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## Clean Air at the Getty Museum

**Photo: Jack Ross.**

Monitoring at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center has demonstra that it is among the cleanest museums in the world with respect to gaseous particulate pollutants. Extensive material testing by the GCI's Museum Research Laboratory of materials proposed for use within the Museum ensured that no harmful gaseous pollutants would be emitted. Approximat eight hundred materials were tested, of which 12 percent (or about one hundred) failed. The materials that failed were rejected for use in galleries, storage areas, and display cases.

A major factor in the minimal infiltration of outdoor pollutants into the Museum is the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system selected for the Getty Center. The Center's location--not only in a major metropolitan area but also above one of the main freeway corridors in the region--presents a challenge with respect to the infiltration of outdoor

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pollutants. The HVAC system filters air at least twice through particle and gaseous filters. The air is exchanged six times per hour and refiltered with each exchange.

In a collaborative project among the GCI, Getty Trust Facilities, and the Museum's Decorative Art and Sculpture Conservation department, the ind air quality of the Museum was monitored for 16 months prior to the Cente public opening to confirm low levels of gaseous and particle pollution. Outdoor pollutants were measured at two HVAC air intakes and at two receiving galleries. In these galleries, the concentrations of indoor-generat pollutants were monitored. Once construction was completed, the indoor particulate concentrations measured were exceptionally low, comparable t some "clean room" environments used in sensitive manufacturing. The lev of gaseous pollutants were also low.

This important research project includes the evaluation of passive sampler commercially available in the United States and sampling devices develop by colleagues from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage in Amsterdam, Brookes Univer in Oxford, England, and the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotlan This is also the first thorough study of a new museum's environment from construction and installation to opening and operation.

The Museum's environment continues to be monitored. Even with the addition of the public presence in the galleries, it is anticipated that the lev of pollutants will remain low.

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