Although the Nazis shut down "The Bauhaus" only 14 years after its founding, the German design school would have a profound influence on art and architecture throughout the 20th century, and into the 21st. Indeed, the Bauhaus’s 100th anniversary this year has prompted a global program of celebratory exhibitions. With one of the world’s most prominent Bauhaus collections, the Getty Research Institute has organized in-gallery and online exhibitions where one can learn about Bauhaus teachers’ spiritual and aesthetic beliefs, peruse the lessons and exercises students pored over, and see the work of Bauhaus students and faculty, including that of Lyonel Feininger, Oskar Schlemmer, and Joost Schmidt.

The Getty Foundation also honored the Bauhaus, awarding a Keeping It Modern (KIM) grant in 2017 to the school’s modern building in Dessau, which the influential architect and Bauhaus founder, Walter Gropius, designed in 1925. Our feature on KIM focuses on several completed projects—Iglesia de Cristo Obrero y Nuestra Señora de Lourdes in Uruguay, Gandhi Bhawan in India, and Centennial Hall in Poland—buildings greatly diverse in their modernist viewpoints, and all extraordinary in how poetically form follows function.

KIM complements the Getty Conservation Institute's Conserving Modern Architecture (CMA), a program to advance the practice of conserving notable 20th-century structures. This issue of The Getty profiles the CMA's first project, the Eames House, a modernist Los Angeles home designed and occupied by Charles and Ray Eames. You’ll read about the considerable conservation challenges posed by this iconic modern architecture, and how a multidisciplinary team of conservators, scientists, architects, and engineers, in partnership with the Eames Foundation, not only found answers but also created a long-term conservation strategy for this much-visited masterpiece.

"From the Vault" explores another facet of modernism—the work of American painter Frederick Hammersley, who helped create Southern California’s “hard-edge abstraction”—while "From The Iris" takes you into the Woman’s Building, an arts institution with an agenda arguably as radical as the Bauhaus’s, but also different in many aspects. "New Acquisitions" highlights a painting by Scandinavian artist Vilhelm Hammershøi that appeals to modernist sensibilities in its elegant starkness. And you’ll find a story about holograms by 2019 Getty Medal-laureate, Ed Ruscha, as well as other C-Project artists, who in the spirit of the Bauhauslers, experimented with new materials and techniques to create groundbreaking art for a new age.
The Drunken Satyr Arrives at the Getty

One of the few large bronzes to survive from the ancient world has left Naples for the first time to undergo a multi-month conservation treatment at the Getty. The 2,000-year-old Drunken Satyr is being conserved through a joint initiative between the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (MANN) and the Getty, previous collaborators on the conservation of ancient Roman bronzes—some 65 statues and busts—as well as dozens of marbles, says Kenneth Lapatin, curator of the exhibition and of antiquities at the Getty. “Of these, the Drunken Satyr is the most impressive. It demonstrates the ability of the medium seemingly to defy gravity, with its well-preserved limbs splayed in all directions.”

Before it arrived at the Getty Villa’s conservation studios in October, the Drunken Satyr had been on display since the early 1800s at the museum. “Of these, the Drunken Satyr is the most impressive. It demonstrates the ability of the medium seemingly to defy gravity, with its well-preserved limbs splayed in all directions.”

Drunken Satyr depicts an inebriated middle-aged satyr—in Greek and Roman mythology, a half-man, half-goat follower of the wine god Dionysos (Bacchus to the Romans). The sculpture, created around the 1st century BC, became famous following its excavation on June 10, 1754 at the Villa dei Papi, a luxurious residence on the edge of Herculanum that eventually served as the principal model for the Getty Villa’s architecture. (A modern replica of the Drunken Satyr adorns the reflecting pool of the Villa’s outer peristyle garden.) Buried under some 80 feet of rock and debris by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79 (the same eruption that destroyed nearby Pompeii), the bronze was partially damaged: the right arm and left hand were detached, and parts of the lion pelt and wineskin on which the figure rests were lost. By 1759 that damage was repaired and the statue was re-patinated—heated or chemically treated to smooth and blacken the surface—and mounted on a new stone base.

Before the conservation project could begin, experienced Getty art handlers designed a crate that would reduce vibration and potential shock during the sculpture’s long journey to Los Angeles. Once the crate was constructed at MANN, the J. Paul Getty Museum’s conservator Erik Risser and preparator Rita Gomez helped pack the statue; it was then craned through a second-story window and flown to Los Angeles. When it arrived at the Getty Villa, Risser, fellow Museum conservator William Shelley, and the Getty Conservation Institute’s Monica Ganio began analyzing the statue to identify past centuries’ interventions. They are currently using a combination of tools: ultraviolet light to identify resin (often applied by 18th-century conservators) and other non-ancient organic materials; an endoscope to peer into the statue’s hollow interior in search of wood, plaster, and other 18th- and 19th-century materials; and microscopy at a 50 times magnification, to inspect the surface for both cracks and “bronze disease”—a common term to describe surface pitting or corrosion.

Analysis and conservation of the Drunken Satyr will continue through the spring. For updates on the Getty’s conservation practices, visit the Getty’s blog, The Iris (blogs.getty.edu/iris/).

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Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. She has also participated in international exhibitions such as the 1990 and 2015 Venice Biennale in Italy. Cuno describes Ed Ruscha as one of our generation’s most original artists. “He finds profundity in the commonplace, through art that is at once highly conceptual, elegant, witty, and technically masterful,” he says. Ruscha’s paintings of the 1960s explore advertising tropes and incorporate words and phrases—he had previously worked in advertising as a layout artist—and he went on to create more than a dozen artists’ books, including the 25-foot-long Every Building on the Sunset Strip (1966). His works are held in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the Tate Gallery in London, and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. He has also presented 21 solo exhibitions at Gagosian galleries.

Last year’s Getty Medal recipients were Studio Museum of Harlem’s Chief Curator Thelma Golden, philanthropist Agnes Gund, and sculptor Richard Serra. Other past recipients include artist Anselm Kiefer and writer Mario Vargas Llosa, artist Ellsworth Kelly, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, architect Frank Gehry, philanthropist Lord Jacob Rothschild, and Harold Williams and Nancy Golden, who were honored together for real estate development.

New Grants for Digital Mapping

The Getty Foundation has awarded four grants to support a growing area within art historical research: the use of geospatial and digital mapping tools to document cultural sites around the world. Funded through the Foundation’s Digital Art History initiative, the new projects explore the ancient sites of Pompeii, Italy, and Catalhöyük, Turkey; the social and urban evolution of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and the flourishing years of Florence during the Italian Renaissance. The grants support a novel approach to digital art history practice, one that moves away from stand-alone solutions and instead focuses on shared learning opportunities.

The grant recipients—Rice University, Stanford University, University of Exeter, and University of Massachusetts Amherst—are creating or expanding a Geospatial Information System (GIS) platform to manage geographic data for their studied regions. Several of the projects will incorporate digital reconstructions, in the form of 3-D and augmented reality models, into their GIS platforms. Throughout the projects the teams will come to the Getty to collaborate and discuss their work.

Cultural Mapping Tools for the Field

At the College Art Association (CAA) conference in New York City this past February, the Getty Foundation supported the attendance of 20 CAA-Getty International Program participants—art historians, museum curators, and artist-teachers—to increase international collaboration and foster connections between US-based art historians, artists, and curators and their global colleagues. During the conference the Foundation also received CAA’s second annual Outstanding Leadership and Fostering Collaboration Award. CAA presents this accolade to an international, multicultural organization that takes a record of exceptional generosity as well as civic and charitable responsibility. Joan Weinstein, acting director of the Foundation, accepted the honor on behalf of the Foundation, which has awarded nearly 8,000 grants in over 180 countries since 1984. CAA is the primary professional organization serving academic art history in the United States.

