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NEWS FROM THE GETTY

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THE GETTY MUSEUM EXPLORES THE IMPORTANT GENRE OF PORTRAITURE IN PHOTOGRAPHY

In Focus: The Portrait

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center
January 27 – June 14, 2009

Dorothea Lange. A Young Girl in Ennis, Ireland, 1954. Gelatin silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. © Oakland Museum of California, the City of Oakland.

LOS ANGELES— *In Focus: The Portrait* presents a selection of about 50 photographs, affording visitors the opportunity to explore a sampling of the Getty Museum's world-renowned collection of photographs on the subject of portraiture.

Following the invention of photography, portraiture became widely accessible to the masses. This exhibition presents a cross section of technical and aesthetic developments in the medium. It shows a broad range of styles throughout the history of photography including works by Félix Nadar (French, 1820–1910), Edward Steichen (American, 1879–1973), Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965), and Cecil Beaton (British, 1904–1980), amongst others.

"If photography was initially perceived to be the most truthful of artistic representations, its underlying subjectivity is especially relevant in portraiture," says Anne Lacoste, curator of the exhibition. "The exhibition illustrates the relationship between photographer and sitter. Selected quotes from both the maker and subject provide insight into their experiences of the photographic process."

In Focus: The Portrait is organized according to three distinct approaches. Marking the beginnings of photography as an entrepreneurial activity, the **Formal Portrait** refers to the traditional practice of professional studios. The works in this section range from a rare

daguerreotype of Edgar Allan Poe to more contemporary works by Irving Penn (American, born 1917) and Richard Avedon (American, 1923–2004). A selection of *cartes-de-visite* from the 1860s–1880s will also be on display.

The **Intimate Portrait** presents photographers' exploration of their immediate environment. The section includes a pictorial portrait by Julia Margaret Cameron (British, born India, 1815–1879); the artist Georgia O'Keeffe photographed by her husband, Alfred Stieglitz (American 1864–1946); and snapshots of life at the Bauhaus by Theodore Lux Feininger (American, born Germany, 1910).

The **Documentary Portrait** responds to a more conventional idea of the camera as a device to record the world. An example of the early application of photography to sciences such as anthropology or psychiatry can be found in a portrait by Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond (British, 1809–1886), while a "mug shot" album demonstrates how the photographic portrait became a useful tool of the modern states in identifying and tracking criminals. This section also illustrates how the medium successfully addresses social issues. Visitors will see the photographic work of Lewis Hine (American, 1874–1940), whose images resulted in protective legislation for children in the United States; Walker Evans (American, 1903–1975), who made iconic portraits during the Great Depression; and Diane Arbus (American, 1923–1971), a member of this new generation of photographers who directed the documentary approach toward more personal ends in the 1960s.

In Focus: The Portrait is curated by Anne Lacoste, assistant curator, Department of Photographs, the J. Paul Getty Museum. It is the third in the "In Focus" series of thematic exhibitions drawn from the Getty's extensive permanent collection of photographs. Upcoming "In Focus" shows include *In Focus: Making a Scene* and *In Focus: The Worker*, both opening in 2009. In September 2009, Getty Museum presents *Irving Penn's Small Trades*, an exhibition designed to highlight the 2008 acquisition of Penn's seminal body of work entitled "The Small Trades," which consists of several hundred full-length portraits of skilled tradespeople dressed in their work clothes and carrying the tools of their respective trades.

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