

= Getty Center =

The Getty Center , in Los Angeles , California , is a campus of the Getty Museum and other programs of the Getty Trust . The \$ 1 @. @ 3 billion Center opened to the public on December 16 , 1997 and is well known for its architecture , gardens , and views overlooking Los Angeles . The Center sits atop a hill connected to a visitors ' parking garage at the bottom of the hill by a three @-@ car , cable @-@ pulled hovertrain funicular .

Located in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles , the Center is one of two locations of the J. Paul Getty Museum and draws 1 @. @ 3 million visitors annually . (The other location is the Getty Villa in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles , California .) The Center branch of the Museum features pre @-@ 20th @-@ century European paintings , drawings , illuminated manuscripts , sculpture , and decorative arts ; and 19th- and 20th @-@ century American , Asian , and European photographs . In addition , the Museum ' s collection at the Center includes outdoor sculpture displayed on terraces and in gardens and the large Central Garden designed by Robert Irwin . Among the artworks on display is the Vincent Van Gogh painting *Irises* .

Designed by architect Richard Meier , the campus also houses the Getty Research Institute (GRI) , the Getty Conservation Institute , the Getty Foundation , and the J. Paul Getty Trust . The Center ' s design included special provisions to address concerns regarding earthquakes and fires .

= = Location and history = =

Originally , the Getty Museum started in J. Paul Getty ' s house located in Pacific Palisades in 1954 . He expanded the house with a museum wing . In the 1970s , Getty built a replica of an Italian villa on his home ' s property to better house his collection , which opened in 1974 . After Getty ' s death in 1976 , the entire property was turned over to the Getty Trust for museum purposes . However , the collection outgrew the site , which has since been renamed the Getty Villa , and management sought a location more accessible to Los Angeles . The purchase of the land upon which the Center is located , a campus of 24 acres (9 @. @ 7 ha) on a 110 @-@ acre (45 ha) site in the Santa Monica Mountains above Interstate 405 , surrounded by 600 acres (240 ha) kept in a natural state , was announced in 1983 . The site cost \$ 25 million . The top of the hill is 900 feet (270 m) above I @-@ 405 , high enough that on a clear day it is possible to see not only the Los Angeles skyline but also the San Bernardino Mountains , and San Gabriel Mountains to the east as well as the Pacific Ocean to the west .

In 1984 , Richard Meier was chosen to be the architect of the Center . After an extensive conditional @-@ use permit process , construction by the Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Company began in August 1989 . The construction was significantly delayed , with the planned completion date moved from 1988 to 1995 (as of 1990) . By 1995 , however , the campus was described as only " more than halfway complete " .

The Center ultimately opened to the public on December 16 , 1997 . Although the total project cost was estimated to be \$ 350 million as of 1990 , it was later estimated to be \$ 1 @. @ 3 billion . After the Center opened , the villa closed for extensive renovations and reopened on January 28 , 2006 , to focus on the arts and cultures of ancient Greece , Rome , and Etruria . Currently , the Museum displays collections at both the Getty Center and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades .

In 2005 , after a series of articles in the Los Angeles Times about the spending practices of the Getty Trust and its then @-@ president Dr. Barry Munitz , the California Attorney General conducted an investigation of the Getty Trust and found that no laws had been broken . The trust agreed to appoint an outside monitor to review future expenditures . The Getty Trust experienced financial difficulties in 2008 and 2009 and cut 205 of 1 @, @ 487 budgeted staff positions to reduce expenses . Although the Getty Trust endowment reached \$ 6 @. @ 4 billion in 2007 , it dropped to \$ 4 @. @ 5 billion in 2009 . The endowment rebounded to \$ 6 @. @ 2 billion by 2013 .

= = Architecture = =

Meier has exploited the two naturally @-@ occurring ridges (which diverge at a 22 @. @ 5 degree angle) by overlaying two grids along these axes . These grids serve to define the space of the campus while dividing the import of the buildings on it . Along one axis lie the galleries and along the other axis lie the administrative buildings . Meier emphasized the two competing grids by constructing strong view lines through the campus . The main north @-@ south axis starts with the helipad , then includes a narrow walkway between the auditorium and north buildings , continues past the elevator kiosk to the tram station , through the rotunda , past the walls and support columns of the exhibitions pavilion , and finally the ramp besides the west pavilion and the central garden . Its corresponding east @-@ west visual axis starts with the edge of the scholar 's wing of the Getty Research Institute (GRI) , the walkway between the central garden and the GRI , the overlook to the azalea pool in the central garden , the walkway between the central garden and the west pavilion , and finally the north wall of the west pavilion and the courtyard between the south and east pavilions .

