

Legion of Honor curator Ganz hired by L.A.'s Getty

By Charles Desmarais

The J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles has hired James A. Ganz as senior curator of photographs. In July, Ganz will leave his current position at San Francisco's Legion of Honor, where he has served as curator of the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts for 10 years.

The Getty Museum's collection of photographs is known across the world for what Ganz, in a phone interview, termed its "tremendous depth and breadth and quality." Begun in 1984 with the simultaneous acquisition of several of the best-known private collections in the U.S. and Europe, the collection has grown to 150,000 works and a gallery of 7,000 square feet.

In the top job, Ganz will oversee the work of six curators plus a large support staff. Though he was reluctant to rank the collection, he said it is "in the top five in the U.S., for sure — up there with the Met, the National Gallery and SFMOMA."

Timothy Potts, director of the Getty, in a statement, called Ganz "a perfect fit with the mission and scholarly focus of the Getty's Department of Photographs."

"His many years of curating exhibitions and acquiring significant works will greatly enrich our collection and the work of our curatorial staff," Potts said.

Ganz holds a doctorate in art history from



Randy Dodson / Fine Art Museums of San Francisco

Jim Ganz will become senior curator of photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum in July.

Yale University, a master's from Williams College and an undergraduate degree from Trinity College. At the Legion of Honor, his portfolio is considerably wider than the photography collection. The Achenbach Foundation holds 90,000 works of graphic art, in a broad range of media, dating from the 15th century forward, and he is one of three curators.

At the Legion, he said, "I've done painting shows and I've enjoyed that." In 2015, for example, he organized the broad-based exhibition "Jewel City: Art From San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition."

He began his career at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass., where he established the

photography collection. The renewed focus on photography, he said, "will be a relief from the treadmill I'm now on" where he is in a department and a museum with a smaller staff.

According to Ganz, discussions with the Getty began in September, but his departure from the Legion of Honor creates a new personnel challenge for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, of which it is a part. It follows upon the announcement last week of FAMSF Director Max Hollein's move to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

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