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Getty Museum to Exhibit Rare Michelangelo Drawing

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Michelangelo Buonarroti (Italian, 1475-1564)
Study of a Mourning Woman
Pen and brown ink, heightened with white
26 x 16.5 cm.

LOS ANGELES - [The Getty Museum](#) will exhibit a rare drawing by one of history's most admired artists, Michelangelo, for a limited time from September 20 through October 29, 2017. The drawing was part of a landmark group of 16 drawings and one painting acquired by the Getty Museum in July of this year.

Study of a Mourning Woman, ca. 1500-05, by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) made headlines after it was rediscovered in the collection at Castle Howard in 1995. Before then, it had been hidden among other treasures in the family collection, unknown to scholars for hundreds of years. This is the first time the drawing has been exhibited in a museum since its rediscovery.

“Michelangelo's drawing is the supernova among a collection of some 16 extraordinarily rare and important drawings recently acquired by the Getty,” says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. “Michelangelo is rightly regarded as one of the very greatest painters, sculptors, architects, and draftsmen in history, and it was important to me that the people of Los Angeles and other visitors to the Getty have the opportunity to view this exquisite addition to our collection before it is shown elsewhere.”

Following its presentation at the Getty, the drawing will be loaned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York for the exhibition *Michelangelo: Divine Draftsmen and Designer* opening November 13.

Michelangelo's powerful pen and ink study of a mourning woman exemplifies his extraordinary talent for monumental figural conceptions. It is characterized by dense hatching and crosshatching in brown ink, with highlights of white lead. The figure is seen in profile and dressed in a full-length robe worn by women of antiquity as depicted in Renaissance painting. Her pose and attitude reflect the mourning figures often found in paintings of Christ's deposition from the cross or a lamentation.

“With a sculptor's three-dimensional conception of space, Michelangelo here depicts a solidly monumental single figure of a type for which he became famous,” said Julian Brooks, senior curator of drawings at the Getty Museum. “This immensely powerful work is a new linchpin in our Italian Renaissance collections and a superb example of the artist's talent and creativity.”

The drawing represents the pinnacle of a group of pen and ink drawings made early in Michelangelo's career, at a pivotal moment when his fame as a sculptor was also spreading to dramatic painted compositions. While there is no known Michelangelo project that includes this figure, the design was nevertheless known to a number of the artist's contemporaries. Examples of figures directly inspired by *Study of a Mourning Woman* can be found in a manuscript page in the Farnese Hours by Giulio Clovio (1498-1578), and drawings by Lorenzo Sabatini (c. 1530-1576) and Francesco Salviati (1510-1563).

For this special presentation, the drawing will be displayed in the Getty Museum's North Pavilion, on the second floor gallery devoted to Italian Renaissance paintings. It will go on view again at the Getty in January 2018, when it returns from the Michelangelo exhibition at the Met, alongside the other recently acquired drawings and Jean Antoine Watteau's painting *La Surprise*, 1721.