CAA-Getty International Program and Leadership Award

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New and Noteworthy

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The Getty Medal was established in 2013 by the trustees of the J. Paul Getty Trust. Last January the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) announced the completion of almost a decade of research, conservation efforts, and infrastructure improvements at the Tomb of Tutankhamen in Egypt. The project—a multi-year collaboration between the GCI and Egypt’s Ministry of Antiquities (MoA)—was sparked by concerns among Egyptian authorities about the impact of high levels of visitor traffic on the wall paintings. Those concerns were addressed by focusing on conservation and the creation of a sustainable plan for continued management of the tomb, which remains open to the public.

To mark the occasion, the GCI and MoA held a hand-over ceremony and symposium on January 31 at the Mumification Museum in Luxor, Egypt. The event included remarks by Timothy Whalen, the GCI’s John E. and Louise Bryson Director, and Neville Agnew, senior principal project specialist; Zahi Hawass, the former minister for state antiquities who initiated the project; and Mohamed Yahia, head of antiquities for Upper Egypt at MoA. After a visit to the tomb, consultants, Egyptian colleagues, and other GCI staff gave presentations and took questions from the audience. Attendees included GCI and MoA staff, various Egyptian and foreign archaeological missions working in Luxor, and members of the international press.

Last November Getty Unshuttered received Gold Medal distinction in Storytelling at the Shorty Social Good Awards, an international competition that celebrates excellence in short-form digital content. A few months later, the program earned the Superintendent’s Award for Excellence in Museum Education from the California Association of Museums. And at the January AVA Digital Awards, an international competition honoring digital creativity, branding, and strategy, Getty Unshuttered received a Platinum award for Social Activism Web Series, Gold for Educational Mobile App, and Honorable Mention for Motion Graphics Design. In early 2019 Getty Unshuttered welcomed 10 new emerging teen artists from Los Angeles for the program’s second year. A new version of the app will debut in the coming months.
Imagine wanting to become an architect, or a painter, or a designer in post-World-War-I Germany, and hearing about a school where students can study any of these fields—plus theater, weaving, woodworking, pottery, and metalworking. Communists, Neo-Zoroastrians, even women—long banned from design schools—are all welcome here; diverse views spark groundbreaking work. You would also work alongside teachers world-famous in their field—if only on the design of a homely milk jug—and that milk jug would be considered a work of art. No snobby attitudes about crafts being inferior to the arts here. No dregs of the class system that led to the devastations of World War I. A new way of learning and creating for everyday life must be discovered; and hopefully that will happen here.

Such an art and design school, the Bauhaus, did once exist; if only for 14 years. Walter Gropius, a well-known 35-year-old architect, founded it on April 1, 1919, in Weimar, Germany, making headlines at once. Not only did the school teach modernism, a growing global movement to reject 19th-century conventions, but the teachers’ methods also radically departed from traditional art institutes. Instead of slavishly reproducing old master works, for instance, students deconstructed these works’ colors and geometric shapes. Students and teachers undertook collective projects, among them the design of a residence with all its furnishings. And there was that all-star faculty: visual artists Lyonel Feininger, Johannes Itten, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee; theater designer Oskar Schlemmer; and musician Gertrud Grunow.

The school moved from Weimar to Dessau to Berlin, perpetually underfunded and criticized for leaning too far left. Faculty clashed in their beliefs and methods; women were largely relegated to textile workshops, and focus shifted from uniting art and craft, to using the language of industry and rationalism, to teaching only architecture. But when the Nazis shut down the Bauhaus for good in 1933, many of its teachers and students built on these ideas in other parts of the world—Gropius at Harvard University; Hannes Meyer, the school’s second director, in the USSR and then Mexico; Anni and Josef Albers at Black Mountain College in North Carolina; and László Moholy-Nagy at the New Bauhaus in Chicago, to name a few.

The Bauhaus aesthetic, filtered through newer generations’ creative minds, still informs our design landscape, beautifying and simplifying our iPhones, Ikea chairs, even the Getty Center’s architecture. Honoring this lasting influence, Germany, the United States, Japan, Israel, and many other countries with a Bauhaus legacy are celebrating the school’s 100th anniversary this year through exhibitions, symposia, publications, and television programs.

For its part, the Getty Research Institute (GRI) has mounted two complementary exhibitions inspired by the institute’s rich and extensive holdings in unique Bauhaus material. Bauhaus Beginnings, on view in the GRI’s galleries starting June 11, takes visitors on a journey through Bauhaus students’ first year, presenting the ideas that initially attracted them; their first-year curriculum; and in an open house of sorts, a display of their works, much of them never before on view.

“This is a compelling Bauhaus exhibition of 250 extraordinary objects from the GRI Special Collections,” says GRI head of architectural collections Maristella Casciato, who curated the project with GRI research assistant Gary Fox. “We haven’t tried to create an encyclopedic exhibition.
Instead we want to convey how collaborative the school was and how strong its students were. Many would go on to become important artists in their own right, including Anni and Josef Albers, Gunta Stölzl, and Marianne Brandt.

The online show Bauhaus. Building the New Artist also launches June 11 and lets visitors dive deeper into material or ideas presented in the in-person exhibition. Visitors can read the school's prospectus—“Architects, sculptors, painters, we all must return to the crafts…proficiency in a craft is essential to every artist,” Gropius entreated—and they can even try their hand at some student exercises, including Kandinsky’s questionnaire about which color suits best a circle, triangle, and square.

“We thought that interactive exercises like these would be a compelling way to activate the material and make it understandable,” says Fox.

“We want visitors to get the feeling of what it was like to be a Bauhaus student—to really step into those shoes.”

What They Learned

Having been introduced to the Bauhaus ethos, visitors next learn what students were taught in their first year: to start, rules about color and form per Kandinsky; Johannes Itten, who explained the expressionist woodcut practice and conveyed in words and signs the designers’ binary approach to spirituality and primitivism; says Casciato.

A rare example of a completed expressionist construction, the Sommerfeld House was well received until it was destroyed in World War II.

What They Believed

Stepping into Bauhaus Beginnings, visitors first learn about the spiritual and aesthetic beliefs flowing through the school during its early years. “At the school’s outset, Gropius was interested in expressionism—the modernist movement to encompass the spiritual realm. Itten—who as a follower of the Neo-Zoroastrian religion Mazdaean inspired many students to see in their heads, practice strict vegetarianism, and wear red robes—presented his students with seven types of color contrast. Paul Klee asked his students to subdivide a square in a variety of directions, a different proportion of relationships and different senses of rhythm. Once students had developed systematic understandings of color, they could apply that knowledge to projects in other workshops, determining what colors worked best together in a tapestry, dance costume, stained glass window, and so on. Students often highlighted the specific interactions between two or three colors in various color studies. Itten and Kandinsky had students arrange and rearrange colored cut-outs to test how one color affected the other, while Klee asked students to paint overlapping forms in watercolor to test transparency and mixing. Many of these studies are on view in the exhibition.

Highlights of this second section include Kandinsky’s teaching notes, wherein he outlines the theoretical bases for his exercises, rare vintage photographs of material studies made for Josef Albers’ first-year course; and one of Fox’s favorite objects in the show, a study of light and dark contrasts created by Friedl Dicker working closely with Itten (see image at left). “She produced this incredibly beautiful contrast study with just charcoal and color,” says Fox. “It’s not an artwork in the proper sense—it’s a classroom exercise. But its sensitivity and subtlety suggest the promise of this young woman artist.” In spite of this promise, Dicker’s life, like many others associated with the Bauhaus, was cut short at the hands of the Nazis—making this object all the more poignant.

