

THE LAST DAYS OF
POMPEII
DECADENCE • APOCALYPSE • RESURRECTION

DATE: August 22, 2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT
Moira Morgan Day
Getty Publications
(310) 440-7096
mday@getty.edu

**THE MODERN OBSESSION WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF POMPEII EXPLORED
THROUGH THE EYES OF ARTISTS OF THE LAST THREE CENTURIES**

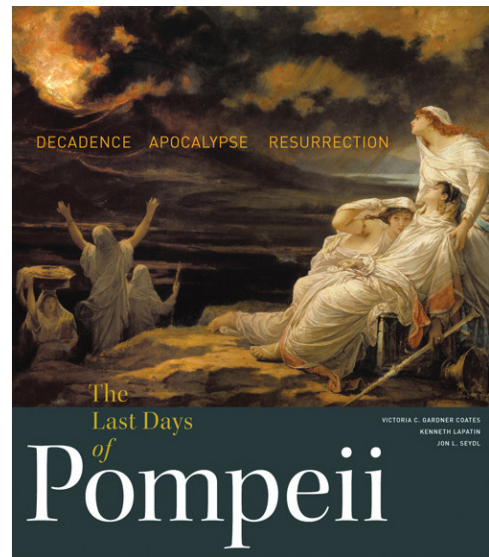
The Last Days of Pompeii: Decadence, Apocalypse, Resurrection

Victoria C. Gardner Coates, Kenneth Lapatin, and Jon L. Seydl

Published by the J. Paul Getty Museum

September 12, 2012

LOS ANGELES—Destroyed yet paradoxically preserved by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, Pompeii and other nearby sites are usually considered places where we can most directly experience the daily lives of ancient Romans. Rather than present these sites as windows to the past, however, the authors of ***The Last Days of Pompeii: Decadence, Apocalypse, Resurrection*** (Getty Publications, \$39.95, Hardcover) explore Pompeii as a modern obsession, in which the Vesuvian sites function as mirrors of the present. Through cultural appropriation and projection, outstanding visual and literary artists of the last three centuries have made the ancient catastrophe their own, expressing contemporary concerns in diverse media—from paintings, prints, and sculpture, to theatrical performances, photography, and film. This lavishly illustrated volume—featuring the works of artists such as Piranesi, Fragonard, Kaufmann, Ingres, Chassériau, and Alma-Tadema, as well as Duchamp, Dalí, Rothko, Rauschenberg, and Warhol—surveys the legacy of Pompeii in the modern imagination under the three overarching rubrics of decadence, apocalypse, and resurrection.



-more-



The J. Paul Getty Trust
Communications Department

1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 403
Los Angeles, CA 90049-1681

Tel 310 440 7360 www.getty.edu
Fax 310 440 7722

Decadence investigates the perception of Pompeii as a site of impending and well-deserved doom due to the excesses of the ancient Romans, such as paganism, licentiousness, greed, gluttony, and violence. The catastrophic demise of the Vesuvian sites has become inexorably linked with the understanding of antiquity, turning Pompeii into a fundamental allegory for Apocalypse, to which all subsequent disasters (natural or man-made) are related, from the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 to Hiroshima, Nagasaki, 9/11, and Hurricane Katrina. Resurrection examines how Pompeii and the Vesuvian cities have been reincarnated in modern guise through both scientific archaeology and fantasy, as each successive cultural reality superimposed its values and ideas on the distant past.

An exhibition of the same name will be on view at the Getty Villa from September 12, 2012 through January 7, 2013 and at the Cleveland Museum of Art from February 24 through May 19, 2013.

About the Authors:

Victoria C. Gardner Coates received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania where she has been a lecturer and visiting scholar. **Kenneth Lapatin** is associate curator of antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum. **Jon L. Seydl** is the Paul J. and Edith Ingalls Vignos, Jr., curator of European painting and sculpture, 1500-1800, at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Publication Information:

The Last Days of Pompeii
Decadence, Apocalypse, Resurrection

Victoria C. Gardner Coates, Kenneth Lapatin, and Jon L. Seydl
J. Paul Getty Museum
256 pages, 9 1/2 x 11 inches
150 color and 20 b/w illustrations
ISBN 978-1-60606-115-2, US \$39.95 [UK £27.95]

Publication Date: **September 12, 2012**

#

Kindly email or mail notice of your review when published to Moira Morgan Day, mday@getty.edu, Getty Publications, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90049-1682.

Available at bookstores or through Getty Publications (800-223-3431). Distributed to the trade in the U.S. and Canada by the University of Chicago Press, and in the U.K. and Europe by Orca Book Services.