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**THE MORGAN TO HOLD FIRST EXHIBITION OF ITS
CELEBRATED COLLECTION OF FIFTEENTH- AND SIXTEENTH-
CENTURY VENETIAN DRAWINGS**

*SHOW WILL INCLUDE WORKS BY TITIAN, TINTORETTO, VERONESE, AND
CARPACCIO, AS WELL AS RARE BOOKS AND MAPS BY VENICE'S INNOVATIVE
PRINTERS AND CARTOGRAPHERS*

Renaissance Venice: Drawings from the Morgan

May 18–September 23, 2012

****Press Preview: Thursday, May 17, 10 a.m. until noon****

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New York, NY, April 17, 2012— Beginning May 18, The Morgan Library & Museum will unveil an extraordinary exhibition of drawings and related material that brings to life the dynamic artistic and cultural milieu of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venice. The first exhibition to focus on the Morgan's outstanding collection of drawings created during this important era in the history of the great port city, *Renaissance Venice: Drawings from the Morgan* features work by masters such as Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Carpaccio, as well as many other less known but highly gifted artists. On view through September 23, 2012, the show also includes books and maps that reveal Venice's role at the forefront of luxury book production and innovative printing.

In the early sixteenth century Venice established itself as a powerful maritime republic and center of international trade. The wealth created by this activity fueled the city's ascent as a cultural capital, and artists were supported by



Paris Bordone (1500 – 1571)
Standing Man Playing a Viola da Gamba, late 1530s
Black chalk, heightened with white chalk, on blue paper
Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909
All works: The Morgan Library & Museum, New York
All works photographed by Graham S. Haber unless noted

government commissions, churches and lay religious communities, and, notably, by a powerful and enlightened aristocracy who sought to decorate their impressive private dwellings in Venice and on the mainland.

All the works in *Renaissance Venice* are drawn from the Morgan's celebrated holdings, and the show will explore specific themes, such as portraiture and the landscape tradition in Venetian drawing, the depiction of religious and civic life, the role of the foreign artist, and innovations in printmaking, book publishing, and cartography. Letters by Titian and Veronese offer fascinating glimpses into artists' relationships with patrons and the transactional nature of the art "business."

"Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venice saw the coming together of economic and social trends that created an amazingly fertile ground for artistic creation," said William M. Griswold, director of The Morgan Library & Museum. "The list of artists working in Venice at the time is a 'who's who' of great Renaissance masters...Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and numerous others. The Morgan is delighted to offer the museum-going public a wide-ranging overview of the role of drawing and related media in this exceptional period in the history of art."

THE VENETIAN LANDSCAPE



Titian (1477/89–1576)
Landscape with St. Theodore Overcoming the Dragon, ca. 1550s
Pen and brown ink, over traces of black chalk
Gift of Janos Scholz

Beginning in the late fifteenth century, landscape played a central role in Venetian painting and drawing. This trend paralleled the strong interest in the natural world during the Renaissance, when artists turned to direct observation rather than inherited models. By the sixteenth century, many Venetian artists depicted mountainous alpine vistas or fantastic landscapes, as seen in the background of Vittore Carpaccio's pen and ink drawing, *Sacra Conversazione*. One of the rare landscapes attributed to Titian, *St. Theodore Overcoming the Dragon*, is representative of the dominant role landscape often played even in narrative subjects.

Inspired by Virgil, Venetian humanists extolled the simplicity of pastoral life, a topic taken up repeatedly by poets, musicians, and artists in the city. Several drawings on view reflect the popularity of the arcadian themes of love, poetry, and music in sixteenth-century Venetian art, including Paris Bordone's famous *Standing Man Playing a Viola da Gamba* and Girolamo Romanino's *Pastoral Concert with Two Women, a Faun, and a Soldier*.



Giulio Campagnola (ca. 1482–after 1515)
Buildings in a Rocky Landscape
 Pen and brown ink
 Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

Giulio Campagnola and his adopted son Domenico introduced a new specialty into Venetian art: the pure landscape. Giulio's drawing *Buildings in a Rocky Landscape* is characteristic of the large, panoramic landscapes that made the Campagnolas' work much sought after by cultivated collectors in the early sixteenth century. These artists' flowing, rhythmic strokes informed succeeding

generations, from Peter Paul Rubens to Jean-Antoine Watteau, who copied Domenico's drawings in the eighteenth century.

