



The J. Paul Getty Trust  
Communications Department

1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 403  
Los Angeles, California 90049-1681  
www.getty.edu

Tel 310 440 7360  
Fax 310 440 7722  
communications@getty.edu

## NEWS FROM THE GETTY

**DATE:** December 20, 2011  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### A NEW SETTING GIVES FOUR WORKS OF ART NEW LIFE IN AN EXHIBITION AT THE GETTY MUSEUM

*The Life of Art: Context, Collecting, and Display* opens February 7, 2012

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center

LOS ANGELES—From the time an object is made until the day it enters a museum's collection, it may be displayed, used, and perceived in different ways. A new, long-term exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum, ***The Life of Art: Context, Collecting, and Display***, takes four objects from the Museum's permanent collection and encourages visitors to sit down and spend time with them, offering the opportunity to examine them closely to understand how they were made and functioned, why they were collected, and how they have been displayed. Touch screen interactive displays will highlight and explain visual clues about the life of each object.

"Many of the objects in the Getty Museum's permanent collection have fascinating stories," said David Bomford, acting director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "By focusing on close engagement with a few selected works, *The Life of Art* encourages critical seeing and reveals the full lives of these objects and why they continue to be collected and cherished today."



Fountain, 1661–63. Jean Leroy (French, master 1625). Probably altered by Ralph Leake in London, in 1695, and altered in 1758 by Phillips Garden (British) and altered again later in the 18 century by unknown silversmith. Silver. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

The four objects from the Getty's permanent collection are: a silver fountain (France, 1661–1663), a lidded porcelain bowl (China or Japan and England late-1600s), a gilt-wood side chair (France, about 1735–1740), and a gilt-bronze wall light (France, 1756). The exhibition gallery provides an inviting, comfortable setting where the works are presented at table height so that each can be seen easily at close range and in the round. Labels and the interactive programs will prompt visitors to examine these artworks carefully to look for makers' marks or inscriptions, details of construction or assembly, and visual evidence of alteration or repair.

The fountain is an elaborate silver vessel made to hold water that could be released from a spigot at the front. A maker's mark indicates that it was made in Paris around 1660; however, the front is engraved with the coat-of-arms of an English nobleman and his wife indicating that it was in England by the mid-1700s.

A fascinating example of Asian and European art combined in one object, the porcelain lidded bowl was made in China or Japan in the late-1600s and shipped to England soon after where the elaborate gilt-bronze handles and other ornamentation were added to make it fit into the grand decorative interiors of the time.

Off the floor and at eye-level, the gilt-wood side chair can be examined closely, revealing the carved wood details that speak to its style, and where and when it was made. The chair was made with easily removable cushions and visitors will see how the upholstery could be changed with the fashion.

For this exhibition the wall light has been taken off the wall and mounted to a sheet of Plexiglas so that the back can be seen. Revealing details of the construction and repair are visible as well as the maker's inscription and an inventory mark indicating that the wall light once belonged to Queen Marie-Antoinette of France.

Each of the works of art in the exhibition has a mate, or a similar piece, on view in the adjacent permanent collection galleries, allowing visitors the opportunity to compare the different viewing experiences. Labels will be installed in the spots where each piece is normally displayed—marking their absence, illustrating how each object is normally displayed and directing visitors to the exhibition.

"The innovative display combining interactive programs as well as traditional print labels will give visitors the option to investigate further to learn about the visual clues, technical details, cultural context and history of each object," said Toby Tannenbaum, assistant director for Education at the Getty Museum and one of the exhibition's curators.

"We hope that they will be encouraged by this experience to try applying the practice of close looking to other works of art throughout the museum."

Three Getty experts—in education, design, and curatorial—worked together to curate this unique exhibition. Jeffrey Weaver, associate curator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts; Merritt Price, Design Manager; and Tannenbaum collaborated on *The Life of Art* from start to finish.

# # #

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Amy Hood  
Getty Communications  
(310) 440-6427  
[ahood@getty.edu](mailto:ahood@getty.edu)

**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 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.

#### **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

#### **Additional information is available at [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu).**

Sign up for e-Getty at [www.getty.edu/subscribe](http://www.getty.edu/subscribe) to receive free monthly highlights of events at the Getty Center and the Getty Villa via e-mail, or visit [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu) for a complete calendar of public programs.