

CHARLES RAY

"The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme"

(J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) I have an unfortunate tendency to fall asleep during movies. Often I don't make it through a title sequence without my wife elbowing me to stop my snoring. For this reason, it was really great to see "The Spectacular Art of Jean-Léon Gérôme" at the Getty Center this summer: Paintings of Roman arenas, slave girls, boys with snakes, and dignitaries from

Siam awoke me to the splendors of a Hollywood screen. An additional bonus for Los Angeles (a city that loves its art professors) was the exhibition at Los Angeles County Museum of Art of sporting images by

Thomas Eakins. While Gérôme's gladiators and bloodied lions are completely spectacular, Eakins, once a student of Gérôme, manages to bring the reptilian into his disturbing painting of wrestlers. Seeing both shows in the same day reminded me of just how painful and bloody good teaching always is.



Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Working in Marble, or the Artist Sculpting Tanagra*, 1890, oil on canvas, 19 7/8 x 15 1/2".