

# Getty

MAGAZINE | FALL 2020



INSIDE: RUSCHA'S SUNSET BLVD | KEEPING IT MODERN | MESOPOTAMIA | CONSERVATION DURING COVID-19





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On the cover: Shoot from Sunset Blvd, 1966, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: Strip 242 (Image 0002). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha. Story on p. 34

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



draft on our website in mid-September. The plan outlines how we will achieve five specific goals, which are: to develop Getty's workforce so that it reflects the diversity of Southern California and the nation; to confront and eliminate racism and discrimination in the workplace; to improve communication within the Getty community to help contribute to a culture of trust; to enhance the diversity of collections, interpretations, exhibitions, digital content, and public programs; and to deepen Getty's engagement with BIPOC and other diverse communities. Know that this is only the first iteration of a plan that will continuously evolve with the input from staff and members of local BIPOC-led organizations, and from what we might learn from peer institutions' work and experience. We still have lots of work ahead of us. Making true, lasting change requires a collaborative effort, especially as we remain separated from one another due to the pandemic.

That separation will continue a bit longer, I'm sorry to say. Although we had hoped to open our doors in August, and dozens of people worked hard to make that happen, we recently decided that our sites will not reopen to the public before January. This was an informed decision by our COVID-19 Task Force in consideration of the Public Health Department's guidelines. The good news is that this "down time" has proven useful in several ways. Free from monitoring a constantly changing pandemic landscape, we've been able to put more energy and care into our upcoming exhibitions and programs. We've pivoted to creating numerous online offerings—stories, exhibitions, and classes that will be accessible to anyone in the world at any time. And we've likely made much faster progress on our DEI work because of this respite.

Until we can open safely, please stay part of our Getty community through this magazine and the many blog posts, online exhibitions, and podcasts on our website. I can't wait to see you again soon.

During the last few months, I have been deeply moved by the heartfelt call from our staff and from the community to make Getty a better place—a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive place. I have learned so much from everyone.

At an online summit in August, I heard from more than 150 staff members—all volunteers on Getty's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council and on program and department DEI Task Forces—about their collective efforts so far. They have accomplished a great deal in very little time, and are clearly dedicated to this essential work. On behalf of the entire senior leadership, I thank them.

Meanwhile the Getty leadership team, two dozen of us, have been meeting every Monday since mid-July. During these meetings we spend at least an hour with the excellent Jones Consulting team, discussing topics such as white culture and privilege and their affect on our lives and work.

We have also heard many suggestions from staff about how we can improve the Getty going forward, and we have incorporated them into an initial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan. We published that

Jim Cuno





## NEW INTERNSHIPS FOSTER DIVERSITY IN ART CONSERVATION

**GETTY HAS LAUNCHED A PILOT PROGRAM** to address the lack of cultural diversity in the field of art conservation. The Post-Baccalaureate Conservation Internships offer one-year paid internships to recent college graduates from culturally diverse backgrounds to prepare them for postgraduate study in the conservation field.

The program's first recipients are Cheyenne Caraway, Kiera Hammond, and Michelle Tenggara, who began working remotely this fall. Workplans and scheduling remain flexible given ongoing developments related to COVID-19, but the group is doing virtual rotations among conservation studios at the Getty Center and Villa. In addition, the interns can take courses through Santa Monica College and receive career mentoring from Ellen Pearlstein, professor in the UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Ethnographic and Archaeological Materials and Getty's official advisor for the program.

The Post-Bacc interns are scheduled to then begin residencies in the conservation studios of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures; Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens; Fowler Museum; LACMA; and Autry Museum of the American West. While these partners remain strongly committed to the program, decisions about how this aspect of the internships will unfold will be made further into the academic year given the unpredictability of the pandemic.

"The Post-Bacc internships were created to provide an essential rung in the ladder toward a conservation career," says Antoine Wilmering, who trained as a conservator and is now a Senior Program Officer at the Getty Foundation overseeing conservation initiatives. According to Wilmering, a graduate degree is essential to securing a job in art conservation, yet only a few graduate programs exist. That makes competition for those few spots intense, and applicants often bolster their credentials by completing a range of prerequisite science courses and almost a year of pre-program internship training, which is often unpaid. "Graduate program administrators say these realities have produced a conservation field that is neither culturally diverse nor equitable. But we're confident that the Post-Bacc internships will help participants overcome these barriers and gain exposure to the skills needed for a conservation career."

The program builds on the Foundation's longstanding Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internship program, which for nearly 30 years has offered paid internships at museums and arts organizations to undergraduates of underrepresented cultural backgrounds. The Post-Bacc internships are administered by the Getty Foundation and operated in partnership with the other Getty programs. Support for the launch of this pilot program was provided by the Getty Patron's Program. ■

From top: Getty Post-Bacc interns Cheyenne Caraway, Kiera Hammond, and Michelle Tenggara



## GETTY BRINGS ART EDUCATION INTO THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

**EVEN IF K-12 CLASSES CAN'T COME TO GETTY** this year, the Getty can come to them.

This fall the J. Paul Getty Museum launched Getty Virtual Art Explorations, a teaching program that provides live arts education online. Following the success of a virtual pilot program this summer with Los Angeles Unified School District and Inner-City Education Foundation, the Getty Education team has expanded the program to additional school districts and homeschool networks in Southern California.

According to Getty educators William Zaluski and Kelly Jane Smith Fatten, the interpretation of art strengthens perception, expression, and imagination, and develops the skills to describe and analyze what one perceives. Also, the online classroom setting is a communal one, and community art

experiences can increase the understanding not just of art, but of one's self and others, offering balanced experiences that benefit the collective psychology. Getty educators believe that the students of Los Angeles are the number-one priority of the greater community at large, and are delighted to offer what they do best as a part of students' experience in these new times.

Getty Virtual Art Explorations is an interactive, collection-based, object-focused experience with students. The program uses a discovery- and inquiry-based teaching approach, and was created to provide arts education in the virtual classroom. Using Zoom, Getty can also extend its reach both locally and globally, opening new doors and connecting with future visitors. Educators can sign up for Getty Virtual Art Explorations through Getty's website, [getty.edu](http://getty.edu). ■



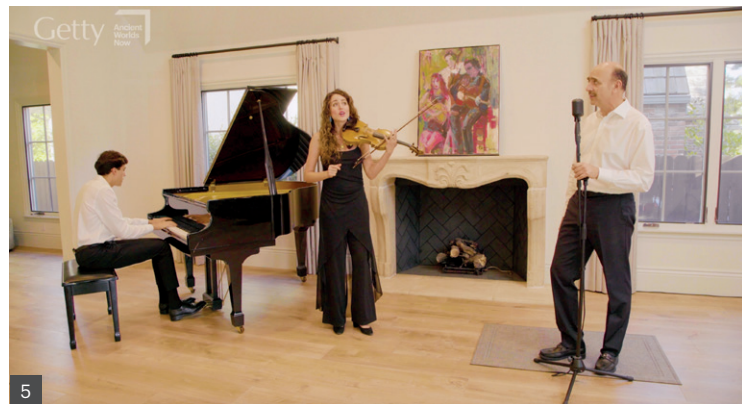
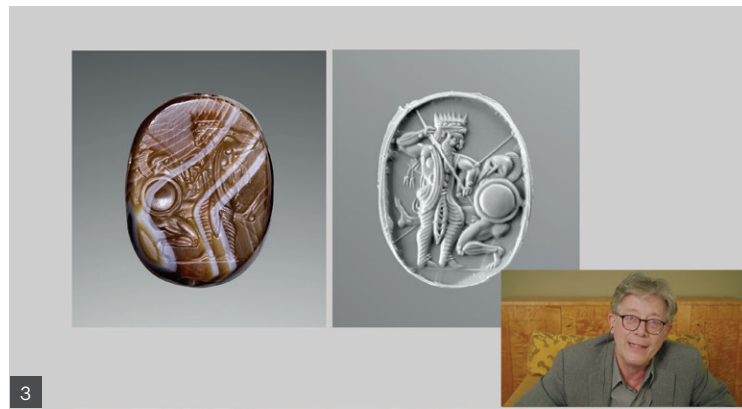
**Virtual Preview: Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World**

The J. Paul Getty Museum and the Farhang Foundation hosted Patrons and supporters on July 19 for a virtual preview of *Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World*. As part of Getty’s Ancient Worlds Now: A Future for the Past initiative, the exhibition will feature more than 100 priceless treasures from Persia’s ancient past, many of them never before seen on the West Coast. Getty Museum Director Timothy Potts and Senior Curator of Antiquities Jeffrey Spier highlighted pieces from the exhibition, giving viewers a sense of the craftsmanship, artistry, and rich cultural traditions of a great world power in antiquity, one that had a profound influence on Greece and Rome.

Major support for *Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World* is provided by Elizabeth and Bruce Dunlevie and the Spogli Family Foundation. The Farhang Foundation is the Exhibition Cultural Partner.

The exhibition is scheduled to open at the Getty Villa in April 2022.

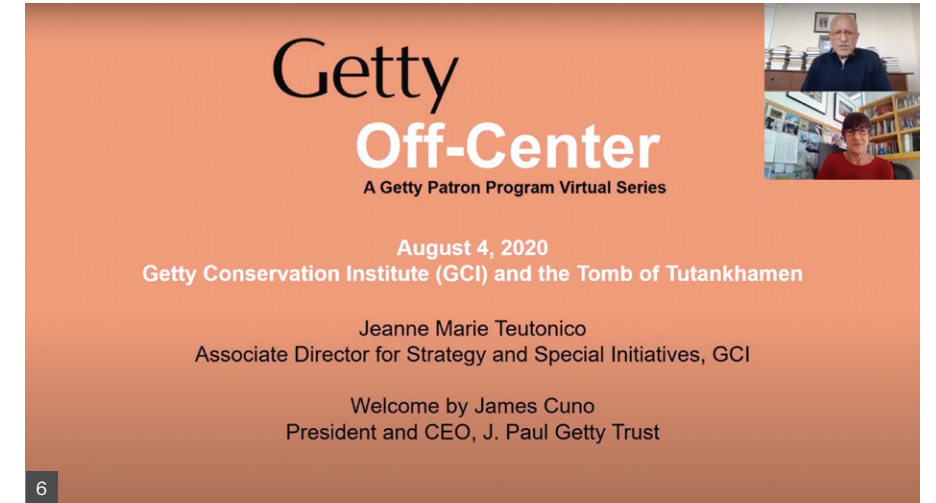
1. Farhang Foundation Chairman Hormoz Ameri
2. Getty Museum Director Timothy Potts
3. Exhibition curator Jeffrey Spier presents the *Scaraboid with a Persian King Fighting a Greek Hoplite* gem.
4. *Stag Rhyton*, 100–1 BC, Near Eastern. Gilt silver, garnet, and glass. The J. Paul Getty Museum
5. Musical performance by Chloe Pourmorady



**Getty Off-Center Launches**

Getty Off-Center, a new Getty Patron Program virtual series, kicked off its first event on August 4 with Jeanne Marie Teutonico, the Getty Conservation Institute’s (GCI) Associate Director, Strategy and Special Initiatives. Teutonico spoke about the GCI’s decade-long work at the Tomb of Tutankhamen in collaboration with Egypt’s Ministry of Antiquities. Accompanied by vibrant images—of the paintings that lined the 3,000-year-old tomb’s walls, conservators analyzing the composition of its structural elements, and visitors inside the chamber—the presentation covered challenges faced in this tumultuous period, the research that informed the chosen conservation methods, and the long-term outcomes of this project to preserve one of the world’s most captivating ancient sites. After the presentation, guests participated in a lively Q&A session.

6. Getty President and CEO Jim Cuno and Jeanne Marie Teutonico welcome Patrons and supporters to the first Getty Off-Center event.
7. A team of conservators works on the tomb’s wall paintings.



**Digital Miniseries: The ODDyssey**

This summer the Troubadour Theater Company (“the Troubies”) presented *The ODDyssey*, a humorous take on Homer’s epic tale. Performed on Zoom and streamed on the Getty Museum’s YouTube channel, the five-episode series followed Odysseus as he navigated the perils of monsters, seductresses, and tantrum-throwing gods to reach his home and his suitor-swarmed wife Penelope. Inspired by the gridded Brady Bunch aesthetic of Zoom, the Troubies’ homemade props and boisterous musical antics attracted thousands of viewers of all ages.

The Troubies, a self-described “no-holds-barred, Commedia Del Arte-flavored Los Angeles-based ensemble of actors, musicians, and comedians,” have been frequent collaborators with the Getty Villa’s theater program. Their unique mash-ups of classical epics with pop culture have delighted audiences at several Villa Theater Lab debuts and the 2016 Annual Outdoor Theater production, *Haunted House Party*.



