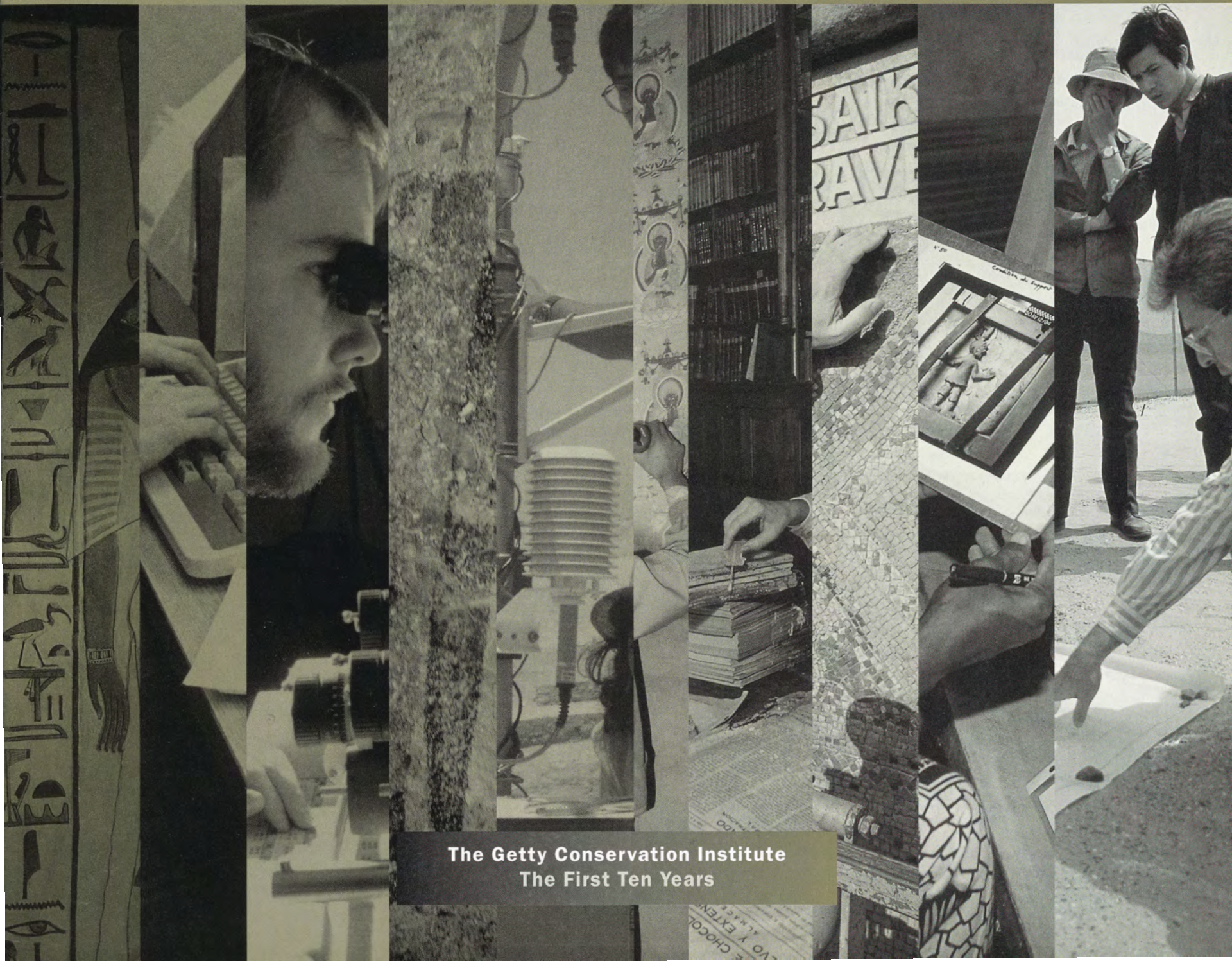


CONSERVATION

The GCI Newsletter



The Getty Conservation Institute
The First Ten Years

The Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter

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The Getty Conservation Institute

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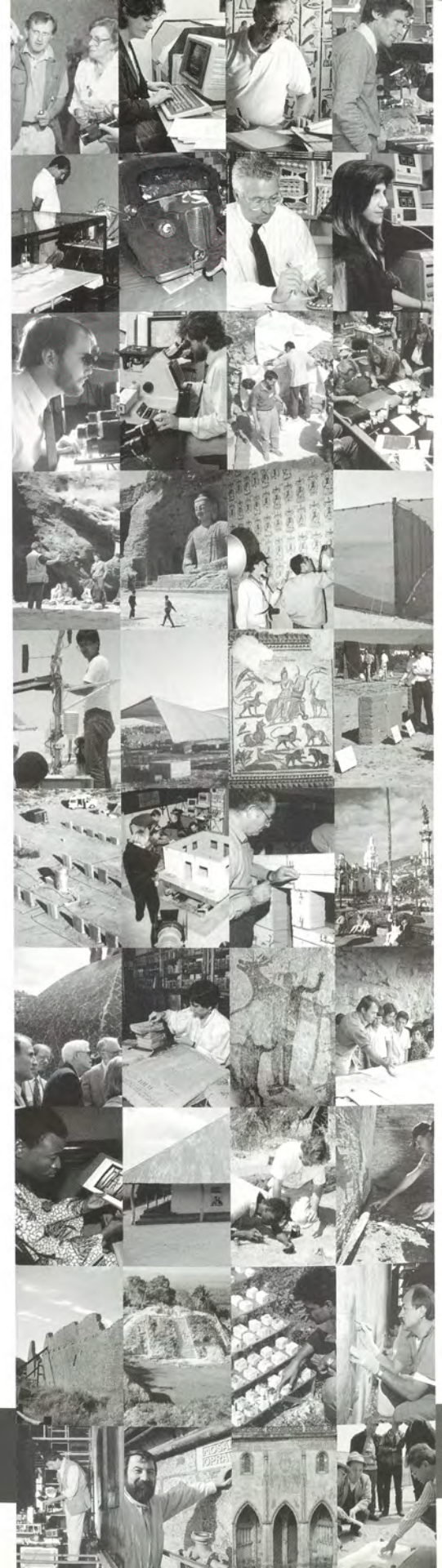
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Front cover:

Images from the work of the Getty Conservation Institute during its first ten years.



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This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Getty Conservation Institute's full emergence as an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. The Director of the Institute, Miguel Angel Corzo, introduces this special issue of *Conservation, The GCI Newsletter*, which looks back at the Institute's first ten years and its efforts to preserve for future generations the treasures of our past.

Feature

5 The Getty Conservation Institute 1985–1995: A Retrospective

In the summer of 1985, a dozen employees and the newly installed first director of the Getty Conservation Institute took up quarters in rented warehouse space in a suburb of Los Angeles. It was the beginning of the GCI's full-fledged operation. Since that time the Institute has worked around the world, promoting the conservation of cultural property and seeking to increase public awareness of conservation's importance. This issue's feature article chronicles the planning behind the Institute; the growth of its scientific research, training, and documentation programs, and its special projects; and the evolution of the Institute's philosophy.

Profile

20 Opportunity and Responsibility: A Conversation with Harold Williams

Since his arrival at the Getty Trust in 1981, Harold M. Williams, the Trust's President and Chief Executive Officer, has guided its metamorphosis from being primarily a museum to an organization of international stature with seven different programs, including the Getty Conservation Institute. He talks about the origins, establishment, and development of the Institute, and reflects on the Trust's continuing commitment to the preservation of the cultural heritage.

A NOTE FROM THE

Director

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Getty Conservation Institute's full emergence as an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. In 1985 the Institute's first director was appointed, and the GCI moved to its present headquarters in the Marina del Rey section of Los Angeles. Since that time, the Institute has worked around the world — from the Gobi Desert to the Nile, from Prague to the jungles of Belize — promoting the conservation of cultural property and seeking to increase public awareness of conservation's importance.

We are devoting this special issue of *Conservation, The GCI Newsletter*, to a look back at the Institute's first ten years: the growth of its scientific research, training, and documentation programs; the development of its special projects; and the evolution of its philosophy. We are dedicated to conservation because we believe that conserving the artifacts and places of the past — and the values these represent for communities and nations — preserves the knowledge needed to guide us in the present and the future. The same principle prompts us here. We hope that reflecting back on our efforts to this point will help us and our colleagues and friends astutely focus our work in the years ahead.

This issue also includes a conversation with Harold Williams, President and Chief Executive Officer of the J. Paul Getty Trust. Since 1981 Mr. Williams has led the Trust through a period of tremendous growth characterized by an expanded commitment to the arts and humanities, a commitment that includes addressing the international problems of conservation and the essential role conservation plays in preserving our cultural heritage. His vision and support have made possible the achievements of the GCI's first decade.