THE VENETIAN PORTRAIT

The Sicilian painter Antonello da Messina's arrival in Venice heralded the introduction of the oil painting technique in Italy. This in turn helped inspire the late-fifteenth-century vogue for portraiture characterized by a new naturalism. Venice's aristocracy and wealthy classes commissioned portraits to record physical likeness as well as social status, often displayed through opulent clothing and lavish settings.

Initially, most sitters were shown in strict profile, according to antique precedents.

Later, increasingly evocative three-quarter or frontal views dominated, allowing a more direct and intimate

relationship with the viewer. In Venice

and northern Italy, family group portraits became fashionable, and Palma Giovane was known for quick sketches of his wide circle of friends and large family—indeed, one family portrait on view shows eleven children.

Works of particular note in this section of the exhibition include an accomplished *Portrait of a Woman with a Hairnet*, executed by an artist in the circle of Giovanni Bellini or one of his contemporaries, and Carpaccio's *Head of a Bearded Man Wearing a Cap*.



Anonymous Italian Artist
Portrait of a Woman with a Hairnet
Black chalk, heightened with white chalk
Gift of H.P. Kraus

PATRONAGE IN VENICE



Giovanni Antonio de Sacchis, called il Pordenone (1483–1539)

Conversion of Saint Paul, early 1530s

Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white gouache, over traces of black chalk, on blue paper faded to a green-gray

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

In the seventh century Venice had become a republic, governed by a hereditary ruling class headed by a doge, who was elected for life by the city-state's aristocracy. The position was usually entrusted to members of the inner circle of powerful Venetian families—such as the Mocenigos, Cornaros, Grimani, and Trevisans. Venice's aristocracy financed many of the city's most celebrated works of civic and religious art.

The walls of the Doge's Palace were lined with large paintings by Titian, Veronese, and Federico Zuccaro, celebrating Venice and extolling its civic ideals. The *scuole*, wealthy lay confraternities, promoted a distinctively Venetian style of large narrative compositions. In addition to altarpieces and religious images for personal devotion, Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, and Battista Franco also created works with secular subject matter for a new and expanding clientele of patrician collectors, such as Franco's *Ceiling Design with the Story of the Slave Girls of Smyrna*.



Giuseppe Porta, called Salviati (1520–1575)
Bellerophon Killing the Chimera
 Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white gouache,
 over black chalk, on blue paper faded to gray-brown; squared in red
 and black chalk
 Gift of Janos Scholz

The inextricable relationship between Venetian artists and patrons is reflected in several works on view. Zuccaro completed his accomplished copy of Veronese's *Frederick Barbarossa Kisses the Hand of Pope Victor IV*, in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Doge's Palace, some twenty years before he himself received a commission for a painting in the palace, *The Submission of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa before Pope Alexander III in Venice*. In a preparatory drawing for the later painting, the emperor kneels before the pope in St. Mark's Place, symbolizing reconciliation between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor, mediated by the Venetian republic. Similarly, a letter by Veronese to his patron Marcantonio Gandino indicates that a painting by Veronese was to be shipped from Venice to Treviso on a ship owned by Gandino.

PRINTING IN VENICE

Not long after the invention in Germany of printing using movable type arrived in Venice in 1469, the city rapidly became the preeminent center for publishing in Italy. By 1500 Venice boasted over one hundred printers, making it the most important printing center in Europe. In the last decades of the fifteenth century the new, hand-illuminated printed book appeared, signaling a marriage of traditional and contemporary techniques. Printed on precious parchment, these luxury items were created for a wealthy and prominent clientele. Trained scribes and artists embellished the printed texts by adding chapter headings, initials, borders, and lavish frontispieces.

Exemplifying the hand-illuminated printed book tradition is a two-volume Bible produced by Vindelinus de Spira in Venice in 1471. Though both volumes' miniatures are likely attributable to the same artist, the Master of the Putti, the two books may not have originally belonged together. The first volume shows evidence of having belonged to the Cornaro family; the second to the Macigni family. Unlike most bibles, which were written or published in Latin, this copy is in Italian, making it one of the earliest to appear in the vernacular. The second volume's frontispiece represents one of the most ambitious pictorial illusions painted in a Venetian book during the Renaissance, the text seemingly printed on a frayed piece of parchment suspended from an architectural monument.



