

The
Morgan
Library &
Museum

Press
Release

**MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM
OPENS MAJOR EXPANSION AND RENOVATION ON
APRIL 29, 2006**

**PROJECT IS RENZO PIANO'S FIRST COMPLETED
NEW YORK CITY COMMISSION**

**INAUGURAL EXHIBITION "MASTERWORKS FROM THE MORGAN"
SHOWCASES MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED OBJECTS FROM ALL AREAS OF
THE MORGAN'S RENOWNED COLLECTIONS**

**** Press Preview on Tuesday, April 25, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. ****

New York, NY, April 25, 2006—The Morgan Library & Museum—closed for almost three years while undergoing a major expansion—reopens to the public on April 29, 2006. The \$106-million building project, designed by Pritzker Prize–winning architect Renzo Piano of the Renzo Piano Building Workshop, provides the museum and center for scholarly research with double the exhibition space for its world-renowned collections. Undertaken in collaboration with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, it is the most dramatic expansion and renovation in the Morgan's history and Mr. Piano's first completed commission in the city.

The Morgan marks the occasion with a weeklong series of special activities, capped by the public opening. The celebration includes a press preview on April 25 and a civic dedication on April 26 with New York City mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. A performance series is also planned, with scheduled appearances by baritone Thomas Hampson, playwright Edward Albee, author Pete Hamill, and poet Seamus Heaney.

In addition to expanded exhibition space, the project includes a dramatic new entrance on Madison Avenue, a spacious central four-story court that serves as a gathering place in the spirit of an Italian piazza, a new performance hall, a naturally lit reading room, much-needed storage space for collections, and a number of visitor amenities, such as two new dining facilities and a larger shop.

“I am delighted to present the newly expanded Morgan Library & Museum to the public,” said Director Charles E. Pierce, Jr. “As one of New York’s cultural crown jewels, we are immensely excited to share our beautiful new surroundings. Renzo Piano has given the city a revitalized landmark, at once respecting the architectural traditions of the Morgan and providing dynamic additions to our Madison Avenue campus.”

The new design integrates three historical buildings—including the original 1906 Morgan library, designed by Charles McKim; the 1928 Annex building, designed by Benjamin Wistar Morris; and the mid-nineteenth-century Morgan house—with three intimately scaled pavilions constructed of faceted steel panels and glass to create an accessible and inviting setting. With more than fifty percent of the square footage located below ground, the new buildings are modestly sized and respectful of the Morgan’s traditional architecture and the surrounding neighborhood. The glass-enclosed central court connects the buildings and seamlessly joins the old and new, providing many views both in and out of the 151,000-square-foot campus.

“The design preserves The Morgan Library & Museum’s unique charm and intimate scale,” said Mr. Piano. “The Morgan experience will now be greatly enhanced and more public. We chose steel and extra-wide glass, which is almost like crystal. These are honest materials that create the right sense of strength and clarity between old and new, as well as a sense of transparency in the center of the institution that opens the campus up to the street.”

In total, the Morgan expansion project adds about 75,000 square feet to the complex. The increased exhibition space enables the public to rediscover the Morgan’s superlative collection of more than 350,000 objects. The collection represents the finest, rarest, and most beautiful examples of master drawings and prints from the past five centuries; medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts; literary, historical, and music manuscripts; printed books; and ancient pictorial seals from the Near East.

“The reopening marks a very important milestone in the history of The Morgan Library & Museum,” said Mr. Pierce. “We will now be able to exhibit more of our collections than ever before and serve the scholarly community in new and better ways. This dual purpose has always been at the heart of the Morgan’s mission.”

Expansion Design

The Morgan expansion and renovation project began in 2003 and was designed by the Paris-based Renzo Piano Building Workshop, with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP serving as executive architect/architect of record.

The three new pavilions face 36th Street, 37th Street, and Madison Avenue, with the largest centering the campus and providing the new entrance on Madison. The smallest contains a 20 x 20 x 20 foot “cube” gallery, the Clare Eddy Thaw Gallery, and was inspired by Renaissance chambers Piano encountered in Italy. It is an essential element in the interplay of the three new structures with the three historical buildings. For the opening, some of the Morgan’s most outstanding medieval and Renaissance treasures will be displayed in the filtered natural light of “the cube.”

The pavilions are constructed of faceted steel panels and glass, with the steel coated in a rose-hued, off-white paint (a subtle nod to the Tennessee pink marble of the McKim building and Annex). The design also features high-transparency, low-iron glass and baffled roof systems for filtered natural light.