What They Made

In the final section of Bauhaus Beginnings, visitors see just how Bauhaus students applied their lessons. On view are an extensive selection of weavings, photographs and reconstructions of stage performances, prints, architectural sketches, postcards, and photographs. “This is where you see that the students’ work was in some sense on an equal footing with the masters,” says Fox.

“The weaving is especially strong,” adds Casciato. “Those women were incredible artists who truly wanted to bridge art and craft. And they clearly understood the theory of color, achieving incredible results. The textiles by Gunta Stölzl, who was also a workshop director at some point, and Lena Bergner are probably my favorite pieces in the exhibition (see image on p. 10). Interestingly, the weaving workshop was the most profitable part of the Bauhaus, once the teachers and students decided to sell what they made.”

Also on view here are photographs and photograms by László Moholy-Nagy, marking the school’s turn toward a more rationalist approach, as well as photographs by Bauhaus student Waldemar Hüsing. Not only are these works—and all the other works in Bauhaus Beginnings—surprisingly impactful in person, says Fox, but they might also visually communicate the Bauhaus ethos more eloquently than words can. “Look at Joost Schmidt’s exploration of colored triangles, for instance, and you’ll understand at once how painstaking the investigations into the purportedly fundamental aspects of art and design were at the Bauhaus.”

The exhibition might also prompt visitors to wonder if Bauhaus ideals should be embraced even more than they have been. “There’s definitely a lesson to be learned from the Bauhaus’s innovative reconsideration of pedagogical processes,” says Casciato. “And I hope visitors will think, maybe students today should work alongside their teachers, have more collaborative projects, all of that. Maybe we should reinvent the Bauhaus’s approach for the 21st century.”

On June 16 the GRI will present a program of short films produced between 1919 and 1933 by figures associated with the Bauhaus. The films highlight artists’ experiments with the relatively young medium and illustrate the emergence of abstraction in film. Learn more at getty.edu/360.
Nestled into a coastal hill in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles, overlooking a large meadow and shaded by eucalyptus trees, the Eames House stands as an icon of modern architecture. The 1949 home and studio—two stunning glass and steel rectangular boxes linked by a courtyard—was designed by husband-and-wife team Charles and Ray Eames as part of the influential Case Study House Program. The couple chose to explore the innovative use of prefabricated materials and mass-produced, off-the-shelf products to rapidly construct a residential structure. The Eameses designed the house for themselves—they would live there until their deaths—and introduced many novel ideas about materials, furnishings, and the flexible use of space. The couple also considered what the relationship between the house and the landscape would yield. By placing the house so that a hill protects it on one side, while trees and a meadow appear through glass walls on the other, an incredibly lively, always changing interplay of light and shadow illuminates the house both inside and out. Taken together, the buildings, their contents, and the setting tell us much about how the Eameses earned their reputation as innovators of modern design.

To ensure that the house can continue to tell that story—it is open to the public for visits, tours, picnics, and private events throughout the year—the Charles and Ray Eames House Preservation Foundation (Eames Foundation) had to tackle a variety of conservation issues shortly after it began managing the house in 2004. And board chairman Eames Demetrios and his colleagues didn’t like the advice they were getting. “The experts we consulted about climate control, for instance, assured us that the most important thing to do was seal off the house and install internal equipment—which would surely be intrusive,” remembers Demetrios, the Eameses’ grandson. “That was totally not the spirit of the open, indoor-outdoor feeling of the place.”

When the foundation asked the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) for help in 2011, the GCI was incredibly empathetic, says Demetrios. “They understood our viewpoint that maybe it wasn’t one size fits all when it comes to climate control. Maybe you actually have to think about the specific building.”

The GCI was also in the midst of developing its Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative, a comprehensive, long-term program to advance the practice of conserving 20th-century heritage—especially modern architecture. The Eames House, the GCI decided, would make a perfect first project. “We thought, what an incredible privilege that our first field project might be in Los Angeles, such an important place for modern architecture—particularly in the postwar era—and that we actually might contribute to the conservation of the internationally renowned Eames House,” says Susan Macdonald, head of the Buildings and Sites department at the GCI. “It was also a great fit for our new initiative; it exhibited many of the conservation challenges faced by modern architecture.”

THE EAMES HOUSE
PAST AND FUTURE

By Anna Zagorski
and Gail Ostergren
Research Specialists
Getty Conservation Institute
In 2012 the GCI officially partnered with the Eames Foundation to undertake an assessment of the condition of the house as well as its internal environment, content, and site; to help design and implement immediate repairs; and to develop a long-term conservation management plan. Eight years later, all of this has been accomplished.

“We want the Eames House to look as though Charles and Ray just stepped out for the day,” says Lucia Dewey Atwood, director of the Eames Foundation’s 250 Year Project, which aims to preserve the house for generations to come. “That way visitors can better understand how the Eameses used the structure, better understand their work and life. We want to make sure that when your great, great, great grandchildren visit the Eames House, they will have the same authentic experience that you can today.”

Research Understanding the Materials

The first step in the process was to assemble a multidisciplinary team of conservators, scientists, architects, and engineers to tackle diverse challenges. For one, the square vinyl-asbestos tiles in the living room had lost adhesion to the concrete floor and were loose and brittle. Given the tiles’ asbestos content, careful removal was required. Also, subsequent investigations revealed that vapor was permeating the concrete floor, elevating interior moisture levels to a point that could damage the contents of the house.

To prevent further damage, the GCI worked with the Eames Foundation’s continuing architecture firm, Escher GuneWardena Architecture, to find a moisture barrier system for use beneath the new vinyl-composite tile floor. The tiles would need to match the originals in appearance, be long-lasting, and be chemically compatible with the other elements of the vapor barrier system to ensure a driest environment to better protect the interior finishes and collections.

The GCI also investigated how the Eameses used color and paint in the house. Ray Eames was an artist and colorist, and the extent of her influence on the selection of paint colors and patterns at the house became clear after the team looked into the paint stratigraphy (layers). By carefully examining paint samples removed from the interior and exterior metalwork, researchers recorded the series of painting campaigns over the life of the house, confirming how the color changed over time. Research revealed a first-generation paint layer of warm gray distinguishably mixed and possibly tinted by hand with mineral pigments such as red iron oxide, Prussian blue, and chrome yellow—a finding that suggests that the original color of the metalwork was indeed the warm gray described in early accounts of the house. These discoveries will help the Eames Foundation make choices about repairing the metalwork, both now and in the future.

Whereas a tremendous amount of information exists about most of the materials used to construct and fabricate the Eames House, little was known about the wood paneling in the living room. The long, narrow panel boards were installed vertically from floor to ceiling to form a continuous surface of warm golden wood. The large glass expanses meant long-term exposure to daylight, which includes ultraviolet light that degraded the room’s wood finishes (and distressed some of its contents as well). J. Paul Getty Museum conservators identified the species of wood as Eucalyptus microcorys, commonly known as Australian tallowwood. Interestingly, numerous eucalyptus trees (of a different species) stand outside the Eames House and populate the neighboring hillside. To maintain the paneling’s warm glow, conservators recommended a treatment for the interior wood that preserved the original tallowwood and varnish treatments, including the patina.

