NEWS FROM THE GETTY

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GETTY AND WHYVILLE PARTNER TO OFFER VIRTUAL GETTY MUSEUM ONLINE, CONNECTING KIDS AROUND THE WORLD TO ART

Whyvillians Can Play and Learn About Art, and "Collect" Masterpieces Just Like a Real Art Patron

LOS ANGELES—The Getty has partnered with Pasadena-based Numedeon, Inc., a specialist in Web-based educational communities, to bring the Getty Museum to the virtual world of Whyville *(www.whyville.net)*. The award-winning site for children has over one million "citizens," mostly between the ages of 8 and 14, who gather from around the world to learn, create, chat, and have fun together. This partnership brings art games based on the Getty's collections into Whyville, which originally focused primarily on science. Located in Whyville's town square, the virtual Getty Museum is the first cultural institution in the online city.

"This online outpost reflects our continued commitment to education in the visual arts, reaching out to a new generation of Internet-savvy kids," says Peggy Fogelman, assistant drector and head of education and interpretive programs at the J. Paul Getty Museum. "At the virtual Getty Museum, kids can explore our collections on their own terms. By making art fun and familiar, we hope that Whyvillians will venture beyond their computer monitors into art galleries and museums in their hometowns, and to the Getty Center when they visit Los Angeles. We want them to make art a part of their virtual as well as real lives."

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In Whyville, the Getty Museum joins other entities from the real world such as NASA (WASA in Whyville). There is also a City Hall, mall, dance studio, airfield, Greek theater, playground, homes, a newspaper (*The Whyville Times*), and much more. The virtual Getty Museum is always open. In the Getty gallery, Whyvillians can explore art in the Getty's renowned collection and learn more about the works they see. There is an art storage room, where they can meet "Eugene," the Getty Museum registrar, learn about what he does, and trek the globe on an Art Treasure Hunt. After that, Whyvillians can retire to the Getty lounge to relax and chat, or gather partners to play a rousing game of ArtSets.

The two interactive games at the virtual Getty Museum are designed to be fun as well as educational, a hallmark of the Getty's work with children over the years. ArtSets is a quick match game that teaches players about art media and subjects, sharpening their thinking skills along the way. Up to four people can play ArtSets in real time, competing to arrange artworks into sets of three based on medium (photography, paintings, or drawings) and subject (people, places, things), or by coming up with three works that make a set because they are all different.

In the Art Treasure Hunt, players are shown works of art and given clues to a historical period and place related to the object. Whyvillians are encouraged to link to the Getty Web site at *www.getty.edu* to do research. Once they find the location and date answers, players arrange the pieces chronologically to find out which city they have to visit first. Then it is off to the Whyville airfield and the Warp Wagon to circumnavigate the globe to find and collect the works of art.

Successfully completing both games earns players valuable virtual currency known as "Whyville clams" that they can use to buy and decorate virtual homes, use as capital to open stores, and even purchase face parts that Whyvillians use to create their online virtual personas. In addition, Art Treasure Hunt winners walk away with virtual copies, or "posters" of the artworks from the Getty Museum. Just like real art collectors, kids can gradually build a collection, which they can display in their virtual homes. Whyvillians also earn clams by winning other games offered in their city,

starting up virtual businesses, or by doing jobs such as writing for the *Whyville Times* newspaper. They can even run for political office.

Since launching in 1999, Whyville has grown to be the leading Web-based educational community for children. Over 60 percent of its "citizens" are girls. Over one million registered users log 40 million page views per month to explore topics in science, economics, citizenship, and now art. It is growing at a rate of 1,200 members a day. The brainchild of a group of scientists, researchers, and entrepreneurs, Whyville takes an inquiry-based approach in the belief that children learn better by actively doing and trying rather than passively reading or watching. In addition to the Getty Museum's ArtSets and Art Treasure Hunt, Whyille games include ion football, where citizens play a team game to learn about electrical charges; Mimi's dance studio, where players use vector arithmetic to design a dance; and SmartCars, where they design robot cars based on neural circuitry.

Visitors can reach Whyville at *www.whyville.net,* or through the Getty Web site at *www.getty.edu.* Whyvillians who venture into the Getty Web site will find even more art games to play on the special Web pages of Getty Center exhibitions dating from 2000. Kids can still see a virtual version of the 2001 exhibition *Devices of Wonder* and "operate" a number of gadgets and optical instruments dating from the 1600s, or explore last year's Premiere Presentation *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece* in a Web component specially developed for kids and families. Highlights include interactive features about childhood in ancient Greece, fun quizzes, and ancient games such as knucklebones that visitors can play online against virtual opponents like Socrates.

Whyville is produced and maintained by Numedeon, Inc, a company based in Pasadena, California, that specializes in educational virtual worlds. Numedeon virtual worlds are developed upon the Numedeon Interactive Community Engine (NICE), the company's proprietary software that was designed to present minimal technical barriers for use, requiring no downloads and only a 56K modem. Aside from Whyville, NICE also supports UTHSCSA-Virtual, a virtual campus for the University of Texas Health Science Center, to facilitate online interaction and collaboration among medical research professionals.

The J. Paul Getty Museum is committed to sharing the power of the visual arts and their ability to inspire, educate, and delight. The Museum achieves this by collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting important works of art and offering a wide range of public programs for audiences young and old. The renowned collection includes Greek and Roman antiquities; European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture, and decorative arts; and European and American photographs. The Getty Museum is located at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Mike Winder
Getty Communications Department
310-440-6471
mwinder@getty.edu

The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that features 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 are based at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Visiting the Getty Center:
The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is $7; no reservation required. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call 310-440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is 310-440-7305.

Additional information is available on the Getty Web site at *www.getty.edu.*