2020 Exhibitions at the Morgan

Jean-Jacques Lequeu: Visionary Architect. Drawings from the Bibliothèque nationale de France
January 31 through May 10, 2020

Six months before he died in poverty and obscurity, architect and draftsman Jean-Jacques Lequeu (1757–1826) donated one of the most singular and fascinating graphic oeuvres of his time to the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). The Morgan Library & Museum is proud to be the first institution in New York City to present a selection of these works. Some sixty of Lequeu’s several hundred drawings will be on view in Jean-Jacques Lequeu: Visionary Architect, the first museum retrospective to bring significant public and scholarly attention to one of the most imaginative architects of the Enlightenment.

Lequeu’s meticulous drawings in pen and wash include highly detailed renderings of buildings and imaginary monuments populating invented landscapes. His mission was to see and describe everything systematically—from the animal to the organic, from erotic fantasy to his own visage. Solitary and obsessive, he created the fantastic worlds shown in his drawings without ever leaving his studio, and enriched them with characters and stories drawn from his library.

Jean-Jacques Lequeu: Visionary Architect is organized by the Morgan Library & Museum and the Bibliothèque nationale de France with the cooperation of Paris Musées.

The exhibition was presented at the Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, from 11 December 2018 to 31 March 2019. Exhibition curators were Corinne Le Bitouzé and Christophe Leribault and scientific collaborators were Laurent Baridon, Jean-Philippe Garric, and Martial Guédron. The curator of the exhibition at the Morgan is Jennifer Tonkovich, Eugene and Clare Thaw Curator of Drawings and Prints.

The exhibition is made possible by generous support from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, an anonymous donor, the Alex Gordon Fund for Exhibitions, and Aso O. Tavitian, with assistance from Robert Dance and Hubert and Mireille Goldschmidt.
Alfred Jarry: The Carnival of Being
January 24 through May 10, 2020

The subversive works and personality of the French writer Alfred Jarry (1873–1907) played a crucial role in the transition from the nineteenth-century avant-garde to the emergent modernist movements of the early twentieth century. An inspiration for Dada and Surrealism and a touchstone for the Theatre of the Absurd, Jarry is most renowned for his play *Ubu roi* and the legend of its sensational premiere in 1896. To his contemporaries, however—figures such as Paul Gauguin, Henri Rousseau, Oscar Wilde, and Guillaume Apollinaire—Jarry’s prestige extended beyond theater. He applied his genius to poetry, the novel, and operettas; he was a graphic artist, an actor, a puppeteer, a critic, and the inventor of an imaginary science called pataphysics. For Jarry, engagements with technology, popular imagery, and the performance of everyday life could constitute works of art.

Some of the many ideas and innovations he brought to multiple mediums also found expression in his maverick book and magazine designs. Jarry was one of the first writers to experiment with visual typography. His concept of authorship and unorthodox approach to illustration, employing anachronism, assembling, collage, and appropriation, anticipated practices at play in modern and contemporary artists’ publications. By exploring his enterprises in print, this exhibition contributes to an ever-broadening appreciation of Jarry’s role in the radical upheaval in the arts more than a century ago.

*Alfred Jarry: The Carnival of Being* celebrates the generous gift to the Morgan Library & Museum of the books and manuscripts from the Robert J. and Linda Klieger Stillman Pataphysics Collection.

The exhibition is made possible by major support from Beatrice Stern, the Sherman Fairchild Fund for Exhibitions, Robert J. and Linda Klieger Stillman, and the Franklin Jasper Walls Lecture Fund.
Famine and flight, emigration and immigration, foreignness: these are some of the societal issues touched upon by the anonymous author of the Bible’s Book of Ruth, whose titular character was a great-grandmother of King David and, in the Christian tradition, an ancestor of Jesus Christ. This exhibition celebrates the 2018 gift by Joanna S. Rose of the Joanna S. Rose Illuminated Book of Ruth to the Morgan. The accordion-fold vellum manuscript, measuring nine inches tall and an amazing eighteen feet long, was designed and illuminated by New York artist Barbara Wolff, who worked on the project for two years (2015–17). The complete biblical text of the Book of Ruth is written in Hebrew on one side and in English on the other, the work of calligrapher Izzy Pludwinski. The Hebrew side features twenty colored illustrations and a continuous landscape, with accents and lettering in silver, gold, and platinum; the English side has forty images executed in black ink.

The Rose Book of Ruth is presented in conversation with twelve manuscripts, drawn from the Morgan’s holdings, that unfold the Christian traditions for illustrating the story of Ruth during the Middle Ages. Through the juxtaposition of the modern manuscript with these ancient works, which date from the twelfth to the fifteenth century and include three leaves from the Morgan’s famed Crusader Bible, the exhibition brings into focus the techniques of medieval illumination that inspired Wolff, as well as her inventive approach to iconography.

