



DATE: September 28, 2016
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J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS
Drawing: The Art of Change

On View October 4, 2016 –January 1, 2017
at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center



Three Sketches for Medea and Her Children (verso), about 1600 -1604. Peter Paul Rubens
Pen and brown ink. 11 11/16 x 17 1/4 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles 84.GA.959

LOS ANGELES – More than any other medium, drawing conveys the evolution of artistic ideas with great immediacy. With crossed out lines, repositioned figures, and cut and pasted forms, sheets of paper bear the traces of an artist's change of mind during the creative process.

Drawing: The Art of Change, on view October 4, 2016 –January 1, 2017, at the J. Paul Getty Museum, brings together a collection of works from the permanent collection that showcase the crucial role revision plays in the artistic practice.

"One of the most alluring aspects of drawings is the window they provide into the artist's creative process, which in turn helps us better understand finished works, be they on canvas or on paper," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "Known to art historians as *pentimenti* – the Italian for 'repenting one's sins' – these progressive corrections or improvements to an image are today regarded as anything but detractors; on the contrary, these are central to the understanding of the artist's working method and bring us closest to a

sense of how a great artistic hand and mind came together. The exhibition is a celebration of this vigorous process of artistic experimentation."

In one of the most spectacular works in the exhibition, Peter Paul Rubens's *Three Sketches for Medea and Her Children* (about 1600-1604), the artist reveals his evolving visualization of the scene through several studies of Medea carrying her dead children while fleeing from her husband Jason. He explores two possibilities: she either grasps their arms from above the elbow or, more successfully, from below, to emphasize their dead weight.

Pontormo's *Dead Christ* (about 1517-18), a powerful image of the lifeless Christ with his head thrown dramatically back, similarly allows us to witness the artist exploring his ideas. With a flurry of pencil strokes, Pontormo suggests an emaciated body with slender limbs and taut flesh. The unerased lines around the main drawing show that he changed his mind throughout this process, correcting the outlines of the figure with great speed and confidence. On the lower part of the sheet, we see a lightly sketched study of a woman standing in profile, over whom Pontormo drew the figure of Christ.

Another Italian artist, Annibale Carracci changes his subject and composition multiple times in the drawing *Three Studies of Heads* (about 1585). "He first drew a study of Saint John the Evangelist holding a lamb placed sideways from the left center," explains Stephanie Schrader, the exhibition's curator. "The bearded man wearing a hat and the youth with his head cupped in his hands were most likely his next additions. At the bottom, the artist inserted a third figure, whose hat covers his sketchy eyes. These three studies are among the most striking portraits by Annibale, who carefully observed and depicted the world around him."

Drawing: The Art of Change will be on view October 4, 2016-January 1, 2017, at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center. The exhibition is curated by Stephanie Schrader, curator in the Museum's Department of Drawings. Programs related to the exhibition include a regional celebration of the art of drawing that is a part of Big Draw LA. This event will take place on Saturday, October 8, 2016. Additional related programming information can be found at getty.edu/360.

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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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