Once the new floor had been installed and the paneling conserved, one of the next projects was reinstalling the furniture. The living room’s contents—1,864 items—had been temporarily relocated to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art for the exhibition California Design, 1930–1965: Living in a Modern Way, part of the Getty’s major initiative Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980. Environmental monitoring of the exterior and interior temperature, humidity, and light levels ensued, and the researchers made recommendations for environmental controls, taking into consideration the Eames Foundation’s desire to maintain the house as it was designed by the Eameses.

In its next steps, the GCI provided research and technical support for the replacement of the roof and funded a landscape study as well as a geotechnical evaluation. (A survey of architectural finishes was funded by a Getty Foundation Keeping It Modern grant.) A selection of the studies and their findings have been published in the comprehensive Eames House Conservation Project: Investigations 2011 to 2016. The contents of the house—including an array of furnishings, textiles, books, folk objects, and artworks that Ray and Charles Eames collected—were the focus of a GCAI assessment that documented the condition of the collection and identified potential risks and mitigation strategies. An investigation of the Cemesto cladding panels—a defining design feature of the house’s facade—is in progress.

All of this research has led to a greater understanding of the original building-material fabric, and of the care needed to enhance its durability into the future, says Macdonald.


While these studies were underway, the GCI also focused on conservation management planning. “After helping the Eames Foundation tackle some immediate needs and feeling that we had developed a sound understanding of the place, we thought that comprehensive conservation planning was the next logical step,” says Chandler McCoy, GCI project manager of the Eames House conservation project. “The conservation management plan (CMP) starts with the history of the house and its design, its physical features, and how the house embodies Charles and Ray’s creative spirit. From there, it proceeds to identify what is significant about the Eames House and presents policies that will protect this significance. Early on we realized that this significance is derived not only from its architecture—which is undeniably iconic—but also from the collection inside the house and from the surrounding landscape. All three elements contribute to its significance, and have to be managed appropriately.”

The Eames House Conservation Management Plan was completed earlier this year, officially adopted by the Eames Foundation, and celebrated at an event at the Eames House in April. The CMP provides the Eames Foundation with a framework for the ongoing care, management, conservation, and display and interpretation of the site, including the house and studio, the collection, and the landscape. It will be a vital tool in the creation of a long-term strategy to ensure that the house may be enjoyed by visitors well into the future.

“Going through the process of articulating the CMP has helped us clarify the needs of the site—and to develop solutions that will address those needs,” says Atwood. “I’m happy to say that the process mirrored the Eameses’ approach to problem-solving—their approach being iterative and focused on a deep understanding of the need. As work proceeded on the Eames house, ideas would be tested, then refined and tested, as often as necessary to arrive at the most appropriate solution.”

Generous support for the Eames House Conservation Project was provided by the GCI Council and the Dunard Fund, USA.
Most of us are familiar with stories that follow kingly lions, wily foxes, noble unicorns, or other enchantingly anthropomorphized animals, real or fantastical. Our tendency to assign human traits to animals—to see bits of ourselves and reflections of human society in the animal kingdom—seems to be a universal drive across time and geography. Interestingly, a number of the traits we ascribe to animals today actually trace back to the Middle Ages—and to one seminal book: the bestiary.

This encyclopedic roster of animals describes the features and behaviors of individual creatures not based on the criteria we tend to use today—scientific observation and a desire to systematically catalogue the Earth’s creatures. Instead, the bestiary tells stories about each animal, in the process ascribing them human traits and personalities, all to teach moral and spiritual lessons to a Christian audience. Readers were most often reminded of the dangers of false faith and sin, but also came across allusions to the Virgin Mary or the miraculous Incarnation, Crucifixion, and the Resurrection of Christ, core aspects of the Christian faith.

To introduce today’s audience to these charming and fascinating books, the J. Paul Getty Museum will present *Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World*, a major exhibition opening May 14 that brings together nearly one third of the world’s surviving illuminated medieval Latin bestiaries. Since specific depictions of the bestiary’s individual animals became so well known in the Middle Ages, permeating a variety of other genres of manuscripts as well as tapestries, ivories, metalwork, and additional objects, the exhibition will also include a glittering array of works of art.

On the occasion of this engaging exhibition, we looked deeper into three of our favorite bestiary creatures—the lion, the fox, and the unicorn—so as to tie their characteristics and personalities as described in the bestiary to our perceptions and depictions of these animals today.

Elizabeth Morrison
Senior Curator
and Larisa Grollemond
Assistant Curator
Manuscripts Department
J. Paul Getty Museum

Surprising Tales from the Medieval Book of Beasts

A Lion Named Rex

The first animal in the bestiary is always the lion, which the text introduces as “rex”—Latin for “king”—of all the beasts. We learn that the main characteristics of the lion are nobility, bravery, and fierceness, and that although lion cubs are born dead, after three days the father lion breathes into their faces, bringing them to life. The Christian parallel in this story, you might have already realized, is the death of Christ and his miraculous Resurrection three days later by God.

An image from a bestiary in the Getty Museum’s collection (above) depicts the story with a father and mother lion standing over a cub, bringing it to life. The lion family is atop a small mound and set against a highly decorative background, and a multi-colored, gilded frame surrounds the scene. Such beautifully painted, graphic scenes—plentiful in the medieval bestiary—served as visual devices that cemented the stories into readers’ minds.

The lion’s reputation as a leader, plus many other positive traits ascribed to it by the bestiary, made this animal well suited for inclusion in other works of art. The lion was particularly popular in heraldry, for instance, and was part of one of the earliest extant tapestries, a South Netherlandish Two Lions (detail), about 1270, Franco-Flemish. Tempera colors, gold leaf, and ink on parchment. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig VII 34 recto.
Crazy Like a Fox

This modern idea of the fox as a sly, wily creature comes directly from the medieval bestiary, of course. The bestiary text describes a particularly effective ruse carried out by the fox. It rolls in red mud and lays on its back, pretending to be dead and letting its tongue loll out. Masquerading as a tempting morsel, the fox waits for birds to descend, and when they do, the fox snaps his jaws shut and devours them. This scene can be found in one of the Getty Museum's 13th-century bestiaries (below), which shows the birds at the moment right before the fox makes his move. The Christian lesson related to the fox's behavior warns the faithful against trusting the ruses of the devil, who reveals himself only when he has gullible believers in his clutches. The legend of the fox's cunning spread far beyond the bestiary even during the Middle Ages. One of the most popular literary works in medieval France concerned the clever antics of its eponymous hero, Reynard the Fox. In this set of adventure tales, Reynard was constantly trying to pull one over on the other animal characters in the story, including King Noble (a lion, of course). If he wasn’t busy deceiving with his tricks, he was somehow worming his way out of being detected and punished. He often posed as a religious official or doctor to gain credence, but was mainly intent on creating mischief and stealing. Reynard’s tales became so popular in France that the common word for fox in modern French does not derive from the Latin term vulpes, but is instead the word reynard.

The concept of the cunning fox continues to affect contemporary English parlance. To “outfox” someone is to win a contest of wits, to be “crazy like a fox” is to act nonsensically while concealing a hidden motive.

Unicorn as Christ or Suitor

Another animal that features prominently in the medieval bestiary, as well as in the modern imagination, is the unicorn. Although we often associate this creature with children’s plush toys or fantasy video games, its story in the bestiary had far more serious connotations. According to the bestiary text, the unicorn was a savage and wild beast whose horn was prized for its miraculous powers of healing and purification. The ability of the horn to decontaminate water made unicorn imagery particularly appropriate for aquamanilia, vessels used in hand-washing rituals both sacred and secular (see image above). The only way to capture the creature was to place a beautiful maiden alone in the woods and wait for the unicorn to come and willingly place its head in her lap. Hidden hunters could then approach the unicorn, kill it, and seize its horn as a prize.

