

GRI Reorganization

On December 10, 2020, Mary Miller, Director, and Andrew Perchuk, Deputy Director, presented a reorganization of the GRI at the quarterly Town Hall. The reorganization is based on both the self-study prepared for the Visiting Committee and the Visiting Committee report in 2019. The purpose of the reorganization—which GRI leadership underscores is not a restructuring—is to conceptualize the GRI’s mission and work in a four-part framework of “Collections and Discovery,” “Knowledge Creation/Research,” “Dissemination and External Affairs” and “Administration.” New reporting structures go into effect in January 2021, which will configure departments and personnel to align with this quadripartite framework, creating three new divisions to add to the existing division of “Administration,” which encompasses not only business functions but management of Scholar Housing and international visas for Getty-wide purposes. With re-focused leadership, the reorganization will also allow the GRI to meet Getty’s “Digital First” goal in collections, scholarship, and education.

Collections and Discovery. The GRI’s collections are divided among three areas: Getty Library, Special Collections, and Institutional Archives. Together, they comprise nearly 1.5 individual volumes, over 9,000 special collections (which include more than 5 million photographs), and several thousand GRI programs, oral histories, etc., providing a diversity of primary and secondary source materials to researchers. Such materials—made accessible through a complex infrastructure of curated acquisitions, processing, cataloguing, conservation, digitization, and integration into digital search engines and resources—form the reservoir from which students and researchers draw inspiration and generate new scholarship. The reorganization consolidates all collections-related activity into one division, led by an Associate Director for Collections and Discovery, leading to more efficiency, stronger communication, and collective understanding of and commitment to institutional priorities.

Knowledge Creation/Research. Although knowledge creation is not exclusive to any one GRI department, it is especially central to the scope and identity of three: Scholars Program, Digital Initiatives, and Research Projects. In strictly functional terms, then, it makes sense that these areas would be grouped together. However, the rationale for linking these areas is also aspirational: the future of art historical research and scholarship will be increasingly digital and data-driven, led by, an Associate Director of Research with experience as both an art historian and a digital humanist.

Dissemination and External Affairs. In a world that is increasingly anchored in visual culture, it is essential that the GRI communicate the importance of research on art, the history of visual culture, and cultural heritage to both a scholarly and public audience. To do so requires strategy and coordination across a range of GRI departments and staff, all working together to make the mission, priorities, activities, and achievements of the GRI accessible, legible, and welcoming. The reorganization will bring together the GRI’s most outward- and public-facing areas, creating clearer governance structures for digital content production and execution, and facilitating

interfacing with Getty-wide departments such as Getty Publications, Getty Digital, Communications, and Development. An Assistant/Associate Director of Dissemination and External Affairs will lead the existing GRI departments of Exhibitions, Publications, Web and New Media, Programming, and Development and External Affairs.

As we come out of the Pandemic, the GRI looks forward to maximizing its talent and more efficiently using its resources, while providing greater clarity of vision, alignment with staff organizational structures in other Getty Programs, and greater opportunities for staff growth and development.