Later this year in the newsletter we will take a closer look at some highlights of the GCI's past work in the four categories that now constitute the Institute's areas of interest — objects and collections, archaeological sites and monuments, historic structures and cities, and public awareness and advocacy.

In the spring of 1996, the Institute will move to its permanent home in the newly constructed Getty Center. Located in the Brentwood area of Los Angeles, the Getty Center will serve as the headquarters for all the programs of the Getty Trust. In the years to come, the GCI will be working even more closely with its sister organizations on the vital task of preserving the cultural heritage that enriches us all.

Miguel Angel Corzo
Director
The Getty Conservation Institute

THE GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE

A RETROSPECTIVE

1985–1995

by Janet Bridgland

I

N THE SUMMER OF 1985, the Getty Conservation Institute took up quarters in rented warehouse space in Marina del Rey, a suburb of Los Angeles. For the Institute's dozen employees and its newly installed first director, the move marked the beginning of the GCI's full-fledged operation.

The Institute's establishment as a new player in the international field of cultural heritage conservation was the result of years of planning, combined with the bequest of one of the world's most prominent art collectors, J. Paul Getty. Its origins dated to 1953, when Mr. Getty opened the art collection in his Malibu residence to the public. Created as a trust, the J. Paul Getty Museum became an operating foundation in the early 1970s. In 1982, six years after his death, Mr. Getty's estate was settled, and the size of his substantial endowment to the museum was revealed.

In the year leading up to the settlement of the estate, the Getty Trust explored how it might best concentrate its energies in the fields of art and art history. Its legal status as an operating trust required it to create and operate its own programs rather than fund those of other institutions, and the Trust's Board felt a responsibility to develop programs beyond the reach of other private and public institutions. As its President and Chief Executive Officer, Harold M.

Williams noted in June 1983, "We are unusual as a foundation in that we have a very large endowment. We can think long-range and make long-term commitments.... Unlike a government agency, we do not need to satisfy different constituencies. Unlike a corporate foundation, we are not looking for PR value. We can focus our efforts and we can take risks; therefore, we have a special responsibility to the field to make a difference."

The Formative Years

In April 1982 the Trust committed itself to four major activities: a Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, a Conservation Institute, a Center for Education in the Arts, and a new museum, all of which would eventually be located at a common site in the Los Angeles area.

After extensive consultations, the Trust selected three programs for the Conservation Institute that were considered top priorities by the field: applied scientific research and analysis; the collection and dissemination of information relating to conservation and allied fields; and training in conservation theory and practice. Consistent with the Trust's underlying philosophy, the Institute would adopt an interdisciplinary approach, combining science and art history with treatment in its efforts to preserve the cultural heritage.

Guided by an international conservation advisory committee, the Trust early on took steps related to establishing a conservation institute. In late 1982 it contracted with the regional conservation laboratory in Williamstown, Massachusetts, to assess information needs of conservation practitioners and recommend strategies for improving the collection and dissemination of information. In February 1983 Frank Preusser was recruited from Munich's Doerner Institute to develop a program of analytical support to the Getty Museum and applied scientific research that eventually formed the core of the GCI's research activities. In April of that year the Trust took over financial and operational responsibility for *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts (AATA)* on behalf of the International Institute for

the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) and later surveyed *ATA's* readership to determine how the publication could be improved.

Early in 1985 the Trust concluded its search for the Institute's first director. The appointment of Luis Monreal, then Secretary General of the Paris-based International Council of Museums, was a philosophical turning point in the GCI's development. Until then the Trust envisioned the Institute concentrating on fine arts collections in museums. However, in a December 1984 meeting with Harold Williams and Nancy Englander (the Trust's Director of Program Planning and Analysis), Mr. Monreal advocated that the Institute devote its resources not only to objects and collections but also to immovable cultural property such as archaeological sites and monuments, particularly in countries rich with cultural heritage but lacking the technical or financial resources to conserve them. The Trust ultimately embraced this perspective — a shift in direction that Mr. Williams later called a "transforming moment" for the Institute — and Mr. Monreal took up his duties as GCI Director in May 1985.

Creating a Critical Mass: 1985–1986

By August 1985, when its small staff moved to Marina del Rey from Malibu, the GCI had already organized a three-week study group in Japan on Asian lacquerware (*urushi*), hired a full-time managing editor for *ATA*, initiated an extramural scientific research program with partners in Europe and North America, and begun discussions to create an international computerized conservation information network. Likened by one onlooker to "a whirling dervish," Mr. Monreal was determined that the Institute have an immediate impact on the conservation field.

He was also committed to the Getty Trust's belief in an interdisciplinary approach to conservation. "In fact," he later said, "for several years before going to the Getty I had been puzzled about this kind of dichotomy that existed in the conservation field between different specialties and different professionals." He felt that the Getty could set a precedent by transforming conservation into an interdisciplinary pursuit that involved art historians, architectural conservators, materials scientists, chemists, engineers, and others in the process. "It was necessary to put together a small but distinguished team of professionals in all these areas that could believe in those principles and work together."

The bulk of the Institute's scientific activities was transferred to Marina del Rey, while a small staff remained at the Getty Museum to support its conservation and acquisitions programs. A major challenge facing the Institute — indeed the field as a whole — was the dearth of trained conservation scientists. A survey in the late 1970s found fewer than 50 conservation scientists in all of the United States. Cognizant that the field would not be well served by "robbing Peter to pay Paul," Dr. Preusser, the GCI's Scientific Program Director, set out to expand the ranks of conservation scientists by recruiting a young team whose common attribute was a fascination with the challenge of applying science to cultural heritage preservation.

As a principle, the Institute sought outside partners to increase the impact of its resources. This was particularly evident in the Scientific Program, which divided its energies between in-house research projects and extramural research. James Druzik, a GCI Conservation Scientist who has coordinated the Institute's extramural research since 1985, recalls that "it was always within the design of the GCI's research plan to exploit centers of scientific and engineering excellence in furthering conservation practice and understanding. This was regardless of whether that knowledge was at other conservation facilities, in academic institutions, or within industry."

Research projects were selected according to the urgency of a problem, its importance to the field, and the absence of research on that topic. Care was taken not to duplicate efforts under way elsewhere. In-house research, aimed at products commonly used in conservation, first investigated surface coatings and consolidants. Evaluating materials used in display and storage became another important area of research.



Left: Jessica Brown, Managing Editor of *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts*, and the first staff member of the GCI's Documentation Program. Photo: Tom Moon. Right: Mitchell Bishop of the Documentation Program examines a volume in the stacks of the GCI's Library. Photo: Kelvin Jones.

1981

Getty Trust explores arts community needs in anticipation of endowment funding

1982

Trust announces commitment to Conservation Institute and other programs
Conservation Information Project begins

1983

Frank Preusser hired as Conservation Scientist and Laboratory Head at Getty Museum
Aging of coatings and consolidants research begins
Parylene research begins
Trust assumes responsibility for *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts* (ATA)
1st meeting of the GCI's Advisory Committee

1984

ATA readership surveyed
Research begins on protection of art from photochemical smog and cellulose ethers

AATA, projects such as the products database, and the embryonic library collection started by Museum conservation staff formed the nucleus of the GCI's Documentation Program. In June 1985 AATA and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCRROM) decided to pool bibliographic references in a common on-line database. That August the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN), a program of the National Museums of Canada, agreed to undertake a pilot project to create an on-line database for AATA. The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI), a sister program to CHIN, subsequently contributed to the emerging network.

The first step in deciding how best to apply the Institute's resources to conservation training was to review training curricula and facilities worldwide and determine where the principal needs existed. Consultations with the profession suggested that the Institute should focus on continuing education and advanced training rather than entry-level programs.

"We were interested in initiating training activities for conservation professionals in specialized areas that had received little attention, such as the conservation of ethnographic materials," recalls Training Program Director Marta de la Torre, who launched the program in mid-1985. In keeping with the Institute's desire to act as a catalyst, the Training Program sought joint ventures with other institutions. "Rather than depend upon a large in-house staff, we thought it would be more effective for us to work with outside expertise. The Training Program began as a creating and coordinating unit rather than as a teaching unit—and it has remained so." By October 1985 the GCI had launched, with the Courtauld Institute of Art at the Uni-

versity of London, its first collaborative training project, a three-year diploma course in wall paintings conservation; this was also the first formal training program on this subject ever conducted in England.

From the outset, Mr. Monreal believed that special projects were needed to complement the Institute's Scientific Research, Documentation, and Training programs. "Special Projects were, particularly at the beginning, a tactical move to occupy one part of the conservation picture and give the Institute the visibility it required in its initial stages," he said. At the same time, the projects provided an opportunity for staff to benefit from the expertise of the people in the countries where the projects took place: "Any institution whose goal is to address matters beyond its physical boundaries runs a risk of arteriosclerosis if it is not constantly in contact with the problems in the field."

