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MEDIA CONTACT
Alexandria Sivak
Getty Communications
(310) 440-6473
asivak@getty.edu

J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM EXHIBITION FEATURES WIDEST-RANGING COLLECTION OF ARGENTINE PHOTOGRAPHY EVER DISPLAYED IN THE UNITED STATES

**Part of Pacific Stand Time: LA/LA, exhibition will feature
nearly 300 works by 60 artists spanning the history of the photographic medium**

Photography in Argentina, 1850-2010: Contradiction and Continuity

On view September 16, 2017 – January 28, 2018
at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center



Left: *Mariposas (Butterflies)* (1988), from *Pancartas (Signs)* series. Grupo Escombros (Argentine, active since 1988). Chromogenic print (printed in monochrome) mounted on wood. 40 x 60 cm (15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in.). Courtesy of the artists and WALDEN, Buenos Aires
© Grupo Escombros / WALDEN

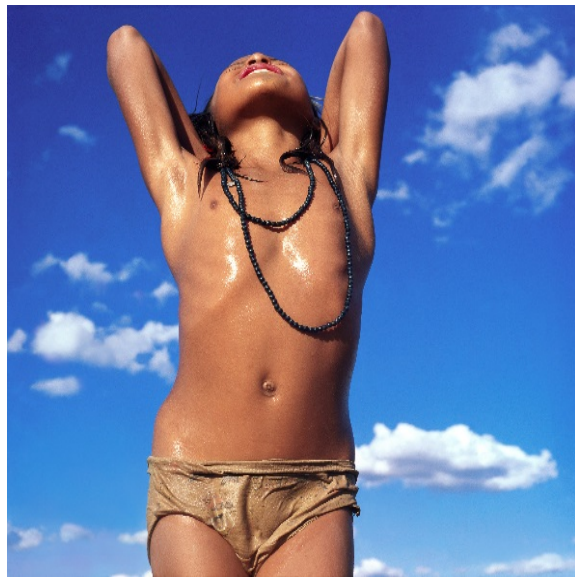
Right: *Cacique Pincén (Chief Pincén)* (1878). Antonio Pozzo (Argentine, born Italy, 1829 - 1910). Printed by Samuel Rimathé (Swiss, born Italy, 1863 – unknown). Albumen print. 20.2 x 14 cm (7 15/16 x 5 1/2 in.) Collection of Diran Sirinian

LOS ANGELES – From its independence in 1810 until the economic crisis of 2001, Argentina was seen as a modern country with a powerful economic system, a predominantly European immigrant population, a strong middle class, and an almost nonexistent indigenous culture. This idea of a homogenous society differs greatly from the perception of other Latin American countries and underlines the difference between Argentina's colonial and postcolonial history and those of its neighbors. *Photography in Argentina, 1850-2010: Contradiction and Continuity*, on view September 16, 2017-January 28, 2018 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center, features nearly 300 photographs created by Argentine artists from the dawn of the medium to the present day. The exhibition includes a large body of newly acquired work



from the Getty's permanent collection, alongside loans from Argentine photographers and collectors, and several major institutions worldwide.

The exhibition explores four themes that emphasize crucial historical moments and aesthetic movements in Argentina in which photography played a critical role. The exhibition concentrates on photographs that are fabricated rather than found, such as narrative tableaux and performances staged for the camera. At the same time, it includes examples of what has been perceived as documentary photography, but also functioned as political propaganda or expressed a personal ideology. These images produce, and other times dismantle, national symbols, utopian visions, and avant-garde artistic strategies deployed within the country.



Sin título (Untitled) (2001), from *Chaco* series. Guadalupe Miles (Argentine, born 1971). Inkjet print, printed 2017. 100 x 100 cm (39 3/8 x 39 3/8 in.). Courtesy of the artist © Guadalupe Miles

"Spanning a time period of more than 150 years, *Contradiction and Continuity* represents one of the most ambitious presentations of Argentinian photography ever to be undertaken by an American museum," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "As with many of the projects being developed for the Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA initiative, this exhibition and the related publication are certain to make important contributions to our understanding of Latin American art that will be appreciated by future generations of art historians."

Potts adds, "I am especially pleased that this exhibition has allowed us to expand the Museum's holdings of Latin American photography, thanks in no small part to the generosity of our Photographs Council, which is responsible for purchasing a larger number of the works that will be on view."

Civilization and Barbarism

Following the election of its first president, Bartolomé Mitre in 1861, Argentina began its transformation into a modern metropolis that valued progressive policies for its people. Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810-1884), a noted intellectual at the time, wrote that "to govern is to populate" in reference to the country's efforts to increase immigration. A major railroad system was built and a national education system established, in order to advance the country and its standard of living. By 1869, immigrants in Buenos Aires, mainly from Spain and Italy, represented 50% of the population.

On view in this section of the exhibition will be rare 19th century albums and photographs that document the capital city's growth in areas such as plazas, thoroughfares, theaters,

government buildings, and monuments. Commercial portraits, posed and sometimes costumed in well-furnished Buenos Aires portrait studios, will also be on view. These studios served a clientele of immigrants eager to share portraits from their new homeland with relatives abroad, thus creating additional interest in the region. A counterpoint to these works will be photographs by contemporary artists, such as Gustavo Di Mario (Argentine, born 1969), whose 2005 *Carnaval* series explores life in the rural interior of Argentina while employing a queer approach to mainstream Argentine icons.