The main axes of the museum grid that is offset by 22 @. @ 5 degrees begins with the arrival plaza , carries through the edge of the stairs up to the main entrance , aligns with the columns supporting the rotunda as well as the center point of the rotunda , aligns with travertine benches in the courtyard between the pavilions , includes a narrow walkway between the west and south pavilions , a staircase down to the catus garden and ends in the garden . The corresponding cross axis starts with the center point of the circle forming the GRI library garden , then passing to the center of the entrance rotunda , and aligning with the south wall of the rotunda building . Although all of the Museum is aligned on these alternative axes , portions of the exhibitions pavilion and the east pavilion are aligned on the true north @-@ south axis as a reminder that both grids are present in the campus .

The primary grid structure is a 30 @-@ inch (760 mm) square ; most wall and floor elements are 30 @-@ inch (760 mm) squares or some derivative thereof . The buildings at the Getty Center are made from concrete and steel with either travertine or aluminium cladding . Around 1 @, @ 200 @, @ 000 square feet (110 @, @ 000 m2) of travertine was used to build the Center .

Throughout the campus , numerous fountains provide white noise as a background . The initial design has remained intact ; however benches and fences have been installed around the plaza fountains to discourage visitors from wading into the pools . Some additional revisions have been made in deference to the Americans with Disabilities Act .

The north promontory is anchored by a circular grass area , which serves as a heliport in case of emergencies , and the south promontory is anchored by a succulent plant and cactus garden . The complex is also encircled by access roads that lead to loading docks and staff parking garages on both the west and east sides of the buildings . The hillside around the complex has been planted with California Live Oak (Quercus agrifolia) trees .

The Museum has a seven @-@ story deep underground parking garage with over 1 @, @ 200 parking spaces . Its roof has an outdoor sculpture garden . An automated three @-@ car , cable @-@ pulled hovertrain funicular takes passengers between the parking garage at the bottom of the hill and the Museum at the top of the hill .

= = Arrival court and central rotunda = =

Visitors typically arrive at a tram station in the arrival plaza located between the administrative buildings and the Museum entrance . A large set of steps leads to the main doors of the rotunda building . The rotunda building houses information desks , two orientation theatres and Museum shops . It also holds a grand staircase that starts a path toward the paintings located on the second floor of each art pavilion . The rotunda opens to the south to a terrace that links all five of the Museum pavilions . A separate building to the west of the arrival plaza and stairs holds a cafeteria and restaurant . Next to the restaurant is a stone arch , which separates the Museum from the GRI . Stairs from the terrace connecting the GRI and the restaurant lead down to the central garden .

= = Museum = =

The J. Paul Getty Museum 's estimated 1 @. @ 3 million visitors annually make it one of the most visited museums in the United States . The collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum on display at the Getty Center includes " pre @- @ 20th @- @ century European paintings , drawings , illuminated manuscripts , sculpture , and decorative arts ; and 19th- and 20th @- @ century American and European photographs " . The paintings include :

Arii Matamoe (The Royal End) by Paul Gauguin (1892) . The Museum 's director , Michael Brand , stated that the purchase of the painting was " one of the key moments in the history of our collection . " The literal translation of the Tahitian words of the title are " noble " and " sleeping eyes " , which implies " death " .

Irises by Vincent van Gogh (1889) . The Museum purchased the painting in 1990 ; it had sold for \$ 53 @. @ 9 million in 1987 .

Portrait of a Halberdier by Pontormo (1528 ? 1530) . When the Museum bought the painting for \$ 35 @. @ 2 million at an auction in 1989 , " the price more than tripled the previous record at auction for an Old Master painting " .

A copy of Portrait of Louis XIV , which measures 114 x 62 @- @ 5 / 8 inches , by the workshop of Hyacinthe Rigaud (after 1701) .

Getty 's extensive photograph collection is located on the lower level of the west pavilion .

The Museum building consists of a three @- @ level base building that is closed to the public and provides staff workspace and storage areas . Five public , two @- @ story towers on the base are called the North , East , South , West and the Exhibitions Pavilions . The Exhibitions Pavilion acts as the temporary residence for traveling art collections and the Foundation 's artwork for which the permanent pavilions have no room . The permanent collection is displayed throughout the other four pavilions chronologically : the north houses the oldest art while the west houses the newest . The first @- @ floor galleries in each pavilion house light @- @ sensitive art , such as illuminated manuscripts , furniture , or photography . Computer @- @ controlled skylights on the second @- @ floor galleries allow paintings to be displayed in natural light . The second floors are connected by a series of glass @- @ enclosed bridges and open terraces , both of which offer views of the surrounding hillsides and central plaza . Sculpture is also on display at various points outside the buildings , including on various terraces and balconies . The lower level (the highest of the floors in the base) includes a public cafeteria , the terrace cafe , and the photography galleries .

