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## FACT SHEET

### **ABOUT THE GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S DIGITIZATION OF THE ARCHIVE OF ED RUSCHA'S *STREETS OF LOS ANGELES***

#### **Overview**

The Getty Research Institute has launched an extensive project to digitize **Ed Ruscha's *Streets of Los Angeles* archive** acquired by the GRI in 2012. Since 1965 Ruscha has launched an ambitious, systematic effort to photograph the streets of Los Angeles. The *Streets of Los Angeles* archive contains more than a half million images including negatives, digital files, contact sheets, notes, and the complete production archive of Ruscha's seminal artist book *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966). Tracking distinctive elements of the Los Angeles cityscape, the project spans five decades and records major streets such as Hollywood Boulevard, Melrose Avenue, and Sunset Boulevard.

The GRI is currently digitizing a significant portion of this archive and designing an innovative web-based application compatible with the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF). This application will facilitate access to the archive as well as enable new points of access through a designed user interface and software that will display the **130,000 digitized** images from the archive. The application will make the images navigable via keyword, geographic coordinates, and possibly additional attributes such as building type or optically-recognized text that appears in the signage in the photographs.

In 2017 the GRI put out a call for proposals for research projects investigating the archive from scholars working the digital humanities, cultural geography, art history, photography, and visual culture, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches. The dual goals of this high-level engagement with the archive are to explore the research potential of the archive and develop new technologies for digital humanities.

The four interdisciplinary teams that were selected to participate will spend one to three years collaborating with the Getty's project team. To enable their research they will receive advance access to the digitized archive as well as facilitated access to metadata, including geographic information system (GIS) information that is being generated by the project. Their feedback on user interface designs and prototypes throughout the duration of their work will inform the Getty's project. These scholars will also

participate in workshops and other group meetings and may contribute to a related scholarly publication.

Ultimately, the *Streets of Los Angeles* archive will be digitized and widely accessible to any curious user. The project is expected to generate strategies and technologies that will benefit and inform other digital humanities work.

### **Project Names and Participants**

*Every Pixel on the Sunset Strip: Machine Vision and the Streets of Los Angeles*

Peter Leonard, Yale University  
Damon Crockett, Yale University  
Doug Duhaime, Yale University  
Paul Messier, Yale University

*Surface and Seriality in Ed Ruscha's Street Photographs of Los Angeles*

Mark Shiel, King's College London  
Alyce Mahon, University of Cambridge  
Shannon Mattern, The New School  
Amy Murphy, University of Southern California

*Imageability: Sign and Signage in Ed Ruscha's Streets of Los Angeles*

Eva Ehninger, Institute for Art and Visual History, Humboldt-University,

*Ed Ruscha's Street-Level View and the Postwar Redevelopment Vernacular*

Brian Goldstein, Swarthmore College  
Francesca Russello Ammon, University of Pennsylvania  
Garrett Nelson, Dartmouth College

### **Quotes from leadership**

“Ed Ruscha is one of the most important artists of his generation, but until recently no one knew that he has systematically photographed the city of Los Angeles for more than fifty years. The *Streets of Los Angeles* archive is perhaps the most significant artistic attempt to record the evolution of a city in modern history. Ruscha's vast photographic archive opens up new possibilities not only for art history and the history of photography but for architecture and urban planning, cinema and cultural geography. The Getty Research Institute's digital art history project will make this remarkable archive available for interdisciplinary scholarship. We recently invited four project teams to engage the *Streets of Los Angeles* in ways that will deepen our understanding of Ruscha's archive and further enhance the GRI's innovative work in the digital humanities.”

- Andrew Perchuk, acting director of the Getty Research Institute.

“The digital art history project focused on Ed Ruscha's *Streets of Los Angeles* archive will help us better understand how imaging technologies are transforming the discipline of art history. The project provides a unique opportunity to tackle a challenge that art historians are increasingly faced with:

researching and analyzing with very large collections of digital images.”

- Emily Pugh, Digital Humanities Specialist.

### **Important links**

Project page: [http://www.getty.edu/research/scholars/digital\\_art\\_history/ruscha/index.html](http://www.getty.edu/research/scholars/digital_art_history/ruscha/index.html)

Archive information and finding aids:

[http://www.getty.edu/research/special\\_collections/notable/ruscha.html](http://www.getty.edu/research/special_collections/notable/ruscha.html)

Press release about the archive and related photography acquisition in 2011:

<http://news.getty.edu/the-getty-acquires-ed-ruscha-photographs-and-archive.htm>

**PRESS OFFICERS: Please advise Amy Hood, Getty Communications of outreach efforts, [ahood@getty.edu](mailto:ahood@getty.edu)**

**The Getty Research Institute** is an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. It serves education in the broadest sense by increasing knowledge and understanding about art and its history through advanced research. The Research Institute provides intellectual leadership through its research, exhibition, and publication programs and provides service to a wide range of scholars worldwide through residencies, fellowships, online resources, and a Research Library. The Research Library—housed in the 201,000-square-foot Research Institute building designed by Richard Meier—is one of the largest art and architecture libraries in the world. The general library collections (secondary sources) include almost 900,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and auction catalogues encompassing the history of Western art and related fields in the humanities. The Research Library’s special collections include rare books, artists’ journals, sketchbooks, architectural drawings and models, photographs, and archival materials.

**The J. Paul Getty Trust** is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades.

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