

## Getty Center celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Robert Polidori photographs exhibition

2017



Robert Polidori (Canadian / French / American, born 1951), European Painting 1850-1900 Gallery, J. Paul Getty Museum, 1997. Chromogenic print. Image: 41.6 × 54.6 cm (16 3/8 × 21 1/2 in.) Sheet: 47.6 × 60.3 cm (18 3/4 × 23 3/4 in.) Accession No. EX.2017.11.21 © Robert Polidori Object Credit: Courtesy of the artist in conjunction with The Lapis Press.

LOS ANGELES, CA.- In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Getty Center, the J. Paul Getty Museum opens an exhibition of 20 works by renowned photographer Robert Polidori (Canadian-French-American, born 1951). Robert Polidori: 20 Photographs of the Getty Museum, 1997 is the first public exhibition of photographs showing the first installation of the Getty Center in the month leading up to its opening in December 1997.

“As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Getty Center this December, this exhibition provides an opportunity to reflect upon the creation of this remarkable complex of buildings and the evolution of the Getty Center’s programs. Polidori’s artfully composed images are not only an important historical record, but also a revealing insight into the behind-the-scenes work that goes into the preparation and installation of our exhibitions and displays,” says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

Highly regarded for his depictions of human habitats and cultural museology, Polidori produced these intimate and unstaged views of the Getty Center in fall 1997 while on assignment for *The New Yorker*. Initially limited to surveying the exterior grounds because of restricted access, he lobbied successfully for permission to photograph the Center's indoor spaces as well. Polidori ultimately produced about 60 exposures of the gardens, entrance hall, galleries, and various spaces across the site. Working in what he called an "old analogical way" with a large-format camera and Kodak Vericolor film, Polidori created this group of photographs at a moment when digital photography was gaining momentum, embraced by amateur and professional photographers alike.

This exhibition features a selection of photographs Polidori made of interior spaces within the Getty Museum, work he generated while in the midst of a multi-year project to document period rooms undergoing restoration at the Palace of Versailles. Many of the images reveal the process of installing objects from J. Paul Getty's painting, sculpture, and decorative arts collections in the new galleries, some of which remain on display today. A book titled *Synchrony and Diachrony*, published by Steidl and featuring texts by Polidori, David Dorenbaum (psychoanalyst and assistant professor at the University of Toronto), and Amanda Maddox (associate curator, Department of Photographs, J. Paul Getty Museum), will be released on the occasion of the exhibition.

"The labors made semi-evident in these photographs—showing brief glimpses of seemingly chaotic states, slowly evolving towards a structured order, resembling tableaux and portraying scenes seen as occurring behind a curtain—were attempts on my part to bring some phenomenological trace, as well as psychological depth, to a subject matter that essentially is usually invisible: the portraiture of the curatorial act," says Robert Polidori.