= = Central Garden = =

The 134 @, @ 000 @- @ square @- @ foot (12 @, @ 400 m2) Central Garden at the Getty Center is the work of artist Robert Irwin . Planning for the garden began in 1992 , construction started in 1996 , and the garden was completed in December 1997 .

Irwin was quoted as saying that the Central Garden " is a sculpture in the form of a garden , which aims to be art . " Water plays a major role in the garden . A fountain near the restaurant flows toward the garden and appears to fall into a grotto on the north garden wall . The resulting stream then flows down the hillside into the azalea pool . The designers placed rocks and boulders of varying size in the stream bed to vary the sounds from the flowing water . A tree @- @ lined stream descends to a plaza , while the walkway criss @- @ crosses the stream , which continues through the plaza , and goes over a stone waterfall into a round pool . A maze of azaleas floats in the pool , around which is a series of specialty gardens . More than 500 varieties of plant material are used for the Central Garden , but the selection is " always changing , never twice the same " .

After the original design , an outdoor sculpture garden , called the " Lower Terrace Garden " was added in 2007 on the west side of the central garden just below the scholar 's wing of the GRI building .

= = Getty Research Institute (GRI) = =

The Getty Research Institute (GRI) is " dedicated to furthering knowledge and advancing

understanding of the visual arts . " Among other holdings , GRI 's research library contains over 900 @, @ 000 volumes of books , periodicals , and auction catalogs ; special collections ; and two million photographs of art and architecture . GRI 's other activities include exhibitions , publications , and a residential scholars program . At the Getty Center , GRI is located to the west of the Museum . The round building encircles a landscaped garden and is located to the west of the central garden . The main entrance of GRI is connected by a terrace to the main arrival court of the Museum , with outdoor sculptures placed along the route . GRI has one art gallery on its entrance level that is open to the public .

= = Other offices = =

Meier also designed three other buildings located next to the north promontory and offset at a 22 @. @ 5 degree angle from the main axis of the Museum pavilions . The north @-@ most building is an auditorium . Next to it is the North Building , with the East Building sitting between the North Building and the rotunda . The main entrance to the East Building is flanked by two round silos that hold its elevators . A bridge over a sunken courtyard links the main entrance of the East Building to the main walkway that connects the auditorium and North Buildings to the rotunda . These buildings house the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) , the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Getty Foundation . These buildings are generally closed to the public except for special events held in the auditorium . They are linked to the Museum both by landscaped terraces and by an enclosed glass walkway that leads from the main rotunda .

GCI , which is headquartered at the Getty Center but also has facilities at the Getty Villa , commenced operation in 1985 . It " serves the conservation community through scientific research , education and training , model field projects , and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field " and " adheres to the principles that guide the work of the Getty Trust : service , philanthropy , teaching , and access " . GCI has activities in both art conservation and architectural conservation .

The Getty Foundation awards grants for " the understanding and preservation of the visual arts " . In addition , it runs the Getty Leadership Institute for " current and future museum leaders " . Its offices are north of the Museum . The foundation offices are located in the two administrative buildings that are north of the Museum . The J. Paul Getty Trust , which oversees the Getty Conservation Institute , Getty Foundation , Getty Research Institute , and J. Paul Getty Museum , also has offices there .

= = Preparation for natural disasters = =

= = = Earthquakes = = =

Although the Center 's site was thought to have little motion during earthquakes , which are frequent in the Los Angeles area , in 1994 , as the Center was being constructed , the Northridge earthquake struck . It caused " disturbing hairline cracks ... in the welds and plated joints of the steel framework . " As a result , the steelwork through the site was retrofitted . The Center 's buildings are thought to be able to survive an earthquake of 7 @. @ 5 magnitude on the Richter scale .

= = = Fires = = =

In the 16 electrical transformers at the Center , silicone fluid is used as a coolant " with less risk of ignition " than hydrocarbon coolant . The native flammable chaparral was removed and fire @-@ resistant poverty weed was added to the slopes around the Center . Each year , a herd of goats is rented to clear brush on the surrounding hills .

At the north end of the Center , a tank with 1 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 US gal (3 @, @ 800 @, @ 000 l) of water , together with a grass @-@ covered helipad , allow helicopters to collect water . The

access ramp from the entry plaza to the Museum was constructed to allow a fire truck to pass over it . Inside the Museum , the sprinkler system is designed to balance " between the potential damage of a fire and the risk of water damage to valuable artwork " .

= = Panoramic view looking south = =