Shooting of the Father's Corpse, Frontispiece from Bible, Volume 2
Printed by Vindelinus de Spira in Venice, 1471
Vellum

The impossibility of decorating by hand ever-increasing numbers of books led Venetian printers to mechanical means of embellishing their printed texts. By the 1500s woodcuts became the standard means by which to illustrate books. On display is an important early printed book, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (*Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream*), opened to a woodcut illustration of a nymph discovered by a satyr. The illustration, believed to have been designed by Benedetto Bordone, was likely the inspiration for Giorgione's painting *Venus Reclining* of around 1510, perhaps the first large-scale painting of a female nude since antiquity.

Artists, including Titian and Battista Franco, produced masterful woodcuts and engravings for a new kind of market and to enhance their reputation. In a letter on view to one of the most powerful patrons of the time, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Titian presents an impression of an engraving after his own *The Trinity in Glory*. Print technology allowed Titian to send another impression, accompanied by a similar letter, to the Duchess of Parma.



Cesare Vecellio
A Woman Blonding her Hair, from
Degli habiti, antichi et moderni di diversi parti del mondo (*Of Costumes, Ancient and Modern, of Different Parts of the World*)
 Printed in Venice, 1590

Later in the sixteenth century costume books emerged as a popular new genre, reflecting a greater curiosity about foreign cultures inspired by travels and new discoveries. Venice and the Veneto played a leading role in the costume book's early development. Cesare Vecellio's *Degli habiti, antichi et moderni di diversi parti del mondo* (*Of Costumes, Ancient and Modern, of Different Parts of the World*), printed in Venice in 1590, became a model of the costume book genre. Featuring woodcut illustrations of exotic and domestic fashions, the book includes examples ranging from European dress to the costumes of Persians, Moors, and Arabs.

INNOVATIONS IN DRAWING

Venetian Renaissance drawings reveal both a respect for tradition and a taste for innovation. Whereas in the late fifteenth century the favored media were pen, ink, and wash, mostly used for relatively finished drawings of figures and compositions, the generation of Titian and Bordone, later followed by Tintoretto, preferred soft, scumbled black chalk, which was ideally suited to recording tonal subtleties and creating impressions of movement. Other artists, such as Vittore Carpaccio, perfected the technique of applying ink with the brush onto the famous Venetian blue paper, so prized by Albrecht Dürer. Jacopo Bassano's innovative use of colored chalks made him a precursor of the pastel medium.

A prolific draftsman, Tintoretto's drawings embody the Venetian Renaissance artist's melding of old and new. He studied with Titian for a brief period in the 1530s, and was deeply influenced by Veronese, Schiavone, and Michelangelo.

Tintoretto's masterful drawing *Samson Slaying the Philistines* was inspired by a wax or clay model he owned after Michelangelo's design for a never-executed sculpture of the same theme. Although stylistically indebted to works by his predecessors, the dynamic tension of Tintoretto's figures, the unusual perspectives of his compositions, and his dramatic use of light, anticipate the art of the next century.



Jacopo Robusti, called Tintoretto (1519–1594)
Two Studies of Samson Slaying the Philistines (Judges 15: 14-19)
Charcoal, heightened with white gouache, on faded blue paper
Thaw Collection
Photography: Schechter Lee, 2008

THE TERRAFERMA: VENICE'S MAINLAND POSSESSIONS

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Venice's possessions on the mainland, the *terraferma*, stretched westward from Udine, in the east, almost to Milan, and included Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, and Bergamo. These Venetian strongholds ensured the city's food supply and also safeguarded trade routes to the north.

