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**GETTY MUSEUM'S DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHS CELEBRATES
30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH AN EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTING
ITS RENOWNED COLLECTION**

Convergences: Selected Photographs from the Permanent Collection will feature recent acquisitions by Loretta Lux, Yasumasa Morimura, Cindy Sherman, and James Welling



Daughter of Art History, Theater A, 1989. Yasumasa Morimura (Japanese, born 1951). © Yasumasa Morimura. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES – Since it was established in 1984, the J. Paul Getty Museum's Department of Photographs has seen its collection grow substantially through purchases and gifts. On view from July 8 – October 19, 2014, the department's newest exhibition at the Getty Center, *Convergences: Selected Photographs from the Permanent Collection*, coincides with this anniversary. Through a series of 14 groupings, the exhibition reveals points of intersection—or convergence—between recently acquired works by contemporary artists and historical photographs already in the collection.

Among the contemporary artists whose work has been recently acquired, in several cases with the assistance of the Museum's Photographs Council, are Loretta Lux, Vera Lutter, Yasumasa Morimura, Cindy Sherman, and James Welling. These photographs are placed in

conversation with prints by Diane Arbus, Imogen Cunningham, Walker Evans, Man Ray, Frederick Sommer, and others.

"As the youngest curatorial department at the Getty Museum and the only department to actively collect contemporary art, the Department of Photographs has very quickly evolved into a leader in the field, greatly expanding the collection and presenting thoughtful exhibitions that have enriched our understanding of the medium," explains Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "This exhibition, which reflects on the department's 30 year history, offers visitors the opportunity to appreciate the continuum that exists – sometimes conscious, sometimes serendipitous – between newly acquired contemporary works and more historical works that came into the collection earlier in the department's history. Not only does it provide insight into the history of the department and its collecting, but also into the history of photography itself."



Image Left: *Country Girls*, 1925. August Sander (German, 1876 – 1964). © J. Paul Getty Trust. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



Image Right: *Sasha and Ruby*, 2005. Loretta Lux (German, born 1969). © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

The premise of the exhibition was inspired by Lawrence Weschler's 2006 collection of essays *Everything That Rises: A Book of Convergences*, in which the author explores visual associations between disparate objects, events, and phenomena. Weschler uncovers "uncanny moments of convergence, bizarre associations, eerie rhymes, whispered recollections" in images of wide-ranging historical, geographical, and thematic content.

"The idea of convergences provides a framework with which to think about how images made at different times and with different aesthetic motivations can be in conversation with one another," says Virginia Heckert, curator of photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum and curator of the exhibition. "It also gives some insight into the curatorial process by which a collection with strong holdings of historical photography, like that of the Getty Museum, can be expanded to include contemporary work."

Each pair or cluster of images in the exhibition is anchored by one of approximately a dozen recently acquired contemporary works, all on view for the first time. Historical works have been selected on the basis of visual resonances that may suggest direct influence or may be of a more tenuous nature.

One of the groups brings together several images that explore the ways in which photographers have portrayed the bonds and differences between twins. Taken during the annual Twins Day festival in Twinsburg, Ohio, Mary Ellen Mark's (American, born 1940) portrait of *Heather and Kelsey Dietrick, 7 years old, Kelsey older by 66 minutes* (2002) captures subtle nuances in expression and body language. By contrast, Loretta Lux's (German, born

1969) portrait of *Sasha and Ruby* (2005) utilizes digital manipulation to introduce an emotional aloofness that is further enhanced by the girls' distanced stance from one another. Lux's and Marks's photographs are indebted to Diane Arbus's (American, 1923-1971) image *Identical Twins, Roselle, N.J.* (negative, 1966-67; print, 1970-75), which itself was inspired by August Sanders's (German, 1876-1964) 1925 portrait of identically dressed girls from the German countryside.

In another grouping, Yasumasa Morimura (Japanese, born 1951) uses make-up, costumes, custom-made props, and sets to create elaborate re-stagings of iconic works from Western art history. In *Daughter of Art History, Theater A* and *Daughter of Art History, Theater B* (1989) he becomes the barmaid of Édouard Manet's painting *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882). Morimura's work calls to mind Marcel Duchamp's alter ego Rose Sélavy, whose portrait has been preserved in photographs by his close friend and collaborator, Man Ray. Two of these photographs will be included in the exhibition. Like Duchamp before him, Morimura seems to embrace femininity as an empowering channel for creativity.

For *New Abstraction #71* (2000), James Welling (American, born 1951) placed strips of mat board on sheets of high-contrast film to produce cameraless photograms. Prints made from these



Image Top: *New Abstraction #71*, 2000. James Welling (American, born 1951). © James Welling. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased in part with funds provided by the Photographs Council

Image Bottom: *[Girders with Walkway]*, about 1935 - 1940. Ralston Crawford (American, born Canada, 1906 - 1978). © Ralston Crawford Estate. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

negatives evoke the abstract formal vocabulary used by Modernist photographers in the United States and Europe to depict architectural structures and frameworks in the 1920s and 1930s. By tilting their cameras upward or downward and allowing the subject to extend beyond the picture frame, artists such as Ralston Crawford (American, born Canada, 1906-1978) sought to draw our attention to elegant geometric patterns found in industrial constructions.

For the past fifteen years, Alec Soth (American, born 1969) has documented the daily lives and dreams of low-income Americans. *Rebecca* (2005) is a somber portrait of a mother and her baby, whose isolation is exacerbated by an empty asphalt lot and the bleakness of her surroundings. Rebecca appears distinctly unprepared to imagine the idealized images of motherhood staged by Julia Margaret Cameron (British, born India, 1815-1879) and Gertrude Käsebier (American, 1852-1934) or to face the realities presented in Weegee's (American, born Austria, 1899-1968) portrait of a mother and child in Harlem. Grouped together, these portrayals of motherhood contrast attitudes of devotion and well-being with poverty and struggle.

Convergences: Selected Photographs from the Permanent Collection is on view July 8-October 19, 2014 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center. Full list of related events to be announced.

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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 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.

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