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**GETTY COMPLETES CONSERVATION OF JACKSON POLLOCK'S MILESTONE PAINTING
MURAL, ON VIEW AT THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM FOR A LIMITED TIME**

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center
March 11-June 1, 2014



Mural, 1943. Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–1956). Oil and casein on canvas. The University of Iowa Museum of Art, Gift of Peggy Guggenheim.

LOS ANGELES—Jackson Pollock's monumental painting *Mural* and an exploration of its creation, early history and conservation will be on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center for a limited time March 11 through June 1, 2014.

Following extensive joint study and treatment by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) as part of an agreement with the University of Iowa Museum of Art, the artwork will be exhibited alongside new research, showcasing a significant transitional moment in Pollock's career. The exhibition is jointly curated by Scott Schaefer, Curator Emeritus of the J. Paul Getty Museum; Tom Learner, Head of GCI Science overseeing

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the GCI's Modern and Contemporary Art Research Initiative; and Yvonne Szafran, Head of the J. Paul Getty Museum's Paintings Conservation department.

Pollock is among the most influential painters in American history, and *Mural* is widely recognized as a crucial watershed moment for the artist. The storied artwork also has a number of persistent myths associated with it – the most prevalent being that it was painted by Pollock in a frenzied, 24-hour session.

"This painting is of the greatest importance in the history of 20th century art," said Jim Cuno, President and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust. "We are honored to have been entrusted with task of scientifically analyzing and treating this painting. Our work has revealed much new and significant information about the painting and its role in a transitional moment in Pollock's career. We are pleased to be able to share this research and the painting itself, which is rarely seen outside of Iowa, with visitors to the Getty from around the world."

"With this conservation treatment by the Getty, for which we are immensely grateful, Pollock's *Mural* can now be viewed with its 'best face forward' for many years to come," said University of Iowa President Sally Mason.

"The Getty Museum has a history of conserving works of art from other institutions where our expertise can help contribute to preserving the object for future generations," said Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "This project provided a wonderful opportunity for our team, in close collaboration with colleagues at the GCI, to extend this program into the 20th century providing many new insights into a painting of supreme importance to the history of modern art. It will be particularly interesting to see Pollock's masterpiece of expressive abstraction in the context of our historical collections: great works often reveal themselves most when they are placed outside their comfort zone."

Mural was Pollock's first commission by legendary art collector Peggy Guggenheim and the work has been in the University of Iowa's art collection since it was donated by her in 1951.

The painting was likely rolled and unrolled at least five times as it moved from Pollock's studio, to Guggenheim's entrance hall, to Vogue Studios (for photography), to New York's Museum of Modern Art, to Yale University, and finally, in 1951, to the University of Iowa.

This early itinerant history took a toll on its condition. The paint began to flake, and the weak original stretcher caused the painting to develop a pronounced sag. By 1973, its structural condition was in need of attention, and a conservation treatment was carried out in

Iowa to stabilize it. This included adhering a lining canvas with wax-resin to the reverse, replacing the original stretcher with a sturdier one, and varnishing the painting.

By 2009, it was evident that further conservation intervention was needed, and experts from the Getty Conservation Institute and the J. Paul Getty Museum were invited to Iowa to assess the condition and display of the painting. While the 1973 treatment had successfully consolidated the paint, it also made the sag a permanent feature, with the adhesive locking the distortion into place. When the painting was re-stretched, the distortion meant that portions of the unpainted tacking margins were now visible on the front of the painting. The varnish applied in 1973 also had dulled the surface.

In July 2012, the painting was transported to the Getty Center for an in-depth study and conservation treatment. Art historical research, conventional methods of treatment and analysis, and some of the latest developments in technical imaging were used to provide new information and insights into the painting and its creation and present *Mural* in the best possible manner. The analysis and conservation work was jointly undertaken by Learner and Alan Phenix from the GCI, and Szafran and Laura Rivers from the J. Paul Getty Museum.

One exciting discovery has been that Pollock's initial paint marks appear to have been made in four highly diluted colors—lemon yellow, teal, red, and umber—all applied wet-on-wet and still visible in several areas of the painting. This presents the intriguing possibility that one of the most prevalent myths – that Pollock painted the monumental work in one all-night session – might be *partially* true.

"It looks as if Pollock did finish some kind of initial composition over much of the canvas very rapidly, perhaps even in a single all-night session. However, the majority of paint layers on *Mural* were not part of this session, and were frequently added over earlier applications of paint that had already dried, indicating several days or even weeks would have passed between painting sessions," said Learner at the GCI.

Further analysis also has provided new information about the paints Pollock used to create his masterpiece. While most of the work was created on Belgian linen canvas with high quality artist's oils, the Getty's investigation yielded another interesting surprise – simple white housepaint.