## Thank You to Our Community of Donors

You make it possible for us to do more than we can do alone, and we could not be more grateful. Whether serving on Getty Councils, supporting the Patron Program, furthering the Getty's legacy through the J. Paul Getty Founder's Society or providing philanthropic support, your contributions are furthering Getty's important work.

**You are raising our exhibitions to new heights**

**You are growing our collections for the benefit of our many audiences**

**You are helping scholars rewrite art history**

**You are safeguarding magnificent cultural heritage sites**

**You are empowering students throughout our innovative education programs**

Thank you for your generosity—and for your belief that art brings us together and illuminates our shared humanity.

## MY GETTY



*Among her many academic accomplishments, Zorana Ercegovac taught information literacy courses at UCLA, Drexel University, and in secondary schools for 28 years, retiring in 2015. But her scholarly pursuits have continued, and she has spent much of her time at the Getty Research Institute and Getty Museum, her favorite haunts since the Center opened in 1997. She tells us why she considers Getty a “friendly muse, a temple, a busy lab, and a hub with endless possibilities,” even when she can only visit virtually.*

**AS A PIANIST, ETHNOMUSICOLOGIST, INFORMATION SCIENTIST, AND EDUCATOR**, the Getty Center has offered me a place to “decelerate”—to reflect, admire the natural beauty of the gardens, and even find unique textures and sounds in the travertine stone. The Center has also become my Pantheon, allowing me to view, read, hear, and explore whatever I wish at my own pace. The Getty Research Institute’s richly developed, interdisciplinary resources perfectly fit my interests, and until the closure due to COVID-19, I have been a regular there every Friday, reading in the reference section and making sure I have plenty of time to visit exhibitions.

One of the many periodicals I depend on, *School Libraries Worldwide*, is actually one of the journals that published my recent findings about how seventh graders search for images in digital libraries and archival collections. I studied seventh graders because a bigger project I’m working on will teach teens information literacy skills—effective searching and critical thinking—well before they arrive at high school and college.

Getty has been my laboratory, too, preparing me to make connections between visual representations and music expressions. I’ve even led a series of themed lectures and discussions based on Getty’s collections for the “Music in Cultural Contexts” section of the UCLA Faculty Women’s Club, and most recently focused on the *Manet and Modern Beauty* exhibition. I had visited that show many times, and “wove” vocabularies found in Manet’s art with those in symbolist poems (Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* for one) as well as the music of Manet’s contemporaries (Chopin, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, etc.).

My next presentation, also for the UCLA Faculty Women’s Club, is based on Käthe Kollwitz, inspired by Getty’s exhibition last winter of her etchings, lithographs, woodcuts, and other works. In that symposium I will focus on the Second Viennese School, including pieces by composers Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern, and I will use art pieces from the Kollwitz oeuvre to discuss art in the context of the Weimar Republic.

Although I haven’t been able to visit in person, I have accessed PRIMO, the Provenance Index, and other online resources to conduct research for that symposium. As always, Getty’s tools are absolutely, at least to me, essential for my work. ■



**Annelies Cosaert is a Getty Conservation Institute fellow working on the Managing Collection Environments initiative, a multi-year effort to keep artworks safe in too hot, too cold, too dry, or too wet places. She tells us about a current project in Chandigarh, India.**



GCI Fellow Annelies Cosaert sets up environmental data logging facilities at the Chandigarh Government Museum and Art Gallery (CGMAG) with GCI Assistant Scientist Vincent Beltran (left) and CGMAG technical consultant Vishal Bhatnagar

stan. The studio of pioneering modern architect Le Corbusier was chosen to deliver designs for the new city and for several of its most prominent buildings, including the museum.

The building's façade, intended to hide the treasures inside from outside views, looks rather plain. But pass through the front doors and you enter an architectural wonderland. Skylights let light flow into the interior, and mezzanines frame the exhibition halls as art pieces themselves. Furniture (by Pierre Jeanerret, Le Corbusier's cousin) and display cases (by Ratna Fabri, a leading interior and furniture designer), are made to harmoniously meld exhibition hall and collection. The building's passive climate control includes wing-shaped aerators that allow air to circulate naturally and cool the indoors, especially during the hot and humid season.

Together with the Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative team, we are helping our partners in India improve the environment of the museum, seeking solutions that will benefit the building, its occupants, and the collection. Improving their collection care will be done through research that examines the effect of the environment on art objects. We measure indoor environmental aspects such as temperature, relative humidity, and pollution. We take outdoor measurements via a weather station. To contextualize all this data, we observe the state of the collection and interview museum personnel and stakeholders about damage that has occurred over time and in the past.

I love working within an unfamiliar context. It is an interesting way to learn more about people and their culture, and why they care about these art objects. Still, given our limited time on site, it remains challenging to develop a deeper understanding of our Indian peers' views—whether on the role of museums, how conservation is defined and applied, what kind of change is acceptable, and how cultural heritage is valued.

This fellowship has given me the opportunity to witness the power of interdisciplinary collaboration. Not only does collaboration broaden one's views, it makes things actually happen. This experience has also given me some great friends. Being an ex-pat can be lonely, but I have had an amazing time during and after work with my colleagues, in particular two other GCI fellows. Our personalities, educational background, and cultural background might be different, but our openness and tolerance have led to a wonderful closeness that will continue well after my time at Getty. ■

*Annelies Cosaert, a native of Belgium, received her Master's degree in Conservation and Restoration with honors from the University of Antwerp in 2014. A series of short internships led to a post-graduate internship at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage where she was employed in the department of preventive conservation. Cosaert has also worked for the Flemish government and Studio Wim Delvoye.*

**WHEN I FIRST HEARD ABOUT** the Getty Conservation Institute's (GCI's) Managing Collection Environments (MCE) initiative, I was working in Belgium for contemporary artist Wim Delvoye developing a database for the artist's studio. I admired the initiative's focus on preventative conservation and sustainability, and how it connected the safety of collections with the buildings that housed them. When a fellowship position popped up, I pursued it immediately.

One of the projects I'm working on right now takes me to the Government Museum and Art Gallery in Chandigarh, India. The city of Chandigarh was constructed as the new, utopian capital of the Indian Punjab region after the British recognized Indian Independence and the old capital, Lahore, became part of Paki-



*Quieter weekends are prompting some of us to glance at our shelves for that special book we've longed to revisit. Maybe it nudged us onto our career path, guided us through a tough transition, or enchanted us with its fictional world.*

Photo: Yosi Pozeilov. Book cover © Penguin Books

**Marie Svoboda, conservator of antiquities at the Getty Villa Museum, tells us about the book she's been rereading during lockdown.**

**ALTHOUGH I HAVE READ** many wonderful novels and inspirational stories over the years, *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez holds a special place in my heart. As the book's many accolades attest, it is a masterful work of magical realism filled with dream-like imagery, soulful questions, and spiritual emotions. It manages to encompass all of life's complexities—love, passion, loss, secrets, death, and the fear of death. More personally, the book always takes me back to the year I first read it, almost 30 years ago, a special time in my life when I traveled extensively, developed a passion for art, and discovered my eventual professional career.

I remember how delightful the book was to read—like unwinding a ball of yarn that gradually led me through the characters' rich journeys. In the main

plot, a woman ends her relationship with a love-struck poet to marry a doctor devoted to eradicating cholera; but this first love waits 50 years to be with her again. My favorite part, then and now, is probably when the lovers are trapped together on a riverboat during a cholera outbreak. The poet is feeling such an intense kind of passion; he is finally with the woman he loves, after waiting a lifetime, and he will sacrifice anything to keep traveling down the river with her.

In my youth I could relate to that kind of love, and to the desire to completely immerse oneself in such a powerful emotion. The story filled me with hope and a sense of destiny, even as it dealt with so many painful issues, all relevant as my personal road to becoming a conservator was very challenging. Through my passion and deep desire to pursue this career, inside I remained inspired by the poet who never gave up what he wanted.

Now, during our own pandemic, I can uniquely understand the need for staying positive and making the best of every moment, no matter how trying things may seem. Reflecting on this book still transports me to a pivotal and exciting time in my life when I too was navigating a winding river that took me to unknown destinations, successes and failures, unprecedented fears, and bountiful joy. ■



## Meet Rita Gomez, lead preparator at the J. Paul Getty Museum and the woman who keeps works of art safe as they travel the world.



**The gist of what I do:** Like all preparators, my job is to ensure the safe and proper handling of any artwork while it moves from different areas within the museum. My job also includes working with objects that have been approved to travel on loan; I anticipate every move from wall to wall and pedestal to pedestal, if you will.

Mainly I manage the packing/unpacking shop and the crating shop. I work with my exceptionally talented team on strategies for packing objects on the schedule. I oversee the building of the packing crates and the actual packing, and work with the registrars to schedule things like curators coming in to look at an object, since that involves us using screwdrivers and drills to remove lids. I also assist with objects from the permanent collection and potential acquisitions when they arrive at the loading dock, help pick up objects at the airport, and coordinate the objects coming back to various areas of the museum. It's anticipating what moves the piece has to go through, and then making decisions based on how the piece would suffer the least, as if it were a patient in a hospital. The object that went out on loan must return in an unchanged condition.

**Prepping to prep:** I grew up in Tijuana, Mexico, up to grade school. We were a *fronterizo* family: my dad commuted daily to

the San Diego Country Club, welding the irrigation systems. He was also in partnership with my granduncle in demolition, where they would repurpose materials for projects like restoring theaters. I was always interested in following him like a puppy dog and learning what he was doing. He'd say, "I want you to repair this pen, and this is the wood you're using." (At times we owned horses, cows, and chickens.) So I learned to build. Sometimes when he went off to work, I'd try out the tools and supplies he had. I was learning to use the hammer and becoming interested in materials and texture, without knowing that I could apply that to a career in the arts. If I found a piece of wood, I would carve it and give it to my mom and say, "Here's a spoon that I just made for you." I didn't realize I was making sculpture. So I feel like that was my foundation to be a "crater," our term for a builder of crates and other structures for transporting art.

**How I discovered art:** On Sundays we'd go visit Grandma. Usually I was a hyper kid—I made my own wheelbarrow where I could put all my tools, and then I'd go do whatever project I was working on. But on Sundays, instead of running around with other kids, I would just sit in Grandma's rocking chair with her big Bible which was illustrated with works by Rembrandt and Michelangelo. I didn't know the works' titles; I wasn't even reading it. I was just looking at the paintings, which I was extremely compelled by and attracted to. At my house there weren't any books other than school books; there were just chores and many tasks to do, and we could watch cartoons on the black-and-white TV from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., run around for a little bit, and go to sleep. That was it. So my grandma's Bible was my first museum visit because I didn't even know there was a thing called a museum to go visit.

In 1972 my family and I moved to the Santa Clarita Valley, where I started junior high, and after high school I went to College of the Canyons on a track scholarship. I took an art appreciation class, and oh, my gosh. I loved learning about art. Eventually the teacher had to say, 'Anybody *but* Rita raise your hand!' We had an assignment to go to the Norton Simon Museum, which was my first museum. I was so overwhelmed that I had to sit down and just take it in that I was seeing in person the works of art in my books.

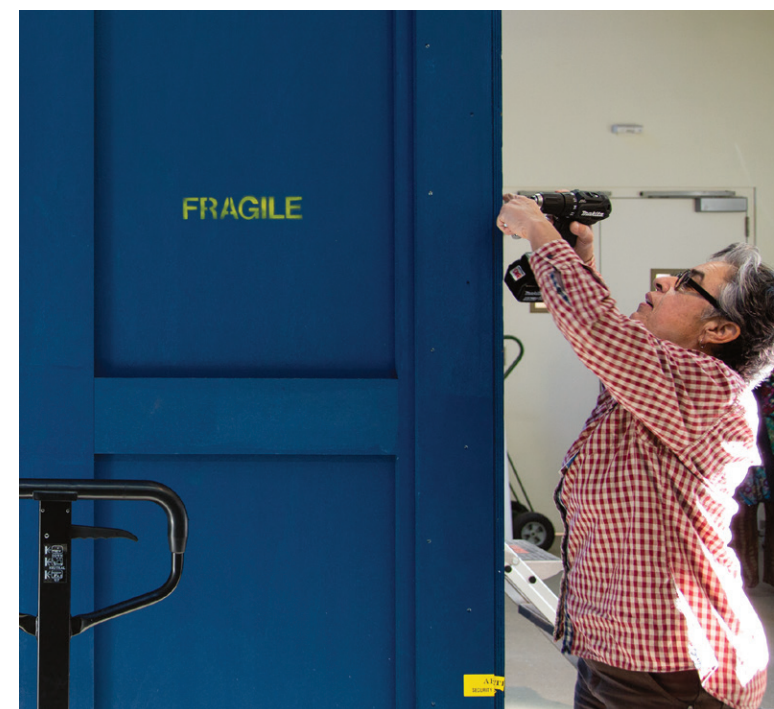
**Why I became an art preparator:** I was a teaching assistant for one of my art professors, and another professor asked me to help him set up an art installation at Cal State Northridge. So I learned how to move objects. I also learned how to do matting at an art auction house. But I needed a job, so my professor suggested I go to Cooke's Crating, which is a fine art handling, shipping, installing, and storing company in Los Angeles. I started there doing inventory and eventually became the packing and crating manager.

