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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE GETTY LEADS INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE FOCUSED ON  
THE PRESERVATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS  
Multiyear Research Project Conducted by the Getty Conservation Institute**

LOS ANGELES—The Getty Conservation Institute’s analysis of the world’s first photograph, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce’s *View from the Window at Le Gras*, was part of the Institute’s continuing multiyear research project on the conservation of photographs. The initiative works to advance the identification and understanding of photographic processes in order to develop an effective conservation strategy for the long-term preservation of these important chemical-based works.

The Conservation Institute’s research project grew out of a concern that the increasing shift to digital photography could lead to a loss of crucial information about past artistic, commercial, and experimental photographic processes and works. In response, the Conservation Institute and the Image Permanence Institute (IPI), Rochester, New York, organized a meeting of experts in 2000 to identify the most pressing issues regarding the conservation of photographs. As a result, a collaborative research effort was launched involving the Getty Conservation Institute, the IPI, and the Centre de recherche sur la conservation des documents graphiques, Paris.

As part of this multiyear project, Niépce’s photograph was brought to the analytical laboratories at the Getty in 2002, where conservation experts began to conduct the first scientific study of the image’s material makeup to determine the object’s state of conservation. Using sophisticated equipment, including a powerful X-ray and an infrared spectrometer, Getty scientists were able to see through the layers of chemicals in the photograph without damaging it.

The “At First Light” symposium will share unpublished results and findings from this study, and will also include discussions of the latest research findings produced to date by the research project. In addition, Getty experts designed an oxygen-free protective case for the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center to house and display Niépce’s historic image.

The Conservation Institute’s work in this area reflects the Getty’s commitment to the art of photography. The Getty holds one of the finest collections of photographs in the country, including many images by pioneers from the art form’s early years. Six recently acquired rare daguerreotypes include the earliest surviving photograph of the Parthenon, made by the pioneering French artist Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey. Among current exhibitions at the Getty Center is *Julia Margaret Cameron, Photographer*, on view through January 11, 2004. The major retrospective features more than 100 groundbreaking images from the visionary Victorian artist. Upcoming Getty photography exhibitions include *Recent Acquisitions: Eugène Atget, Brett Weston, William Garnett, Milton Rogovin*, opening February 3, 2004; *Photographers of Genius at the Getty*, opening March 16, 2004; and *Spirit Into Matter: The Photographs of Edmund Teske*, opening June 15, 2004.

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**The J. Paul Getty Trust** is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that features the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Grant Program. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs are based at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

**The Getty Conservation Institute** works internationally to advance conservation in the visual arts. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of information.

**Visiting the Getty Center:**

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$5 per car. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call 310-440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is 310-440-7305.

**Additional information is available on the Getty Web site at *www.getty.edu*.**