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Release Date: October 13, 2008

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**INSTALLATION AND EXHIBITION DESIGN ELEMENTS PROVIDE RICH CONTEXT FOR WORKS OF ART IN *POMPEII AND THE ROMAN VILLA* AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 19, 2008, THROUGH MARCH 22, 2009**

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Visitors to the exhibition ***Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture around the Bay of Naples*** will be greeted by a 14-foot-tall photomural of a painting of Mt. Vesuvius erupting, a virtual tour of three important Roman homes created by Capware (Naples, Italy), and an 11-foot-tall cross section illustrating a Pompeian interior before the eruption. The dynamic installation, created in just over four months by the National Gallery of Art on the mezzanine in the East Building, will showcase some 150 works of sculpture, painting, mosaic, and luxury arts, including recent discoveries on view in the U.S. for the first time and celebrated finds from earlier excavations.

Excerpted from the DVD *Journey to Pompeii* (Capware), a three-minute virtual tour running continuously on a 70-inch LCD screen will display digital recreations of two houses in Pompeii (House of the Tragic Poet and House of the Faun) and one villa in Herculaneum (Villa dei Papiri) prior to the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79. To give visitors the sense of walking through a lavish Pompeian interior, installed on facing walls of the entrance corridor are two reproductions (11 x 54 feet and 11 x 35 feet, respectively) of watercolors of the *House of the Centenary* (1903) by Jules-Léon Chiffrot depicting cross sections of the house. Just before the doorway, two maps of the Bay of Naples and the archaeological sites from which the objects in the exhibition were excavated are to the right.

The doorway is framed by a 14-foot-tall reproduction of the border of the title page for the book *Pompéi: Choix de monuments inédits and Maison du Poète Tragique* (c. 1828) by Jules-Frederic Bouchet and Desire Raoul-Rochette. This early publication contains exquisitely hand-colored engravings of the paintings and mosaics from the

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House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii and is on view in the exhibition. In the threshold on the floor is life-size digital reconstruction of a mosaic of a guard dog, *Cave Canem* (late 1st century AD)—one of several in Pompeii.

A life-size digital reconstruction of *Mosaic with marine creatures* (late 2nd century BC to 1st century AD) is installed on the floor with wall text identifying the various species in the mosaic: octopus, squid, lobster, prawn, eel, bass, red mullet, dogfish, ray, wrasse, and murex.

Bronze sculptures *Snake, Stag, Lion, and Boar attacked by Dogs* from the garden of the House of the Citharist are arranged in the exhibition as they were originally discovered.

The plants depicted in the 6 1/2-foot-long fresco *Wall painting from the House of the Golden Bracelet* (1st century BC to 1st century AD) on the north wall served as a model for a potted version of a Roman courtyard garden. It includes calamondon oranges, senecio cineraria (Dusty Miller), maiden hair fern, asparagus fern, rosemary, roses, lavender, lilies, euphorbia (diamond frost), asters, bay, boxwood, euonymus, laurel, and phoenix palm. Set around and among the plants are original garden objects: *Basin and stand* (1st century AD); *Satyr and hermaphrodite* (1st century BC to 1st century AD); and *Bell-krater with dancing warriors* (1st century BC to 1st century AD).

Three frescoes depicting Apollo and the muses (1st century BC to 1st century AD) from a triclinium (dining room) were excavated by chance in 1959 during construction of a highway that passed through the town of Moregine on the River Sarno, south of Pompeii. Further excavation was conducted in 1999–2000. The site was largely submerged in water, which was pumped out so that the frescoes could be salvaged. The frescoes form three walls of the room; the floor, ceiling, and faux seating have been recreated to complete the ensemble.

The *Alexander Mosaic* (late 2nd century BC), from the House of the Faun (the largest house discovered in Pompeii to date), is reproduced on the floor with its missing sections digitally reconstructed. Measuring 9 feet 8 inches by 17 feet 1 inch, the mosaic depicts Alexander the Great's victory over the Persian King Darius III in 333 BC. It was excavated in the early 1840s and is now on view in the [Museo Archeologico Nazionale](#) in Naples. The mosaic's border, showing a hippopotamus, a crocodile, and other creatures

swimming in the Nile River, is also a digital reconstruction. The mosaic is installed within a colonnaded area that evokes its original setting. The columns constructed for the exhibition are closely modeled on those at the House of the Faun.

Several objects depicted in *A Sculpture Gallery* (1874) by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema have been installed adjacent to the painting. They include: *Basin with support in the form of Scylla* from Pompeii (1st century BC to 1st century AD); *Young Hercules Strangling the Serpents* (c. 1560) by Guglielmo della Porta; *Lampstand* (1st half of 1st century AD) from Pompeii, House of Pansa VI. 6.1; *Chiurazzi reproduction of table from the House of Gaius Rufus*, Pompeii (early 20th century); *Serpent bracelet* (19th century) Joseph S. Wyon and Alfred B. Wyon, after Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema; and *Bowl with Minerva and Owl* (1914) reproduction of the original from c. 1st century BC.

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### General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's Web site at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov).

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering the East and West Buildings. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 x 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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