In 1986 we were asked to come to the Getty Villa to help move the paintings department to the Getty Ranch House.

I went there with a team to help move things, and somebody who worked at Getty told me there was a job opening for an art preparator. I applied, took a 100-question test, and got the job. The test included questions like, how would you move a heavy but delicate marble object from a confined, tight spot to another location? Within six months of being hired I became the head of the packing team in preparations.

## I was learning to use the hammer and becoming interested in materials and texture, without knowing that I could apply that to a career in the arts.

**Why I wanted to work at Getty:** When the Getty opportunity came up, I thought it would be a dream come true to be hired. Getty was developing like no other institution, and I appreciated that I would be permitted to do the best possible work I could do with the best materials. Everyone at Getty carried themselves with a completely different demeanor than I had been exposed to until then (other than my influential art professors). And of course another important reason was to stay local, due to family ties.



**Most challenging project:** The Stela with Queen Ix Mutal Ahaw, a relief built by the ancient Mayans, which came from the de Young Museum in San Francisco for the Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA *Golden Kingdoms* exhibition. She was in 29 fragments of limestone, not adhered together but mounted on a steel frame eight feet tall. I called it a 1,000-pound lollipop.

After its display at the Getty Museum it needed to get to its next venue, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. We were asked to travel with the piece, and I traveled in a truck with it from LA to New York for three days. When the exhibition closed, the Met flew me and my colleague Andrew Gavenda over to repack the piece. When the packing was done, this time Andrew was the courier, so he traveled in a truck with the piece from New York to San Francisco for three days.

That project gave me the heebie-jeebies. You never know how rough the road conditions are going to be. But the main objective is to plan for what we know will happen to the piece on its journey, and for extremes—if it falls over or drops. We want the packing to hold that patient together, so it goes out and comes back unchanged.

**What might surprise Getty visitors:** We build seismic isolators, so if there's an earthquake, the object remains still on its pedestal. The floor can move but the object stays in place and the isolator takes the ricochet, the slack, away from the object. They're heavy—up to 3,000 pounds.

**An artwork I love to show people:** The sculpture *Saint Ginés de la Jara* by Luisa Roldán, from about 1692. There is a big empty space in his robe, and we used to find pennies in there. I don't know why people were compelled to throw coins in there. That guy was like a wishing well. But that's one of the pieces I like to show because Roldán was the first woman sculptor recorded in Spain, and she was also appointed as a sculptor to the royal court. I just think that is so significant.

**Best part of my job:** I love every aspect of it. Working on pieces like the Maya stela is like a toothache—you savor it and it's painful until they take it out. Then it's such a relief. I like the coordination and problem-solving, I like turning on the radio and getting really dirty building a crate—then, doing the finest of handling for delicate pieces like Roman glass and fine portraits. It's like handling a big potato chip with paint on it. ■





Opposite: Portrait of Paul R. Williams in front of Theme Building at LAX, 1965, Julius Shulman. Gelatin silver print. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

Right: Beverly Hills Hotel Addition, Beverly Hills, built 1949–50, Paul R. Williams (architect); photography 1950, Julius Shulman. Gelatin silver print. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

## THE ARCHIVE OF LA ARCHITECT PAUL REVERE WILLIAMS

*The Getty Research Institute and the USC School of Architecture have teamed up to preserve and further Williams's legacy*

By Amy Hood  
Getty Senior Communications Specialist

**THE ARCHIVE OF RENOWNED ARCHITECT PAUL REVERE WILLIAMS**, which documents the entirety of his career, is now being jointly acquired by Williams's alma mater, the USC School of Architecture, and the Getty Research Institute, who will work together to make the archive accessible to students and other researchers and make possible many future exhibitions, programs, and publications about Williams.

The archive has been meticulously cared for by Karen Elyse Hudson, Williams's granddaughter, who has published extensively on his work. Although many believe that Williams's archive was destroyed in a fire that consumed Broadway Federal Savings & Loan during the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest, most of the extensive archive was in a different location and is in excellent condition. With records from his

early residential commissions during Los Angeles's housing boom of the 1920s to landmark mid-century civic structures, the archive includes approximately 35,000 plans, 10,000 original drawings, blueprints, hand-colored renderings, vintage photographs, correspondence, and other materials.

Williams was the most significant African American architect of the 20th century, with especially strong ties to Southern California and the city of Los Angeles. A native Angeleno born in 1894 and orphaned by the age of four, Williams contributed greatly to the cultural landscape and design of Los Angeles. He was the first African American member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), its first African American Fellow, and ultimately its first African American Gold Medalist.

During his career, Williams overcame numerous race-based indignities. For instance, he learned to draw upside down in order to sketch for clients from across the table—for the benefit of any white clients who might have been uneasy sitting next to an African American. He also toured construction sites with

hands clasped behind his back; from experience, he could never be sure every person at a construction site would shake a Black man's hand. The ability to work within these conditions adds further resonance to the enduring significance of Williams's legacy.

Williams's prolific career spanned nearly six decades and more than 3,000 projects. He was known for Late Moderne design, which combines long horizontal lines and sleek curving forms, though he was fully versed in other architectural styles. His early work was primarily residential, and he designed legendary homes for leaders in business and entertainment such as Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Frank Sinatra, the E. L. Cord and Paley families, and Cary Grant. Though his later career included commercial, institutional, and public building projects, residential design was a perennial element of his work.

While Williams had a lasting impact on Southern California, he also worked on a large number of national and international projects, which notably included the 14-story addition to the Hotel Granada







El Mirador Hotel, Palm Springs, Paul R. Williams architect, Built 1952–53, photography 1953, Julius Shulman. Gelatin silver print. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

in Bogotá and the design of the Hotel Nutibara in Medellín, both in Colombia. He was associate architect on the United Nations building in Paris, and Langston Terrace in Washington, DC, the first federally sponsored public housing in the country. Southern California was always his chief building ground, however.

Many of his projects—including the Music Corporation of America (MCA) headquarters (1939), the Ambassador Hotel’s renovation (1949), the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company Building (1949), refurbishments and additions to the Beverly Hills Hotel (1940s–1970s), the Los Angeles County Courthouse (1951), Hillside Memorial Park (1951), Los Angeles International Airport (1960), Westwood Medical Center (1960–62), and the First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church (1968)—became modernist fixtures of the Los Angeles cityscape,

some resonating strongly within Los Angeles’s African American community. Golden State Mutual Life Insurance was the largest African American-owned insurance company in the western United States, holding the most significant institutional collection of African American art, while the First AME Church was home to the oldest Black congregation in Los Angeles.

Williams was the chief architect for the Pueblo del Rio neighborhood, located at 52nd Street and Long Beach Avenue in South Los Angeles and built to house African American defense industry workers in 1940. This mid-century project was designed by the Southeast Housing Architects, which included Richard Neutra, Gordon Kaufman, Adrian Wilson, and the firm of Wurdeman & Becket.

Williams retired in 1973, having received numerous accolades, including the AIA’s Award of Merit for



Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz House, Palm Springs, built 1954–55, Paul R. Williams (architect); photography 1955, Julius Shulman. Gelatin silver print. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

the MCA Building in 1939, and the NAACP’s Spingarn Medal for his outstanding contributions as an architect and work with Los Angeles’s Black community in 1953. In 2017 he was posthumously awarded USC Architecture’s Distinguished Alumni Award. He died in 1980, at the age of 85.

Although the GRI and the USC School of Architecture co-own the archive, it will be housed at Getty. The GRI will oversee processing and conservation of the materials, which are in excellent condition. An extensive digitization effort will take several years and will ultimately make most of the archive accessible to scholars and others.

As the most significant and intact archive of an African American architect working in Southern California in the early and mid-20th century, the archive is a cornerstone for Getty’s African American Art History Initiative (AAAHI), launched in

2018. Williams’s archive expands the scope of visual culture represented in present and incoming collections at the GRI, including the Betye Saar Archive, the Johnson Publishing Company Archive, Robert Farris Thompson’s Library and Archive, and the Harry Drinkwater Photography Collection. The archive will join the GRI’s noteworthy Architectural Collections and its extensive holdings of Los Angeles-based 20th-century architects, such as Welton Becket, Pierre Koenig, John Lautner, Ray Kappe, Frank Israel, William Krisel, and Frank Gehry.

“Paul Williams was a trailblazing architect whose long career helped shape Los Angeles and Southern California,” says Getty Research Institute director Mary Miller. “His archive essentially tells the story of how the modern Southland was built. Its importance as an aesthetic and educational resource cannot be overstated.” ■



By Carly Pippin  
Communications Specialist  
Getty Foundation

# MODERN MOMENTUM

Pool at Sidi Harazem, Morocco.  
Photo: Andreea Muscurel

## How Getty's Keeping It Modern initiative preserves 20th-century architecture, offers professionals new skills, and instills local pride

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**AZIZA CHAOUNI, A MOROCCAN-BORN STRUCTURAL ENGINEER AND ARCHITECT**, is eager to share her fond memories of Sidi Harazem, a modernist thermal bath complex near Fez, Morocco. “I grew up visiting these ancient mineral waters with my grandmother,” she says. “At first I was a bit fearful of the imposing concrete structures, yet I quickly became enthralled with the constructed waterfalls, floating stairs suspended by thin cables, and mysterious pyramid-covered rooftops. There is little doubt my appreciation for modern architecture is indebted to those defining encounters.”

Designed by Jean-François Zevaco in 1958 following Morocco's independence from France, Sidi Harazem, which sits near a magnesium-rich spring, reflected the young nation's desire for recreational spaces that catered not only to citizens, but also to international tourists. But by the 1980s, the complex of pools, markets, bungalows, and a hotel had slid into disrepair, no longer popular with visitors who preferred beachside resorts.

In 2016, Chaouni received a Getty Foundation Keeping It Modern (KIM) architectural conservation grant to restore Sidi Harazem to the oasis it once was. “The project allowed us to change the perceptions of the locals, who went from seeing the baths as gray and sad to considering them an integral, and even beautiful, part of their history. Now the community acts as our number one ambassador.”

Chaouni's tale is not unique. Many 20th-century buildings around the world have been forgotten, despite a growing appreciation for modern architecture. “These structures reflect a specific time in history, particularly the first half of the 20th century, when society experienced monumental shifts that led to new kinds of construction,” says Antoine Wilmering, the Getty Foundation program officer who oversees KIM. Massive

urban growth and social change created the need for more housing, schools, and public buildings, he says, and modernism embraced these cultural changes, offering up technically advanced buildings that were uniquely functional, minimal, and accessible to the masses. “Modernism was fueled by idealism and the belief that social progress was not only worthwhile, but attainable. In short, modern architecture embodies human aspiration.”

“Modern architecture embodies human aspiration.”

But there's a rub. Because of the modern movement's twin commitments to experimental materials and innovative building techniques, many of its most significant architectural contributions are showing their age and facing uncertain futures if stewards fail to act. The Getty Foundation conceived Keeping It Modern in 2014 to ensure a future for these vulnerable structures, and has now supported the conservation of 72 buildings in 40 countries by funding critical research and planning activities that help stakeholders assess and articulate the historical value of a site.

### You've Got to Have a Plan

Keeping It Modern focuses on the creation of conservation management plans that aren't about the quick fix. Experts consider all aspects of a building—its history, original materials, and long-term use—trying to “future proof” the plans so that their recommendations or guidelines address not just the problems of tomorrow, but those of the next year or even decade.