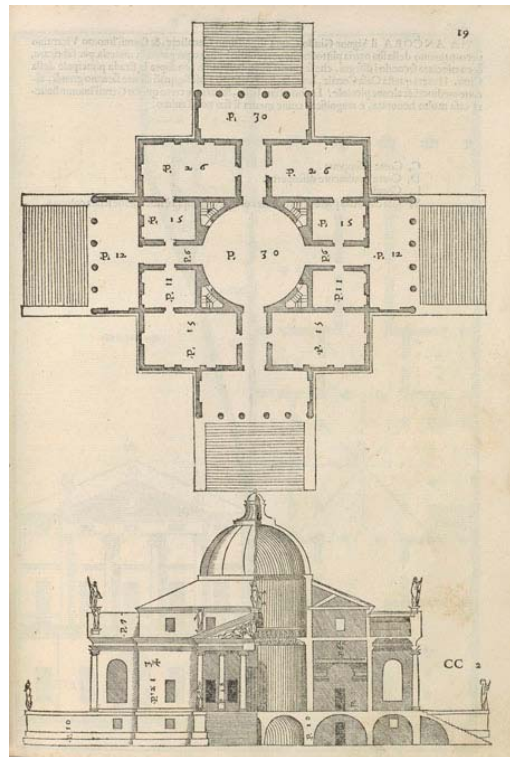
Venice's political independence and unified territories allowed artists considerable mobility. Some preferred to return to their native cities in Lombardy, Friuli, or the Veneto, where they established flourishing workshops, although distinctive local traditions, such as the realism of the Lombard painters of Bergamo and Brescia, also prevailed.



Paolo Veronese (1528–1588)
Studies of Jupiter Astride the Eagle, 1557
 Pen and brown ink, brown wash
 Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

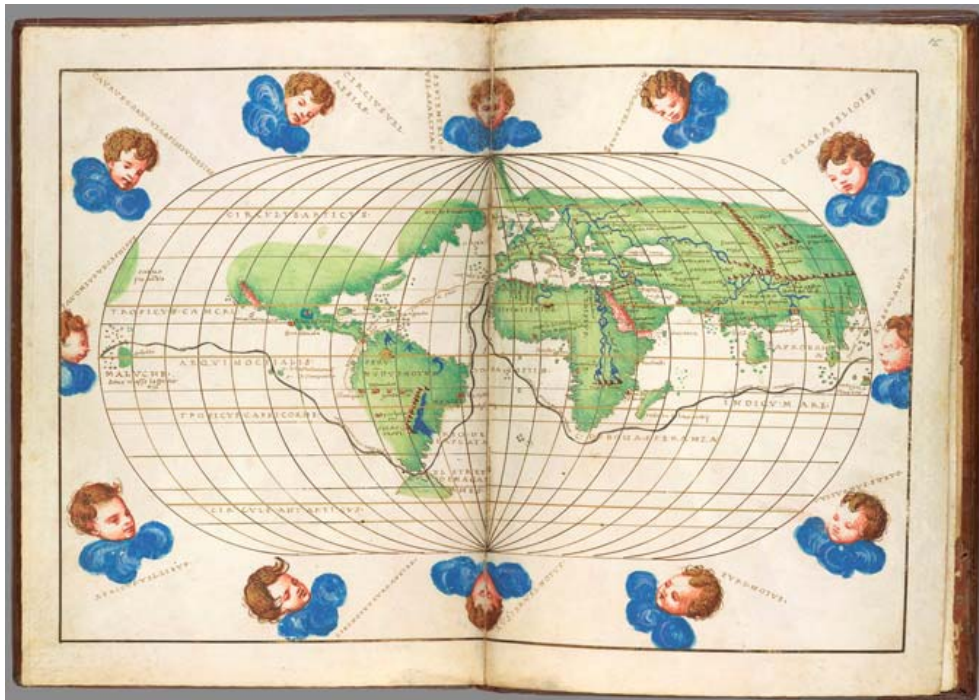
Artists such as Veronese and Battista Franco were frequently employed by the Venetian aristocracy, called upon to create works for public buildings and private residences on the *terraferma* and around Venice. Veronese's *Studies of Jupiter Astride the Eagle*, for example, is preparatory for frescoed decoration in Palazzo Trevisan, on the island of Murano.

Although he built a number of famous churches in Venice, the architect Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) never received a commission to build a palace there. He was, however, much employed on the Venetian mainland. His literary masterwork, the treatise *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (*Four Books on Architecture*), begun in 1555, profoundly affected Western architecture. A page from the treatise on display shows Palladio's design for a symmetrical building with a square plan and a circular central circular, complete with a dome and four projecting porticos.