The Book of Ruth: Medieval to Modern is made possible by Joanna S. Rose, the David Berg Foundation, Joshua W. Sommer, and the David Klein, Jr. Foundation.
Active in New York in the 1980s and 1990s as a sculptor and draftsman, Al Taylor (1948–1999) found inspiration for his lyrical and witty compositions in banal objects and everyday situations. Driven by curiosity and a sense of humor, he drew maps of pet stains, imagined puddles hanging out to dry, and created elegant still-lifes out of assemblages of tin cans balanced on wires. During his short career, he produced more than five thousand drawings, in which he combined technical skills and Old Master virtuosity with conceptual strategies based on chance and graphic systems such as charts and diagrams. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue will bring to light new research based on the drawings, sketchbooks, and abundant documentation in the artist’s estate.

*The Drawings of Al Taylor* is organized by the Morgan Library & Museum, New York and curated by Isabelle Dervaux, Acquavella Curator and Department Head of Modern & Contemporary Drawings.

The exhibition is made possible by generous support from the Sherman Fairchild Fund for Exhibitions, the Ricciardi Family Exhibition Fund, Alyce Williams Toonk, the Robert Lehman Foundation, and David Zwirner.
Los Angeles–based artist Betye Saar (b. 1926) emerged in the 1960s as a major voice in American art. Part of a wave of artists, many of them African American, who embraced the medium of assemblage, she is known best for incisive collages and assemblage sculptures that confront and reclaim racist images. The daughter of a seamstress, and a printmaker by training, Saar brings to her work a remarkable sensitivity to materials. Her imagery is drawn from popular culture, family history, and a wide range of spiritual traditions.

This exhibition, conceived in close consultation with the artist, looks at the relationship between Saar’s finished works and the preliminary annotated sketches she has made in small notebooks throughout her career. In addition, the show will include approximately a dozen of Saar’s travel sketchbooks with more finished drawings and collages—often relating to leitmotifs seen across her oeuvre—which she has made over a lifetime of journeys worldwide. Selections will cover the span of her career, from the late 1960s up through a sculptural installation made specifically for this exhibition.

This exhibition is organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The exhibition is curated by Carol S. Eliel, Curator of Modern Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The coordinating curator at the Morgan Library & Museum is Rachel Federman, Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Drawings.

This exhibition is made possible with lead corporate support from Morgan Stanley and lead support from the Ford Foundation. Additional support is provided by Agnes Gund, Louisa Stude Sarofim, and The Lunder Foundation – Peter and Paula Lunder family.
In a letter written near the end of his life, Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778) explained to his sister that he had lived away from his native Venice because he could find no patrons there willing to support “the sublimity of my ideas.” He resided instead in Rome, where he became internationally famous working as a printmaker, designer, architect, archaeologist, theorist, dealer, and polemicist. While Piranesi’s lasting fame is based above all on his etchings, he was also an intense, accomplished, and versatile draftsman, and much of his work was first developed in vigorous drawings. The Morgan holds what is arguably the largest and most important collection of these works, including early architectural caprices, studies for prints, measured design drawings, sketches for a range of decorative objects, a variety of figural drawings, and views of Rome and Pompeii. These works form the core of the exhibition.

Supplemented with seldom-exhibited loans from a number of private collections, Sublime Ideas will offer a broad survey of Piranesi’s work as a draftsman, celebrating the 300th anniversary of the artist’s birth.
Ferdinand Hodler: Drawings – Selections from the Jenisch Museum Vevey June 12 through September 13, 2020

A modern art pioneer, renowned Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918) created works that range from vast symbolist compositions to intimate, realist portraits and nearly abstract landscape paintings. This exhibition of approximately sixty works, primarily on paper, will focus on the role of drawing in his practice, from quick compositional sketches to elaborate oil studies. Most of the drawings Hodler produced were preparatory studies for his large-scale figure compositions; these offer a fascinating account of his working process, which involved technical experiments with imprints, tracing, and collages. A few of his portrait drawings will also be featured, including a poignant series in which he recorded the illness and death of his lover Valentine Godé-Darel.

All the works will be borrowed from the Musée Jenisch in Vevey, Switzerland, a town on Lake Geneva that Hodler visited frequently. In 2014, the Musée Jenisch received a bequest of more than six hundred drawings by Hodler, gathered over fifty years by artist and collector Rudolf Schindler. These rarely seen drawings offer a compelling survey of Hodler’s singular contribution to early modernism.

Ferdinand Hodler: Drawings – Selections from the Jenisch Museum Vevey is organized by the Morgan Library & Museum in collaboration with the Jenisch Museum Vevey.