The Institute's first Special Project, the conservation of the wall paintings in the tomb of Queen Nefertari in Egypt's Valley of the Queens, began in 1986 with an important research component — developing a diagnostic methodology that could be applied to wall paintings in other sites. The treatment phase that followed included a training program for conservators from Egypt and other countries. In this and subsequent field projects, documentation of the site and of the methodologies used was an important element in the project design.

In addition to field projects, the Institute began convening groups of experts to address issues that had received limited attention. In October 1985 the GCI held an international meeting on disaster preparedness and response, which led to the creation of an interdisciplinary steering committee and a number of efforts intended to



Above: Luis Monreal, center, the GCI's first Director, during a 1989 visit to the tomb of Queen Nefertari, site of the Institute's first Special Project. At right is Laura Mora, one of the directors of the conservation team. At left is Lorenza d'Alessandro, a member of the team. Right: Paolo Mora, who, with his wife Laura, directed the conservation of the tomb of Nefertari. Photos: Guillermo Aldana.



1985

MAY Luis Monreal becomes first Institute Director

JUNE AATA and ICCROM Library agree to standardize and merge bibliographic citations

GCI gives one-time endowments to three U.S. conservation training programs

"Urushi" meeting and study tour in Japan

Test procedures evaluated for accelerated aging of museum and archival materials

JULY Institute moves to Marina del Rey

AUGUST AATA operations move to Marina del Rey to GCI

Project launched to develop AATA database on-line

SEPTEMBER GCI holds 1st training course, "The Restoration of Glass Vessels"

OCTOBER GCI and Courtauld Institute in London organize diploma course in conservation of wall paintings

1st meeting of specialists on "Disaster Planning for Cultural Property"

DECEMBER GCI and ICCROM hold "International Meeting on Scientific Research" in Rome, Italy



Frank Preusser, center, the GCI's first Scientific Program Director, looking in on a 1985 training course on molding and casting of museum objects. Photo: Paul Slaughter.

assist in the protection of cultural property from disasters. Two months later the Institute organized with ICCROM a meeting of representatives from leading conservation research institutions to exchange information about research and to strengthen collaboration. In April 1986 the GCI and Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia organized an international meeting on "In Situ Archaeological Conservation," one of whose principal aims was to establish greater dialogue and cooperation between conservators and archaeologists.

These gatherings were an important means of identifying priorities for the Institute. For example, the "In Situ" conference pointed to the need for research on the conservation of mud brick, adobe, and mud plaster, and for training in team fieldwork for conservators and archaeologists. Publications were a spinoff of these events and another step toward meeting the information needs of the field (see sidebar).

As the Institute grew, its Visiting Committee provided guidance on programs and policies. The GCI's role in enhancing public awareness of conservation was discussed early on; however, it was agreed that the Institute should concentrate on activities directed at conservation professionals until it was better established.



Shin Maekawa, center, then a GCI Fellow, in Cairo in 1989 during the presentation of a prototype storage case designed for the Egyptian Royal Mummy Collection. Photo: Frank Preusser.

The Programs Emerge: 1987–1990

By 1987 each program had a clearly defined set of goals.

The Scientific Program's activities were organized into five categories. The *museum environment* encompassed strategies for preventing damage to collections, such as that caused by air pollution and light, fluctuations of temperature and humidity, and insect pests. *Materials and methods* was concerned with identifying materials and developing procedures for testing them: protective coatings and consolidants fell into this category. In addition, the program began research and analysis of artists' materials, including pigments, binding media, and varnishes. *New technology* dealt with the evaluation of new analytical, diagnostic, or treatment techniques that could be applied to works of art. *Architecture and monuments* addressed the conservation of building materials such as stone and adobe or outdoor bronzes.

The Scientific Program also maintained its *museum services* section at the Getty Museum. "It made no sense for the Museum to have a separate scientific department when the GCI could fulfill that function," explained David Scott, who has headed Museum Services since 1987 (and served as Acting Scientific Program Director during the first half of 1995). "The Institute has provided necessary technical expertise for the examination and analysis, as well as the conservation, of numerous museum objects — over a thousand by 1994. A lot of the work done for the Museum has been written up and published in the general literature, and in a few instances even led to conferences on specialized topics, such as ancient and historic metals."

1986

JANUARY
1st GCI Newsletter published

APRIL
"In Situ Archaeological Conservation" conference in Mexico City

JUNE
Agreement with National Museums of Canada to develop computerized information network

JUNE
Meeting at Getty Museum on "Paintings Conservation"

JUNE
Research begins on effects of fumigants on collections

JUNE
1st GCI Technical Report published

JULY
1st GCI monograph, *The Nature of Conservation, stone consolidants*

JULY
Research begins on effects of biodeterioration, of Conservation Training Programs

AUGUST
GCI hosts International Meeting of Directors of Conservation Training Programs

AUGUST
Survey of indoor pollutants in museums begins

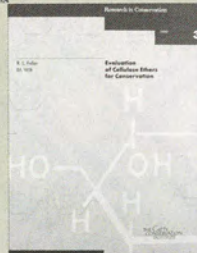
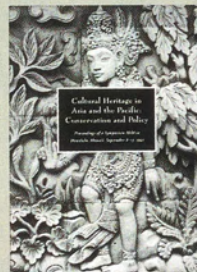
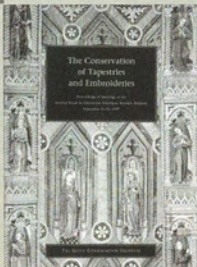
SEPTEMBER
Course on metallography and microstructure of ancient and historic metals

SEPTEMBER
Nefertari project in Egypt announced

OCTOBER
1st in-house scientific research fellowships awarded

NOVEMBER
1st issue of AATA published from Network bibliographic database

DECEMBER
Research begins on consolidation of adobe



The Publications Department of the Getty Conservation Institute was established in 1986 with the mandate “to publish the results of the Institute’s work.” Today the Institute disseminates information on a wide range of topics related to cultural heritage conservation.

The Institute’s first title, *The Nature of Conservation: A Race Against Time*, was produced in 1986. Written by Philip Ward and released in English, French, and Spanish versions, it was designed to serve as an introduction to the philosophy and methods of conservation for museum professionals, site managers, and the public.

As part of the GCI’s involvement in organizing conferences, the Institute began publishing conference proceedings and, later, preprints. Beginning in 1987 a proceedings volume was produced each year for the next three years, the first being *In Situ Archaeological Conservation*. Other early publications included the *Nefertari Progress Report* on the conservation project in the tomb of Nefertari, and *Between Two Earthquakes: Cultural Property in Seismic Zones*, written by Sir Bernard Feilden, the former director of ICCROM, and released in both English and Spanish.

In 1988 the Institute started publishing the results of its scientific research in conservation, including work commissioned by the GCI Scientific Program. Since then, the increasingly active publications program reflects the Institute’s continuing commitment to the dissemination of information to conservation professionals, as well as to those working in related fields such as archaeology and art history (this is true as well with *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts*). Publications are also directed toward enhancing conservation training and increasing public awareness of conservation and its importance.

The over 40 books that have thus far been published by the Institute fall into one of six general categories:

- Individual titles (not part of a series)
- Reference books (directories and abstracts)
- Symposium proceedings (edited texts of conferences)
- Symposium preprints (texts of symposium papers published in advance)
- Research in Conservation series (results of scientific research on a specific topic)
- GCI Scientific Program reports (reports of research conducted under GCI auspices)

Two of the newest books in the symposium proceedings series are *Archaeometry of Pre-Columbian Sites and Artifacts* and *Ancient and Historic Metals: Conservation and Scientific Research*. The latest volume in the Research in Conservation series is *Accelerated Aging: Photochemical and Thermal Aspects*. Also recently issued is the *International Directory of Training in Conservation of Cultural Heritage*.

Among the most recent of the Institute’s publications is *Picture L.A.: Landmarks of a New Generation*, an exhibition catalogue with photographs and text that has won three international design competitions. A final report on the conservation of wall paintings in the tomb of Nefertari, *Art and Eternity*, has also been produced. Other Institute monographs on specific issues of conservation have included *The Conservation of the Orpheus Mosaic at Paphos, Cyprus*, and *The Metallography and Microstructure of Ancient and Historic Metals*.

As a number of in-house projects reached maturity, the Scientific Program began emphasizing the development of conservation applications for use in the field. One area of investigation concerned methods of controlling biological growth on archaeological sites and outdoor monuments. Another, the evaluation of seismic mitigation measures for art objects, was directed toward the needs of the Getty Museum but had broad international application as well. By 1990 the Scientific Program played an increasing role in collaborating with the Training Program (in areas such as ethnographic conservation, in situ conservation, and site management), participating in the Conservation Information Network's materials database, and supporting Special Projects. "As Special Projects grew, there was a corresponding need for Scientific Program staff to explore the challenging conservation problems these projects posed," said Dr. Scott. "This ultimately led to our direct involvement in a variety of activities, running the gamut from the development of environmental monitoring systems to assessing the causes of stone deterioration."