Structural engineer and architect Aziza Chaouni. Photo: Andreea Muscurel

While developing Sidi Harazem’s conservation management plan, Chaouni was able to undertake a broad educational campaign that encouraged locals to brainstorm how the baths could be repurposed. “I really wanted to connect with the community on a human level, so I invited them to tea, set up interviews with those who’d lived near the baths for decades, and developed collaborative design workshops—all so we could bring their voices into our work and remind them that they are as much a part of Sidi Harazem’s past as they are its future.” Because of these conversations, future proposals for the site will prioritize tourism-related economic opportunities for locals, such as a new museum, covered farmers market, and potential cooking school. Most importantly, public support helped convince the site owners, the Moroccan State Pension Fund CDG and the Region of Fez, to enforce the zoning proposed by the conservation plan and to fund the rehabilitation of the thermal bath.

Chaouni and her team’s success has been echoed at other KIM-supported sites in Asia, Australia,

Africa, Europe, and the Americas—at schools, museums, churches, civic halls, sports arenas, pools, water towers, and even zoos. The Getty Foundation website has made available conservation management plans for 30 buildings, and more will follow as the remaining projects finish. These plans feature results from scientific and technical studies—serving as educational resources on best practices for the care of a diverse array of modern buildings.

“Before Keeping It Modern, the conservation of modern architecture happened in a piecemeal fashion, with no consensus regarding best practices,” says Shikha Jain, director at the heritage preservation organization DRONAH. Jain oversaw the first Keeping It Modern project in India, at the Gandhi Bhawan in Chandigarh. “The initiative’s ability to bring widespread attention to the values of conservation research and planning has ignited interest in the preservation of modern heritage worldwide and provided a valuable framework by which professionals can perform interventions and engage with one another.”

Examples of such exchanges between professionals through the KIM network include a seminar in Sidi Harazem led by Chaouni and São Paulo-based architect Silvio Oksman (who was involved with a grant site in Brazil), at which eight KIM grantees from the Global South met with professionals from the Middle East and North Africa to discuss challenges they faced while conserving modern architectural heritage. A bilingual website ([kimmhup.com](http://kimmhup.com)) presents the ideas and case studies discussed at the seminar and a free publication, *Modern Heritage Under Pressure*.

### 2020 Grants Span the Globe

This past summer, the Getty Foundation awarded its seventh and final round of Keeping It Modern grants, and for the first time supported projects in Chile, Kuwait, Nigeria, Portugal, and Senegal. The grants solidify Keeping It Modern’s ambitions to provide models for the conservation of modern architecture at a global scale, particularly in regions where modern buildings are plentiful but their caretakers struggle to gain access to the best techniques for preservation and maintenance.

In one of the projects, Chaouni’s experience preserving Sidi Harazem will benefit a new outdoor site on the other side of the Saharan desert: a vast fairground complex in Senegal’s capital city of Dakar. As with previous KIM projects, the goal is to engage local citizens and demonstrate the importance of modern architecture to the history of our built spaces. ■

## Thirteen New Projects: from campuses to water towers to swimming pools

### Kuwait Towers, Kuwait City, Kuwait (architect: Malene Bjørn, 1976)

Composed of spike-shaped towers punctuated by concrete spheres—two of which store water—Abraj Al-Kuwait represents the importance of water as a life-sustaining force in the Middle Eastern desert. The orbs have a remarkable shimmering quality thanks to 41,000 enameled metal discs adorning their surfaces. The project team will conduct a technical study to identify why some of the discs are detaching and develop conservation protocols for carrying out repairs and maintenance.

Right: Abraj Al-Kuwait (Kuwait Towers), Kuwait. Image courtesy ArkDes Collections



Below: View of the Tropical Bird House located at Dudley Zoo & Castle, England. Photo: DWMZS

### Tecton Buildings at Dudley Zoo and Castle, Dudley, West Midlands, United Kingdom (architects: Berthold Lubetkin and the Tecton Group, 1937)

In 1932, Soviet émigré Berthold Lubetkin cofounded the Tecton Group, an architectural practice that brought radical modernism to England. His concrete structures at the Dudley Zoo and Castle—with their curved concrete roofs, glass-windowed walls, and sleek, unornamented forms that mirror the slopes and hills of the surrounding landscape—are among the greatest surviving Tecton Group buildings in the world, and important examples of the early-modern movement in the UK. Today, some of the zoo’s Tecton buildings have deteriorated or are no longer in use, including the tropical bird and elephant houses. Building on a 2011 conservation management plan, the project team will use grant funds for concrete testing, structural surveys, and site investigations to restore more of the structures to full operation.





**International Fairgrounds, Dakar, Sénégal (architects: Jean-François Lamoureux and Jean-Louis Marin, 1974)**

A series of triangular buildings with exquisite architectural detailing, the Centre International du Commerce Extérieur du Sénégal is a preeminent example of post-independence African modernism, which is known for leveraging new architectural technologies and daring designs to mirror the optimism of newly liberated states. An experienced project team will develop a detailed conservation management plan for the complex, collaborating with local Senegalese professionals and architectural students.



**White Tower, Ekaterinburg, Russia (architect: Moisei Reisher, 1929–31)**

A prime example of austere 1930s Russian constructivism, the White Tower of Ekaterinburg was once among the largest water towers in existence, soaring to 113 feet with a capacity of more than 180,000 gallons. It has sat idle since the 1960s, though, having been replaced by a centralized, higher-pressure hydraulic system. In 2012, the PODELNIKI architecture group, a non-profit organization founded by young local architects, began championing the tower's conservation and reuse. Now, the Schusev State Museum of Architecture and PODELNIKI will lead the effort to develop a conservation management plan that could pave the way for the site's reopening as a cultural center.

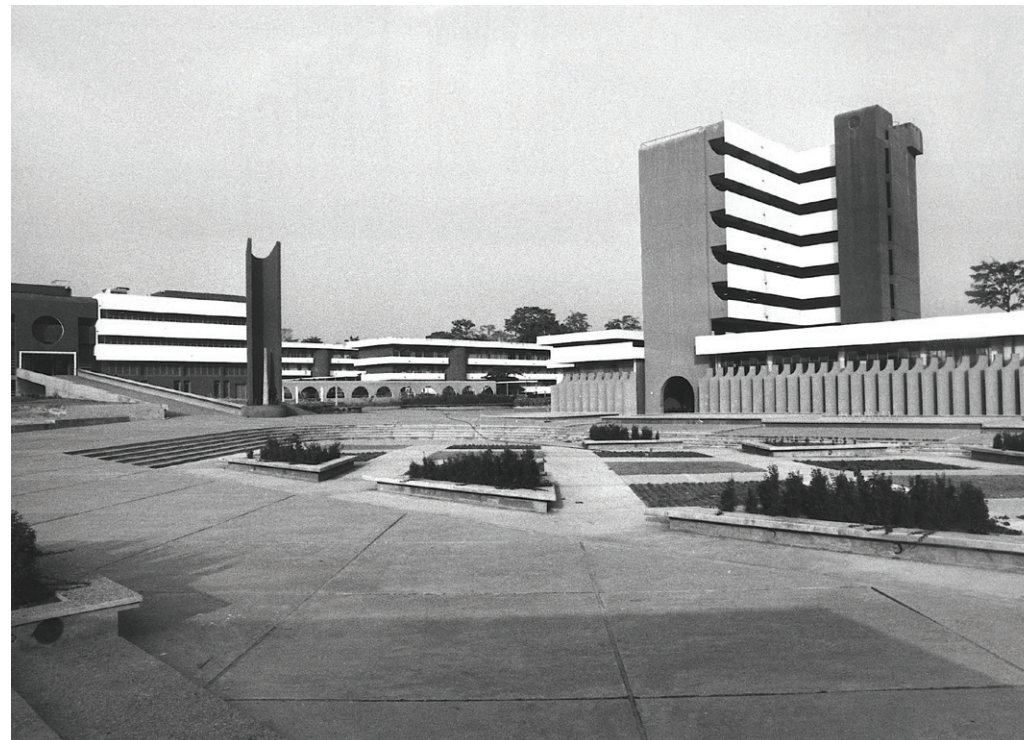
Above: The White Tower, Ekaterinburg, Russia. Photo © Konstantin Antipin

Opposite, from top: Orange exhibition hall at Centre International du Commerce Extérieur de Dakar, Sénégal. Photo: Aziza Chaouni

University of Ife, Arie Sharon Digital Archive – ariehsharon.org / The Yael Aloni Collection

**Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, Nigeria (architect: Arie Sharon, 1962–76)**

Merging Bauhaus principles with tropical modernism—a style that emphasizes local materials and heat-mitigating design elements—this campus incorporates functionality and simplicity with climate-responsive design. The university's Faculty of Environmental Design and Management will work with an architectural firm to develop a comprehensive conservation management plan that not only preserves the postcolonial, modernist architecture, but also sets standards for the care of similar campus structures across the region.





**Gandhi Bhawan, Chandigarh, India (architect: Pierre Jeanneret, 1962)**

Set into a large reflecting pool, Gandhi Bhawan takes the shape of an abstracted lotus flower, marrying angular lines with swelling organic forms. A former recipient of a Keeping It Modern grant for conservation research and planning, Gandhi Bhawan will now receive an implementation grant to allow the India-based project team to conserve two of the site's most definitive elements: the reflecting pool and the building's exterior cladding panels made of precast concrete. Once completed, the work will set a new standard in the field while meticulously preserving this iconic landmark.



Above: Swimming Pools in Leça, Portugal. Photo: João Morgado

Opposite: Gandhi Bhawan, Chandigarh, India. Image courtesy Panjab University

**Swimming Pools, Leça, Portugal (architect: Álvaro Siza, 1966)**

Stark, rectilinear concrete walls intersect with the shoreline's rugged natural rock at this striking outdoor recreational complex. Over the years, the maritime location and neighboring oil refinery have contributed to the deterioration of the pools' concrete structures. Getty grant funds will support investigations into the preservation of the concrete and the development of a conservation management plan.





**Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad, India (architect: Charles Correa; structural design: Mahendra Raj, 1966)**

This 50,000-seat stadium was once the largest cricket venue in the world, and it is still used today for sporting events and cultural festivals. Its distinct cantilevered framing takes its structural power from an elegantly zig-zagging exterior wall that provides added reinforcement. But even though it was created with cutting-edge technology, the steel-reinforced concrete is now showing visible signs of strain. Specialists from the US and India will collaborate on a detailed plan to conserve the stadium while increasing local knowledge regarding the care of exposed concrete buildings.



**Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, Netherlands (architect: Gerrit Rietveld, 1963)**

The main building of Rietveld Academie, an art and design school, embodies the idea of architecture not as mass but as a boundary made of space and light. The four-story structure features a prominent span of glass known as a curtain wall that allows daylight to stream into the classrooms and studios. A Getty grant for a conservation management plan will help preserve the structure's original fabric and develop new solutions that accommodate modern-day educational technology and energy-efficiency standards.



**Oberstufen-Schulzentrum Wedding, Berlin, Germany (architects: Pysall, Jensen, Stahrenberg & Partner, 1976)**

With its bright orange façade, modular, curved-edge panels, and rounded windows, this former secondary school brings a distinctive Pop flare to the Bauhaus-derived language of international modernism. The horizontal layout reflects reformist educational goals to strip away class hierarchies, and large windows suggest transparency while integrating exterior and interior spaces. Since the school closed in 2011, a nonprofit, ps wedding, has advocated for its reuse as a community center. A Getty grant will help an interdisciplinary team of experts research the building and define an overarching strategy for its conservation, operations, and long-term management.

Above: Oberstufen-Schulzentrum Wedding, Berlin, Germany. Image © Sammlung für Architektur und Ingenieurbau der TU Braunschweig, Pysall, Stahrenberg und Partner PSP

Opposite from top: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad, India. Photo: Sanat Jhaveri & Co.

Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Photo: Hans Vroege





Left: Benedictine Monastery Chapel, Santiago, Chile. Photo: Antoine Wilmering

Below: Mosaics inside the Buzludzha Monument, Bulgaria. Photo: Romain Veillon

Opposite: First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, Connecticut. Photo: Robert Gregson

**Monasterio Benedictino de la Santísima Trinidad de las Condes, Santiago, Chile (architects: Brother Martín Correa and Gabriel Guarda OSB, 1964)**

The minimalistic chapel at the Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Trinity stands in stark contrast to the ornamentation and gilded surfaces of many Catholic houses of worship. Although recognized as a national historic monument in 1981, the monastery lacks a conservation plan for the chapel that addresses both the practical needs of the monastic community and the site’s aging fabric. Led by the Universidad del Desarrollo, the project team will work with local consultants and government agencies to develop a comprehensive protocol for site maintenance.