The exhibition is made possible by major support from Beatrice Stern; generous support from the Wolfgang Ratjen Foundation, Liechtenstein; and assistance from the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.
PLEASE SEND TO REAL LIFE: Ray Johnson Photographs
June 26 through October 4, 2020

A widely connected pioneer of Pop and mail art, Ray Johnson (1927–1995) was described as “New York’s most famous unknown artist.” Best known for his multimedia collages, he stopped exhibiting in 1991, but his output did not diminish. In 1992–1994, he used 137 disposable cameras to create a large body of work that is coming to light only now. Staging his collages in settings near his home in Locust Valley, Long Island—parking lots, sidewalks, beaches, cemeteries—he made photographs that pull the world of everyday “real life” into his art. In his “new career as a photographer,” Johnson began making collages in a new, larger format that made them more effective players in his camera tableaux. The vast archive he left behind at his death included over three thousand of the late photographs. Now, his final project makes its debut alongside earlier photo-based collages and works of mail art: fruits of a romance with the camera that spans the four decades of the artist’s career.

PLEASE SEND TO REAL LIFE: Ray Johnson Photographs is made possible by generous support from the Kieckhefer Foundation.
David Hockney: Drawing from Life
October 2, 2020 through January 17, 2021

David Hockney (b. 1937) is one of the most internationally respected and renowned artists alive today. Organized and premiered by the National Portrait Gallery, London, this exhibition is the first to focus on his portraits on paper and one of very few to investigate his drawing practice. Featuring around one hundred drawings, the iteration at the Morgan will trace the trajectory from Hockney’s early works as a student to his Ingres-like portraits of the 1970s and his return to the sketchbooks in the early 2000s.

The exhibition will be unique in exploring Hockney’s practice on paper through a small group of sitters he has depicted repeatedly over the years: his muse and confidante, the designer Celia Birtwell; his mother; Gregory Evans, his curator and former partner; and the artist himself. Each of these individuals has been important to Hockney, who over time has rendered them in different forms: pencil, pen and ink, pastel drawings, etchings, photo joiners, camera lucidas, and iPhone and iPad drawings. In revisiting them over decades, Hockney gives us insight into how his practice has evolved over time.

An exhibition organized by the National Portrait Gallery, London, in collaboration with the artist and the Morgan Library & Museum.

David Hockney: Drawing from Life is made possible by Mr. and Mrs. Robert King Steel and Katharine J. Rayner. Additional support is provided by Dian Woodner.
Van Eyck to Mondrian: 300 Years of Collecting in Dresden
October 23, 2020 through January 31, 2021

Building on the Morgan’s tradition of presenting to the American public distinguished works from outstanding institutions abroad, Masterworks from Dresden: Van Eyck to Mondrian will focus on the exceptional drawing collection of Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden. Established by Augustus II the Strong, Elector of Saxony, in 1720, the Kupferstich-Kabinett is one of the oldest and finest depositories of works on paper in the world. The Morgan will be the sole American venue for this exhibition, which is timed to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the collection.

Both chronologically and geographically wide-ranging, the exhibition will celebrate pivotal moments and key traditions in the history of European draftsmanship. Most remarkably, it will feature Jan van Eyck’s Portrait of an Elderly Man—an exceptionally rare drawing by the great Netherlandish Renaissance painter, which has never before traveled to the United States. The Kupferstich-Kabinett’s strength in Northern Renaissance and Baroque drawings will be further showcased through works by Lucas Cranach the Elder, Hans Holbein the Younger, Rembrandt, and Rubens, while the museum’s rich holdings of Southern European works will be represented by Correggio, Bronzino, Sofonisba Anguissola, and others. Among works produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highlights include studies by Caspar David Friedrich, Goya, Käthe Kollwitz, Gustav Klimt, Otto Dix, and Piet Mondrian.

This exhibition was organized by the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and the Morgan Library & Museum, New York.

Van Eyck to Mondrian: 300 Years of Collecting in Dresden is made possible by an anonymous donor, in memory of Melvin R. Seiden. Generous support is provided by the Wolfgang Ratjen Foundation, Liechtenstein; The Christian Humann Foundation; Mr. and Mrs. Clement C. Moore II; Elizabeth and Jean-Marie Eveillard; Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder; and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation; with assistance from the Arnhold Family, in memory of Henry H. Arnhold.
Young, handsome, and highborn, Claude III de L’Aubespine lived in luxury after marrying an heiress and obtaining the favor of King Charles IX. His brilliant career at court was cut short in 1570, when he died at the age of 25. He left behind a splendid library, which was dispersed, and only recently have his books been identified and properly appreciated for their superb quality and fine bindings. L’Aubespine now ranks among the great collectors of the French Renaissance.

For the first time in more than 350 years, this exhibition brings together some of the most spectacular bindings in that collection, exquisite examples of Renaissance ornamental design. They will be shown along with related artwork and literary memorials of L’Aubespine. He left his books to his sister, a patron of the poet Pierre de Ronsard, who praised her country estate, the library, and its perfumed bindings, which, he said, “smell as good as your orange trees.” This exhibition will evoke the sensual pleasure and literary connoisseurship implicit in a noble library of that era.

*L’Aubespine: Splendid Bindings from a Courtier’s Library* is made possible by T. Kimball Brooker.