The 1993 pest control treatment (using nitrogen) of Edward Kienholz's *Back Seat Dodge '38* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Photos: Shin Maekawa.



Members of GCI's scientific staff at work. From left: Cecily Grzywacz, Eric Hansen, Eric Doehne, and David Scott. Photos: Mary Striegel, Tom Moon, Guillermo Aldana, and Tom Moon.



1987

JANUARY Conservation Information Network released to test users

MARCH 1st course on "Conservation in Field Archaeology" held at UCLA

APRIL "Varnish Removal and the Cleaning of Paintings Workshop" at Getty Museum

MAY "Directors' Seminar on Conservation Training Issues" in Arrowhead, California

MAY 1st course on "Conservation of Rock Art," held in Vailtorta, Spain

JUNE 1st public demonstration of Conservation Information Network

JUNE "Conservation of Paintings on Canvas" course held at University of Delaware

JULY Research begins on "Preventive Conservation," stone building materials

JULY Emergency consolidation of Nefertari wall paintings completed

SEPTEMBER Official release of Conservation Information Network, Sydney, Australia

OCTOBER Prototype design begins for Egyptian Royal Mummy Collection inert gas storage cases

OCTOBER 1st workshop on "Conservation of Historic Photographs"



GCI training courses. *From left:* A 1993 course in Paphos, Cyprus, on the conservation of excavated sites. *Photo:* Neville Agnew. A workshop on the cleaning of paintings, held at the Getty Museum in 1987. *Photo:* Kelvin Jones. A 1991 course on rock art conservation at the site of Painted Rock, near Bakersfield, California. *Photo:* Nicholas Stanley Price.

The mandate of the Training Program was to stimulate international conservation training through joint ventures with other institutions. By 1988 the program's activities were divided into three main categories: professional training (programs considered comprehensive by virtue of their duration and the scope of their curricula), specialized training (short-term courses on particular topics), and infrastructure development (support of conservation training in general). The care and protection of museum collections through preventive conservation became a priority, as did augmenting the number and quality of training opportunities in developing countries. The Program also concentrated on training in the conservation of archaeological and ethnographic objects and archaeological sites, as well as on the development of teaching materials to be used in degree-granting conservation programs.

The Documentation Program's three principal initiatives were *AATA*, the GCI Library, and the Conservation Information Network. The Getty Trust took over *AATA*'s operation with a commitment to making it easier to use and to expanding its geographic and subject coverage. During the late 1980s new specialty editors were recruited, fields such as archaeology and architecture were canvassed for ways of improving literature coverage in these areas, and a new indexing system and keywords were developed. Special subject supplements were reinstated, and collaboration was initiated with the Getty's *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* project (*AAT*) to develop a conservation thesaurus.

The Conservation Information Network was a particularly ambitious collaborative venture. By its official release in September 1987, the Network's contributing partners included the GCI, the Canadian Conservation Institute, ICCROM, the Smithsonian's Conservation Analytical Laboratory (CAL), and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), with system support from CHIN. By February 1988 the Network had received more than eight hundred inquiries about its services from 34 countries. Bilingual access in French and English was instated, and the Network was demonstrated for the first time in Eastern Europe. In 1990, consistent with the GCI's commitment to reduce support once development was completed, a transition plan was devised for transferring Network management and operations to CHIN.

From their inception, Special Projects were intended to complement the Institute's regular programs of Scientific Research, Training, and Documentation, fostering the interdisciplinarity to which the Institute was committed. Projects were selected according to the urgency of the issues to be addressed and their importance to the field.

1988

APRIL Research in Conservation reference series launched
1st symposium on "Materials Issues in Art and Archaeology"

MAY Disaster emergency team sent to New Orleans in response to fire at historic Cabildo Building New Mexico
Adobe field-testing established at Ft. Selden

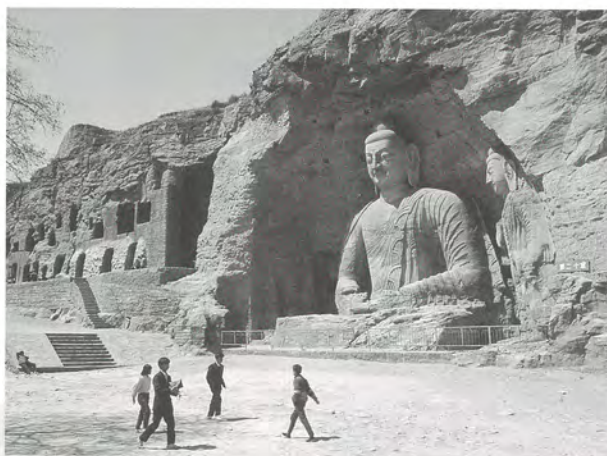
JUNE "Symposium on Excellence in Conservation Teaching" at GCI
Research begins on Chumash Indian pigments

JULY 1st course in "Conservation of Archaeological Sites," held in Atica, Chile
Work on Dead Sea Scrolls begins

AUGUST Research begins on epoxy resins for stone consolidation
Disaster emergency team sent to Mexico City in response to flooding at Carrillo Gil Museum

SEPTEMBER Conservation of Orpheus Mosaic in Paphos, Cyprus, begins
Siqueiros mural project begins in Los Angeles

NOVEMBER Research begins on consolidation of ethnographic objects



The China project. *Top:* The Yungang Grottoes. *Photo:* Guillermo Aldana. *Middle left:* The synthetic textile windbreak fence at the Mogao Grottoes. *Photo:* Dusan Stulik. *Middle right:* The beginnings of the vegetation windbreak fence at the Mogao Grottoes. *Photo:* Po-Ming Lin. *Bottom:* Li Tie Chao, right, a Chinese member of the project team, performs color monitoring in one of the grottoes at Mogao in 1989. At left is Neville Agnew, then GCI Scientific Program Deputy Director. *Photo:* R. Tseng.

“There have always been multiple objectives with Special Projects,” says Neville Agnew, former Director of GCI Special Projects and now the Institute’s Associate Director for Programs. “Certainly among them is tackling challenges not capable of being easily met by others. That’s particularly true in the developing world, where we’ve worked extensively. We’ve looked for strong collaborative partnerships and for opportunities to act as a stimulus for the conservation efforts of others. We’re well aware that our resources are extremely limited in terms of our ability to do large projects, and we wouldn’t want to be repetitive in the kind of conservation activities we undertake at a particular site. We can really just do examples, coupled with training in methodologies. But our involvement in a project can often have many positive spinoffs, including the enhancement of the status of the cultural resource authorities in their own country. We’ve seen this happen a number of times.”

In some cases, Special Projects fell prey to political events. For instance, the project involving site conservation of the Buddhist art in the Mogao and Yungang grottoes in China — formally agreed to in January 1989 — was suspended following events in Tiananmen Square. However, the China project did resume 18 months later, and a variety of site conservation activities were undertaken.

1989

JANUARY Project announced to conserve Buddhist grotto sites in China

FEBRUARY GCI and Canberra College in Australia organize one-year diploma course on rock art conservation

APRIL 1st course on “Rock Art Site Protection and Management,” held at GCI

JUNE GCI and NIC release guidelines for conservation assessments of museums

JULY Work begins on environmental monitoring stations

“Conservation of Polychrome Sculpture” course in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

RESEARCH BEGINS ON CONTROLLING INSECT PESTS IN MUSEUMS

AUGUST Research begins on analysis of binding media measures for museum objects

NOVEMBER Hexashelter constructed to protect Orpheus mosaic in Paphos, Cyprus

The GCI in Transition

In May 1990 Luis Monreal left the GCI to return to his native Barcelona, leaving the management of the Institute to Associate Directors Frank Preusser and Rona Sebastian, pending the appointment of a new Director. That November Miguel Angel Corzo, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Friends of the Arts of Mexico Foundation, was selected to head the Institute.

In addition to his tenure as a consultant and then as director of Special Projects at the GCI between 1985 and 1988, Mr. Corzo's extensive museum, archaeological, and historic centers experience and his commitment to the arts made him an ideal candidate to take the Institute to its next level of development. In accepting the appointment, he signaled his interest in conservation advocacy when he observed that "the GCI plays a vital role in raising worldwide awareness of the need to conserve cultural property and thereby maintain lasting artistic and humanistic values." He said he looked forward "to the challenge of continuing to build on the Institute's impressive record as an international advocate of conservation."

Mr. Corzo's first steps on taking up his duties were to review the Institute's progress in key areas and to encourage a less program-oriented, more thematic approach as the basis for assessing the GCI's work. This approach was intended to strengthen collaboration among the Institute's programs, which until then had been promoted primarily through Special Projects.