Four new galleries and interpretive installations create many more opportunities for adults, families, and schoolchildren to participate in programs devoted exclusively to the permanent collection. The additional gallery space allows the Morgan to exhibit more of its collections as well as host major loan exhibitions of master drawings, rare books, and original manuscripts. The Morgan has been an increasingly important venue for such exhibitions of holdings from internationally renowned private and public collections. The new galleries are located in both the central pavilion and old reading room space in the Annex, effectively doubling the Morgan’s overall exhibition space.

Gilder Lehrman Hall, named in honor of Richard Gilder and Lewis E. Lehrman, is the Morgan’s first performance hall and a significant new concert venue for New York. Designed by Renzo Piano and acousticians Eckhard Kahle and David Harvey, the hall features fine cherrywood paneling on the walls and ceiling and a flexible stage that allows for the accommodation of 240 to 280 people. Located below ground, in the northeast corner of the site, the hall provides an elegant setting for a rotating schedule of orchestral, ensemble and vocal programming, including readings, lectures, screenings, and presentations related to the collections. The Morgan currently plans to present approximately sixty music programs and lectures annually.

The Sherman Fairchild Reading Room maintains the subtle charm and intimacy of the former facility but is also outfitted with new technology and many more workstations to meet the needs of contemporary researchers. Naturally lit from above, its translucent roof structure enables scholars to examine the Morgan's holdings in the ideal environment for studying manuscripts and works on paper.

Mr. Piano also has designed the Morgan's vault. This state-of-the-art storage facility is nestled deep into Manhattan schist and is equipped with modern climate control and security systems.

New landscaping enhances the Morgan's parklike Murray Hill setting, complementing the trees located in the inner court. There are two new dining facilities: The Morgan Café, which provides a casual dining experience in the central court, and The Morgan Dining Room, located in the former Morgan family dining room of the Morgan house. The restaurant, featuring the cuisine of Executive Chef Charlene Shade, serves a refined and distinctive menu that draws inspiration from early twentieth-century American fare, including special selections related to exhibitions or drawn from Morgan family recipes.

The Morgan Shop has been expanded and is located in two restored period rooms on the first floor of the historic Morgan house. With a wide selection of books, reproductions, cards and decorative items, the shop provides visitors with one of New York's unique shopping experiences.

Historic Renovation

Morgan House

Located on Madison Avenue at 37th Street, the landmark Morgan house is a rare surviving freestanding brownstone. Originally designed in the Italianate style, it was built in 1852/53 for Isaac Newton Phelps, expanded in 1888 by architect R. H. Robertson, who added neo-Renaissance elements, and purchased by the banker Pierpont Morgan for his son in 1904. The Morgan family lived in the house until 1943, when J. P. Morgan, Jr., died. The Morgan purchased the house in 1988.

As part of the renovation and expansion project, many areas and decorative features of the house have been conserved, including several exquisitely ornate fireplaces, one of which is a Carrara and Botticino marble fireplace. Two expansive period rooms on the ground floor, including a wood-paneled music room with gold detailing that was brought from England and refitted in the house, also have been restored, and the Morgan has refurbished the entire brownstone facade to maintain the architectural integrity of the building.

The second and third levels of the Morgan house contain office space; the upper level houses The Thaw Conservation Center, a world-class laboratory for the conservation of works on paper and a center for conservation studies. Designed by Samuel Anderson Architects and occupying 5,600 square feet, the Thaw Center includes designated areas for wet and dry conservation treatments, matting and framing, advanced seminars, graduate internships, and postgraduate fellowships.

The McKim Building

In 1902, owning more treasures than his Madison Avenue home could hold, Pierpont Morgan commissioned Charles Follen McKim (1847–1909) to build a library for them. McKim was regarded as the dean of American architecture; his style infused classical discipline with measured grandeur and opulence, and he proposed to build Morgan an Italianate marble villa that would pay architectural tribute to the High Renaissance. In 2006, a century after its completion, the McKim building has remained little changed since Morgan’s day. Both the exterior and interior of the original building are designated New York City Landmarks; the secretary of the interior has designated the library a national historic landmark.

For the reopening, the paintings and decorative objects in the McKim have been cleaned and refitted and the period rooms refurbished. The building’s exterior has been returned to its original 1906 condition by Beyer Blinder Belle. Drawing on its restoration expertise, the firm has replaced the marble on the rear facades of the McKim and Annex as well as overseeing the restoration of the Morgan house.

“We are honored to be working with Renzo Piano and the Morgan on this extraordinary project,” said Richard Southwick, Director of Historic Preservation, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP. “It has been extremely rewarding to contribute to the preservation of the Morgan’s historic buildings and the evolution of the project throughout the construction process.”

