

Samuel F. B. Morse, Artist and Inventor

Had Samuel F.B. Morse succeeded in his ambition to become a great American painter, we likely would not have the Morse code and someone else would have developed the telegraph.....

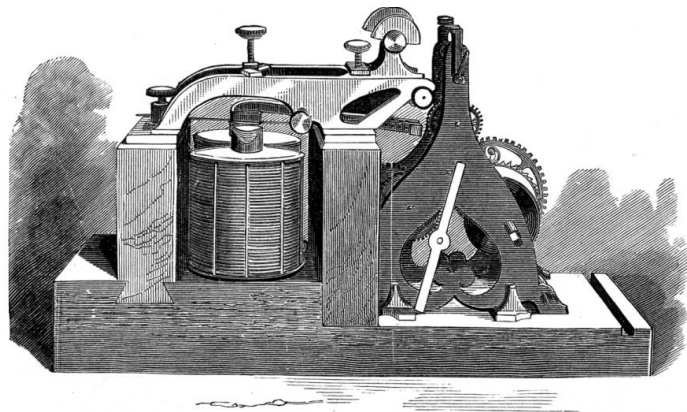
View Samuel Morse's painting in detail online at <http://tinyurl.com/n6awww5>.

Morse had great hopes for this gigantic canvas (180 x 274cm) when it was exhibited for the first time in New York. The painting represents the paintings hung in the Salon Carré at the time (note the passage in the back wall into the Grand Salon). The painting was exhibited with a catalog identifying each of the paintings and sculptures.

Consistent with the genre of the gallery painting, figures involved with the paintings are represented on the floor of the Salon, and these figures include Morse himself (bending over the shoulder of an unidentified student) and James Fenimore Cooper, wife and daughter, with Cooper holding forth upon some subject. This placement captures an number of themes: the friendship of the two men, their entirely comfortable bearing in the presence of the concentrated glory of Europe, and Morse's hope of selling the painting to Cooper.

Alas, the public who viewed the painting in New York and other cities did not embrace it as a bridge to Great Art (or as anything else); it lost money in the public exhibition (as did his earlier large canvas of the members of the House of Representatives) and it did not generate much in the way of commissions for Morse.

Cooper's reputation and finances went into steep decline and he was unable to buy the painting. By 1837 Morse put up his brushes and concentrated on developing the telegraph. Henry Fox Talbot and Louis Daguerre were developing mechanical means of reproduction, and the age of great Gallery paintings was coming to a close.



**MORSE TELEGRAPH RECEIVER OF 1844—THE FIRST INSTRUMENT
RECORDING THE MORSE CODE.**

A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H	I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X
Y	Z	&	,	?	.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	0	