The theme of *preventive conservation for museum collections* had been addressed by the Institute beginning with its early environmental research. Building on this research, the Training Program developed a two-week course on preventive conservation, offered first with the Art Conservation Program of the University of Delaware and Winterthur Museum in 1987 and again in an expanded version at the GCI in 1990. Training Program Director Marta de la Torre sees the course, now held annually, as "a fundamental part of the Institute's overall effort to expand conservation practice beyond treatment to encompass management. Preventive conservation approaches — which include such things as environmental controls, appropriate storage, and the monitoring of objects — offer today's conservator the most effective way to protect collections." Also during the late 1980s, the GCI joined with the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property (NIC) to develop a methodology for gathering and reporting information essential for successful collections-care policies and practices. This was completed and distributed to the field during 1990.

Conservation of ethnographic and archaeological objects was another area of Institute activity. Training became a major focus because of the lack of conservators specializing in ethnographic and archaeological conservation. A 1990 GCI course on the consolidation of ethnographic painted objects was a prime example of collaboration by Institute programs. Developed with ethnographic conservators and materials scientists, the course drew on in-house research to provide new data on paints typically found on ethnographic objects. The course was so successful that a special *AATA* supplement was developed on the topic. In a related activity, the Training Program has

continued to work for the development of a master's program in the conservation of archaeological and ethnographic materials, in partnership with a major university.

Conservation, management, and protection of archaeological sites and monuments grew out of the Institute's concern that insufficient attention had been paid to conservation issues posed by sites and monuments. By 1990 GCI activities encompassed the conservation of many types of cultural property in situ, including rock art, wall paintings, mosaics, archaeological sites, historic monuments, and architecture. The Scientific Program, in support of Special Projects, installed environmental monitoring stations in Egypt, China, and Bolivia, and conducted studies on adobe and stone consolidation. Conservation work in the tomb of Nefertari continued, while activity at the two Buddhist cave sites in China resumed in 1990.



A GCI-designed environmental monitoring station being installed in 1990 on the Great Sphinx at the Giza Plateau. Photo: Neville Agnew.

1990

FEBRUARY
"Conservation Teaching Excellence" seminar for Latin American training program directors

MARCH
Research begins on seismic stabilization measures for Byzantine churches

MAY
Luis Monreal resigns as GCI Director

JUNE
Environmental monitoring station installed on the Sphinx

JULY
1st edition of Research Abstracts published
Course on "Consolidation of Ethnographic Painted Objects," held at GCI

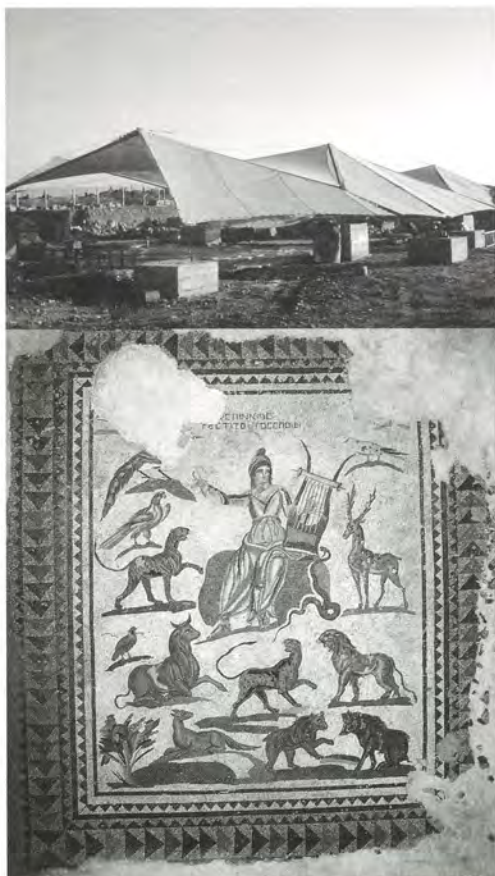
AUGUST
Research begins on controlling particle intrusion into museums and archaeological sites

SEPTEMBER
Research begins on application to conservation of environmental scanning electron microscope

OCTOBER
Conference in Leningrad, "Conservation and Disaster Recovery: International Cooperation at the Library of the USSR Academy of Sciences"

NOVEMBER
6th International Conference on the Conservation of Earthen Architecture ("Adobe 90") in Las Cruces, New Mexico

December
Miguel Angel Corzo designated Director of GCI
"Conservation of Cultural Property within Urban Environments" seminar in Quito, Ecuador
1st course in "Conservation of Excavated Sites" held in Paphos, Cyprus
Getty Seismic Adobe Project begins



Top: The specially designed hexashelter, constructed in 1989 to protect the Orpheus Mosaic in Paphos, Cyprus. Photo: Neville Agnew. Bottom: The Orpheus Mosaic, following a conservation effort conducted by the GCI and the Cyprus Department of Antiquities. Photo: Guillermo Aldana.

Between 1987 and 1991 five training courses given for archaeologists emphasized preventive conservation and the safe retrieval of cultural property during excavations. Field-based training in the conservation of archaeological sites and objects was also developed in conjunction with projects in Tiwanaku, Bolivia, and Paphos, Cyprus. Complementing the conservation training was instruction in creating site management plans, including provisions for future visitor access. "These courses were part of the GCI's effort to make conservation a site management issue," recalls Margaret Mac Lean, formerly with the Institute's Training Program and now Documentation Program Director. "That effort also involved developing a flexible yet systematic approach to decision making which included such elements as bringing together all parties interested in a site and assessing a site's significance or value before embarking on any conservation program. Exposure to this approach certainly made a contribution to the work of those who participated in the courses, some of whose careers have taken a different path as a result."

In keeping with its desire to foster the exchange of information and expertise, the GCI coorganized two conferences in 1990 that addressed historic preservation and management. The 6th International Conference on the Conservation of Earthen Architecture ("Adobe 90") was held in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and its proceedings published by the GCI. An "International Seminar on Conservation of Cultural Property within the Urban Environment," held in Quito, Ecuador, marked the GCI's first attempt to examine architectural heritage preservation in historic cities.

Disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response, one of the Institute's earliest initiatives, remained a priority. In 1990 the GCI began a collaborative project in Skopje, Yugoslavia, to develop a methodology for seismic strengthening of Byzantine churches and other historic structures; in the same year in California, it initiated a study with a similar aim for adobe structures, the Getty Seismic Adobe Project. September 1990 witnessed the organizing of an international conference, "Conservation and Disaster Recovery: International Cooperation at the Library of the USSR Academy of Sciences" in Leningrad, which reviewed the Academy's recovery following its devastating 1988 fire (the GCI and the U.S. Library of Congress continued providing technical assistance with the recovery).

Even as the GCI was expanding its activities in these areas, Mr. Corzo moved the Institute in a new direction: increasing public understanding of the need to conserve the cultural heritage and creating a greater constituency for conservation.



Participants in the "Adobe 90" conference visit the site of a field study on adobe consolidation, conducted at Ft. Selden, New Mexico. Photo: Dusan Stulik.

1991

- MAY Conservation project begins in historic center of Quito, Ecuador
- JUNE Lecture series organized at the Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA
- JULY Research begins on waterborne consolidants as a treatment
- AUGUST
- SEPTEMBER "Conservation of Stone in Archaeological Sites and Historic Monuments" course in Puebla, Mexico
- OCTOBER "Cultural Heritage in Asia and the Pacific: Conservation and Policy" symposium in Honolulu, Hawaii
- NOVEMBER "Ancient and Historic Metals: Conservation and Scientific Research" conference at Getty Museum
- NOVEMBER "Conservation of Ethnographic and Archaeological Materials" course in Tiwanaku, Bolivia



Top: Members of the Getty Seismic Adobe Project team examine an adobe model after it has been subjected to a simulated earthquake. Bottom: Bill Ginell, the GCI's director of the project, adjusts nylon straps on the model, designed to reduce shifting of adobe blocks during a quake. Photos: Louise Walker.



An aerial view of the Ft. Selden adobe test site. Photo: Mike Taylor.

A Broadening Mission: 1991–1995

As it grew, the Institute broadened its audience from conservation practitioners working primarily in the fine arts to include those responsible for archaeological sites and artifacts. By the early 1990s the Institute began reaching out to all the professionals who work with cultural property: art historians, curators, archaeologists, engineers, and architects, among others. Decision makers were equally important. The Institute recognized that their support was essential in the adoption of preventive conservation as a priority.

In 1991 the Institute revised the format for its newsletter, now targeting a larger constituency. *Conservation, The GCI Newsletter*, was designed to move beyond the traditional conservation audience and to bring about a better understanding of the modern threats to cultural property, such as poorly planned development, industrial pollution, and mismanaged tourism. The following year, the Institute formally redefined its mission, stating in part: “Committed to preserving the world’s cultural heritage for the enrichment and education of present and future generations, the Institute seeks to increase awareness of and respect for all cultural heritage, regardless of its place of origin, [and] to provide relevant information to all those responsible for conservation policies and practices.”