Andrea Palladio (1508–1580)
Plan and Elevation of the Villa Rotonda, from
I quattro libri dell'architettura (*Four Books on Architecture*)
 Printed in Venice, 1570
 Gift of Paul Mellon, 1979

TRAVEL AND THE VENETIAN EMPIRE



Battista Agnese
Map of the World with Magellan's Route, from
Portolan Atlas, 1536–1564
Vellum

By 1500, Venice was the foremost maritime power in Europe. Its empire included a dense web of fortified harbors in the eastern Mediterranean stretching along the Dalmatian coast to Crete and Cyprus to protect its trading interests. Accordingly, Venice became an important center for cartography, catering to the needs of Venetian merchants and naval commanders.

An important milestone in cartography, Benedetto Bordone's 1528 *Isolario* (*Book of Islands*) was originally intended as a guide for sailors. The ambitious book describes important islands and ports throughout the Mediterranean and in other parts of the world, also touching on their culture and history. Some of the regions depicted in the illustrations are among the earliest printed maps of these areas, and the book also included new discoveries such as the connection between North and South America.

Bordone introduced an oval depiction of the earth, a convention adopted by later cartographers, including Battista Agnese. Agnese created his *Portolan Atlas* between 1536 and 1564, during the heyday of Italian mapmaking. Rather than a practical navigation tool like Bordone's work, Agnese's atlas was a luxury item most likely reserved for high ranking official and rich merchants.

Venice's wealth and stability allowed artistic creativity to flourish and also attracted a host of foreign artists from the north, such as Albrecht Dürer, and from its eastern territories, including El Greco, who arrived in Venice from Crete in about 1565. The impact of this exchange on the artistic life of Venice is hard to underestimate. It also served to spread the Venetian style well beyond the confines of the city-state.



Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)
Kneeling Donor, 1506
 Brush and black ink, gray wash, heightened with white bodycolor, with accents in pen and dark ink, on blue Venetian paper
 Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Lecture

Paolo Veronese: “Marvels in Drawing and Then in Coloring”

With Xavier F. Salomon

Wednesday, June 20, 6:30 pm

Veronese was one of the most extraordinary and prolific draftsmen in sixteenth-century Venetian art. In this lecture Xavier F. Salomon, Curator of Southern Baroque Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, will examine Veronese's compositional drawings and how they relate to his finished paintings. The analysis of the drawings will allow for a better and deeper understanding of the artist's creative process. *Renaissance Venice* will be open at 5:30 pm especially for program attendees.

Tickets: \$15; \$10 for Members; free to students with valid ID.

Film

Death in Venice

Friday, June 29, 7 pm

(1971, 130 minutes)

Director: Luchino Visconti

Adapted from Thomas Mann's novella of the same name, this haunting film tells the story of avant-garde composer Gustave Aschenbach (loosely based on Gustav Mahler, played by Dirk Bogarde) who travels to Venice where he develops a troubling infatuation with a beautiful adolescent boy, Tadzio (Björn Andrésen).

Free. Tickets are available at the Morgan's Admission Desk on the day of the screening.

Gallery Talk

Renaissance Venice: Drawings from the Morgan

Friday, June 1, 7 pm

Eveline Baseggio Omiccioli, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints, will lead this informal exhibition tour.

Free

ORGANIZATION AND SPONSORSHIP

Renaissance Venice: Drawings from the Morgan is organized by guest curator Rhoda Eitel-Porter. It is conceived as the third in a series of exhibitions dedicated to the Morgan's exceptional collection of sixteenth-century Italian drawings. *Renaissance Venice* was preceded by *Draftsmen of the Medici Court: Drawings from the Morgan*, presented in 2008, and *Rome after Raphael: Drawings from the Morgan*, shown in 2010.

Major funding for this exhibition is provided by the Alex Gordon Fund for Exhibitions.

Generous support is provided by The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation and by Robert B. Loper, with additional assistance from members of the Visiting Committee to the Department of Drawings and Prints.



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 from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

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

\$15 for adults; \$10 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.