Collection.*

Free with museum admission

ORGANIZATION AND SPONSORSHIP

Gatsby to Garp: Modern Masterpieces from the Carter Burden Collection is organized by Carolyn Vega, Assistant Curator in the Morgan's Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts.

This exhibition is made possible by lead funding from Karen H. Bechtel.

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.