**Buzludzha Monument, Hadzhi Dimitar Peak, Bulgaria (architect: Georgi Stoilov, 1981)**

The Buzludzha Monument, which commemorates the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Bulgarian Communist Party, received a Keeping It Modern planning grant in 2019 and has received another for the immediate stabilization of its elaborate interior mosaics. These artworks—which highlight events, figures, and policies from 20th-century Bulgarian history—are at severe risk of being destroyed without immediate intervention. A new Getty grant will support the installation of a shelter to protect the mosaics from the elements, as well as technical investigations and implementations to prevent them from detaching from the concrete walls.

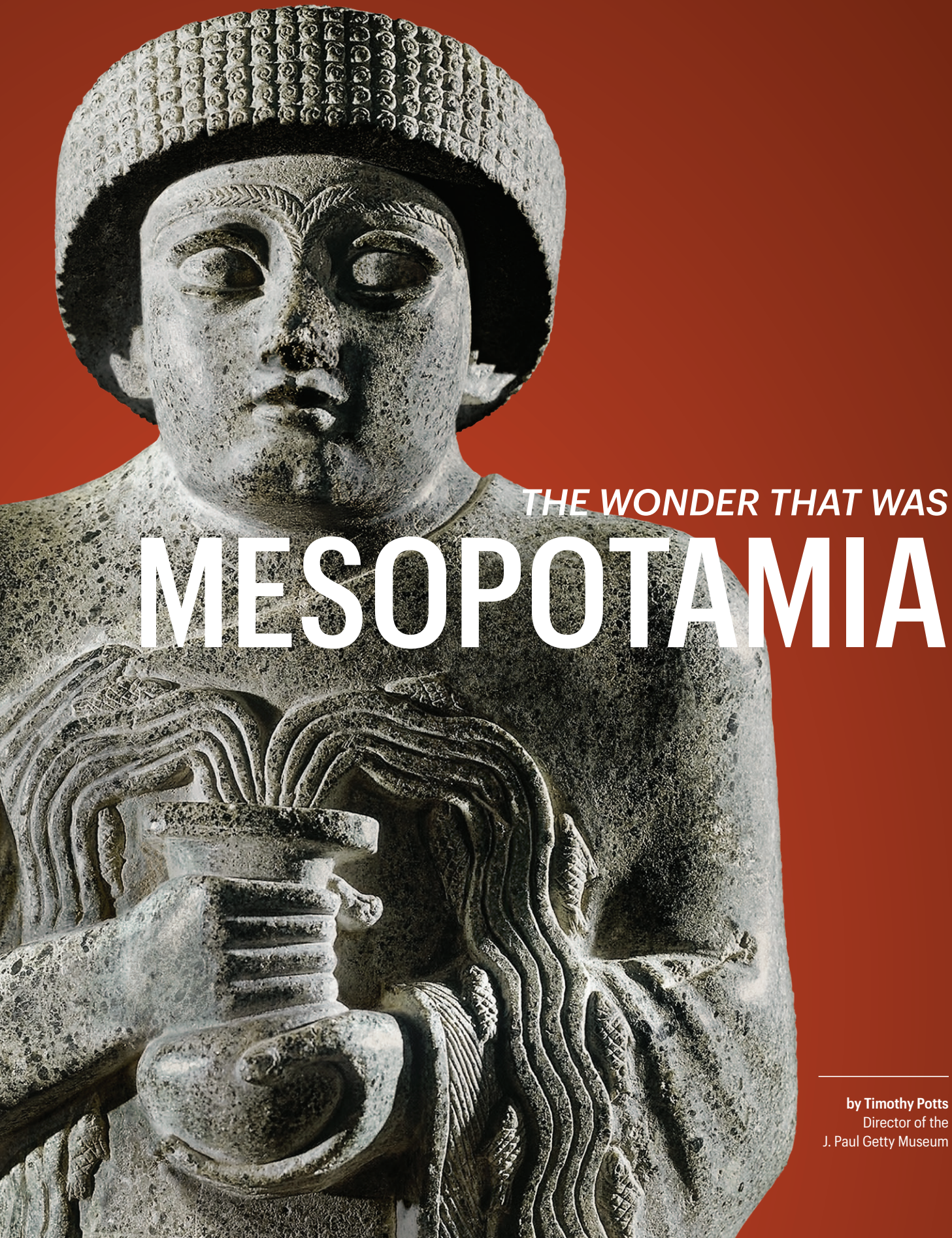


**First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, Connecticut (architect: Wallace K. Harrison, 1958)**

A major component of this house of worship is its stained-glass sanctuary windows that sparkle with over 20,000 pieces of amber, emerald, ruby, amethyst, and sapphire glass, executed using dalle de verre, a pioneering approach of setting colored glass within a concrete matrix. The church received an earlier Keeping It Modern grant for conservation research and planning. With this new implementation grant the project team can create mockups and perform field tests on one of the church’s walls in order to conserve, repair, and stabilize the dalle de verre elements.

For more information about KIM, visit the Getty Foundation’s website at [www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/keeping\\_it\\_modern/](http://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/keeping_it_modern/).





THE WONDER THAT WAS  
**MESOPOTAMIA**

by Timothy Potts  
Director of the  
J. Paul Getty Museum

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*Museum Director Timothy Potts contextualizes  
Mesopotamia: Civilization Begins, a major exhibition  
at the Getty Villa*

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**THE FIRST URBAN LITERATE SOCIETY**—arguably the first civilization in human history—arose in the centuries before 3000 BC in the flat mud-plains of ancient Sumer (southern Iraq). The economic basis of these first cities’ rapid growth was irrigation agriculture fed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which also gave ancient Iraq its Greek name, Mesopotamia (“land between the rivers”). The much greater harvests created by controlling the annual floodwaters from the neighboring highlands supported a vastly more concentrated population and also provided a surplus to be traded for metals and other foreign raw materials.

By about 3300 BC, the major walled city of Uruk, with a population of around 100,000, represented the largest settled concentration of people anywhere in the world. The key social and political aspects of Uruk’s rise to pre-eminence remain elusive, but archaeology reveals the physical manifestations of the great changes taking place, including the appearance of monumental architecture, rapid advances in technologies, arts, and architecture, and the invention of the first known system of writing. It is also clear that religion suffused every aspect of Mesopotamian private and public life to an extent difficult to comprehend today.

**A Multitude of Powerful Gods**

The numerous gods and goddesses of the Mesopotamian pantheon, each personifying some concept, skill, or natural phenomenon, were believed to deter-

mine man’s destiny in a very direct and personal way. Any event, from the successful completion of a business deal to the fall of a great empire, might be attributed to the intervention of the gods, imagined to be fully as fickle and partisan as humans.

Elaborate methods were contrived to determine the gods’ will through natural omens, such as unusual animal behavior, astronomical events, the patterns of oil on water, dreams, the shape and color of sacrificial animal entrails, and so on. To record this last practice, animal livers were modeled in clay and inscribed with the names of their various parts and what they indicated. “If the finger of the liver is like a cow’s tongue,” a typical entry reads, “his eunuchs will murder the king.” No temple would be founded or war waged without obtaining a favorable omen from the relevant god.

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Religion suffused every  
aspect of private and public  
life to an extent difficult to  
comprehend from a modern  
viewpoint.

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The temples of major deities supported large priesthods who managed the gods’ often considerable estates. Economic as well as a religious institutions, engaging in agriculture, manufacturing, and trade, the temples would expect to receive booty and slaves from a successful military campaign by the king. Priests were the scholars of their day, and education took place in temple schools as well as in private houses.

Statue of Prince Gudea (detail), Neo-Sumerian period, about 2120 BC. Dolerite. Musée du Louvre, Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, Paris. Gift of Boisgelin, 1967 (de Clercq collection). © Scala / Art Resource, NY





The temples were imposing buildings, often set on a raised platform and lavishly decorated with precious metals and stones. Most cultic activities were conducted behind closed doors, the public taking part only in major festivals when the cult statues were paraded around. Otherwise, the cult statue of the god in the inner sanctum of the temple was cleaned, clothed, and fed daily by the priests. The region's famous ziggurats—including the one in Babylon that the Bible calls the “Tower of Babel”—were essentially huge staged podiums with staircases leading to a small shrine at the top where ceremonial rituals were performed.

The patron gods of the imperial capitals sometimes also became the state deities of great empires—notably Ashur for Assyria and Marduk for Babylonia. A variable core of eight or so other major deities was worshipped throughout Mesopotamia, while numerous lesser gods had local followings or represented particular activities or aspects of daily life. There was, in addition, a multitude of demons, represented with animals' heads or as hybrid monsters, which

brought sickness and ill-fortune and had to be kept at bay or, if necessary, exorcised with spells by the incantation priest.

Many of the early rulers of Sumer bore priestly titles, and even later, when “church” and “state” were largely distinct, the king was regarded as the city-god's deputy on earth, his “chosen one” who would act as high priest on important religious occasions. The king was also the fountainhead of justice, whose duty was to see “that justice shine forth in the land, that the evil and dishonest be confounded, and that the strong not oppress the weak,” as Hammurabi proclaims in his famous law code.

The subjects of Mesopotamian art reflect its two principal sources of patronage—the temple and the palace. Deities and scenes of worship are complemented by representations of the king valiantly triumphing over his enemies, hunting lions, or celebrating a victory. Assyrian and Babylonian kings are shown galloping along in their chariots much like the Sumerians 2,000 years earlier, but the rough rendering of the Sumerian figures is worlds apart

Above: Gallery view of *Mesopotamia: Civilization Begins* at the Getty Villa

Opposite: Statuette of the Demon Pazuzu, about 934–610 BC, Neo-Assyrian. Bronze. Musée du Louvre, Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, Paris. Feuardent purchase, 1872. Image © Musée du Louvre, dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Thierry Ollivier / Art Resource, NY

from their Assyrian descendants, in which the anatomy of limbs and joints is exploited as a rich source of decorative effects.

Elegance, clarity of design, and sheer craftsmanship reached new heights under the Persians, who adapted the Assyrian-Babylonian repertoire of motifs, while also drawing on the great talent of Iranian and northern steppe artists for decoratively stylizing natural forms. Other influences from as far as Greece may be detected in their work, which concentrates particularly on images of real and mythical animals.

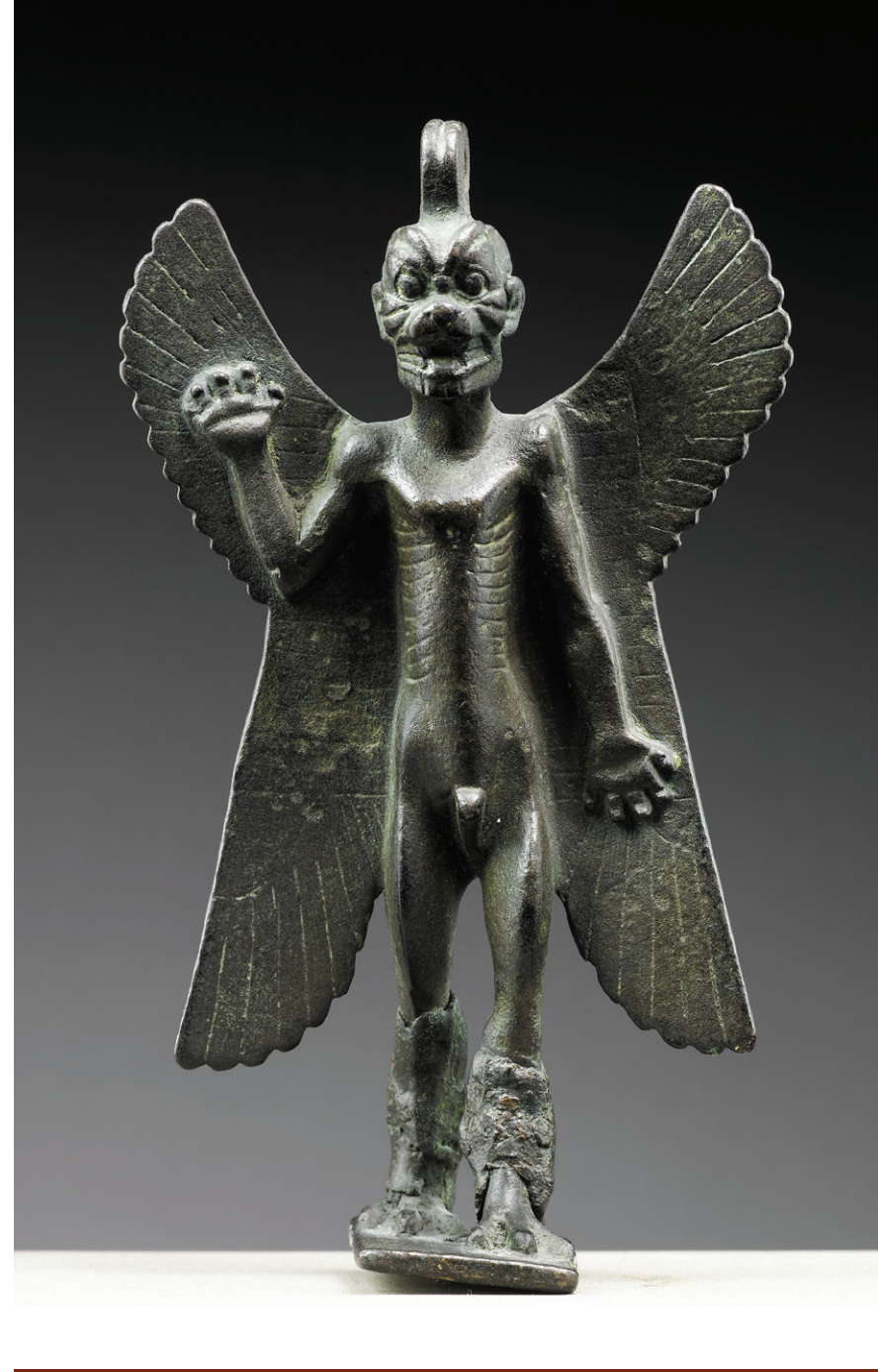
### The Lasting Influence of Mesopotamian Culture

The Mesopotamian legacy to western civilization is easily underestimated, largely because it was transmitted to us through the Greeks and Romans, who selected, adapted, and gave a new character to much of what they passed along. The scant vestiges of Mesopotamian culture directly recognizable in our lives today include a handful of words like “alcohol” (Akkadian *guhlu*) and “cane” (*ganu*); the division of our compasses and watches into 60 units; the positional numeral system; and the Tree-of-Life motif in art.