Inaugural Permanent Collection Exhibition

Masterworks from the Morgan

The inaugural exhibition, *Masterworks from the Morgan*, demonstrates the superb quality and scope of the institution’s permanent collections, which are universally regarded as among the greatest in the world. Installed throughout the campus, the exhibition of more than three hundred objects will feature presentations from all six of the Morgan’s collection departments, including newly acquired works and works that have never been seen before or have not been on view for many years.

The **drawings exhibition**, on view through July 2, 2006 in Morgan Stanley Gallery East, comprises works from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, highlighting the breadth and depth of the Morgan's holdings. Included are drawings by Italian artists, such as Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo; Dutch and Flemish masters Rembrandt and Rubens; and nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists, such as Cézanne, Degas, Picasso, and Pollock. The show also chronicles the history of the Morgan's collection, from works purchased by Pierpont Morgan himself in 1909 to notable acquisitions of the last several years.

The installation of **literary and historical manuscripts** in The Engelhard Gallery presents a wide range of items—from drafts of poetry and prose to correspondence, journals, and other documents—by major European and American authors, artists, scientists, and historical figures. On view through September 3, the exhibition focuses on what manuscripts reveal about the creative process. Charles Dickens, Beatrix Potter, Alexander Pope, Edgar Allan Poe, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Jane Austen, Ezra Pound, Oscar Wilde, Alexander Calder, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are among the celebrated figures represented in the exhibition.

Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts are a cornerstone of the Morgan's international reputation. The opening installation, on view through September 10 in Morgan Stanley Gallery West, includes such unrivaled works as the Reims Gospel Book, the Morgan's finest Carolingian manuscript, written in gold at the Abbey of Saint-Rémy (ca. 860). Also on display is the Mont-Saint-Michel Sacramentary (ca. 1060), the most lavishly illuminated surviving manuscript from the French island abbey; the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (ca. 1440) painted by an artist regarded as the most gifted and original of the "golden age" of Dutch manuscript painting; and the Farnese Hours (1546), the most famous Renaissance manuscript by Giulio Clovio, a Croatian praised by Giorgio Vasari as a Michelangelo of smaller works. Also on view for the first time in many years are the Morgan's thirty-five hand-painted tarot cards from the Visconti-Sforza deck, one of the earliest and most beautiful, made in Milan (ca. 1450).

The exhibition of the Morgan's impressive collection of **music manuscripts** organizes some of the institution's most treasured works by genre, including operas, concertos, songs, and orchestral works. The installation, on view through September 3 in The Engelhard Gallery, includes Mozart's famed "Haffner" Symphony and Richard Strauss's *Don Juan*, which are seen, almost note for note, as they are known today. Other works are in draft form and include pieces by Beethoven, Robert Schumann, and Charles Ives, among others.

On view through September 10 in Morgan Stanley Gallery West, the installation of **printed books and bindings** showcases the Morgan's diverse and exceptional collection. Examples on view include one of only two surviving copies of the first edition of Malory's stories of King Arthur (1485); one of the Morgan's three Gutenberg Bibles (ca. 1455), the first book printed from movable type; Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872) with proofs of Tenniel's illustrations; Oscar Wilde's *Vera, or the Nihilists* (1882), with his autograph revisions and corrections; and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), annotated by the author.

Pierpont Morgan took great interest in ancient **Near Eastern seals**, as is evident from his collection, dating from 3500 to 330 B.C. This opening installation, on view in the Marble Hall through November 12, displays a number of the best examples of these objects, which are among the earliest known pictorial carvings used to communicate ideas. Created for about three thousand years in the region the Greeks referred to as Mesopotamia, or "the land between two rivers," the seals had both a practical function, as a means of identification, and an amuletic one, intended to protect or benefit the owner in some way. They are among the smallest pictorial objects ever produced—often just one inch in size—and are intricately detailed by sculptors who carved them with simple tools in semiprecious stones.

Pierpont Morgan's Medieval Treasury

The Clare Eddy Thaw Gallery—a glass-enclosed 20 x 20 x 20 foot "cube" inspired by Renaissance chambers Renzo Piano encountered in Italy—includes some of Pierpont Morgan's favorite objects. On view will be the splendid twelfth-century Stavelot Triptych (from the Abbey of Stavelot in Belgium), one of the outstanding masterpieces of medieval goldsmithing; the gold and jeweled binding of the Lindau Gospels, one of the Morgan's most important acquisitions, which incorporates finely worked gold, star sapphires, garnets, emeralds, and other stones; the fourteenth-century portable shrine of Cardinal Basin; the highly ornamented twelfth-century Malmesbury Ciborium, a vessel for eucharistic wafers; and the twelfth-century Lichtenthal Casket, which contains some of the finest and most important Middle-Rhenish translucent enamels of the period.