In another bestiary image in the Getty Museum’s collection, the maiden seems to gaze down at the defenseless unicorn with pity as two hunters relentlessly stab it (Ms. Ludwig XV 4, fol. 85v). As the bestiary explains, the maiden is a symbol for the Virgin Mary, while the unicorn stands in for Christ. Only when Christ was made human in the Virgin’s womb did he become vulnerable to the fate of death. The story of the unicorn not only became one of the most recognizable symbols for Christ in religious works of art, but it also morphed into a secular motif associated with courtly love. Stately tapestries depicting unicorns are among the most prized and famed objects to survive from the Middle Ages, and they often feature a young maiden alongside the noble creature or a hunt for its valuable horn. The theme of a beautiful young woman taming the wild creature came to serve as a metaphor for a man subjugating himself to a woman’s love; accordingly, scenes of the maiden and the unicorn appeared on objects ranging from ivory caskets to saddles.

For now, though, you can enjoy the unicorn—and the lion, fox, and a slew of other memorable animals—as they prance, scurry, and fly across the pages of the many bestiaries on view in Book of Beasts. We hope you delight not only in these beautifully rendered works, but also in how much of your understanding of animals’ “natural” personalities comes from the stories popularized by a centuries-old book.
Modernist architects were experimenters and innovators, often using untested materials to create structures that advanced new philosophical approaches to the built form. Consequently, many iconic 20th-century buildings (some now nearly 100 years old) have begun to deteriorate. They face problems such as water ingress (damage from moisture absorption), structural failure, outdated electrical wiring, and substandard energy performance. Furthermore, heritage professionals who care for these buildings often lack the scientific data they need to develop the necessary conservation protocols. Those dedicated to safeguarding modern architecture have signaled a growing urgency to preserve this heritage before it is too late.

To address the preservation of modern architecture, in 2014 the Getty Foundation launched Keeping It Modern, an international grant initiative to preserve landmark modern movement buildings. Over the past five years, Keeping It Modern has supported conservation projects at 52 buildings of outstanding significance across the globe, and two more years of funding for individual projects still lie ahead.

"Modern buildings are sometimes criticized for seeming plain or austere, yet they were created to solve real societal problems and improve the lives of everyday people," says Antoine Wilmering, the Getty Foundation senior program officer heading up the initiative. "Moreover, they are inspiring examples of human ingenuity and encourage today’s architects to break boundaries."

Grant recipients to date have ranged from the Sidi Harazem Thermal Bath Complex in Morocco to the Miami Marine Stadium in Florida, and from the São Paulo Museum of Art in Brazil to the Sevan Writers’ Resort in Armenia. All projects—whether for a CMP. The finished plan should arrive just in time for this year’s Bauhaus 100th anniversary celebrations, a worldwide commemoration of the launch in 1919 of the now-famous Bauhaus School and the subsequent Bauhaus movement. (See p. 12 for a related story.)

Among the projects already completed, the following exemplify how the initiative is positively impacting the field and ensuring the long-term care of significant modern movement buildings.

Iglesia de Cristo Obrero y Nuestra Señora de Lourdes

Celebrated Uruguayan architect and engineer Eladio Dieste (1917–2000) forged his reputation by using locally available and affordable brick in novel and surprising ways. Near his home country’s capital city of Montevideo in Atlántida, Dieste’s Iglesia de Cristo Obrero y Nuestra Señora de Lourdes—composed of two layers of red bricks surrounding a pretensioned iron armature—demonstrates a number of groundbreaking uses of brick including freestanding vaults, undulating surfaces, and folded planes. With his rigorous understanding of geometry and engineering, Dieste was able to design the church as if its block-formed walls were fully pliable.

Despite being maintained with dedication by the local community over the years, the building was showing signs of stress at the beginning of

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the 21st century. Compounding the need for repair was the fact that Dieste’s finished buildings often diverged from their drawn plans; his engineering had never been fully understood, and conservation plans were consequently hard to develop. With this in mind, a team of national and international experts used Getty support to embark on a rigorous engineering study of the site. In one example, specialists used state-of-the-art fixed scanners to capture millions of tri-coordinated points around the building. The data led to a highly detailed, 3-D digital topographical record of the church that was used to analyze its functional requirements and to compare the existing building with the architect’s original drawings. The technical studies have shed light on Dieste’s structural innovations and are now informing the conservation and care of Cristo Óbrero and that of the architect’s prolific portfolio across Uruguay and beyond.

Gandhi Bhawan

Gandhi Bhawan is located at Panjab University in Chandigarh, an Indian city known worldwide as a mecca of 20th-century architecture. (Chandigarh was built after India gained independence in 1947.) The distinctive building reflects the result of a 1960 proposal that established a Gandhi Bhawan (Gandhi Center) at each university in India to promote “the study of Gandhian ideas and his way of life.” At Panjab University, Swiss architect Pierre Jeanneret (1896–1967) used innovative cast concrete panels to evoke a lota flower—a traditional symbol of peace and unity—marring angular lines with swelling organic forms, all fittingly surrounded by a large reflecting pool. The design is often interpreted as a juxtaposition of Gandhi’s uncompromising ideals of truth and his pursuit of harmony; the former represented by the sharp angularity of the roof, the latter found in the gently rounded curvilinear walls. Jeanneret also devised an experimental surface treatment, setting local river stones into the concrete mix to achieve a look akin to marble cladding, the white surfaces representing the purity of Gandhian principles.

In recent years these panels had begun to dislodge with age, threatening one of the building’s defining features. A Keeping It Modern grant in 2015 supported an in-depth technical study of the Gandhi Bhawan to address the deterioration of its concrete. A team of conservation architects and scientists performed a preliminary condition assessment that included sound testing of each precast concrete panel—they tapped each surface with a dead blow hammer or mallet, and based on the vibrations, detected areas that might split or break. Given the building’s complex geometry and height, the team also used non-intrusive laser scanning to produce 3-D point cloud renderings of the structure, which subsequently helped researchers generate 2-D drawings to aid interventions. The results of these and many other detailed scientific investigations led to a CMP that paves the way for the conservation and continued functionality of the site—and of other campus buildings from the same era—now and in the future.

Gandhi Bhawan’s CMP is the first such document for a modern heritage structure in India, making it an invaluable resource for a country abundant in modern sites. According to Shikha Jain, a director at the heritage preservation organization DRONAH and overseer of the CMP, “the results of the CMP are being disseminated within professional and academic arenas and are serving as pilot cases for future projects.” Already, conservation activities are underway at other significant locations in India, including Chandigarh’s Government Museum and Art Gallery, which received a Keeping It Modern grant in 2017. Jain and her colleagues are among the consultants on the project, bringing with them the lessons learned at Gandhi Bhawan.

Centennial Hall

A tour de force of structural engineering, Centennial Hall in Wrocław, Poland, was designed by German architect Max Berg (1870–1947) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Napoleon’s defeat at the Battle of Leipzig in 1813. When completed in 1913, Centennial Hall was the largest reinforced concrete structure in the world and featured the biggest free-standing dome ever built. Widely recognized as one of the most important examples of early 20th-century architecture, this venue has remained a popular location for major conferences and cultural events. At the beginning of the 21st century, though, building stewards recognized the need to adapt Centennial Hall to contemporary standards. And in 2006, a designation on the UNESCO World Heritage List set off a five-year process to modernize the site.