The housepaint was used very specifically to regain some pockets of areas of white space or 'air' after the majority of the work had already been painted.

The Getty team also investigated whether Pollock might have laid the canvas on the floor to drip paint onto the canvas, as he did - famously - in later years.

"There are several areas of pink paint on *Mural* where we thought Pollock may have dripped it onto a canvas lying flat on the studio floor. However, we were able to achieve the same results by manipulating an oil paint and flicking it at a test canvas placed upright, so it seems unlikely that he laid this painting horizontally to apply paint to the canvas," said Learner

"Having said that, you can certainly glimpse in the application of the splattered paint in *Mural* how Pollock's style is evolving," added Szafran. "It's a hint of things to come."

In terms of the conservation treatment carried out at the Getty, conservators first removed the aged varnish on the surface, which made an important visual change to the depth of and surface of the painting.

Another major conservation challenge has been dealing with the exposed edges of the painting and the pronounced sag in the original canvas. The stretcher that holds the canvas needed to be remade to properly bear the weight of the artwork, so the Getty research team began to think of ways in which the shape of the painted surface could be incorporated into the new stretcher design.

"Instead of simply replacing the stretcher, we began to consider making a slightly curved stretcher that would follow the existing painted edges, thereby returning all areas of unpainted canvas to the sides of the stretcher, " said Szafran. "Throughout the entire process, we let the painting speak for itself, to let us know if it could be put on a curved stretcher."

The team created painstaking mock-ups, researched all of the variables, talked with other experts, and decided it was worth the undertaking.

The painting will be presented at the Getty Museum, displayed alongside the team's extensive research and analysis. The exhibition occupies two galleries, with the painting installed in the first. The second gallery examines the materials and techniques used to create *Mural*, explores some of the legends surrounding the work, explains how it has changed since it was completed, and discusses its recent conservation treatment at the Getty. Overall, the exhibition explores a transitional moment in Pollock's career, as he moved toward the experimental application of paint that would become the hallmark of his technique.

The research and analysis work also can be found in detail in the related illustrated book, Jackson Pollock's *Mural: The Transitional Moment*, available at the Getty bookstore. The publication, which provides a more complete picture of Pollock's process than ever before, includes an essay by eminent Pollock scholar Ellen Landau and an introduction by art collector and comedian Steve Martin.

The conservation of *Mura* has been a collaboration between Getty programs, with input from a variety of scholars, artists, conservators and scientists and art historians.

The Getty Conservation Institute Modern Paints project — now part of the broader Modern and Contemporary Art Research Initiative — has over the past ten years improved analytical methods for identifying paint types and understanding how they perform. The GCI is currently leading a comprehensive research effort into modern paints and the challenges they present in terms of conservation.

The J. Paul Getty Museum's Paintings Conservation Department has a long-established program of bringing important paintings from around the world for conservation, study, and display at the Museum.

As well, the Getty Research Institute holds one of the world's most important archives for the study of modern and contemporary art, which aided the work.

This project has been generously supported by the J. Paul Getty Museum Paintings Conservation Council and a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation enabled Getty staff to consult with other specialists near and far.

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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 Malibu.

The Getty Conservation Institute 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, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professional conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professionals and organizations responsible for the conservation of the world's cultural heritage.

The J. Paul Getty Museum collects in seven distinct areas, including Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts, and photographs gathered internationally. The Museum's mission is to make the collection meaningful and attractive to a broad audience by presenting and interpreting the works of art through educational programs, special exhibitions, publications, conservation, and research.

The University of Iowa Museum of Art was founded in 1969 to advance education and research in the fields of Art and Art History in ways that contribute to and enhance the national and state-wide academic mission of the University of Iowa. With over 13,000 objects in its collection, the museum has one of the most significant encyclopedic university art collections in the country, with particular strengths in 20th century American and European painting, 20th century American prints, 20th century American and European ceramics, Pre-Columbian art, and Sub-Saharan African art.

The Getty Research Institute is an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. It serves education in the broadest sense by increasing knowledge and understanding about art and its history through advanced research. The Research Institute provides intellectual leadership through its research, exhibition, and publication programs and

provides service to a wide range of scholars worldwide through residencies, fellowships, online resources, and a Research Library. The Research Library—housed in the 201,000-square-foot Research Institute building designed by Richard Meier—is one of the largest art and architecture libraries in the world. The general library collections (secondary sources) include almost 900,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and auction catalogues encompassing the history of Western art and related fields in the humanities. The Research Library's special collections include rare books, artists' journals, sketchbooks, architectural drawings and models, photographs, and archival materials.

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 \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 5 p.m. on Saturdays and for evening events throughout the week. 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. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California. Same day parking at both Museum locations (Getty Center and Getty Villa) is available for \$15 through the Getty's Pay Once, Park Twice program.

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu.

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