As the Institute’s audience expanded, so did the thrust of its activities. In 1991 it organized with US/ICOMOS a symposium on “Cultural Heritage in Asia and the Pacific: Conservation and Policy,” where representatives from 15 countries discussed the challenges of conserving their national heritage and the influence of governmental policies on this process. The proceedings of the meeting were published, and a follow-up meeting was held in Sri Lanka in 1993, which focused on the destruction caused by illicit traffic of cultural objects, the conservation problems result-

ing from increased tourism in the region, and the need to educate the public and train professionals in the field.

In the same year as the Sri Lanka meeting the Institute coorganized an international conference in Dunhuang, China, on the “Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road.” Those attending the six-day event had the opportunity to visit the nearby Mogao Grottoes, where the GCI’s conservation efforts — in partnership with China’s State Bureau of Cultural Relics — were continuing. The Institute’s attention to Asia was also reflected in an international conference on “The Future of Asia’s Past,” held in January 1995 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Coorganized by the Asia Society, the Siam Society, and the GCI, the conference was attended by representatives from 28 countries who met to discuss the urgent need to shape effective policies for the preservation of Asia’s architectural heritage in the context of the region’s rapid economic development.

A number of the Institute’s initiatives have led to long-term commitments. Its participation in the organizing of the 1991 and 1993 conferences to address the conservation needs facing museums and libraries in Russia and throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States resulted in a concerted effort to help establish an international conservation center in St. Petersburg. A similar initiative is under way to assist with the creation of a research, training, and conservation treatment center in Oaxaca, Mexico, which would provide the Institute with a base for its Latin American activities.

1992

- JANUARY GCI and Getty Museum organize “Emergency Planning in Museums” workshop
- FEBRUARY Project begins at Maya site of Xunantunich in Belize
- Environmental monitoring project completed on the Sphinx
- Conservation Imaging Consortium begins research on scientific image documentation and analysis
- MARCH Research begins on Brazilian polychrome sculpture
- International Symposium on Archaeometry at UCLA
- “Conservation of Excavated Materials and Sites” course in Jerusalem, Israel
- APRIL Conservation of wall paintings at UCLA completed
- MAY Project begins to protect archaeological ruins at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico
- JUNE Network management and operations transferred to CHIN
- AUGUST “Recent Methods in the Lining of Paintings” course in Copenhagen, Denmark, for Eastern European conservators
- SEPTEMBER GCI joins effort to identify scientific research priorities for U.S. libraries and archives
- OCTOBER Project to conserve St. Vitus mosaic in Prague, Czechoslovakia, announced
- “Grotto Site Management” course in China
- NOVEMBER Exhibition in The Tomb of Nefertari: Conservation of the Wall Paintings opens at Getty Museum



Top: Plaza Major in the heart of historic Quito. Photo: Guillermo Aldana. Middle: Participants in a 1993 seismic colloquium in Quito gather on the roof of the Monastery of Santa Clara. Photo: Jorge Sciupac. Bottom: GCI Fellow Nieves Valentin working in the Library of La Merced in Quito in 1991. Photo: Jesús Lopez.

Since 1991 the Institute's Special Projects have expanded not only in number but in scope, from conservation of a paleoanthropological site to conservation of an urban environment. In 1992 the Institute began a multi-faceted collaborative project in the historic city core of Quito, Ecuador, that included among other elements a study of colonial-era structures and the development of a program to encourage their rehabilitation; a colloquium on seismic protection of historic buildings; conservation work at the La Merced Library; and production of a video on Quito's historic core. Two years later, on the other side of the world, the GCI and the government of Tanzania initiated a project to conserve the 3.6-million-year-old hominid tracks at the site of Laetoli; in a series of campaigns, the Institute is working to save from vegetation and erosion the most ancient traces of human ancestors.

Other recent GCI projects have included rock art conservation in Baja California, conservation of the bas-reliefs of the Royal Palace of Abomey in Benin, testing strategies in collaboration with the National Park Service to protect the Anasazi archaeological ruins at Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, and the conservation of the 14th-century *Last Judgment* mosaic on St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague. The Institute is also researching the issues of conservation in humid tropical environments, using the Maya site of Xunantunich in Belize as a venue for addressing these problems. And, in its home community of Los Angeles, the GCI has been working for several years to save the only surviving public mural in the United States painted by Mexican artist David Alfaro Siqueiros.



Top: Rock art in Cueva de Las Flechas, located in Baja California. Photo: Guillermo Aldana. Bottom: Nicholas Stanley Price, director of a GCI team working to conserve the rock art in Cueva de El Ratón (also in Baja California), explains the project to schoolchildren from a nearby village during a 1994 field campaign. Photo: Kathleen McDonnell.

1993

- JANUARY "Conservation and the Archaeologist" course at UCLA
- MARCH GCI begins developing display cases for Constitution of India manuscripts
- APRIL Treatment of Kienholz's Back Seat Dodge '38 at Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- MAY GCI holds 1st Open House
- "Seismic Protection of Historic Buildings and Monuments" colloquium in Quito, Ecuador
- JUNE Project begins on rock art sites in Baja California Sur, Mexico
- Archaeological site management seminar in San Ignacio, Belize
- JULY International conference on preservation of collections in St. Petersburg, Russia
- Project to conserve hominid footprints in Laetoli, Tanzania, begins
- International conference on Islamic monuments in Cairo, Egypt
- OCTOBER Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on heritage conservation in Asia-Pacific region
- DECEMBER "Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road" conference in Dunhuang, China
- Advisory committee established to study lintels in Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem



Above top: Justin Alaro, a conservation trainee, examining one of the bas-reliefs from the Royal Palaces of Abomey being conserved as part of a GCI project. Photo: Susan Middleton. Above bottom: A view of one of the Royal Palaces. Photo: Guillermo Aldana. Below: Donatius Kamamba, a conservator with the Tanzanian Antiquities Unit, and Jerry Podany, head of Antiquities Conservation at the Getty Museum, at work in 1993 cutting through acacia roots that threaten the hominid footprints at Laetoli. Photo: Neville Agnew.



Creating successful Special Projects partnerships has been one of the greatest ongoing challenges facing the Institute. "It takes time to build a good relationship," says Martha Demas, Acting Director of Special Projects. "In some instances we've been more successful than in others. We've learned through sometimes difficult experience that building the necessary trust to make a project work requires sensitivity to cultural differences and to political realities. It also means maintaining regular contact with our partners and bringing those we're working with to visit the Institute to let them see who we are, what we do, and how we work." While this approach is time consuming, it yields benefits in terms of enhancing communication and mutual understanding. "It's absolutely essential for the success of a project to have a good partnership with the appropriate agency in the country where we're working," observes Dr. Demas. "The long-term care and maintenance of a site depend upon the establishment of an equal partnership from the beginning. Our partner needs to have a real stake in the work we're doing together."

Building on the earlier grouping of Institute activities, four themes currently provide the framework for the Institute's programs: *objects and collections*, *archaeological sites and monuments*, *historic structures and cities*, and *public awareness and advocacy*. Increasingly, the Institute has sought to exercise influence on major issues such as the development of professional training within targeted geographic regions, archaeological and historic site management, and the impact of tourism and economic development on the cultural heritage. This last issue was the subject of a six-day international conference on the "Conservation of Archaeological Sites in the Mediterranean Region," organized by the Institute and the Getty Museum. Over 80 high-level government officials and experts from 16 countries participated in this May 1995



Top: At the Anasazi ruins in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, Mike Taylor of the U.S. National Park Service and Neville Agnew of the GCI examine geosynthetic material installed to protect the stone walls from water damage. Bottom: The north wall of Pueblo Bonito at Chaco Canyon. Photos: Guillermo Aldana.

1994

- FEBRUARY
Conservation project for historic center of Ouro Preto, Brazil, begins
- MARCH
GCI provides assistance to historic properties damaged in January 1994 L.A. earthquake
- APRIL
"Thin-layer Chromatography" workshop at GCI
- MAY
1st course on "Pest Management," held at GCI
- JUNE
Project begins to conserve bas-reliefs of the Royal Palace of Abomey, Benin
- JULY
Research begins on Brancusi's The Infinite Column in Târgu Jiu, Romania
- OCTOBER
Netertari: Light of Egypt exhibition opens at the Palazzo Ruspoli in Rome
- NOVEMBER
"Site Conservation" seminar in Israel
- DECEMBER
"Interdisciplinary Cooperation in Managing the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage" at GCI
- JANUARY
"National Summit on Emergency Response: Safeguarding Our Cultural Heritage" in Washington, D.C.
- FEBRUARY
Picture L.A.: Landmarks of a New Generation exhibition opens at Los Angeles City Hall
- MARCH
Research begins on testing program for preservation of archaeological sites through reburial



Left: GCI Fellow Rakesh Kumar at Xunantunich in Belize, looking over stone samples testing consolidants and biocides. Photo: Bill Ginell. Right: A view of the pyramidal structure in the central plaza at Xunantunich. Photo: Neville Agnew.

conference, which addressed the difficulties of balancing conservation and preservation with increasing tourism and economic development.