To capture the results of the restoration and articulate the historical significance of the building for future generations, the Getty Foundation awarded a grant in 2014 for the development of a CMP for Centennial Hall. The project involved architectural analysis as well as archival and bibliographical research of all known publications about the site. Conservation experts undertook structural analysis of the building’s fabric with both interior and exterior details fully considered. They also tested surface finishes to determine the original paint color scheme. A survey of the composition and condition of the greenery in the surrounding areas affected recommendations for the revitalization of the historical landscape design.

The research results were combined to inform a comprehensive CMP for the first time in Poland. In a show of national support, the Polish government invited the Centennial Hall conservation team to present the plan at a conference celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Hall’s inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. In addition to offering recommendations for the Hall’s long-term care, the document stipulates that neither remodeling nor extensions can alter the original building plans and architectural shape of Centennial Hall, and that conservation agencies must provide annual, detailed inspections of the building’s original elements.
Such policies reveal the deep dedication of stakeholders for preserving the integrity of this iconic Polish site, which for over a century has been at the epicenter of some of Europe’s most devastating conflicts—only to endure, time and time again, to be enjoyed by future visitors.

How Keeping It Modern Grants Are Making a Difference

Through these three projects and many more, Keeping It Modern is having an impact not only on individual modern sites, but also on the field of modern-architecture conservation overall. This past February, for example, preservation professionals and government officials from North Africa and the Middle East gathered in Morocco for a Foundation-funded Keeping It Modern workshop, “Modern Heritage Under Pressure.” At the event, several grantees presented learnings from completed projects to their regional colleagues in order to increase awareness among CMPs and their role in heritage preservation. Such efforts are especially important in helping colleagues gain support for the conservation of modern architecture in their home countries, often in the face of competing priorities.

Reports that Guide Professional Practice

To date, 20 grantees have published CMPs and/or technical reports that capture research findings and recommendations applicable to both the chosen building and others from the same time period. The Getty Foundation is committed to sharing the results of these projects with conservation professionals, architects, and other stewards of 20th-century architectural heritage by making the reports freely available through the Keeping It Modern Report Library on the Getty Foundation’s website. Each downloadable PDF contains detailed information about the building’s history and construction. The reports are also searchable by function (school, church, performance venue) and material (brick, concrete, metal) to allow for targeted research. The library is updated periodically as new reports are completed.

Connecting Global Stewards

Keeping It Modern has also supported the development of international networks among conservation professionals. Each year, new Keeping It Modern teams travel to London for a grant-funded workshop hosted by the Twentieth Century Society. During sessions led and developed by staff of the GCI, they exchange knowledge about conservation challenges and learn how to adopt values-based management practices through the CMP framework. The time spent together establishes a cohort of individuals who can turn to one another for further advice and counsel.

Growing Local Capacity

Many Getty Foundation initiatives emphasize training, and Keeping It Modern is no exception. Several grantees have incorporated training opportunities into their projects, thereby helping to develop lasting local capacity. As an example, a grant awarded in 2018 to the National Schools of Art of Havana in Cuba will fund training opportunities for Cuban conservation professionals; that, in turn, will help build local support and expertise.

What’s Next

Through its support of research and planning activities, Keeping It Modern is saving important buildings while also providing model projects that can guide those in the field as they look to define and implement strategies for preserving modern architecture into the future. With two more years of grantmaking to go, Keeping It Modern continues to focus on signature buildings from around the world, especially projects in Brazil and Armenia, grantees have orchestrated conferences to discuss successes, solve problems, and confer about local issues affecting their work. In East-Central Europe, two new grants awarded in 2018 for buildings in Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, combined with earlier grants in Armenia, Kosovo, Poland, and Russia, are creating the potential for a robust network in the region.

Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World

Edited by Elizabeth Morrison
With Larisa Grollemond

A celebration of the visual contributions of the bestiary—one of the most popular types of illustrated books during the Middle Ages—and an exploration of its lasting legacy.

Images drawn from the bestiary became nearly as recognizable in the Middle Ages as the most famous of biblical scenes, such as Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit or Noah and the Ark. Images like that of the lion were instantly familiar to medieval audiences due to the singular nature of the iconography (the content and compositional features of the images). This aspect of the bestiary tradition has been little studied, perhaps because it has been assumed to imply a lack of originality or innovation in the genre. Yet it was this very stability that enabled the bestiary’s imagery to become so influential over such a long period of time. The bestiary was, in fact, the most popular nonsacred text of its day, and it is possible that the imagery gave it an air of incontrovertibility and authority that its multiform text could not.

So iconic were the stories and images of the bestiary that they were easily identifiable to those in the Middle Ages even when the animals appeared in other artistic contexts. The most common bestiary animals, including the lion, unicorn, elephant, pelican, phoenix, and dragon, escaped from the pages of bestiaries to inhabit a wide variety of other types of objects long past the bestiary’s primary period of production in the thirteenth century. Liturgical books, marginal images in devotional manuscripts, late medieval encyclopedias, and all manner of secular books drew on the visual language of the bestiary to add layers of meaning. Medieval maps located the bestiary’s exotic animals in the distant lands of India and Ethiopia. Moreover, the bestiary’s animals appear in a glittering array of objects in other media, including ivories, tapestries, metalwork, jewelry, sculpture, and personal luxury items. The artists of these various works could insert the animals with confidence that their viewers were steeped in the knowledge of bestiaries. The bestiary’s animals became a pictorial shorthand for a rich symbolic language that permeated the visual culture of the Middle Ages.
his chores. He invents the story of a griffin, conquers a bonnacon, and triumphs over a dragon. Godfrey does not realize that its splendid pictures of animals make him forget his chores. He kicks off a new series, Conserving Modern Heritage, aimed at sharing best practices. The projects selected represent a range of building typologies, uses, and sizes, from the high-rise housing blocks of Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation and public buildings such as London’s National Theatre to small monuments like the structures at Dudley Zoological Gardens and a sculpture by Donald Judd. The projects also represent a range of environmental and economic contexts. Some projects benefit from high levels of heritage protection and access to funding, while others have had to negotiate conservation with stringent cost limitations. All follow a rigorous conservation approach, beginning with a process of investigation and diagnosis to identify causes and target repairs, balanced with conservation requirements to preserve significance.

Don’t Let the Beasties Escape This Book!

Written by award-winning author Julie Berry, and featuring fantastical illustrations by April Lee, this children’s book also contains engaging back matter with information on life in the Middle Ages and a mini-bestiary showing animals from original 13th-century manuscripts. Don’t Let the Beasties Escape This Book! brings the Middle Ages, legendary beasts, and the medieval imagination to life.

Concrete Case Studies in Conservation Practice

This timely volume brings together 14 case studies that address the challenges of conserving the 20th century’s most ubiquitous building material—concrete. Following a meeting of international heritage conservation professionals in 2013, the need for recent, thorough, and well-voiced case studies on conserving 20th-century heritage became clear. This book answers that need and kicks off a new series, Conserving Modern Heritage, aimed at sharing best practices. The projects selected represent a range of building typologies, uses, and sizes, from the high-rise housing blocks of Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation and public buildings such as London’s National Theatre to small monuments like the structures at Dudley Zoological Gardens and a sculpture by Donald Judd. The projects also represent a range of environmental and economic contexts. Some projects benefit from high levels of heritage protection and access to funding, while others have had to negotiate conservation with stringent cost limitations. All follow a rigorous conservation approach, beginning with a process of investigation and diagnosis to identify causes and target repairs, balanced with conservation requirements to preserve significance.

