

PAUL OUTERBRIDGE  
JO ANN CALLIS  
TAKING SHAPE  
MADE FOR MANUFACTURE

**DATE:** January 29, 2009  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



Attributed to Johann Paul Schor, Side table, about 1670, Gessoed and gilt poplar, The J. Paul Getty Museum, 86.DA.7

**GETTY EXHIBITION BRINGS TOGETHER TWO  
EXTRAORDINARY COLLECTIONS TO  
ILLUSTRATE THE INHERENT  
COMMONALITIES OF SCULPTURE AND  
DECORATIVE ARTS**

***Taking Shape: Finding Sculpture in the  
Decorative Arts***

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center  
March 31–July 5, 2009

LOS ANGELES—The disciplines of sculpture and decorative arts are often viewed in opposition to one another, the former as a fine art created for aesthetic purposes and the latter created as an applied art for functional purpose. ***Taking Shape: Finding Sculpture in the Decorative Arts*** challenges the conventional distinctions between the two by bringing together a range of “decorative” objects rarely considered within the context of sculptural practice—drawing attention to their astonishing sculptural inventiveness. On view at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, March 31 through July 5, 2009, ***Taking Shape*** brings together sculpture and furniture from the collections of Temple Newsam (England) and the Getty Museum, with a focus on 17<sup>th</sup>– and 18<sup>th</sup>– century Baroque and Rococo objects made in England, France, and Italy.

This exhibition deconstructs the prevailing assumption that decorative art is guided only by functional purpose while sculpture is infused with autonomous creativity. The objects included suggest that qualities ordinarily associated with sculpture—autonomy, creative freedom, and aesthetic intent—are often interchangeable with those traditionally linked to decorative work, such as craftsmanship, contingency, and function. While some works in the exhibition might be more readily classified as ‘sculpture’ and others as ‘decorative art’, the focus is on the interactions between them, especially their shared ground and inherent commonalities.

-more-



The objects range from sculptures intended for interior display to furnishings and are organized in three sections in the exhibition. The first section presents a range of sculptures conceived as complementary pairs, originally intended to flank altars, entrances, or hallways. The installation reveals that rather than representing the antithesis to sculpture, decoration often provided the motivation for its creation. The second section of the exhibition concentrates on the complex sculptural forms of furnishings, demonstrating that they were not simply made to be useful, but to be admired as individual objects of beauty and ingenuity. The last section of the exhibition connects the two themes explored in the preceding galleries—the decorative capacity of sculpture and the sculptural quality of furniture—by focusing on a single object from the Getty's own collection, a gilt-wood side table attributed to Johann Paul Schor (1615-74), a sculptural tour-de-force that defies any practical use.

Co-organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Henry Moore Institute, *Taking Shape: Finding Sculpture in the Decorative Arts* is curated by Charissa Bremer-David, curator of sculpture and decorative arts, Jeffrey Weaver, associate curator of sculpture and decorative arts, at the J. Paul Getty Museum and Martina Droth, research coordinator at the Henry Moore Institute; with assistance from curatorial consultants James Lomax, senior curator at Temple Newsam and Anthony Wells-Cole. The exhibition was on view at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, England, from October 2, 2008 through January 4, 2009 before coming to the Getty Center.

## **RELATED EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS**

All events are free, unless otherwise noted. Seating reservations are required. For reservations and information, please call (310) 440-7300 or visit [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu).

### **TALKS**

#### *Curator's Gallery Talks*

Charissa Bremer-David, curator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts, leads a gallery talk on the exhibition. Meet under the stairs in the Museum Entrance Hall.

Thursdays, April 2 and May 21, and Wednesday, June 24, 2:30 p.m.

### **RELATED PUBLICATIONS**

#### *Taking Shape: Finding Sculpture in the Decorative Arts*

Introduction by Martina Droth

Essays by Charissa Bremer-David, Katie Scott, Mimi Hellman, and Mary D. Sheriff

While some artworks are more readily labeled as "decorative arts" and others as "sculpture," such objects can exchange and share features. Decorative objects intended for functional or ceremonial use can incorporate sculptural forms or assert a sculptural presence and, conversely, sculpture can perform decoratively, serving an ornamental program or

purpose. Showcased in this book are thirty-eight extraordinary works of decorative art, furniture, and sculpture, executed in the exuberant Baroque and Rococo styles during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that embody such sculptural inventiveness. These exquisite pieces are drawn from the collections of the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Temple Newsam House, Leeds, England. (Getty Publications, \$40.00)

This publication will be available beginning in March 2009 in the Getty Museum Store, by calling (800) 223-3431 or (310) 440-7059, or online at [www.getty.edu/bookstore](http://www.getty.edu/bookstore).

**VISIT WWW.GETTY.EDU**

Explore highlights of this exhibition and the Museum's collection on the Getty's Web site.

**Note to editors: Images available on request.**

# # #

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Rebecca Taylor  
Getty Communications  
310-440-6427  
[retaylor@getty.edu](mailto:retaylor@getty.edu)

**The J. Paul Getty Trust** is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that features the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

**Visiting the Getty Center:**

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Monday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$10. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call 310-440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is 310-440-7305.

**Additional information is available at [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu).**

Sign up for **e-Getty** at [www.getty.edu/subscribe](http://www.getty.edu/subscribe) to receive free monthly highlights of events at the Getty Center and the Getty Villa via e-mail, or visit [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu) for a complete calendar of public program.