

A NEW EXHIBITION AT THE MORGAN REVEALS JACOPO TINTORETTO'S DRAWING PRACTICE AND LASTING IMPACT ON VENETIAN ART

Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice

October 12, 2018 through January 6, 2019

Press Preview: Thursday, October 11, 11:30 am-12:45 am

RSVP: media@themorgan.org

New York, NY, September 10, 2018 —

The dramatic canvases of Jacopo Tintoretto (1518/1519–1594), with their muscular, expressive bodies, are some of the most distinctive of the Italian Renaissance. His drawings, however, have received less attention as a distinctive category in his oeuvre. Opening October 12, *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* will be the first exhibition since 1956 to focus on the drawing practice of this major artist. It will offer a new perspective on Tintoretto's evolution as a draftsman, his individuality as an artist, and his influence on a generation of painters in northern Italy.

Organized to mark the five-hundredth anniversary of the artist's birth, this exhibition brings together more than seventy drawings and a small group of related paintings. It places Tintoretto's distinctive figure drawings

alongside works by contemporaries such as Titian, Veronese, and Bassano, as well as by



Tintoretto (1518/19-1594), *Seated Male Nude*, ca. 1549. Black and white chalk, squared, on blue paper. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 5385. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

artists—Domenico Tintoretto, Palma Giovane, and others—working in Venice during the late sixteenth century, whose drawing style was influenced by Tintoretto's. The exhibition also features a particularly engaging group of drawings that have recently been proposed as the work of the young El Greco during his time in Italy.

When the exhibition travels to the NGA in March 2019, it will be shown with *Tintoretto: Artist of Renaissance Venice*, a major retrospective focusing on his paintings.

The Exhibition

Seven sections explore the career and legacy of Tintoretto. Born the son of a fabric dyer (*tintore* in Italian) from whose profession the young artist derived his nickname, the artist rose to prominence in the 1540s. By the time of his death in May 1594, he was the pre-eminent artist in Venice, responsible for vast pictorial cycles in the Palazzo Ducale and the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, as well as paintings found throughout the churches and palaces of Venice. Even during his lifetime, he was thought of as an impetuous genius, an artist who worked hastily, without careful design or consideration. Yet although Tintoretto was never an academic draftsman akin to his Florentine contemporaries, over the course of his career he forged his own distinctive style of drawing and his own way of using them. As Tintoretto's fame grew, his expanding workload required more assistants, and his drawing practice evolved. In training those assistants, he influenced a generation of artists in northern Italy.



Titian (1488-1576), *Embracing Couple*, ca. 1568–70, charcoal and black and white chalk on faded blue paper. The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The Venetian School of Drawing and Tintoretto's Early Works

Since the sixteenth century, writers have often noted a distinction between the supposedly more formalized and intellectual process of drawing in central Italy and the more personal, experimental Venetian approach. Venetian artists indeed adopted a broad range of techniques, media, and methods of drawing, including pen and ink, black and white chalk on blue paper, colored chalks, and brush drawings. Tintoretto's experimental manner evolved in the context of these rich, diverse means of design. Titian, the leading artist

of his time, remained a powerful influence through works such as *Embracing Couple*, which

might be considered the quintessential Venetian drawing: it is loose and impressionistic yet also a powerful study of light and shadow falling across bodies twisting through space. Tintoretto was equally fascinated by the works of artists like Pordenone and Schiavone, who presented alternate artistic paths.



Tintoretto (1518/19–1594), *Venus and Vulcan*, ca. 1545, black chalk, pen and brown ink with brown and gray wash, bpk Bildagentur / Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Art Resource, NY. Photography by Jorg P. Anders

By 1537 or 1538, Tintoretto was an independent master. While many of Tintoretto's drawings have been lost, from those that remain we can trace his evolution from an early experimental mode of drawing akin to Schiavone's, to an increasing attention on life study, and on to quicker, functional figure drawings intended to satisfy the practical needs of a busy painter. A drawing like his *Venus and Vulcan* highlights the various elements of Tintoretto's early drawing style, with its energetic approach to design and bodies that are simultaneously muscular and lithe.

Highlights in Tintoretto's Career, and the Evolution of His Drawing Practice

The watershed moment in Tintoretto's career was the unveiling in 1548 of his *Miracle of the Slave*, a work of a monumentality, drama, and richness unseen in his painting to that point. The confraternity of San Rocco then commissioned Tintoretto to take up the decoration of their church. During the late 1550s, Tintoretto also painted two vast paintings for the church of the Madonna dell'Orto, the *Last Judgment* and *Making of the Golden Calf*. These highlighted Tintoretto's abilities and soon led to commissions at the Palazzo Ducale and the Scuola Grande di San Marco. A few years later, Tintoretto began painting the Scuola di San Rocco, a project that would occupy him on and off for the rest of his career. Although there are no extant drawings directly related to the *Miracle of the Slave*, the exhibition includes studies connected with each of these other projects.



