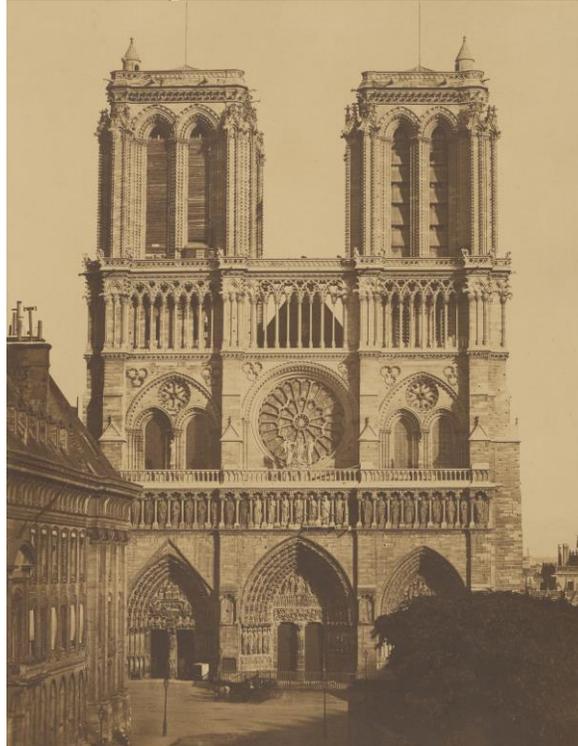




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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The J. Paul Getty Museum presents  
An Enduring Icon: Notre-Dame Cathedral**



[Notre-Dame de Paris]. Édouard Baldus (French, born Germany, 1813 - 1889). French. 1850s. Albumen silver print. Dimensions: 44.5 × 34.4 cm (17 1/2 × 13 9/16 in.) 84.XM.348.10

One of the most recognizable landmarks on UNESCO's List of World Heritage Sites, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris has come to symbolize a range of meanings in the cultural imagination: a major religious edifice, a masterpiece of medieval architecture, a repository for important relics and art, a symbol of Paris, and an iconic French landmark.

On April 15, 2019, a massive fire ravaged the 850-year-old cathedral, destroying the medieval wooden trusses supporting the roof, toppling the famous spire and severely damaging the building. Though the structure's stability remains in question, all the historic relics and works of art—including the celebrated rose windows were saved by the rapid response of emergency workers and Cathedral staff, as well as experts charged with the preservation of the art and architecture.

In recognition of this historic event, the J. Paul Getty Museum will bring together a variety of works of art that showcase the rich cultural legacy of this beloved institution. The special single gallery installation – An Enduring Icon: Notre-Dame Cathedral – will be on view July 23 – October 20, 2019 in the East Pavilion of the Getty Museum.

"The recent fire at Notre-Dame reverberated around the world, with millions of people watching the event unfold live on their screens," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "We thought it appropriate at this moment to illuminate the artistic and cultural impact that Notre-Dame has played in European history, drawing on the rich holdings of the Museum and the Getty Research Institute. The exhibition presents paintings, photographs, engravings, and rare books that commemorate the enduring importance of the Cathedral, which has served as a symbol of Paris for more than eight centuries, through iconoclasm and wars."

Notre-Dame was built on the Île de la Cité, the largest island on the Seine River, in the center of Paris; construction began in 1160 and lasted 100 years. Since 1769, a milestone situated on the square in front of the cathedral has served as point zéro for calculating distances between French cities and Paris, underscoring the institution's central importance to France. And, given its scale and location, Notre-Dame has served as the setting for many important historic events.

The Cathedral is at once a magnificent work of architecture and a repository for masterpieces of art. Its exterior portals preserve the most exquisite examples of sculptural ensembles from the 1200s, and its three large rose windows count among the most magnificent stained glass from the medieval period. Inside, the high, pointed arches of the nave and transept, together with the choir and more than thirty chapels, shelter priceless sculptures, paintings, and ecclesiastic furniture. Scenes of the life of Christ, sculpted in stone in the early 1300s, are set around the choir screen while, within the choir, wooden stalls dating from the 1700s shine with delicately carved panels. In the transept and chapels, thirteen large canvases include some of the most ambitious French religious paintings of the period. At the start of the 1800s, Notre-Dame was in terrible disrepair after the edifice was looted and damaged in the French Revolution. Two impressive personalities helped save the Cathedral, the French writer Victor Hugo (1802-1885), and architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879). The enormous success of Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831; published in English as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*) sparked renewed interest in the Cathedral, enough to exert pressure on the authorities to address its decrepit condition. A decade later, French

architects Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) and Jean-Baptiste Lassus (1807–1857) were selected to oversee a huge restoration effort. After the death of his collaborator, Viollet-le-Duc completed the immense project. Dedicated in 1859, the spire that collapsed during the April 2019 fire counted among Viollet-le-Duc's additions. "Both Hugo and Viollet-le-Duc were the true orchestrators of Notre-Dame's revival in the 1800s," says Anne-Lise Desmas, senior curator of sculpture and decorative arts at the Getty Museum, and curator of this show. "Their contributions henceforth became forever associated with the cathedral's mystique. The artworks on view in this special installation elucidate the importance of this 'majestic and sublime edifice... this aged queen of our cathedrals', as Hugo called it, from its construction in the Middle Ages to its restoration in the 1800s."

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**The J. Paul Getty Museum** collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

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