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*David with the Head of Goliath*, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, oil on wood.  
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

## **THE GETTY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES GRANT TO KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM TO CONSERVE ICONIC MASTERPIECES BY CARAVAGGIO AND RUBENS**

### ***Key Works to be One of Last Major Training Grants Capping Getty Foundation's Panel Paintings Initiative***

LOS ANGELES—The Getty Foundation in Los Angeles is awarding a grant of €300,000 (roughly \$416,000 US) to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (KHM) for the conservation of two great masterpieces by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and Peter Paul Rubens. The KHM grant will be one of the last training grants of the Foundation's successful Panel Paintings Initiative, through which the next generation of paintings conservators is being trained in the complexities of conserving works of art painted on wood panels.

"The conservation of these two spectacular paintings in Vienna provides a fascinating learning opportunity for all of the conservators involved in the project. When the last major training grants are completed in late 2016, the Panel Paintings Initiative will have succeeded in reaching its goals, ensuring that the next generation of conservators is in place to provide

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quality care for panel paintings in major European and North American collections," said Deborah Marrow, Director of the Getty Foundation. "The Initiative's success is the result of a joint effort by all of the expert conservators involved, who have been extremely generous in sharing their time and knowledge."

Sabine Haag, General Director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, added "I am an advocate of publicizing scholarship, science and research in the context of the museum's ongoing international collaborations and interconnected projects, of informing the general public about these important aspects of museum work. Our collaboration with the Getty Foundation has allowed us to expand the Kunsthistorisches Museum as a center of competence and training for panel conservation. I am extremely happy that we will continue this successful collaboration and that this long-term cooperation ensures the optimum examination and conservation of two icons of art history."

The two KHM paintings – Caravaggio's *David with the Head of Goliath* (ca. 1600) and Rubens' *Stormy Landscape* (ca. 1625) – are both iconic masterpieces representing the height of Baroque painting.

Caravaggio's *David with the Head of Goliath* is one of only two existing paintings by the artist on wood panel. A beautiful and emotionally evocative work, this panel is in critically fragile condition, the result of past conservation interventions that shaved the wood support to only a few millimeters in thickness, nearly as thin as paper. The project will require the removal of the existing rigid cradle - a latticed wooden structure attached to the back of the panel intended to prevent warping. Following the cradle's removal, the panels must rest to resume their natural shape before the conservators can determine the next steps, which will include the construction of a new flexible support and the repair of multiple fractures that threaten the integrity of the paint layers.

Rubens' *Stormy Landscape* is a powerful representation of the natural world, setting the course for the future development of landscape painting. The work is among the greatest dramatic landscapes by Rubens, who created it for his own personal collection. It is one of two large landscapes painted by the artist in this period that feature scenes from classical literature, in this case, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. (Small figures on the right side of the painting indicate it is the story of Philemon and Baucis being rescued from the storm by the gods Jupiter and Mercury.) The painting is structurally complex and was cobbled together from ten different pieces of wood. Because each plank has aged differently, the panel presents some unique conservation challenges. The separations between the pieces are now visible to the naked eye.

Old master paintings on wooden supports, or panels, are among the most significant works of art in American and European museum collections. Years of practice are required for a panel paintings conservator to develop the surgical skills required for intervention, including a deep knowledge of painting conservation techniques and exceptional woodworking expertise. With only a handful of experts fully qualified to conserve these paintings, and nearly all of them set to retire within the next decade, the Getty Foundation, Getty Conservation Institute, and J. Paul Getty Museum together launched the Panel Paintings Initiative in 2009 to ensure that the next generation of conservators would be prepared to take their place. Since then, the Foundation has identified and supported a number of projects designed to achieve this goal.

The Initiative already has achieved a concentrated but significant impact on the field, so far providing more than 20 conservators intensive training and hands-on experience in panel paintings conservation. In addition, hundreds of other conservators and students have benefited from the workshops that have been offered, university courses that have resulted, or translations of key works on panel painting conservation that have been disseminated.

One of the key goals of the initiative was to increase knowledge among conservators in Central and Eastern Europe. The project in Vienna will support training for five conservators in from Crakow, Dresden, Prague, and Vienna. Two of these individuals hold teaching positions at conservation schools in their respective countries, which will extend the reach of training activities as they incorporate their newly acquired knowledge into their courses.

Experts at KHM will oversee the project, and structural treatment will be undertaken by two of the world's foremost panel paintings conservators, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's George Bisacca and the Museo Nacional del Prado's José de la Fuente. Also consulting on the project will be two leading experts and active trainers on the Panel Paintings Initiative: retired Opificio delle Pietre Dure conservator Ciro Castelli and Ebury Street conservator Ray Marchant. The project was developed in consultation with the initiative's lead trainers and with members of the Panel Paintings Initiative advisory committee, which includes experts from Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK, and the United States.

Although this is one of the last major training grants of the initiative, a number of the current projects remain active and will continue to yield interesting results over the next two to three years.

### **Previous Projects**

Other projects already undertaken as part of the Getty's Panel Paintings Initiative include the study and conservation of the following paintings: Vasari's *Last Supper*, Fra Angelico's *San Marco Altarpiece*, Alessandro Allori's *Christ on the Cross between the Virgin and Saint John*, Simone Martini's *Crucifix*, and Leonardo da Vinci's *Adoration of the Magi*, all at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure (OPD) in Florence; Albrecht Durer's *Adam and Eve* and Peter Paul Rubens's *Triumph of the Eucharist* series at the Prado Museum in Madrid; six panels by Pieter Brueghel the Elder in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna; three panels by Hieronymus Bosch in the collections of the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the Palazzo Grimani in Venice; and the iconic *Ghent Altarpiece*, the study of which resulted in an innovative web application (closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be) that provides unprecedented access to this masterpiece, all supported by the Getty Foundation.

For more information about the Getty Foundation's philanthropic work around the globe, including the Panel Paintings Initiative, visit [www.getty.edu/foundation](http://www.getty.edu/foundation).

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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 Foundation** fulfills the philanthropic mission of the Getty Trust by supporting individuals and institutions committed to advancing the greater understanding and preservation of the visual arts in Los Angeles and throughout the world. Through strategic grant initiatives, the Foundation strengthens art history as a global discipline, promotes the interdisciplinary practice of conservation, increases access to museum and archival collections, and develops current and future leaders in the visual arts. It carries out its work in collaboration with the other Getty Programs to ensure that they individually and collectively achieve maximum effect. Additional information is available at [www.getty.edu/foundation](http://www.getty.edu/foundation).

**The Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (KHM)**, commissioned by Emperor Franz Joseph I, opened its doors in 1891. KHM's holdings are comprised of the Hapsburg's imperial art collections, ranging from Ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities to Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts. The Renaissance and Baroque collection is of particular significance and is one of the largest and most comprehensive of its kind, containing outstanding works by German, Italian, and Flemish masters, including paintings by Brueghel, Dürer, Rembrandt, Titian, and Vermeer. KHM received three grants from the Foundation since 1986, most recently in 2012 as part of the Panel Paintings Initiative for training and condition assessments related to six paintings by Pieter Brueghel the Elder.

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

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