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The Woman's Building

By Andrea Darlington
Head of Special Collections Management
Getty Research Institute

In 1973 artist Judy Chicago, designer Sheila Levant de Bretteville, and art historian Arlene Raven changed the cultural landscape by founding the Woman’s Building in downtown Los Angeles. For two decades the Woman’s Building played a crucial role in the national women’s movement, shaping both the field of feminist art and American arts education.

On June 6, 2018, thanks to the efforts of the Los Angeles Conservancy and passionate community support, the City Council designated the Woman’s Building a Historic–Cultural Monument. The designation ensures the long-term protection of a building described by art critic and activist Lucy Lippard as “the capital of cultural feminism.”

Recent funding from the Save America’s Treasures grant program, meanwhile, will allow the Getty Research Institute (GRI) to preserve important archives documenting the groundbreaking artistic, educational, and political activities of the Woman’s Building. Administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in collaboration with the National Park Service, the grant program funds projects that preserve “nationally significant historic properties and collections that convey our nation’s rich heritage to future generations of Americans.”

Each collection in this project is valuable on its own terms, from the Woman’s Building records and videos to the archives of several feminist artists and artist groups who were active at the Woman's Building, including Nancy Buchanan, Barbara T. Smith, Faith Wilding, Feminist Art Workers, Mother Art, Sisters of Survival, and the Waitresses. Considered together, the collections illuminate—in strikingly poignant ways—major initiatives, struggles, and dynamics of the women’s movement from the 1960s to the 21st century.

A Unconventional Arts Education

As reflected in its archives, the Woman’s Building was not just a physical structure. It was also an innovative educational institution and an organizational center for the feminist movement.

The heart of the Woman’s Building was the Feminist Studios Workshop (FSW), one of the first independent art schools for women. Based on a feminist pedagogical model rooted in the idea that collectivity and a safe, inclusive environment are essential for women artists to develop, the FSW provided an alternative to traditional arts education and the male-dominated environment at the California Institute of the Arts, where all three founders previously taught.

Rather than painting and sculpture—media championed by traditional art schools—the FSW curriculum emphasized video, writing, performance, and graphic design. The Woman’s Graphic Center and the Los Angeles Women's Video Center, located within the Woman’s Building, offered opportunities for training, experimentation, and self-expression in new media.

The Woman’s Building was also home to art galleries, performance spaces, and feminist-owned businesses. Exhibitions ranged from single-artist surveys to vast thematic explorations like The Great American Lesbian Art Show (1980). For the artists noted earlier, as well as Margaret Atwood, Judy Baca, Audre Lorde, Rachel Rosenthal, Adrienne Rich, Martha Rosler, Betye Saar, and many more, the Woman’s Building was a supportive space for artists and writers to develop and present their work, individually and collaboratively.

The Woman's Building Collections

The archive of the Woman’s Building as an organization offers an overview of the building’s activities from its founding until it closed in 1991. Contents include announcements, posters, manuscript material, and thousands of images of exhibitions, readings, performances, and the building itself.

Among more than 250 videos in the Woman’s Building collection are numerous oral histories, now-iconic feminist video art works like Nun and Deviant (1976) by Nancy Angelo and Candace Compton, and documentation of events and performances such as In Mourning and In Rage (1977), an influential public media performance staged by Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Lohse.

On the steps of City Hall to protest violence against women and the sensationalist news coverage of serial killers the “Hillside Stranglers.”

Over the years, several feminist artist groups emerged from the Woman’s Building. Their archives, many of which were donated to the GRI by the artists themselves, reflect the range of artistic approaches that stemmed from the idea of collectivity so central to the Woman’s Building.

The Project

Thanks to the Save America’s Treasures grant, the GRI can more quickly process and preserve 11 archives and digitize materials most at risk of deterioration. Speedy completion of the work is particularly important given the salience of the collections to current events in the United States and ongoing activism around women’s rights.

Grant-funded digitization efforts will focus on acetate and magnetic media that are particularly great risk of deterioration. These include thousands of photographic negatives and slides, several hundred audio and video recordings, and more than 40 film reels. Because fluctuations in temperature and humidity can be quite harmful to acetate film and magnetic media, storing them in a climate-controlled environment is critical to their preservation. Digitization of this material will allow the GRI to make digital versions available for research, while the original remains safely stored.

The two-year project began in December 2018 and ends in November 2020. Once processed and preserved, all of the archival collections will be freely accessible for research through getty.edu/research/special collections.
**NEW ACQUISITIONS**

**Painting by Vilhelm Hammershøi**

Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864–1916) created some of the most contemplative interiors in the history of painting, using as his subject the simple play of light in one of his minimally furnished Copenhagen apartments. Interest and scholarship in these works has surged over the last few decades; the compositions’ rigorous geometry, sober palette, and lack of sentimental anecdote appeal greatly to modern sensibilities, while their domestic settings, refined painterly handling, and sophisticated light effects call to mind the European old-master tradition, particularly Dutch 17th-century painting.

Sharing this appreciation, the J. Paul Getty Museum recently acquired Hammershøi’s *Interior with an Easel, Bredgade 25, (1912)*, a study of his Copenhagen apartment and studio on Bredgade Street. In this work the artist has orchestrated a sparse atmospheric mood by including only the back of an easel, a print hanging high on the wall protected from direct sunlight, and a small table in an adjoining room, framed by a half-open doorway.

*Interior with an Easel, Bredgade 25* is a work of great power and stark beauty, mesmerizing in its sense of stillness and silence,” says Davide Gasparotto, senior curator of paintings at the Getty Museum.”All the elements of a great Hammershøi are here: the masterful rendering of the cool Nordic light, the exquisitely nuanced tonal harmonies, the geometric rigor of the planar composition, the shimmering weave of small, textured brushstrokes—all working to transfigure the mundanity into something haunting and poetic.”

The painting, never exhibited in public before its emergence on the market in 2018, is now on view in the museum’s West Pavilion galleries. “I am sure visitors will see many resonances with our paintings by other great northern European artists, such as Caspar David Friedrich, Fernand Khnopff, and Edward Munch,” says Museum director Timothy Potts. “We are delighted to be able to add this extraordinary work by one of the most important Scandinavian artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to our collection.”

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**J. Paul Getty Museum Acquires Its First Holograms**

A large collection of glass-plate holograms has been donated to the J. Paul Getty Museum. A group of artists and holographers who formed in the 1990s to explore experimentation with the hologram process. The 105 works, the first holograms to enter the Museum’s collection, extend the Department of Photographs’ holdings of 19th-century stereography into the 20th century and greatly enhance its contemporary holdings.

Notable names in the cache include Richard Artschwager, John Baldesari, Larry Bell, Louise Bourgeois, Chuck Close, Marisol Escobar, Al Held, Roy Lichtenstein, Dorothea Rockburne, Ed Ruscha, Robert Ryman, and James Turrell. The works created by these artists represent their experimentation with the medium, and in some cases complement or incorporate works made in other media. For example, Louise Bourgeois found particular resonance between her physically and psychologically demanding sculpture and holography, which added a sense of movement that she would not otherwise have been able to obtain. Ed Ruscha’s hologram of one-second clips of the end of a film reel looks like viewers marvel at a process that can record a span of time within one stationary framed image.

Holograms not only celebrate a key element of photography—light—but they also innovate it. From 1994 to 1999, artists in the C-Project worked with experts in holography to explore its artistic potential, extending the medium’s application beyond science and medical research. With this donation, the Getty Museum becomes the only institution to introduce original glass holograms by all 20 artists associated with the C-Project into its collection; also included are 16 final editioned holograms by Louise Bourgeois, Chuck Close, and Ed Ruscha that were completed in 2017 by hologram artist Matthew Schreiber. The Getty Research Institute, meanwhile, is the recipient of a concurrent donation from the C-Project archive that includes digital files, VHS tapes and films, collages, and research and correspondence.