"The dichotomy between the capital and the provinces, the European and the native, is a historical narrative that has fascinating recent interpretations," explains Judith Keller, senior curator in the Getty Museum's Department of Photographs and a curator of the exhibition.

National Myths

Several galleries in the exhibition will be devoted to national myths that have shaped Argentina's identity over time. This includes the myths of the indigenous, the gaucho, Evita, and that of the modern city.

The gaucho is celebrated as a national symbol of the idealized Argentine man – a fabled horseman of the pampas with long hair, scarf, poncho, wide lacy trousers, and silver accessories. The exhibition features images of the gaucho that were used to endorse Argentina's traditional customs and its national progress, often adorning postcards and included in albums that were widely circulated. Featured in this section of the exhibition is contemporary artist Marcos Lopez's (Argentine, born 1958) re-staged portrait of "Gaucho Gil," a 19th-century folk figure known for his healing powers and Robin Hood-esque exploits that are still revered in the Argentine countryside today.

While the gaucho became a national myth and point of pride, the existence of Argentina's indigenous population was addressed by the government only through late 19th century military campaigns to eradicate it. However, the indigenous presence in photography was well established by the late 19th century, as they were often posed outdoors or in portrait studios in ways that emphasized their exotic "otherness." On view will be a number of such photographs, including staged images of armed natives and portraits of indigenous chiefs who were visiting Buenos Aires for territorial negotiations. The exhibition also includes work by contemporary artists such as Grete Stern (Argentine, born Germany, 1904–1999) and Guadalupe Miles (Argentine, born 1971), who offer a different, more humanizing view of the indigenous as individuals, rather than stereotypes.

From the 1930s to 1950s, Argentina continued to modernize, and important avenues and monuments were built in Buenos Aires as the city became more cosmopolitan. The administration of Juan Perón from 1946–1955 was a symbol of this modernization, and used photography as propaganda to strengthen public support. Eva Duarte de Perón, better known as Evita, embodied the image of an inclusive Argentina, and the exhibition includes official, and intimate, photographs of her that contributed to her being known as the "spiritual leader of the nation." Later works in the exhibition by artists like Jaime Davidovich (Argentine-American, 1936–2016) offer a contrast to work from previous decades, proposing a critical and multi-dimensional view of this complex historical figure.

Aesthetic and Political Gestures

The 1960s and 70s saw Argentine artists radically break with traditional forms of art and instead embrace performance, actions, and installations. Artists such as Alberto Greco, Edgardo Vigo, and Osvaldo Romberg utilized innovative approaches to art, and documented their work with photography. These aesthetic gestures paved the way for more overt political works by artists later in the 20th century. On view will be documentation of some of these actions and experiments, from the 1960s to the early 2000s.

The decades following the end of Juan Perón's rule were marked by additional turmoil, including the military dictatorship (or Dirty War) of 1976-1983 that saw General Leopoldo Galtieri take power. During this time, thousands of citizens were kidnapped or "disappeared," and their photographs were shown publicly by groups like *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* to bring awareness to these incidents. While trials of military leaders for crimes against humanity began in the mid-1980s, many were later pardoned and protected until the 21st century.

In response to the continuing injustice, artists began protesting with gestures that expressed their distaste for the leaders and their crimes. Politically driven works on view include those of Graciela Sacco (Argentine, born 1956), whose *Bocanada* (literally "empty mouth") public poster series calls attention to hunger and poverty, and Julio Pantoja (Argentine, born 1961), whose 1996-2001 project features young people holding photographs of their parents who disappeared in northern Argentina during the dictatorship.

New Democracy to Present Day

Neoliberalist policies followed the restoration of democracy to Argentina in 1983, and led to a catastrophic economic collapse in 2001. In response to this collapse, artists such as Santiago Porter (Argentine, born 1971) created work that utilizes architecture to highlight aspects of national history in connection to current socio-political issues.

Other artists and collectives addressed inequality and its consequences in contemporary Argentina. SUB collective's 2012 narrative series, *A puertas cerradas (Behind Closed Gates)*, reveals the secure life of a wealthy family in a gated neighborhood outside of Buenos Aires. In contrast, Gian Paolo Minelli (Swiss, born 1968, lives in Argentina) facilitates self-portraiture by inhabitants of Barrio Piedrabuena, an impoverished neighborhood in the capital city.

"Featuring work by 60 artists, this exhibition highlights the crucial role that constructed photography has played in the last century and a half in the evolving, ongoing process of shaping a national identity in Argentina," says Idurre Alonso, associate curator of Latin American collections at the Getty Research Institute and a curator of the exhibition.

Photography in Argentina, 1850-2010: Contradiction and Continuity is on view September 16, 2017-January 28, 2018 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center. The exhibition is curated by Judith Keller, Senior Curator of Photographs, Getty Museum and Idurre Alonso, Associate Curator of Latin American Collections, Getty Research Institute, with assistance from Fabián Leyva-Barragán, Curatorial Assistant, Getty Museum. A book of the same name by

Keller and Alonso will be released by Getty Publications in fall 2017.

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Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles. Led by the Getty, Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA is the latest collaborative effort from arts institutions across Southern California, featuring more than 70 exhibitions exploring wide-ranging aspects of Latin American and Latino arts and culture.

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 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.

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. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 3 p.m. 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 one fee through the Getty's Pay Once, Park Twice program. Visit the Museum Information Desk at the Center or the Villa to obtain a coupon good for same-day complimentary parking at the other site.

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