

Bringing the Arts Together
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'We hope to see unexpected connections between all kinds of people and ideas.'
— Salvatore Settis, Getty Research Institute director

From its vantage point in the Santa Monica Mountains, the Getty Center commands a view that begins with the vast patchwork of Los Angeles and extends into the future of how we understand and appreciate the arts.

Until now, the many arms of the Getty organization — the museum, the research institute, the conservation institute, the grant program, the education institute for the arts and the information institute — have operated apart. The Getty Center, scheduled to open to the public in December, brings them together in a campus-like setting intended to facilitate cooperation and communication among the many arts-related fields.

“There is an excitement of being all there together,” said Deborah Marrow, Getty Grant Program director. “There’s a power of [the programs] being together.... The kinds of encounters are serendipitous. Running into someone on the plaza or the tram or sitting down with them at lunch — all of this will spark ideas.”

According to Harold Williams, president of the J. Paul Getty Trust, “We intend for [the center] to attract and serve a broad public — people from Los Angeles and from around the world, young and old, who will come there to enjoy and study art and cultural heritage in an inspiring and stimulating setting.”

The seeds of the center were planted in 1953 with oil baron J. Paul Getty’s vision for “the diffusion of artistic and general knowledge.” In 1982, when most of the tycoon’s estate passed to the trust, the question was how to best contribute to the world’s visual arts.

The answer is now perched atop a hill overlooking Los Angeles.

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