Virginia Heckert, curator of photography at the museum, worked to complete this acquisition over a period of several years. “It’s wonderful that the Barrons’ passion for pop art, conceptual art, and minimalism led them to encourage several artists associated with these movements to experiment with holography,” says Heckert. “We are grateful that the original glass plates and related archival materials created for the C-Project will reside at the Getty Museum and the Getty Research Institute, enabling continued exploration and appreciation of the magical effects of this unique medium.”

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More: Interior with an Easel
Bredgade 25, 1912, Vilhelm Hammershøi. Oil on canvas. The J. Paul Getty Museum

Opposite: Collection 1884–1998

Major 19th-Century Landscape Painting by Giovanni Segantini

The J. Paul Getty Museum has acquired Spring in the Alps (1897), a monumental landscape painted by Italian artist Giovanni Segantini (1858–1899).

The work was commissioned for Jacob Stern, a San Francisco collector and director of Levi Strauss & Co., and anchored his collection until his death in 1927. After that, it was on display for nearly 70 years at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco as a loan from the Stern family, and was among the city’s most beloved paintings. Sold at auction in 1999, it remained in the possession of the dealer French & Company in New York until recently.

Segantini painted the seven-and-a-half-foot-long canvas in the open air near the village of Soglio, Switzerland, accurately capturing the bright, shimmering sunlight and expansive vista of snow-capped mountains. “Spring in the Alps is a glorious hymn to the reawakening of nature in spring after a long, hard winter,” says J. Paul Getty Museum Director Timothy Potts. “The landscape, rural workers, and the animals all evoke the cycle of nature.”

At the center of the composition, a young farm woman, dressed in the blue and red peasant costume characteristic of the Graubünden district, leads two draft horses past a watering trough. They have left a freshly plowed field, visible in the left middle ground, where a sower scatters seeds. A black-and-white dog stands guard at the right.

Segantini created the vibrant color scheme and brilliant effects of light following the principles of Divisionism, the practice of juxtaposing long, thin strokes of contrasting colors in the belief that the hues mix optically in the eye of the viewer. The rich impasto creates an extraordinarily tactile, almost woven, surface that captures the rarefied mountain light, crisp transparency of the atmosphere, and texture of the grass.

The painting now hangs alongside the Getty’s great impressionist and post-impressionist works, expanding the museum’s ability to tell the story of 19th-century European painting. “Segantini, one of the most important Italian artists of his generation, was internationally famous for dreamy Alpine landscapes that combine elements of naturalism and symbolism,” says Davide Gasparotto, the Museum’s senior curator of paintings. “He was at the peak of his short-lived career, and he considered Spring in the Alps one of his most accomplished achievements.”

The painting joins another important work by Segantini in the museum’s collection, Study for “La Vita” (1897). This large pastel, similar to Spring in the Alps in its composition, was dedicated to Segantini’s friend Toby E. Rosenthal, an American painter living in Munich who arranged Stern’s commission of Spring in the Alps.

From the Getty Patron Holiday Party on December 6 at the Getty Center to an intimate conversation on January 7 with Los Angeles-based artists Carmen Argote and Analia Saban, Getty Patrons have been immersing themselves in art.

1. Kristin Rey and guest at the January 7 Patron event “Artists in Conversation,” a partnership between the Getty, Bottega Veneta, Phaidon, and C Magazine


3. Theresa Baxter, Kate Silva, and Getty Patrons Patricia Artigas and Lucas Etchegaray

4. Getty Patrons Betty-Jo Tilley, Ron Graham, and Marjorie Graham

5. Gerrit Ruetzel, Carmen Argote, Andrew Perchak, and Analia Saban at the January 7 event
Pontormo Opening and Dinner
The J. Paul Getty Museum held an opening reception and dinner on February 4 for Pontormo: Miraculous Encounters. The exhibition, on view through April 28, showcases one of Jacopo da Pontormo’s most moving and innovative altarpieces, the Visitation, alongside preparatory drawings and two exceptional portraits painted during the same period. 

Pontormo is generously supported by Janine and J. Tomilson Hill. Additional support is provided by the Foundation for Italian Art and Culture.

African American Art History Initiative: Leadoff Public Program and Advisory Committee Meetings
Two months after the October launch of the Getty’s African American Art History Initiative (AAAHI)—an ambitious program to establish the Getty Research Institute as a major center for the study of African American art history—members of the initiative’s newly formed advisory committee assembled for a series of meetings with Getty staff. The night before, on December 4, committee members attended the first public program inspired by AAAHI, a lecture given by the initiative’s senior consultant, Columbia University professor Kellie Jones. The talk, also the inaugural Thomas and Barbara Gaetgtons Lecture (sponsored by the Getty Research Institute Council), explored the global reaches of Latin American and African American performance artists during the 1970s.


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College Night at the Getty Villa

On January 29 college students from all over Southern California traveled back to the ancient world during College Night at the Getty Villa, an evening of art, music, gallery tours, and art-making inspired by the exhibition *Underworld: Imagining the Afterlife*. Toga-clad students explored the mythology associated with Hades and other immortals; came face-to-face with Cerberus, Medusa, and other bizarre beings; glimpsed behind-the-scenes work of conservators who care for ancient objects; visited art-making stations inspired by cartoonist Krivy, graphic designer David Lee, and ceramicist Wayne Perry; and enjoyed 3-D underworld animations produced by students from the USC School of Cinematic Arts.

College Night was created with the generous support of LIFEWTR.

18. Bakersfield College’s Jazmine Folden

19. Students Jackson McDonald, Tisca Chandaria, Baylor Adams, Brooke Bidwell, Theodore拉斯y, and Hawk Crubert

20. Students learn about a Romano-Egyptian mummy from Getty docent Elizabeth Andrews.

21. Pomona College’s Alex Dean (left) and Alicia Garza
American painter Frederick Hammersley (1919–2009) helped create “hard-edge abstractionism,” Southern California’s first homegrown postwar artistic movement. In contrast to the reigning abstract expressionism of 1950s and 1960s New York, Hammersley and his West Coast contemporaries emphasized clean lines, careful geometries, and quiet aesthetic contemplation. His canvases range from stark geometric designs to more flowing combinations of multihued shapes, and despite their precise lines and construction, his personal touch remains evident—as does the importance he placed on intuition as a guiding principle for art making.

In 2013 the Getty Research Institute (GRI) acquired a set of sketchbooks, notebooks, lithographs, prints, and other working materials by Hammersley that represent almost every period of his nearly 50-year career. The small but dense collection, generously donated by the Frederick Hammersley Foundation, provides meticulous technical details about the materials and processes used for most of the paintings he produced. Highlights of the collection include 11 sketchbooks and notebooks, 65 paint sample charts, and an unstretched canvas thought to be Hammersley’s first “Hunch” painting, the term he used for works composed by instinctually laying down one color form, complementing it with another, and so on.

Hammersley’s attention to both craft and avant-garde visual strategies align him with a narrative of art in Los Angeles populated by poised, considered, carefully constructed objects, including those of artists Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, and Ken Price. This influence continues through younger generations of artists in Southern California, and owing in part to a renewed interest in abstraction, the last two decades have brought newfound attention to Hammersley’s work.
Welcome to the Bauhaus

Conserving a Modern Icon

Beastly Tales

Avant-garde Architecture


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