Tintoretto (1518/19-1594), *Study of a Man with Raised Arms*, ca. 1562–66, charcoal, heightened with white, on blue paper, squared for transfer, The British Museum, London. ©The Trustees of the British Museum



Left: Tintoretto (?) and Workshop (1518/19-1594), *Study of Michelangelo's Samson and the Philistines* (recto and verso), ca. 1560–70, charcoal and black chalk with white opaque watercolor on blue paper, The Morgan Library & Museum, Thaw Collection, 2005.234. Photography by Janny Chiu.
Right: Tintoretto (1518/19-1594), *Study for a Man Climbing into a Boat* (recto), 1578–79, charcoal, squared in charcoal. The Morgan Library & Museum. Gift of J.P. Morgan, Jr. The Morgan Library & Museum, IV, 76. Photography by Graham S. Haber, 2012.

The most familiar of Tintoretto's drawings are the many studies after Michelangelo's *Samson and the Philistines* and his sculptures in the Medici Chapel. A group of these studies is included in the exhibition, along with a cast of the *Samson* on which they are based. Although traditionally believed to be Tintoretto's own youthful studies, the exhibition argues that these sculpture drawings are exercises that he used in his workshop to teach his assistants how to convey drama, meaning, and sculptural presence of the human form.

In later years, Tintoretto's workload increased to such a degree that his paintings were designed by him but executed by the workshop. His later figure drawings tend to be more simplified and abstracted than his earlier studies of live models, and they frequently adopt exaggerated musculature that was perhaps intended to emphasize form for the workshop assistants executing the paintings.

Tintoretto's Influence on the Next Generation

Tintoretto's son Domenico (1560–1635) was trained in the family workshop in the 1570s and eventually became his father's primary assistant and artistic heir. In his early years, he demonstrated a talent for naturalistic observation in both drawing and painting and was a notable portraitist. Domenico



Domenico Tintoretto (1560 - 1635), *Reclining Female Nude*, ca. 1590, black and white chalk on blue paper. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY.

was arguably at his best when making studies of a model, such as his remarkable series of drawings after a female nude. However, later in his career and particularly after the death of his father, Domenico abandoned his interest in anatomical structure and three-dimensional space that always characterized his father's work, although he essentially continued Jacopo's working methods.



Attributed to El Greco (ca. 1541-1614), *Last Supper*, ca. 1575, brown wash with white opaque watercolor, over black chalk, on light brown paper. The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of János Scholz, 1981.96. Photography by Janny Chiu, 2018.

Some of the most intriguing drawings in the show are the early works of Domenikos Theotokopoulos, El Greco, (ca. 1541–1614) done during his years in Italy. They have the same heightened emotion seen in El Greco's paintings, with dramatic lighting depicting crowds of figures with their heads clustered together. Long considered the work of an unknown artist in Tintoretto's circle, these drawings are comparable to the few later drawings believed to be by El Greco, and several also include his characteristic handwriting. While the work of a distinctive artist, a drawing such as the *Last Supper* (ca. 1575) reveals a compositional debt to Tintoretto and evokes an emotional intensity similar to Tintoretto's *Christ Mocked* (also in the exhibition).

In many ways, Jacopo Palma (ca. 1548–1628) became Tintoretto's truest artistic heir. The son of the minor painter Antonio Palma, he received early training in his father's workshop in Venice and traveled to Pesaro and Rome for various projects before returning to Venice. During the campaign to redecorate the Palazzo Ducale after the fire of 1577, Palma was closely associated with Tintoretto and his workshop, and after Tintoretto's death, it was Palma rather than Domenico Tintoretto who became the



Palma Giovane (1544-1628), *Christ Carried to the Tomb*, ca. 1610, brush and brown and white oil paint over black chalk on oatmeal paper. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Wolfgang Ratjen Collection, Purchased as the Gift of Helen Porter and James T. Dyke, 2007. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

leading painter in Venice. Palma's drawings take us back not only to the chalk drawings of Titian and Tintoretto but also to the pen drawings of Veronese and the compositional studies of

Schiavone and the Tintoretto family. Palma's *Christ Carried to the Tomb* (ca. 1610), for example, captures the spiritual intensity of Titian's late devotional painting as well as the urgent energy of Tintoretto's, and is drawn in a painterly technique parallel akin to that of Schiavone or Domenico Tintoretto. In Palma's works, we can see a summary of the distinctive local traditions of drawing in Tintoretto's Venice.