With the support of its Visiting Committee, the GCI has embarked on a public advocacy program to raise awareness among the general public, as well as among decision makers internationally, of the importance of protecting the cultural heritage. The Institute's commitment to increased public awareness is based on the view that an informed public is the conservator's best ally and can profoundly impact the future of conservation. Projects in this area range from exhibitions and video documentaries to electronic products and a concerted media campaign to help disseminate the message of conservation.

In the fall of 1994, two GCI-organized exhibitions opened to the public. *Nefertari: Light of Egypt*, organized with the Fondazione Memmo, was held in Rome and used a variety of media — including virtual reality — to integrate history and the displaying of objects with a presentation of the conservation process. Another project, *Picture L.A.: Landmarks of a New Generation* — in which eight Los Angeles-area youths from diverse ethnic backgrounds photographed landmarks that were historically, culturally, or socially significant to them — resulted in an exhibition at Los Angeles City Hall that prompted many viewers to look more deeply at traditional concepts of landmarks.

So many of the GCI's activities reflect its search for a more universal, or "holistic," vision of conservation, one that encompasses a variety of approaches. In November 1994 the GCI and the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property organized a symposium on interdisciplinary cooperation in preserving the cultural heritage, bringing together for the first time administrators and conservators from the fields of fine arts, libraries and archives, history and archaeology, natural science, and historic preservation, to discuss shared conservation management concerns. Emerging from the meeting was the consensus that there was a need for market research and a promotional campaign to raise awareness of the importance of protecting the cultural heritage (such a project is now being developed under the GCI's auspices). The following month saw yet another major cooperative venture. A "National Summit on Emergency Response: Safeguarding Our Cultural Heritage" organized by the NIC, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the GCI, witnessed unprecedented collaboration among the major organizations concerned with the preservation of cultural property and led to the creation of an ongoing task force to coordinate a response when cultural heritage is threatened by disaster.



Top: Mexican conservator Agustin Espinosa cleaning the Siqueiros mural *América Tropical* in 1990. Photo: Nancy Kaye. Middle: GCI Fellow Eric Lange in 1994 preparing the digital camera for the digital imaging of the Siqueiros mural. Photo: Madge Claybion. Bottom: A detail of the Siqueiros mural. Photo: Nancy Kaye.

1995

JANUARY "The Future of Asia's Past" conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand

FEBRUARY "Site Conservation and Management" workshop in San Ignacio, Belize

MARCH Research begins on removal of mold from paper and parchment

APRIL "Structural Conservation of Panel Painting" symposium at Getty Museum

MAY Project begins to conserve wall paintings in Ibiza, Spain

"Conservation of Archaeological Sites in the Mediterranean Region" conference Tunisia

JUNE Documentation work begins at Bardo Museum in Tunis

Facility established for St. Petersburg International Center for Preservation



Top: Dusan Stulik, who heads up the GCI team in the effort to conserve *The Last Judgment* mosaic on St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague. Photo: Milena Necasková.
Bottom: An overview of *The Last Judgment* mosaic. Photo: Guillermo Aldana.

The GCI in the 21st Century

In a letter to Getty Trust President Harold Williams, Paul Perrot — an eminent and longstanding advocate for conservation within the international museum community — observed that “the accomplishments of the Getty Conservation Institute are nothing less than startling considering the relatively short number of years it has been in existence. There is no doubt in my mind that the developments we’ve seen, nationally and internationally, would not have occurred with the same vigor — or, perhaps, even occurred at all — had it not been for the constant support and leadership given by the J. Paul Getty Trust.”

For GCI Director Miguel Angel Corzo, the achievements of the GCI are due, to an incalculable extent, to the people of the Institute. “The Getty Conservation Institute’s strength lies with the exceptional spectrum of its staff. They come from a wide variety of disciplines and from a broad diversity of nationalities. It is this mix — plus their excellence — that make the Institute’s approach truly multidisciplinary, as well as sensitive to different cultures.”

Today the Institute and the J. Paul Getty Trust stand on the verge of a new stage in their development. As construction of the new Getty Center in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles moves toward completion, the seven programs of the Trust will be united at one site. In May 1996 the Getty Conservation Institute will be the first program installed in the Getty’s permanent home. There it will be able to forge yet closer relationships with the other

programs of the Trust while at the same time working to preserve the world’s heritage — from the Los Angeles community in which it is based to the far-flung corners of the globe.

“As we get ready to embark on the twenty-first century at our new facilities in the Getty Center, a whole set of exciting challenges awaits us,” reflects Miguel Angel Corzo. Among these, he says, is “a more intense collaboration with the other Getty Programs, bringing young people into the world of cultural heritage conservation, and maintaining our standards of excellence. But the ultimate challenge, of course, is the one we have always had — ensuring that future generations will be able to share in the glory of our culturally diverse past.”

Janet Bridgland joined the J. Paul Getty Trust in 1983 and was Documentation Program Director for the GCI from 1986 to 1990. She is presently a conservation consultant based in Minnesota.

GCI Director Miguel Angel Corzo, right, at the Mogao Grottoes in China. Photo: Guillermo Aldana.




 OPPORTUNITY

AND

RESPONSIBILITY

A CONVERSATION WITH

*Harold
Williams*


Jim McHugh

Harold M. Williams has been President and Chief Executive Officer of the J. Paul Getty Trust since 1981. A graduate of Harvard University Law School, he was Chairman of the Board of Norton Simon Incorporated, before becoming Dean and Professor of Management at the John E. Anderson Graduate School of Management of the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1977 President Carter named him Chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, a post he held for four years. Since his arrival at the Getty Trust, he has guided its metamorphosis from being primarily a museum to an organization of international stature with seven different programs, including the Getty Conservation Institute. By 1997 all of the Getty programs will be located at the new Getty Center, now being constructed in the Brentwood area of Los Angeles.

This spring, Mr. Williams spoke with Janet Bridgland, who first came to work for the Getty Trust in 1983 and served as the GCI's Documentation Program Director during the latter half of the 1980s.

■ *Janet Bridgland: When you became President of the Getty Trust, it was a very different organization. At the time, the Getty Museum was the only program that existed. Did you have any idea that you'd ultimately preside over such an all-encompassing arts institution?*

■ Harold Williams: Not really. The only things I knew when I became President were that the Trustees agreed that the Getty should be more than a museum — and they seemed to be quite open as to what it ought to become — and that Mr. Getty's estate, which was due to close at some indefinite time in the future, would give us an endowment of just over a billion dollars.

I started off by telling the Trustees that I would take a year before I would come back to them with a plan. I then hired Lani Duke and Nancy Englander and said to them, "Look, I don't care what you think the Getty ought to become any more than I care what I think it ought to become. It's our responsibility to go out in the field and see what's missing. This is a unique institution, with a unique opportunity and responsibility."

We spent the year traveling the Western world, looking at the needs in the field — and it was clear that in the area of conservation there was much that needed to be done.

Were there any surprises in what you found?

One of my hypotheses was that we needed to get more people into conservation. But when we got out there we found that we needed to increase the demand for conservation before increasing the supply, and so what seemed to be more compelling was an appreciation of the need for conservation and opportunities for conservators to advance their skills.

We also looked at *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts*, which was struggling at the time. It was obvious that most conservation professionals had no way of either sharing their experiences with others or accessing what others had done. Traditional conservators are basically bench people. They like to do rather than write about or communicate what they've done. That seemed to be an area where there was a genuine need. It was also clear that there was inadequate work being done in the application of science to conservation in an environment in which the object and its context were central.

Once you'd completed your assessment, where did you go from there?

Well, I came to the Trustees in May 1982 with a plan that included a conservation institute with the four elements still very much there — scientific research applied to conservation; information resources, or what we now call documentation; training for conservation professionals; and special field projects that brought together each of these elements.

One of the questions we had for ourselves was, "What kind of leadership do we want for the Conservation Institute?" When we began searching for a director, we found polarization within the field between, say, hands-on conservators and people dedicated to the scientific side, as well as differences between the kind of apprenticeship training that occurs in Europe and the more formal training generally found in this country. Conservation was not a field that had a cohesiveness to it, and we were concerned about that. We wanted the Institute to be a coalescing force, to help define the field rather than become identified with any faction.

We concluded that we needed leadership that would have an appreciation for the objects and the various activities that make up conservation — from scholarship and science to the actual conservation treatment. We had difficulty finding someone who we felt could lead the institution and not be identified with any of the factions. We finally settled on Luis Monreal.

As I recall, Luis had a much broader vision for the Institute than the Trust did originally. Did that pose any difficulty with the Trustees, or were they readily convinced of the importance of a broader mandate?