The Morgan–Renzo Piano Building Workshop with a Brief History

The Morgan expansion project is the subject of a special exhibition of drawings, models, and photographs that begins with a historical survey of the site from the 1850s through today. Featuring materials from the conceptual design phase to the finished scheme, this exhibition chronicles the Morgan's remarkable architectural evolution and is on view in the special exhibition space located in the lobby of The Gilder

Lehrman Hall. This exhibition is organized by The Morgan Library & Museum and the Renzo Piano Building Workshop

Inaugural Season Programs

The Morgan inaugurates the new Gilder Lehrman Hall on May 2 with a concert by renowned baritone Thomas Hampson accompanied by pianist Craig Rutenberg, as well as the Vermeer Quartet. On June 14 soprano Harolyn Blackwell and pianist William Hicks perform in the program *Give My Regards: Landmark American Songs in a Great American Landmark*.

Beginning May 3, the Morgan presents a special guest lecture series entitled *Old Masters and Modern Masters: Face to Face*. Old masters, well represented in the Morgan's collection, at one time were modern masters. This series features several of today's modern masters—some discussing their art vis à vis earlier major figures in their respective field, others considering aspects of the creative process. Playwright Edward Albee, author Pete Hamill, Lord Max Egremont, and poet Seamus Heaney are the celebrated presenters.

To celebrate ten decades of collecting since the completion of the original McKim building, the Morgan presents *Ten Decades, Ten Treasures*, a lecture series beginning June 15. Morgan curators talk about their favorite “top ten” objects in the collection—intriguing personal selections not necessarily including the oldest, rarest or most valuable items. The Morgan's Director, Charles E. Pierce, Jr., begins this series, followed by presentations on Literary and Historical Manuscripts, Ancient Near Eastern Seals and Tablets, Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, Printed Books and Bindings, Drawings and Prints, and Music Manuscripts and Books.

Renzo Piano Building Workshop

Renzo Piano was born into a family of builders in Genoa, Italy, in 1937. He graduated from the School of Architecture at Milan Polytechnic in 1964. Over the course of his studies, he worked with Franco Albini and was a highly engaged visitor to his father's building sites. He was affiliated with Louis I. Kahn in Philadelphia and Z. S. Makowsky in London from 1965 to 1970. During this period he met Jean Prouvé, who was to have a profound influence on his architecture. His collaboration with Richard Rogers dates from 1971 (Piano and Rogers), with Peter Rice from 1977 (L'Atelier Piano & Rice); and he currently has offices in Genoa and Paris under the name Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

The prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize, awarded to Piano in 1998, is among the many honors he has received. Selected major projects include the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1977, with Richard Rogers); the Menil Collection, Houston (1986); the Lingotto Factory restoration in Turin, Italy (1994), the Kansai International Airport, Osaka (1994); the Beyeler Foundation, Basel (1998); the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center, Nouméa, New Caledonia (1998); and the Potsdamer Platz reconstruction, Berlin (1999). Along with the Morgan Library & Museum, his current projects include the London Bridge Tower, the New York Times Headquarters Building, and expansions of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Columbia University campus, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP

Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP is a highly collaborative international practice recognized for excellence in design, planning, and historic structures. The firm maintains offices in New York City, Washington, DC, and Beijing, China. Notable projects in New York, past and present, include Grand Central Terminal, The Rubin Museum, Ellis Island Museum of Immigration, and the restoration and upgrade of the Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse. Award-winning planning studies for the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative; A Vision for Growing an Inclusive City, Washington, DC; the Old DC Courthouse expansion; and security plans for the perimeters of the Smithsonian Institution's buildings on the National Mall are highlights of the firm's Washington, DC, portfolio. Recent design projects elsewhere in the United States include the Muhammad Ali Center and Fourth Street Live in Louisville, Kentucky, winner of the 2005 ULI Award for Excellence. Competition winners in China include the Shanghai Cultural Plaza, a significant new park and new 2000-seat theater in the French Concession District, and the Gonghua City district north of central Beijing. The firm was recently awarded the Red Star Line Emigration project, which will transform the original buildings of Antwerp's famous Red Star Line into a "Place of Memory."

About The Morgan Library & Museum

The Morgan Library & Museum, a campuslike complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, it is a museum, independent research library, musical and performing arts venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. Nearly 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 unveiling of the largest expansion and renovation project in its history, the Morgan reaffirms its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twentieth century.

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street

New York, NY 10016-3405

For more information, call (212) 685-0008 or visit 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 Monday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day

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

Press Contacts

Patrick Milliman

Pam Angelopoulos

The Morgan Library & Museum

212-590-0312

media@themorgan.org