Publication

Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice offers a complete overview of Tintoretto as a draftsman, in which all of the drawings in the exhibition are discussed and illustrated. A checklist of the exhibition is also included in the volume.

Author: John Marciari.

Publisher: Paul Holberton Publishing, London.

240 pages, 175 colour illustrations.

Public Programs

LECTURES An Impetuous Genius: Drawings by Jacopo Tintoretto

John Marciari

Celebrating the opening of *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice*, John Marciari, Charles W. Engelhard Curator of Drawings and Prints—and the curator of the exhibition—presents a new overview of Tintoretto's work as a draftsman by exploring Tintoretto's sources, the evolution of his drawing style, his use of drawings as part of his painting practice, and the practical necessities of training a large workshop, as well as the problems of studying Tintoretto as a draftsman.

Friday, October 12, 6:30 pm*

Tickets: \$15; free for members and students with a valid ID. Tickets include free admission for the day of the program.

*The exhibition *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* will open at 5:30 pm for program attendees.

Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice: An International Symposium

Organized in conjunction with the exhibition *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice*, this symposium will feature presentations from an international group of experts. Papers will explore different practical and theoretical aspects of drawings by Tintoretto and his contemporaries in Renaissance Venice, including the role of life drawing and questions of naturalism, the use of underdrawing in Tintoretto's paintings, and the influence of Tintoretto's work on his contemporaries. Organized by the Morgan Drawing Institute.

Thursday, November 1, 10 am–5 pm*

Tickets: \$15; free for members and students with a valid ID. Tickets include free admission for the day of the program.

GALLERY TALKS

Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice

John Marciari, Charles W. Engelhard Curator and Department Head, Drawings and Prints

All gallery talks and tours are free with museum admission; no tickets or reservations necessary.

Friday, October 26, 6 pm & Friday, November 16, 1 pm

**ADULT
WORKSHOP**

Tintoretto: Drawing in Context

Join artist and educator Simon Levenson, National Arts Club drawing instructor, for this two hour drawing workshop. Following an exhibition tour of *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* studying Tintoretto's compositions, participants will design a large composition as a group with each individual creating a component contributing towards the whole. Advance tickets are required, as space is limited.

Friday, November 16, 6–8 pm

Tickets: \$45; \$35 for members. Advance tickets are required, as space is limited.

CONCERTS

**Francesca Caccini's Alcina
Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Opera**

The Grammy award-winning BEMF Chamber Opera Series presents a new, semi-staged production of *Alcina* by Medici court composer and performer Francesca Caccini.

Paul O'Dette & Stephen Stubbs, Musical Directors

Gilbert Blin, Stage Director

Robert Mealy, Concertmaster

Melinda Sullivan, Dance Director

Anna Watkins, Costume Designer

Shannon Mercer, Alcina

Colin Balzer, Ruggiero

Kelsey Lauritano, Melissa

Boston Early Music Festival Vocal & Chamber Ensembles

The exhibitions *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters* and *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* will be open at 6:30 pm for concert attendees.

Monday, November 26, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, November 27, 7:30 pm

Pre-concert talk: 7 pm pre-opera talk with directors O'Dette, Stubbs, Mealy, and Blin.

Series tickets: 1 BEMF opera and 1 BEMF concert: \$100; \$80 for members.

Tickets: Opera: \$65; \$55 for members.

Vivaldi, Venice, and the Influence of Italy

Celebrate the music of the Italian Baroque and Renaissance, presented in conjunction with the exhibitions *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters* and *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice*.

Monteverdi, Selections from L'Orfeo

Vivaldi, Sonata for Cello in B-flat Major, RV 46

Biber, Sonata in F Major

Vivaldi, Trio Sonata in B minor, RV 79

Merula, Ciaccona

Vivaldi, Concerto for Strings in C Major, RV 117

Corelli, Sonata for Violin in D minor, Op. 5, No. 12 "La Folia"

Vivaldi, Concerto for Strings in G minor, RV 157

The exhibitions *Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters* and *Drawing in Tintoretto's Venice* will be open at 6:30 pm for concert attendees.

Wednesday, December 5, 7:30 pm

Series tickets: \$120; \$112.50 for members.

Tickets: \$50; \$40 for members.

Tickets to these concerts may be ordered only by calling the Orchestra of St. Luke's at **212.594.6100** or visiting **oslmusic.org**.

Subscriptions ticket sales open on September 1st, 2018 at 12 pm
Single tickets sales open on October 15th, 2018 at 12 pm

Organization and Sponsorship

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The Morgan Library & Museum

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, 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 it is a museum, independent research library, music venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. 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 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, and the 2010 refurbishment of the original library, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

The Morgan Library & Museum | 225 Madison Avenue | 212.685.0008 | themorgan.org