

**Press Contacts**

Patrick Milliman  
212.590.0310, pmilliman@themorgan.org  
Sandra Ho  
212.590.0311, sho@themorgan.org

**THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM PRESENTS  
EXHIBITION FOCUSING ON THE CONTROVERSIAL  
SHAKESPEARE PORTRAIT QUESTION**

*INCLUDES FIRST U.S. SHOWING OF TWO RECENTLY IDENTIFIED WORKS: THE  
"COBBE PORTRAIT" OF SHAKESPEARE AND A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PAINTING  
OF SHAKESPEARE'S PATRON, THE 3RD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON*

**Also on View is a Copy of the Morgan's First Folio Edition of Shakespeare Plays and  
Three Additional Portraits, including One Acquired by Pierpont Morgan**

*The Changing Face of William Shakespeare Opens February 4*

**New York, NY, January 4, 2011**—In 2009, when the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-Upon-Avon unveiled a previously unidentified portrait with strong claims to be the only surviving contemporary likeness of William Shakespeare (1564–1616), it created an international stir. The Jacobean-era painting had hung unrecognized for centuries in an Irish country house belonging to the Cobbe family, and bore significant resemblances to the famous engraving of Shakespeare in the First Folio of his plays.



Artist Unknown, Seventeenth Century (c.1610),  
*William Shakespeare*, oil on panel.  
24 ¼ x 14 ¾ inches (53.9 x 37.5 cm)  
Collection of Archbishop Charles Cobbe (1686–  
1765), Cobbe Collection

In a new exhibition at The Morgan Library & Museum entitled *The Changing Face of William Shakespeare*, the Cobbe portrait, together with a recently identified sixteenth-century portrait of Shakespeare's patron Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, are being presented in the U.S. for the first time. Also on view will be three additional portraits of the playwright, including one acquired by Pierpont Morgan in 1910, an original copy of the 1623 First Folio, and a copy of Shakespeare's 1593 poem *Venus and Adonis*, dedicated to the earl.

Together, the works offer insight into the questions surrounding authentic images of the great playwright, an issue of significant scholarly interest and debate. Both the quality of the Cobbe portrait, thought to have been painted around 1610, and recent technical analysis suggest it is the first in a series of portraits claimed to depict William Shakespeare. The Cobbe portrait bears a Latin inscription, taken from a poem by Horace, addressed to a playwright. Both the Shakespeare portrait and the painting of the

earl were inherited by Archbishop Charles Cobbe (1686–1765). In the eighteenth century the Cobbe family was connected by marriage to Southampton's descendants.

The best known image of Shakespeare is Martin Droeshout's posthumous engraving in the First Folio, and the earlier Cobbe portrait has certain costume and design similarities to it, indicating that it may have served as a source for Droeshout. The portrait acquired by Pierpont Morgan, founder of The Morgan Library & Museum, is almost unknown, usually having hung in private offices inside the institution. Also

on view, in addition to the portraits and books, is a 1596 royal gift roll that records Southampton's New Year's gift to Queen Elizabeth I.

“The issue of determining authentic lifetime portraits of William Shakespeare is a fascinating one and the recent identification of the Cobbe portrait adds to the debate,” said William M. Griswold, director of The Morgan Library & Museum. “This exhibition provides context for a discussion that is certain to continue among scholars and those interested in the work of history's greatest playwright.”

*The Changing Face of William Shakespeare* is on view through May 1. It is organized by Declan Kiely, Robert H. Taylor Curator and Department Head of Literary and Historical Manuscripts at The Morgan Library & Museum.

This exhibition is supported by Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon B. Polsky. Optium Acrylic Glazing® is provided courtesy of M&M Distributors and Tru Vue.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

### Lectures, Discussions, and Dramatic Readings

#### **Rome and Rhetoric: Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar***

Garry Wills

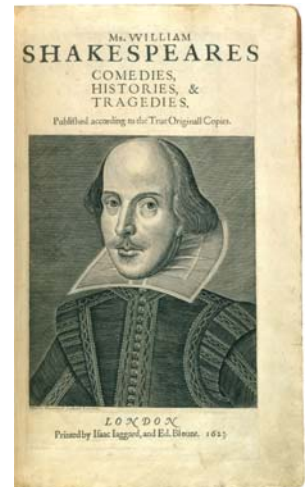
Distinguished scholar Garry Wills (*Outside Looking In: Adventures of an Observer*), Professor of History Emeritus, Northwestern University, presents the final lecture in a series about Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

This program is a collaboration with The Anthony Hecht Lectures in the Humanities at Bard College.

**Wednesday, March 9, 6:30 pm\***

#### **Shakespeare and Southampton**

Stephen Greenblatt



Shakespeare, William (1564-1616). *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies. Published according to the true originall copies.* London, printed by Isaac Iaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1896; PML 5122.

The relationship between Shakespeare and the androgynous 3rd Earl of Southampton has long been a subject of speculation and conjecture. In this illuminating evening of performance and commentary, Harvard University professor and bestselling author of *Will in the World*, Stephen Greenblatt, will examine the connections, real and hypothetical, between the Bard and his young friend, whose astonishing portrait will be on display alongside Shakespeare's at the Morgan. Actors will read selections from the *Sonnets* and the two poems Shakespeare dedicated to Southampton, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Performers to be announced. Presented in collaboration with The Shakespeare Society.

**Wednesday, March 23, 7 pm\***

**Shakespeare Works: *Much Ado About Nothing***

The Morgan hosts an evening of conversation and readings as part of The Shakespeare Society's popular "Shakespeare Works" series. These week-long residencies are aimed at supporting the performance and production of Shakespeare in New York City and creating connections between the theatrical and academic communities. Featuring Olivier-award winning actress Eve Best (*Hedda Gabler*) and noted actor Jonathan Cake from Tealight Productions's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Moderated by Michael Sexton, artistic director, The Shakespeare Society.

**Thursday, April 28, 7 pm\***

\*The exhibition *The Changing Face of William Shakespeare* will be open at 6 pm especially for program attendees.

Family Program

**Tonight, Tonight: *Romeo and Juliet* Meet on the West Side**

How do you turn a four-hundred-year old play into a Broadway musical set in 1950s New York City? To coincide with *The Changing Face of William Shakespeare*, opera singer and educator Jennifer Greene leads an interactive, family-friendly exploration of *West Side Story*, the modern day adaptation of Shakespeare's timeless classic *Romeo and Juliet*. Children will compare scenes from Shakespeare's play to the musical's libretto, hear performances by live artists, and have an opportunity to sing along with musical selections. Appropriate for ages 6-14.

**Saturday, April 9, 2-3 pm**

Gallery Talk

**The Changing Face of William Shakespeare**

Declan Kiely, Robert H. Taylor Curator and Department Head, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum

**Friday, March 18, 7 pm**

**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](http://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 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.