The Mesopotamians' impact on the Greeks, and through them on the future development of Western civilization, ran much deeper, however. Greek mathematics, astronomy, and medicine were all greatly informed by the Babylonians, who had calculated the value of  $\pi$  (pi) to five decimal places and the duration of the solar year to within four and a half minutes. Able to predict eclipses and other celestial events with great accuracy, it is little wonder that the Babylonians left such a deep impression on the authors of the Old Testament.

The Greeks had always been intrigued by the ancient East—for the imponderable antiquity of its monuments, the esoteric wisdom of its priests, and the sumptuous splendor of its court life. More than 2,000 years later, it is still the fascination of cultures at once so ancient, so grand, and so exotic that gives Mesopotamia its enduring interest today.

On view soon at the Getty Villa, *Mesopotamia: Civilization Begins* covers three millennia of this foundational civilization, from the emergence of the region's first cities in about 3300 BC to Alexander the Great's conquest of Babylon in 331 BC. The exhibition is organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Musée du Louvre, Paris. ■



### Related Reading

**Mesopotamia: Civilization Begins.** A rich and vivid overview of ancient Mesopotamia written by Ariane Thomas and edited by Timothy Potts. [getty.edu/publications](http://getty.edu/publications)

**Uruk: First City of the Ancient World.** The most comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the evidence gathered at the archaeological dig at Uruk, roughly 200 miles south of present-day Baghdad, Iraq. [getty.edu/publications](http://getty.edu/publications)



By Erin Migdol  
Associate Editor  
J. Paul Getty Trust



# PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF LA'S MOST ICONIC STREET

*Artist Ed Ruscha's decades-long effort to systematically document every address on Sunset Boulevard inspires two new Getty websites*

Above: Sunset Blvd. at N. Doheny Dr., 1976, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: 9009 headed west (Image 0038). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha

Right: Melrose Ave. at 101 Freeway, 1975, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: Western headed east (Image 0174). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha



**IF**

**LOS ANGELES IS A BEATING HEART**, Sunset Boulevard is its artery. The 22-mile street stretches from the sun-splashed Pacific Coast Highway in the west, to the skyscrapers of downtown in the east, linking sprawling homes with iconic nightclubs and glass high-rises. Its simultaneous glamor and grime have transfixed authors, filmmakers, and artists for decades, though few have documented its ebb and flow like pop artist Ed Ruscha.

An “Angeleno” since moving from Oklahoma to Los Angeles in 1956, Ruscha found inspiration in staples of LA life others might have found banal, carving out a niche photographing and painting gas stations, apartment complexes, and other modest buildings. In 1965, he turned his camera towards Sunset Boulevard.

This ever-evolving street should be “nailed down and captured,” he once said, suggesting that its gleam, grit, and continuous metamorphosis represented Los Angeles’ decay (or development, depending on your view) over time. Ruscha made multiple trips across Sunset Boulevard over 50 years, each time meticulously taking photos of every business, house, lawn, and even parking lot he saw from his pickup truck and van.

While photos from his trip down Sunset in 1966 were published in the now-iconic artist’s book *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, the images Ruscha and his team took over the next five decades have remained unseen by the public until this fall.





Above: Sunset Blvd. at Londonderry Pl., 1966, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: 8609 headed east (Image 0009). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha

Below: Sunset Blvd. at Vin Scully Ave., 2007, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: 1275 Sunset headed west (Image 0050). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha

The Getty Research Institute (GRI) has launched two interactive websites. The first, 12 Sunsets, displays photos from 12 of Ruscha’s Sunset trips, 1965 to 2007, arranging them along a virtual map that can be easily navigated and explored by a general audience. The second, the Research Collections Viewer, is organized much like a library catalogue and serves as an access and discovery tool for scholars.

In 2012 the GRI acquired Ruscha’s Sunset Boulevard archive, a collection of more than 500,000 images stored on rolls of delicate film stock. The incredible volume of photographs meant that each roll of film contained an average of 7,000 images, making it near impossible to search through and study the archive in its physical form. Researchers working on the project knew that this material would have to be digitized—that is, photographed and made accessible online so that scholars could sort, organize, and analyze Ruscha’s immense collection, keeping it safe for years to come. This digitization effort culminated in the two new websites.

The archive could only be accessible to the public or researchers in digital form, says Emily Pugh, head of the digital art history department at the GRI. “It existed primarily as undeveloped negatives that are difficult to access in their physical form. Ruscha himself said he’d only seen about 10 percent of these images. So in this case, digitization was the only way to provide meaningful access.”

### Your Keyboard as Steering Wheel

On 12 Sunsets, you will experience Ruscha’s archive as a virtual tour of Sunset Boulevard. After selecting which year’s photos you want to see, you can move down Sunset on the map (your place on the map is represented by your choice of vehicle icons) using the mouse or left and right arrow keys. The corresponding photos of the street are displayed above and below the map, to represent each side of the street and watch the scenery change, or enter an address in the search bar to view a specific location.



Above: Sunset Blvd. at Echo Park Ave., 2007, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: headed east (Image 0211). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha



Left: Sunset Blvd. at N. Hayworth Ave., 1965, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel (Image 0023). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha





From left: Sunset Blvd. at N. San Vicente Blvd., 1973, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: Beverly Hills Hotel headed east (Image 199). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha

Sunset Blvd. at Olive Dr., 1985, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: Roxy Theatre headed east (Image 0198). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha

Pacific Coast Highway, 1985, Ed Ruscha. Negative film reel: Hilgard Ave. headed east (Image 0085). Part of the Streets of Los Angeles Archive, The Getty Research Institute. © Ed Ruscha

To organize the approximately 60,000 images in this collection, each has been tagged with a few words that describe it. A 2007 photograph of the Sunset Trocadero Lounge, for example, has been tagged with “landmark,” “architecture,” and “luxury vehicle” due to the car parked in front of the building. You can search for a tag to find all its matching images.

### From Contact Sheets to Notes to Gas Receipts

The archive in the Research Collections Viewer, by contrast, does not center around the interactive map. Instead, users can explore the archive using search terms and an organizational hierarchy that allows them to navigate down into every image taken at each photo shoot. This collection includes the entire archive—not only the photos that were digitized and featured in 12 Sunsets, but also lists of items that were not digitized, including photos of other streets besides Sunset, negatives, contact sheets, notes, maps Ruscha used, and receipts for lunch and gas purchased during a shoot. These additional materials reveal the practical, and human, side of Ruscha’s artistic process.

Digitizing such a vast archive required a team of photographers, curators, art historians, and software developers to build brand-new systems for transferring and organizing the images onto the digital platform. The first step was to custom-build an imaging rig, similar to a film projector, which connected to a digital preservation system. Reels ran through this device and produced individual digital images. But

rather than digitize every single reel, the curatorial team focused their efforts. The team made a selection from all of the shoots that would represent the contents of the archive as a whole, which focuses on Sunset Boulevard but also includes photos of streets such as Santa Monica Boulevard, Melrose Avenue, and Hollywood Boulevard. And since the organization of some reels made it difficult to uncover exactly where the images were taken—several boxes contained an assortment of images of hedges, lawns, and other Sunset Boulevard scenery whose precise location would be challenging to determine—anonymous images were not digitized.

The year-long winnowing process resulted in about 130,000 digitized images, or 20 percent of the total archive. Those interested in examining the non-digitized images can find them at the GRI, though without the easy access the digital archive provides.

### Stanford, Software Developers, and Scholars Join In

With the digitization process underway, the team realized it needed more metadata about each image than is typically produced by the archival cataloging process. While most catalogers typically label images based on overarching categories like the year they were taken, such information would be too general to be useful in this case. However, because the Ruscha images represented actual streets and buildings, the archive was an ideal candidate for



geospatial metadata—the organization and labeling of data based on its location. Getty’s digital team worked with a software development firm in Dallas and a geospatial library manager at Stanford University to produce this information for each image.

Concurrent with the metadata generation and digitization processes, the Getty digital team invited a group of interdisciplinary scholars from around the globe to launch their own research projects using the digitized archive. Their feedback and the kinds of research questions they brought to the archive informed metadata creation and software developments, further improving the functionality and effectiveness of the interfaces people will use to access the archive.

The roughly two-year digitization process forced both creative and manual solutions to challenges that arose. When it was discovered that some of the reels were afflicted with vinegar syndrome—a result of decaying film stock that smells like its name—ventilation hoods were installed in the rooms at the GRI where the film would be handled. When the digital preservation system software began to fail due to the high volume of photos being processed, Getty’s digital team spent months rewriting the software to better accommodate the larger volume of files. And though the digital mapping interface could predict the location of images with an impressive degree of precision, metadata specialists still served as a final checkpoint on accuracy, oftentimes lining up individual photos on the map themselves.

### Where to Now?

The learnings and labor that went into 12 Sunsets and the Research Collections Viewer established how to tackle this monumental digitization process, and will provide a blueprint for completing the rest of the archive. In the meantime, scholars in diverse fields such as architecture history, urban planning, and American art will be able to utilize the digitized archive to help answer their own research questions.

“We have some broad ideas of what those research questions might be; for example, you can see how signage changes, including the appearance of billboards publicizing hotlines at the beginning of the AIDS crisis,” says Pugh. “So it’ll be interesting to see what people find once we put this out into the world.”

For Ruscha’s fellow Angelenos, the people who love the thrum of Los Angeles and its ever-changing streets, 12 Sunsets and the Research Collections Viewer will offer a glimpse into the city’s past that would otherwise have remained hidden in Ruscha’s rolls of film. “These are spaces and buildings and signage that we would have very little historical record of otherwise,” says Pugh. “So Ruscha’s archive not only serves as a record of Los Angeles, it also raises the everyday urban environment of LA into something compelling, evocative, and beautiful at the same time.”

Visit 12 Sunsets and the Research Collections Viewer at [Getty.edu](http://Getty.edu). ■



# Conservation in the Time of COVID-19

How is the coronavirus pandemic affecting the conservation of cultural heritage sites? The Getty Conservation Institute's Susan Macdonald reports

By Susan Macdonald  
Head, Buildings and Sites  
Getty Conservation Institute

Final conservation work to the mosaic pavement in the Tablinum of the House of the Bicentenary was undertaken by the Conservation Institute's local conservation consultants in the spring. The project is a partnership with the Archaeological Park of Herculaneum and the Herculaneum Conservation Project.

# A

AS I WRITE, we don't yet know the full socio-economic impact of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic on people and places around the world. But we know from conversations we've had with colleagues and partners globally that cultural heritage places and the many people who rely on them for their livelihoods have been, and continue to be, severely affected.

The work we do at Getty to advance the conservation of the world's cultural heritage engages partners and colleagues around the globe. The pandemic has made us rethink how we do this work and consider how we can continue to engage and support our partners and consultants during this difficult time and beyond.

## How Will the Pandemic Impact Cultural Heritage Sites?

Right now we can only speculate on the pandemic's full impact on cultural heritage sites, but we are already seeing extremely worrying signs.

