J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS

Art of the Fold: Drawings of Drapery and Costume

New Exhibition Showcases the Study of the Human Figure Through Drawings from the Museum’s Permanent Collection

Art of the Fold: Drawings of Drapery and Costume

October 6, 2015 – January 10, 2016
at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center

Drawn from the J. Paul Getty Museum’s renowned permanent collection, Art of the Fold: Drawings of Drapery and Costume is a new exhibition opening at the Getty Center on October 6 that explores how artists harnessed the expressive potential of cloth to convey meaning.

“From the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the convincing depiction of voluminous folds of fabric was a standard part of artistic training and practice,” explains Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. “Focusing on the relationship between the body and clothing, artists of this period exploited drapery and costume to enhance the depiction of a figure’s emotional state and place in society. The drawings in this exhibition demonstrate the many ways in which artists employed drapery to evoke moods, shape identities, and tell stories.”

In Standing Female Saint (about 1450), from the Circle of Martin Schongauer, the abstract pattern of drapery folds generates an agitated sense of motion. Rather than outlining the body beneath it, the flowing tunic accentuates an emotional fervor typical of German fifteenth-century devotional imagery.

Drapery also played a crucial part in artists’ characterization of the human figure. In Hans Brosamer’s Study of a Pleated Skirt and Study of a Hanging Drapery (about 1500) the artist accurately depicts the tonal variations and ranges of light and shade created by folded fabric, capturing the natural flow of cloth with a refined linear quality and variegated hatchings. By
isolating drapery from a human form, while at the same time making it anthropomorphic, the artist celebrates drapery as an independent subject.

In drawings of soldiers, peasants, nobles, and foreigners, clothing served as a primary indicator of social standing and class. In Jacob Jordaens' *Man Kneeling, Facing Right* (about 1630) the artist applied opaque watercolor in thick layers creating angular, broken folds that animate the pose and heighten the sense of piety. Often a figure's clothing indicates status or rank in the social hierarchy, and the flamboyant uniforms of the mercenary soldiers and the elegant attire of the upper classes convey their status.

In their depictions of costume, artists often departed from strict naturalism and relied upon their vivid imaginations. "Drawings of foreigners suggest how dress is embellished and exoticized, whereas theatrical costumes further illustrate how clothing can mask the identities of individuals represented," says Stephanie Schrader, curator of drawings at the J. Paul Getty Museum, who organized the exhibition.

*Art of the Fold: Drawings of Drapery and Costume* will be on view October 6, 2015-January 10, 2016 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center. Related programming will include curator gallery talks, a drawings hour, and more. Additional 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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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.

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