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THE GETTY ANNOUNCES \$5 MILLION ENDOWMENT GRANT TO THE COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART

Endowment will support The Courtauld's Conservation of Wall Painting graduate program



Cave 85, detail of wall painting of a dancing figure, Late Tang dynasty (848–907 CE). Mogao caves, Dunhuang, China. Photo: Lori Wong. © J. Paul Getty Trust

LOS ANGELES – The J. Paul Getty Trust announced today a \$5 million endowment grant to The Courtauld Institute of Art to support its graduate program in wall painting conservation. The Courtauld is the only university in the English-speaking world where students can obtain a research-led education in wall painting conservation. The grant will specifically support scholarships and practical education on wall paintings in the field – both in Britain and abroad – for Master's level students. The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) has been a partner with the Courtauld's Conservation of Wall Painting program since its inception.

"The significance and importance of wall paintings to our understanding of art history and culture in general cannot be overstated," says Tim Whalen, John E. and Louise Bryson

Director of the Getty Conservation Institute. "The Courtauld's program plays an indispensable role in ensuring that new wall paintings conservators are trained and equipped with the critical skills necessary to meet the challenges of this discipline. No other organization has so comprehensively and rigorously embraced this responsibility."

From their earliest form as rock paintings, to decorations in ancient Roman villas at Pompeii, cave temples in Dunhuang, paintings in Mayan temples at Bonampak, medieval wall decorations in the UK, monumental works in the Sistine Chapel, and up to contemporary street art, wall paintings are seminal artistic achievements in all cultures. They also face a unique set of complex conservation challenges owing to their scale and placement, the variety of materials and technologies used to create them, and new challenges such as mass tourism. At a time when there is heightened awareness of the value of and risk to the world's cultural heritage, it is imperative that advanced scientific and practical educational opportunities exist for the professionals responsible for its preservation and care. Without highly skilled conservators, cultural heritage is at even greater risk of being lost.

To address this need for specialists, The Courtauld's three-year master's degree program in wall painting conservation was established in 1985 in partnership with the GCI, and has led the way in the development of ethical and sustainable methodologies for the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations. The program is small and rigorous, currently accepting eight students over three years. The Courtauld has become an international center of excellence in education and research in wall painting conservation, and its program has produced a generation of distinguished alumni who have had a substantial impact on the field. Since its inception 34 years ago, the program has trained students from 15 countries around the world, many of whom have gone on to roles at leading institutions of global prominence including International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) China; the Getty Conservation Institute; and English Heritage.

"The J. Paul Getty Trust is among The Courtauld's longest standing advocates and supporters, and enabled The Courtauld to establish a unique program of wall painting conservation 34 years ago," says Professor Deborah Swallow, Mårit Rausing Director of The Courtauld Institute of Art. "Wall paintings form a major part of the world's cultural heritage and our program continues to set the gold standard for the training of wall paintings conservators worldwide. We are honored to receive this visionary grant, which will support this important program at The Courtauld for generations to come."

Wall painting conservation has long been a focus of the GCI. Its projects have relied on team members with specialized training in the conservation of wall painting, many of whom received their training at The Courtauld. The GCI's wall painting projects have included the tombs of Nefertari and Tutankhamen in Egypt, the Mogao Grottoes in China, the House of the Bicentenary at Herculaneum in Italy, and David Alfaro Siqueiros' mural *América Tropical* in Los Angeles, California, among others.

More information about The Courtauld's program can be found here:

<https://courtauld.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/ma-conservation-of-wall-painting>

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes 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 Pacific Palisades.

The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) works internationally to advance conservation practice in the visual arts—broadly interpreted to include objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, field projects, and the dissemination of information. In all its endeavors, the GCI creates and delivers knowledge that contributes to the conservation of the world's cultural heritage.

The Courtauld Institute of Art is the world's leading university for art history, conservation and curating with an exceptional art collection and Gallery at its heart. It is a global centre of excellence for education and research in wall paintings conservation. Operating from central London, the capital of the art world, The Courtauld is based in Somerset House, a historic site and architectural masterpiece that is now a dynamic hub for the creative industries. The Courtauld is undergoing a major redevelopment project, Courtauld Connects, which will transform teaching and learning, Gallery and social spaces. Find out more at connects.courtauld.ac.uk.