Numerous heritage sites are currently closed to the public, devastating local economies that rely on tourism. Government heritage departments and operators of heritage sites have been deeply impacted by declining income or funding reallocations as governments struggle to meet current COVID-19-related demands. At archaeological sites, looting and other forms of illegal access have been reported.

Many of the departments we collaborate with in our work at heritage sites are government-run, which means that their staff are at the forefront of government policies on how people can access sites, how visitors and staff can be kept safe, and when a site should shut down.

At the same time that staff are dealing with emerging COVID-19 health and safety issues, they are maintaining and caring for sites. Because of this situation, work has been affected; we know of site managers who are struggling to do vital repair and maintenance work.

We are also seeing changes in policy. As a COVID-19 recovery solution, some governments are beginning to take steps to relax planning

and environmental legislation to allow greater development. But this short-sighted action could pose a real threat for heritage sites.

## Supporting Our Partners and Sustaining Our Work in the Field

While we are currently unable to travel to our international project sites, we remain committed to our collaborative project work. We have reaffirmed our support to our partners and have been looking for ways to assist however we can.

In Myanmar, the engineers we collaborate with at the World Heritage Site of Bagan have been continuing the documentation and recording work we began in February, and we've offered them ongoing mentoring to enhance the training they've already received.

Before the pandemic hit, our Bagan colleagues had planned to travel to the International Institute of Technology in Madras, India, together with a group from the Myanmar Technological University, to review the structural models of the temples at Bagan developed by the engineers. With travel impossible, this work was able to continue remotely on Zoom over the course of two weeks.

We've also been able to support the continuation of work at sites in Italy and Peru. At the World Heritage Site of Herculaneum, Italy, our local consultant conservators worked to complete the conservation of the mosaics in the Tablinum at the House of the Bicentenary. In the Andes of Peru, we are working with the local community of Kuñotambo on a maintenance plan for a church whose conservation we completed last year with our partner, the Dirección Desconcentrada de Cultura de Cusco, Peru.

## Reimagining Our Training and Resources

In addition to our work at heritage sites, we offer training courses for professionals. These courses, like our field work, have been affected by the pandemic. We've postponed or rethought courses we had planned over the next 12 months, including the International Course on the Conservation of Earthen Architecture in Abu Dhabi and the Old Cities New Challenges urban conservation course in Penang, Malaysia. The earthen architecture course, which involves hands-on practical building conservation activities, has been rescheduled for 2022, while Old Cities New Challenges is being reimagined as an online course, with an in-person follow-up in Penang when travel can safely resume.

We are taking advantage of this additional time to examine ways to expand our training, to look at new technologies that can help us deliver training to





a wider audience in new ways, and to create training materials that provide a lasting legacy in our areas of work. Future training courses in site management, mosaics conservation, and modern architecture will benefit from this reflection.

We are also thinking extensively about the training materials we create and how we might package these materials for broader use and accessibility. This thinking won't end with the pandemic—it will inform our work moving forward. Our goal is to engage long term with our partners, so as to explore the nature of their challenges and the ways we can best respond to them.

The pause in our travels has also given us time to focus on the development of publications and resources that can close information gaps in the field. So far we've identified a number of books we can digitize, to make them more readily available to the conservation field. We've also conceived of

new resources to serve the conservation community, including a new book series on modern architectural materials, new publications on urban conservation, and a range of training manuals and guidelines. This brainstorming has been really exciting—and something, under normal circumstances, that we often don't have time to do.

#### Working Locally

During this time, we've looked at expanding our work in LA. We're planning a project with the City of Los Angeles that would support further efforts to identify, protect, and celebrate the city's African American heritage. This work builds on Survey LA, a citywide project to identify the cultural heritage of Los Angeles undertaken with the Conservation Institute's support over a number of years. As part of this work, a historic context statement on the city's African American history was prepared.

Church of Santiago Apóstol is located in the Comunidad Campesina Kuñotambo, a remote village of 500 inhabitants located southeast of the city of Cusco. Constructed in 1681 and conserved by the Conservation Institute and Dirección Desconcentrada de Cultura de Cusco, the church is now being maintained by the local community.

This context statement provides a framework for identifying and evaluating related historic resources, which is the first step in their protection and celebration. Led by the city, in collaboration with African American cultural organizations and communities in Los Angeles, the new project aims to expand and implement a number of recommendations from that earlier work. This may include activities such as formally protecting, through designation, a number of places identified in the Survey LA studies, undertaking broader community engagement, working with a number of communities to develop heritage strategies that identify places of importance, and developing plans that interpret and celebrate African American heritage.

This work would also provide an opportunity to investigate how heritage-related planning policies can be rethought and revised to contribute to the development of wider antiracist policies and practices in the historic preservation and planning sector.

#### The Future of Cultural Heritage Conservation

As we emerge from this pandemic, the landscape for cultural heritage may be permanently changed. Some institutions may not survive. And the destructive impact on countless people who rely on cultural heritage for their livelihood will likely be enormous.

Because of that, the cultural heritage sector must play an essential and powerful role in helping to rebuild local economies, provided that these recovery efforts are designed to benefit those most in need of support. We expect that the current spotlight on equity and social justice will bring lasting change to our sector, since conservation has long played a role in fundamental societal issues such as human rights, social justice, and climate change.

All of us working to conserve cultural heritage must dedicate ourselves to effecting meaningful change—both in what we do and how we go about our work—so that our society can be as equal and as just as it aspires to be. ■



Top: Situated on a bend of the Ayeyawady River in the dry central plain of Myanmar, the site of Bagan is a vast cultural landscape that encompasses an extraordinary ensemble of Buddhist art and architecture from the 11th–13th centuries. With more than 3,500 temples, stupas, and monasteries, the site was a popular tourist destination until the pandemic hit.

Bottom: The Earthen Architecture course held biannually with the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism includes hands-on training in conserving historic earthen buildings. The course has been postponed until 2022.





## ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION

**THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM** has extended its collection of Armenian illuminated manuscripts with the acquisition of two new objects: a Gospel book (1583) decorated by a brother and sister team, and a leaf from a Gospel book with *The Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi* (1615).

Although Getty's Armenian manuscripts span several centuries, the Gospel book is the first Armenian object from the 16th century in its collection.

Gospel books were among the most precious and revered manuscripts produced in medieval Armenia. The newly acquired Gospel book opens with a cycle of 20 animated and colorful illuminations showing scenes from Christian sacred history. Some of the most striking scenes are rarely found in the history of Armenian illumination, and include a theological scene depicting souls climbing and descending a ladder that links heaven and hell.

Also unusual is an inscription at the end of the manuscript stating that the illuminations were completed by a brother and sister team named Ghukas and Eghisabet. Evidence suggests that Eghisabet executed the illumination known as *The Way to Eternal Life*, showing virtuous souls climbing up a ladder to Christ while those found wanting are being consumed in hell below. "It is unusual to find a female illuminator identified by name in a manuscript," says Timothy Potts, director of the Getty Museum. "Her presence reveals the often-untold contributions of female artists to the history of illumination."

Although European manuscript illuminators rarely signed their works, it was

a more common practice in Armenia. But even among Armenian manuscripts there are few recorded women. The creation of manuscripts was a collaborative process, and it may be that only the head artist, often a man, was recognized.

The 17th-century leaf once belonged to a manuscript by the celebrated artist Mesrop of Khizan already in Getty's collection (Ms. Ludwig II 7). The leaf contains a vibrant depiction of the Nativity of Christ set within a frame of colorful interlacing designs. The heavens emit a ray of blue light toward the Christ child, who is held by the reclining Virgin Mary, while Joseph rests his hand on his face next to a shepherd who plays a flute for two small animals. At the right, the three magi offer their gifts. The leaf was removed from the manuscript more than 50 years ago, long before the codex entered the Getty's collection, probably by an unscrupulous dealer who expected to make a greater profit by selling the pages separately. Now the two pieces can finally be reunited.

On learning of the acquisitions, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, said, "Armenian manuscript art is one of the most prominent reflections of our rich spiritual heritage through which our forefathers were able to retell the story of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in a most unique and magnificent way. With its majesty and centuries-old traditions, Armenian manuscript illumination truly is the queen of Armenian spiritual art. We are truly thankful to the Getty Museum for its continuous support of Armenian manuscript art."

The two objects are scheduled to appear soon in Getty exhibitions. ■

—Elizabeth Morrison, senior curator, and Nava Streiter, graduate intern, *Manuscripts, Getty Museum*



## EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH CERAMICS

**COLLECTOR AND PHILANTHROPIST MARYLOU BOONE** has given an important group of French ceramics to the J. Paul Getty Museum. Over the last 30 years, Boone has acquired outstanding works of French faience and porcelain dating from the 17th to 18th centuries, and she has previously donated select pieces from her collection to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and to the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino. The recent gift to Getty continues her generous support of local cultural institutions and adds significant breadth and depth to the Getty Museum's collection of French ceramics.

The gift comprises nine sets of works that represent rare examples of French soft-paste porcelain made at three of the major manufactories active in the vicinity of Paris in the 1700s: Saint-Cloud, Chantilly, and Mennecy. One work, a charger, is from a leading faience maker in the south of France, the manufactory of Joseph Olerys at Moustiers. Each piece is of distinctive form, decoration, and workmanship, and half of the items are the only known examples of their shape—a testament to Boone's connoisseurship. "MaryLou Boone is a very discerning collector of European decorative arts, and has long been a good friend of Getty," says Timothy Potts, director of the Getty Museum. "So it is especially pleasing that she has decided to donate a number of her most important works to the museum."

The objects include vessels, plates, and figures originally made to ornament dining tables during the dessert course, and small boxes likely to be displayed on elaborate dressing tables. Aside from their utility, these items were meant to reflect the wealth and refined taste of their owners.

One box is imaginatively conceived to look like an object wrapped in fabric, complete with double knot at the top. A sophisticated example of polychrome ware made at the Saint-Cloud manufactory, it is the only known piece of its shape. Stylized blooming branches, delicately colored in enamel and slightly raised, echo the effect of embroidery, while the



extension of the floral pattern over the joint between base and lid brings to mind the continuous designs found on East Asian ceramics and lacquer. Although this box could have held precious or utilitarian items, it was most likely treasured alone for its delightful form and decoration.

Several other pieces, especially three works from the Chantilly manufactory, show how strongly the passion and admiration for East Asian porcelain influenced European porcelain manufactories in the early 1700s. A group of white-glazed figures from the Mennecy manufactory—delicately rendered depictions of itinerant workers—display skillful modeling and attention to detail and are among the finest of their type.

All of these acquisitions demonstrate French manufactories' ambitious achievements during a remarkable period for technical and stylistic advancement in the ceramic arts of Europe. ■

—Jeffrey Weaver, associate curator, *Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Getty Museum*

Above: Box, 1730–1740, French, Saint-Cloud Porcelain Manufactory. Soft-paste porcelain with glaze and enamel. 9.1 x 10.2 x 8.9 cm (3 9/16 x 4 x 3 1/2 in.). Gift of MaryLou Boone. The J. Paul Getty Museum

Opposite from top: *The Way to Eternal Life*, from Getty Ms. 119, Karbi, Armenia, 1583, Eghisabet. The J. Paul Getty Museum

*Nativity of Christ with the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Magi*, from a Gospel book (Getty, Ms. Ludwig II 7), Isfahan, Persia, 1615, Mesrop of Khizan. The J. Paul Getty Museum



# OFF THE WALLS: INSPIRED RE-CREATIONS OF ICONIC ARTWORKS

Preface by Sarah Waldorf and  
Annelisa Stephan

Van Gogh's *Starry Night* made out of spaghetti? Cat with a Pearl Earring? Frida Kahlo self-portraits with pets and toilet paper? While the world reeled from the spread of COVID-19, thousands of people around the globe, inspired by challenges from Getty and other museums, raided toy chests, repurposed pantry items, and enlisted family, roommates, and animals to re-create famous works of art at home. Astonishing in their creativity, wit, and ingenuity, these creations remind us of the power of art to unite us and bring joy during troubled times. *Off the Walls* presents highlights from this challenge in one whimsical, irresistible volume.

Getty Publications will donate all profits from the sales of this book to Artist Relief, an emergency initiative offering resources to artists across the United States.

