POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART
AWARDED $100,000 GETTY FOUNDATION GRANT

Funds will support major exhibition:
Prometheus 1930/2017

CLAREMONT—The Pomona College Museum of Art has been awarded a $100,000 Getty Foundation grant to support the research and planning for the future exhibition project “Prometheus 1930/2017” under the Getty Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA initiative. When José Clemente Orozco completed his Prometheus fresco at Pomona College, in 1930, it was the first mural painted in the U.S. by one of Los Tres Grandes of Mexican muralism. Jackson Pollock later declared the mural “the greatest contemporary painting in North America.”

“Prometheus 1930/2017” (working title), scheduled to open in September of 2017, will position Orozco’s 1930 mural and its public mode of communication of social and political ideas, within contemporary artistic practices and strategies in Mexico. The exhibition will travel to el Museo Universitario del Chopo in Mexico City, in 2018.

José Clemente Orozco, Prometheus, 1930, central panel, Frary Dining Hall, Pomona College

For Pomona College President David Oxtoby, “Prometheus is an exemplar of the College’s historical commitment to art. The story of the mural’s realization reflects the dynamic exchange of ideas that continue to be a hallmark of the College’s liberal arts curriculum.”

Pomona’s commitment to art is demonstrated in the twenty-first century by a commission to James Turrell for a public Skyspace, as well as the campus-wide acclaim for the projects developed in response to the first Getty PST initiative.
The 2014 grant to Pomona College is one of 40 grants—totaling $5 million—that will launch an extraordinary series of concurrent exhibitions at museums throughout Southern California starting in Fall 2017. Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, a joint initiative of the Getty Foundation and the J. Paul Getty Trust, supports research and planning for projects exploring Los Angeles’ vibrant artistic connections to Latin America.

Drawing on the Greek myth about bringing fire to humanity, Orozco’s mural goes beyond the story’s traditional symbolism to present a complex political work that questions the very idea of enlightenment in a modern world steeped in conflict. Orozco’s vision of Prometheus as an allegory for art that attempts to reach a wider audience—bringing knowledge and enlightenment to the masses—highlights his efforts to transform society.

“Prometheus 1930/2017” will examine the tradition of communicative visual strategies married to political dialogue, as found in Mexican muralism, with contemporary artists who incorporate new modes of artistic practice—such as activist art, public intervention and social practice—to engage a broader public and advance social or political causes.

The research for “Prometheus 1930/2017” will explore an important historical work of art, its reception and history at Pomona, as it provides critical entry to the artistic practice of a group of contemporary artists who expand the canon of socially engaged art. Ultimately, the project will result in an exhibition and publication that bring a singular work of art into the contemporary discourse of artists working in Los Angeles, California, and Mexico.

The “Prometheus 1930/2017” research team is led by Rebecca McGrew, Pomona College Museum of Art senior curator. She curated the critically-acclaimed and award-winning exhibition and accompanying publication It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969-1973 presented as part of the Getty Foundation’s first Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980. Terri Geis, Pomona College Museum of Art curator of academic programs, will serve as co-curator. Geis was part of the research and editorial team for the exhibition and publication In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States (Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, 2012). Daniel Garza Usabiaga, chief curator at el Museo Universitario del Chopo, in Mexico City, will serve as primary project advisor. Garza Usabiaga’s projects focus primarily on emerging contemporary artists in Mexico. His most recent publication is the 2013 award-winning Mathias Goeritz y la arquitectura emocional. Una revisión crítica (1952-1968).

The Pomona College Museum of Art (330 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA) is open to the public and free of charge, Tuesday through Friday, from noon to 5 p.m., Thursday, noon to 11 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call (909) 621-8283 or visit www.pomona.edu/museum.

The Museum collects, preserves, exhibits and interprets works of art; and houses a substantial permanent collection as well as serving as a gallery of temporary exhibitions. Important holdings include the Kress Collection of 15th- and 16th-century Italian panel paintings; more than 5,000 examples of Pre-Columbian to 20th-century American Indian art and artifacts, including basketry, ceramics and beadwork; and a large collection of American and European prints, drawings and photographs, including works by Francisco de Goya, José Clemente Orozco, and Rico Lebrun.