They took it very much in stride. I had to work it through with Luis myself to understand what and why, but I became very enthusiastic about the idea of going beyond what one might call museum art into cultural heritage more broadly. It made a lot of sense — and that was a transforming moment for the Institute.

What role did you see for the Institute as distinct from other conservation organizations that existed at the time?

The reason we identified conservation as an area for the Getty to address was because there were so few organizations and resources dedicated to conservation. What I had said to the Trustees in 1982 was that even if we spent all of our resources on conservation, we would still not make a large dent in the problem because the needs were so enormous. So in my mind there was absolutely no competition between ourselves and other conservation organizations. Indeed, it seemed to me that the needs in the field were so great that our role was to complement what they were doing and collaborate with them.

I think it's important that we collaborate and cooperate with international organizations because there is so much that needs to be done with so few resources. At the same time, we should not only be influenced by their sense of what the priorities ought to be but also have some impact on them.

How do you see the Institute fitting in with the other Trust entities?

In the early stages, I felt it important that the programs have the opportunity to take their own direction within the context of the agreed-upon vision, recognizing that as they developed their own directions and points of view, they would move in directions that were not necessarily fully consistent with the directions in which other programs were moving.

That, to me, has become a source of great strength. I didn't want to see the Getty as a homogenized or monolithic totality. It's the only place in the world that brings all these perspectives together under one umbrella. Certainly one reason for wanting to have them all ultimately at one site was so that the different perspectives could interact with one another, and we could realize the richness that would result from the interaction of the varied perspectives and points of view. Out of that, new perspectives, new knowledge, and different ways of defining the issues would emerge. But it would take time for each of these programs to develop their own identity and sense of purpose so that when they came together they didn't homogenize. They could collaborate and work together, with each bringing its own point of view to the issue at hand. In many respects that's exactly what's happening.

The work of the GCI has underscored for all of us the importance of cultural heritage conservation. Also, the Institute has taken the initiative in working on collaborative projects with other programs and has shown the way in terms of the kinds of collaboration that I would like to see develop.

So in many respects, it's not a bad thing that the programs have had several years to mature independently before coming together in the new Getty Center.

I think it's critical. Otherwise they wouldn't have their own personalities to bring to the common mix. You know, you talk about maturity, but I like to think of the GCI and the other programs as still adolescent. In a way, I hope they remain adolescent. Maturation has some virtues, but I think the essence of the Getty has to be a continuing process of self-questioning, self-doubt, and self-challenge. Are we doing what we ought to be doing? Are we justified in continuing to do what we're doing? Where are the fields going? This is an institution like no other, and it's too easy for us to believe our publicity and become self-congratulatory and then lose our edge. We have to continue to challenge ourselves. We are an institution unique in the world, and that carries with it an enormous responsibility.

The conservation field itself has changed dramatically in the last five to ten years.

And the GCI has, too, in several important respects. It has developed internally so that the various programs within the Institute are much more team-focused than they were. That, I think, reflects a difference in Miguel Angel Corzo's leadership and the stage of development of the Institute as well.

What I also find at the GCI — and it's true with a number of the programs in the Trust — is that we have evolved into a position of leadership which begins now to move us much more into the position of addressing public policy. That's happening more than I anticipated, and it enhances the responsibility of the GCI. It provides an unusual opportunity for the Institute to try to coalesce the field around issues of public policy.

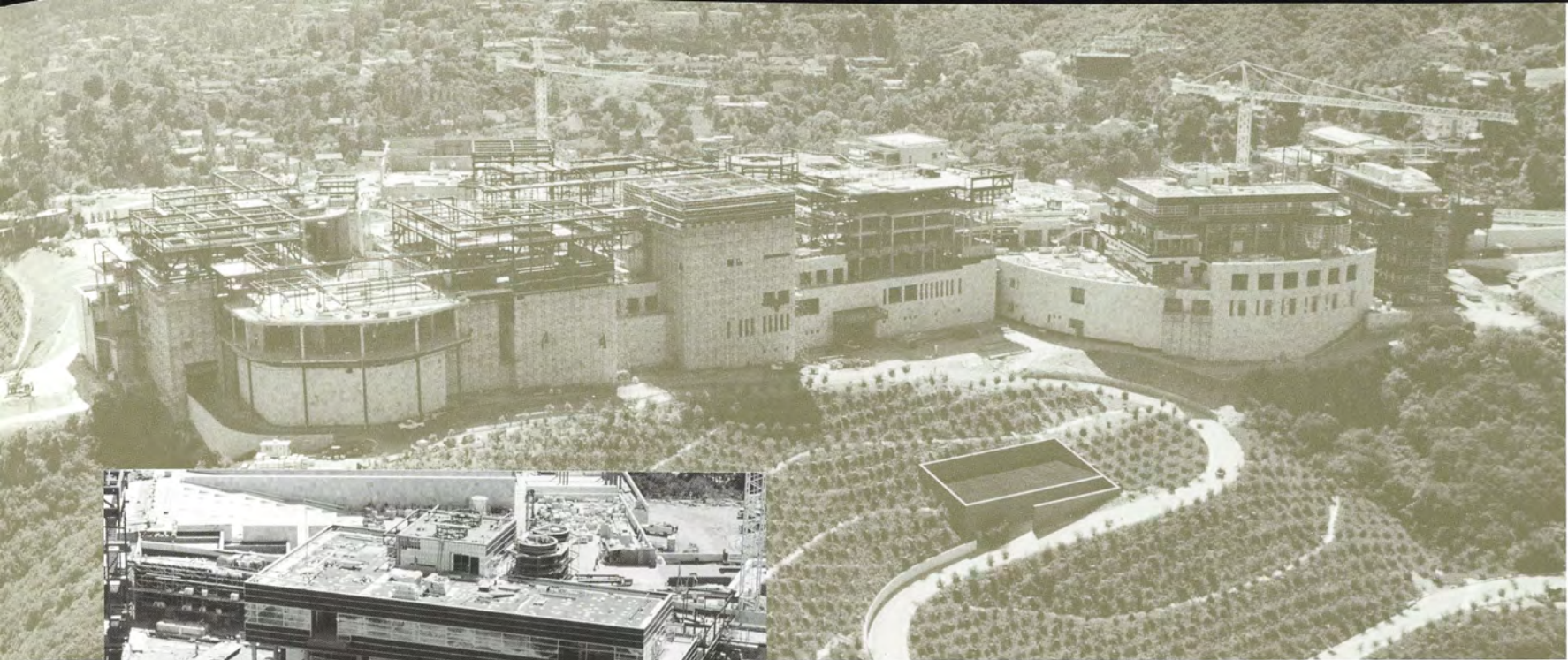
Do you see this whole area of public policy and public awareness as being increasingly important for the Institute?

I think so. I don't know who else will provide it for the field. I think it will be an increasing role — guided, of course, by the fact that as a private operating foundation we cannot lobby.

In reaching the public, there's a model in the success of the environmental movement, one that we can look to and build on. The analogy to environmental preservation is appropriate, in part to remind us that conservation needs to be broader than conservation of the environment only. The environment is, of course, critically important, touching on the physical concerns of human beings, without which nothing else matters. But concern for the physical condition of humanity alone doesn't make for humanity. It's important to recognize that in a time when we're concerned about the physical condition of human beings and concerned about science and technology, it's the arts and the humanities that determine what kind of a society this will be. The preservation of the cultural heritage is our continuity with culture, with what it means to be alive.

Have your years at the Trust altered your view of the arts and their role in the life of the nation?

They haven't altered my personal view. They *have* underscored for me the importance of our responsibility. We have a position where we can provide a degree of leadership in defining the issues and shaping policy. At the same time, the needs are even greater than anticipated as our society seems, in some respects, to be going in the wrong direction.



Top: The Getty Center under construction in June 1995.
Bottom: The building at the Center that will house the Getty Conservation Institute. Photos: Warren Aerial Photography.

What would you like your own legacy at the Getty Trust to be?

I've had a number of careers, and the reason I took on the challenge in each case was because I had a sense of what the mission of those institutions ought to be and of some things I wanted to accomplish. In each case it was a matter of organization, reorganization, and setting a direction. The Getty is the first time — the only time — that I've been involved in creating something from scratch. It's been much more challenging and much more rewarding.

I hope that the legacy is one of an institution that is and remains committed to making a significant difference to the field, an institution that is vital, that is continually reinventing itself. John Gardner uses an expression that I have appreciated and used many times, and that's the concept of a "loving critic." In some fashion that's what we need to be of ourselves. That's what our Board should be, that's what our Visiting Committees should be. We need to have institutionalized mechanisms for continually questioning whether we're doing what we ought to be doing and are doing it in the best way — because there literally is no other place in the world like the Getty.

Well, I think you have much to be proud of.

Yes. But you can't rest on being proud.

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