Clockwise:  
Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Pictura (An Allegory of Painting)*, 1661. Re-creation: @creamii.art

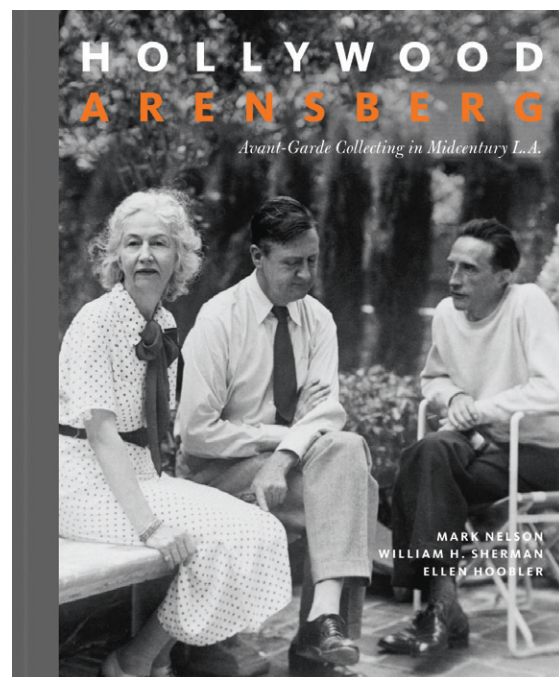
Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632. Re-creation: Ben Morley

Édouard Manet, *Jeanne (Spring)*, 1881. Re-creation: Jeannette Hulick

Kitagawa Utamaro, *Hairdresser (Kamiyui)*, ca. 1797-98. Re-creation: Makya Jackson





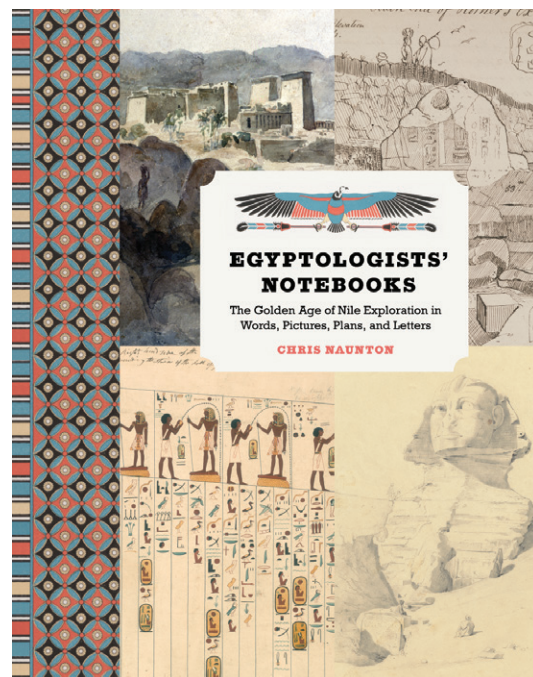


**Hollywood Arensberg**  
**Avant-Garde Collecting in Midcentury L.A.**  
 Mark Nelson, William H. Sherman, and Ellen Hoobler

Following the Armory Show of 1913, Louise and Walter Arensberg began assembling one of the most important private collections of art in the United States. By the time Louise and Walter died, they had acquired nearly 1,000 works of art, including world-class specimens of Cubism, Surrealism, and Primitivism, the bulk of Marcel Duchamp's oeuvre, and hundreds of pre-Columbian objects. These works filled nearly all available space in every room of their house—including the bathrooms.

The Arensbergs have long had a central role in the histories of modernism and collecting, but images of their collection in situ have never been examined comprehensively until now. Presenting new research on how the Arensbergs acquired pre-Columbian art and featuring never-before-seen images, *Hollywood Arensberg* demonstrates the value of seeing the Arensbergs' collection as part of a single vision, framed by a unique domestic space at the heart of Hollywood's burgeoning artistic scene.

GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
 448 pages, 9 x 11 inches  
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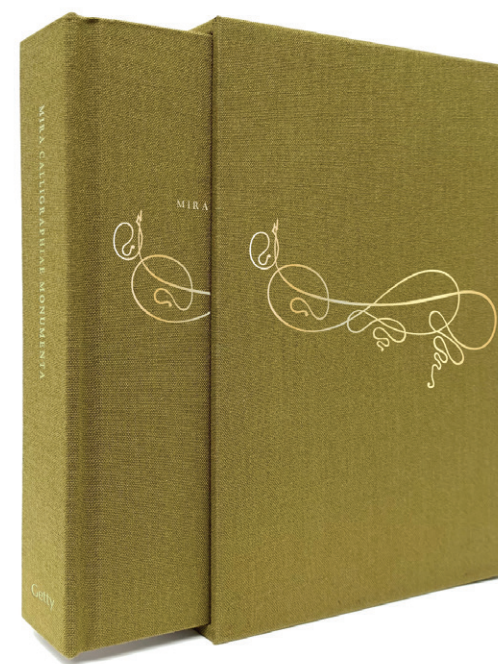


**Egyptologists' Notebooks**  
**The Golden Age of Nile Exploration in**  
**Words, Pictures, Plans, and Letters**  
 Chris Naunton

For centuries, the ancient ruins of Egypt have provided an endless source of fascination for explorers, antiquarians, archaeologists, and the public. Early adventurers were gripped by the urge to capture what they saw in writings, sketches, paintings, and photographs.

*Egyptologists' Notebooks* celebrates Egypt's ancient past, featuring evocative writings, sketches, paintings, and photographs from the journals of pioneering explorers and archaeologists, including less known yet influential women and Egyptians. Reproduced in their original form, they provide intimate, behind-the-scenes access to the archaeological discovery of Egypt.

GETTY PUBLICATIONS  
 264 pages, 8 1/8 x 10 3/4 inches  
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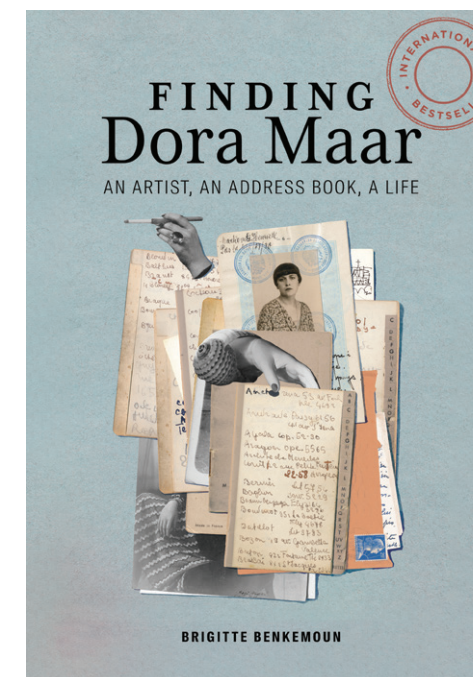


**Mira Calligraphiae Monumenta**  
**A Sixteenth-Century Calligraphic**  
**Manuscript Inscribed by Georg Bocskay**  
**and Illuminated by Joris Hoefnagel**  
**2nd Edition**  
 Lee Hendrix and Thea Vignau-Wilberg

In 1561–62 the master calligrapher Georg Bocskay, imperial secretary to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I, created *Mira calligraphiae monumenta* as a demonstration of his own preeminence among scribes. Some 30 years later, Ferdinand's grandson, the Emperor Rudolf II, commissioned Europe's last great manuscript illuminator, Joris Hoefnagel (1542–1600), to embellish the work.

Reproduced in stunning facsimile, this "spectacular jewel of a book" (*Times Literary Supplement*) is at once a treasury of extraordinary beauty and a landmark in the cultural debate between word and image.

J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM  
 424 pages, 5 x 7 inches  
 183 color and 3 b/w illustrations  
 Hardcover, with slipcase  
 US \$85.00



**Finding Dora Maar**  
**An Artist, an Address Book, a Life**  
 Brigitte Benkemoun  
 Translated by Jody Gladding

In search of a replacement for his lost Hermès agenda, Brigitte Benkemoun's husband buys a vintage diary on eBay. When it arrives, she opens it and finds inside private notes dating back to 1951–20 pages of phone numbers and addresses for Balthus, Brassai, André Breton, Jean Cocteau, Paul Éluard, Leonor Fini, Jacqueline Lamba, and other artistic luminaries of the European avant-garde.

After realizing that the address book belonged to Dora Maar—Picasso's famous "Weeping Woman" and a brilliant artist in her own right—Benkemoun embarks on a two-year voyage of discovery to learn more about this provocative, passionate, and enigmatic woman, and the role that each of these figures played in her life.

Longlisted for the prestigious literary award Prix Renaudot, *Finding Dora Maar* merges biography, memoir, and cultural history in a fascinating and breathtaking portrait of the artist.

GETTY PUBLICATIONS  
 216 pages, 5 3/4 x 8 1/4 inches  
 Paperback  
 US \$24.95



## FEELING COPACETIC?

*In a print suite and cookbook, artist **Alison Saar** captures the many moods conjured by cooking, listening to music, or even better, doing both at the same time*

EARLY IN 2020, AT THE TIME OF THE FRIEZE LOS ANGELES ART FAIR, the Getty Research Institute (GRI) acquired Los Angeles-based artist Alison Saar's series of eight multi-block linocuts on kozo paper, titled *Copacetic Suite* (2018–2019). Evoking the mental spaces of performers and audiences—some private, others in-the-groove and connected—the deep and varied colors of the prints are about the moods of music: sung, played, danced, and simply heard.

Sound hovers and swirls. The music calls up ghostly figures from the linocuts' textured surfaces and backgrounds, creating spiritual, as well as mysterious, moments. The saxophone in *Shebop* is literally smoking; *Jitterbug* dancers are joined by a spectral third partner; *Hepcat*, a listener, turns inquisitively toward the viewer; the singer in *Torch Song* holds her flames like a bouquet. Viewers can make up whatever story they like, since the figures depicted in the linocuts don't

By **Marcia Reed**  
Chief Curator, Associate Director  
Getty Research Institute



Above: *Torch Song* (from *Copacetic Suite*), 2018–2019, Alison Saar. Multi-block color linocut on Japanese kozo paper. Image © Alison Saar. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA

Opposite: *Kitchen Amazon*, 2019, from *Recipes for Trouble*, Alison Saar. Wood, ceiling tin, barbed wire, tar, found skillets, linoleum, and found chain. Image © Alison Saar. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA





Above: *Jitterbug* (from *Copacetic Suite*), 2018–2019, Alison Saar. Multi-block color linocut on Japanese kozo paper. Image © Alison Saar. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA

Right, top: *Shehop* (from *Copacetic Suite*), 2018–2019, Alison Saar. Multi-block color linocut on Japanese kozo paper. Image © Alison Saar. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA

Right, bottom: *Hepcat* (from *Copacetic Suite*), 2018–2019, Alison Saar. Multi-block color linocut on Japanese kozo paper. Image © Alison Saar. Courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, CA

seem real. Saar's grainy surfaces and outlines express the force of feelings, the experience of becoming lost in music or transported by it, no matter whether performing or listening.

Meaning “it’s fine,” copacetic is a cool word to use as the title of this print series and to explain its mood. In its oblique acknowledgement that things are in synch, even working quite well, copacetic’s historic usage reaches back to early 20th-century songs. It’s found in “At the New Jump Steady Ball,” recorded by Ethel Waters in 1921. After a list of alcoholic beverage possibilities at the speak-easy, she sings “Copacetic was the best way for one and all.”

We can mix interior adventures offered by music with the more visceral satisfactions of the palate with the L.A. Louver gallery’s gift of Saar’s cookbook, *Recipes for Trouble*, which includes selected comfort-food recipes and playlists to accompany them. Illustrated with Saar’s artworks, the cookbook is a trifecta for the GRI’s special collections (at once an artist’s book and an illustrated cookbook, and drawn from African American culture). You can find the book reproduced on L.A. Louver’s website, and it’s the perfect thing for these long days and weeks sheltering at home: you can read, laugh, and then cook up the recipes in time with the recommended tunes. Saar’s text puts it all together on the title page: “Conjurin’ in the kitchen is about the feel more than measurement. The syncopation of ingredients is essential. Improvisation strongly encouraged.”

If there was a subtlety you might have missed in *Copacetic Suite*, explicit information can be found in the recipes. “Good Money Greens,” to be eaten on New Year’s Day, are paired with Charles Mingus’s “Goodbye Pork Pie Hat” or Daddy Hotcakes’ “Mustard Greens.” The cookbook’s closer is “Put your foot in it’ Sweet Potato Pie,” accompanied by Nina Simone’s “I Want A Little Sugar in My Bowl.” Saar writes, “EAT with your lover. GET under the covers.” Enough said. Look, listen, travel in your head-space, and most importantly, dine well. ■





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*Wall Panel with a Striding Lion*, 605–562 BC,  
Neo-Babylonian. Glazed brick. The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1931 (31.13.1).  
Image: [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org). Story on p. 30.