

## GETTY MUSEUM ACQUIRES IMPORTANT SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY HERB RITTS

### *Acquisition Includes Photographs of Fashion Models, Nudes, and Celebrity Portraits*

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*Richard Gere, San Bernardino, 1977.* Herb Ritts (American, 1952-2002). Gelatin silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Gift of Herb Ritts Foundation. © Herb Ritts Foundation



*Dorian Three-Quarter Nude (Back View), Hollywood, 1989.* Herb Ritts (American, 1952-2002). Platinum print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. © Herb Ritts Foundation



*Cindy Crawford - Rene J. Malibu, 1994.* Herb Ritts (American, 1952-2002). Gelatin silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Gift of Herb Ritts Foundation. © Herb Ritts Foundation

LOS ANGELES—The Getty Museum announces the acquisition of 69 photographs by famed fashion and celebrity photographer **Herb Ritts**. Consisting of photographs of nudes, portraits, and images made for high-fashion ad campaigns, this acquisition is the most significant body of the artist's work on the West Coast. A portion of the acquisition comes in the form of a generous gift from the Herb Ritts Foundation.

"We are happy to have this opportunity to acquire an important selection of prints by Herb Ritts, whose work in fashion blurred the lines between art and commerce," says Judith Keller, senior curator of photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum. "This acquisition not only helps build our collection of fashion photography, but also fulfills our commitment to collect bodies of works by Los Angeles-based artists."

Other artists in the Getty's collection who established a reputation for their fashion photographs include Richard Avedon, Cecil Beaton, Horst P. Horst, William Klein, Robert Mapplethorpe, Man Ray, and Louise Dahl Wolfe. Significant Los Angeles-based photographers include, Uta Barth, Jo Ann Callis, John Divola, Lauren Greenfield, Robert Heinecken, Catherine Opie, Paul Outerbridge, and Edward Weston.

"Herb Ritts embraced his life in Los Angeles in every aspect and that is evident in his photographs. You can feel the Southern California light and warmth in his work and, without question, it influenced his pictures," says Mark McKenna, director of the Herb Ritts Foundation. "It is an honor knowing that Herb Ritts's prints will be included in the Getty Museum's prestigious collection and at the same time find a home here in the city that he adored."

Highlights from the acquisition include *Richard Gere, San Bernardino* (1977), a portrait that presents the budding actor as a new American hero; *Greg Louganis, Hollywood* (1985), a portrait

of the American Olympic diver; *Wrapped Torso, Los Angeles* (1988), which shows off a dress by Japanese designer Issey Mikaye; *Stephanie, Cindy, Christy, Tatjana, Naomi, Hollywood* (1989), an iconic image that has come to define the era of the Supermodel; *Veiled Dress, El Mirage* (1990), a photograph first used in Versace's couture catalogue; and a suite of photographs of the internationally recognized choreographer and dancer Bill T. Jones. A number of the photographs in the acquisition have not been reproduced, exhibited, or seen outside of the Foundation's archive.

"It's exciting to have so many of Ritts's best photographs become part of our collection," adds Paul Martineau, associate curator in the Department of Photographs. "We are looking forward to displaying them in our galleries next spring for what will be the first significant exhibition on Ritts in over a decade."

Selections from this acquisition will be featured in an upcoming exhibition and a related publication, [opening at the Getty Center in April 2012](#).

### **About Herb Ritts**

Herb Ritts (American, 1952-2002) was a Los Angeles-based photographer and director of music videos who established an international reputation for his photographs of fashion models, nudes, and celebrity portraits. During the 1980s and 1990s, Ritts was sought out by leading fashion designers and magazine editors working for *GQ*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Interview*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vogue*, among others. His career spanned various media. He created ad campaigns for many of the prestigious fashion houses in the United States and Europe and he produced award-winning music videos for artists such as Janet Jackson and Chris Isaak, along with nearly 50 television commercials. Ritts's work has been the subject of international exhibitions and his photographs are represented in significant public and private collections. Ritts developed his own distinctive style which embodied facets of life in and around Los Angeles. An L.A. native, he often made use of the bright Southern California sunlight to produce bold contrasts, and his preference for outdoor locations—such as the beach and desert—helped to separate his work from his New York-based peers. His intimate sense of portraiture and his modern, yet classical, treatment of the nude, places his work within an American tradition of fashion and fine art photography, along with Richard Avedon and Irving Penn.

Ritts' ability to create photographs that successfully bridged the gap between art and commerce is not only a testament to the power of his imagination and technical skill, but also marks the synergistic union between art, popular culture, and business that followed in the wake of the Pop Art movement of the 1960s and 1970s.