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PICTURING THE ANCIENT WORLD: ANTIQUE REVIVAL PAINTINGS

OPENS AT GETTY MUSEUM MAY 4

J. Paul Getty's interest in ancient Greece and Rome is most apparent in the antiquities he collected and in his re-creation of an ancient Roman villa--the J. Paul Getty Museum--to house them. It is also manifest in his small collection of late-19th-century paintings that aspire to recreate the ancient world. In Picturing the Ancient World: Antique Revival Paintings, six of these works will be shown together for the first time, from May 4 through August 30.

The highlight of the exhibition is Lawrence Alma Tadema's Spring of 1894, one of the Museum's most popular works. Spring is often mistaken for an accurate depiction of an ancient Roman festival. While it is correct in many of its archaeological details, it is actually Alma Tadema's fantasy of a lost Golden Age, calculated to appeal to nostalgic yearnings for the greatness of lost civilizations.

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The imaginary quality of antique revival art is also evident in the other paintings in the exhibition, including three works by John William Godward and one each by Ettore Forti and Roberto Bompiani. As a group, they stand as testimony to the wide appeal these paintings had throughout Europe, as well as to how they reflect the spirit of the end of the last century. It is our hope that the romantic idealism of these works will stimulate visitors to ponder how we relate to ancient themes and how our interpretations of them are surely biased by the ideas and concerns of our own day.

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The J. Paul Getty Museum is one of eight programs of the J. Paul Getty Trust, a private operating foundation devoted to the visual arts and humanities. The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is free, but advance parking reservations are required. Call (310)458-2003, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, for information and reservations. For information in Spanish, call (310)458-1104.The Museum houses an extensive permanent collection of Greek and Roman antiquities, pre-20th-century Western European paintings, drawings, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, decorative arts and 19th- and 20th-century American and European photographs. The building itself is a recreation of a first-century A.D. Roman country villa, with interior and exterior gardens. The Museum is located at 17985 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA 90265.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR PHOTOGRAPHS, contact Denise Yarfitz, Public Information Associate, or Elizabeth Nesbitt, Public Information Intern, (310) 459-7611, x334.