

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

411 West Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91105 www.nortonsimon.org

Public Affairs Department 626.844.6941 media@nortonsimon.org

October 2014

Media Contact:

Leslie Denk, Director of Public Affairs

media@nortonsimon.org; (626) 844-6900

Lock, Stock and Barrel: Norton Simon's Purchase of Duveen Brothers Gallery

October 24, 2014 – April 27, 2015

Pasadena, CA—The Norton Simon Museum presents an exhibition examining one of Norton Simon's most memorable acquisitions—the purchase of the century-old, esteemed art dealership, the Duveen Brothers Gallery. Featuring more than 100 works from the Museum's collection, "Lock, Stock and Barrel: Norton Simon's Purchase of Duveen Brothers Gallery" sheds light on Simon's business strategies and his dramatic evolution as an art collector. And with its focus on the Gallery's remaining stock, the exhibition provides a window onto the tastes and trends of the early- to mid-20th-century American art market.

Duveen Brothers Gallery was once one of the largest and most successful art dealerships. Founded in 1879 in England, the firm under Lord Joseph Duveen was responsible for helping some of the most prominent American businessmen—Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Mellon and Henry Huntington among them—build their renowned art collections. By the time Simon began collecting in the mid-1950s, the firm was owned by Edward Fowles, who had managed the Paris office, and occupied a stately mansion at 18 E. 79th Street. Simon's interest was then in 19th- and 20th-century art (his first major purchase in 1954 was a Renoir), but while visiting the Duveen showroom in the late 1950s, one particular 15th-century painting caught his eye.



Bust Portrait of a Courtesan, c. 1509
Giorgione, Italian, 1477/78-1510
Oil on panel, transferred to canvas
12-1/2 x 9-3/8 in. (31.8 x 23.8 cm)
The Norton Simon Foundation

That painting, titled “Bust Portrait of a Courtesan,” was purchased by Duveen in the mid-1930s. Then as now, scholars reveled in discussing and disputing its authorship—whether the painter was Titian, Giorgione, Rocco Marconi, Giovanni Cariani, Bonifazio Veronese or an imitator of any of the above. And many have wavered in their steadfast attribution, as did the famed art historian Bernard Berenson, who published it in 1932 as a Titian, and then again in 1957 as a Giorgione (long after he had left the employ of the Duveen firm). By 1963, despite still some hesitation due to the question of attribution, Simon agreed with Fowles to purchase the painting over a two-year period. And in the course of those two years, he eventually expressed interest in first an additional seven, and then another five objects in Duveen’s stock, until eventually he decided to purchase the whole inventory of slightly fewer than 800 objects, along with the Duveen gallery building and its entire library and archives. (The library was sold to the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in 1965. The archives are now housed at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. The building was traded to the dealer William Acquavella in 1967.)

After a series of decorative arts and furniture auctions in the 1970s to recoup a good portion of his \$4 million outlay for the company, what Duveen pieces remain today in the Norton Simon collections number around 130 objects, primarily paintings, a handful of sculptures, a few porcelains and a cape purportedly worn by Charles IV of Spain. Of this assemblage, only about two dozen pieces are on permanent display. The remaining hundred objects are less frequently exhibited due to their condition, the type of restoration that the paintings underwent under the Duveen conservators’ hands or their dubious attributions. But as a whole, they offer an intriguing historical look at the infamous figure of Joseph Duveen and his eponymous firm that lived on 25 years after his death, as well as the state of the art market and art restoration in America at mid-20th century.

The purchase also resonates with Simon’s shrewd style of acquiring entire floundering-but-viable businesses and building them into thriving enterprises such as Hunt Foods, McCall’s Publishing and Canada Dry. In a step that he would repeat more than once while assembling his outstanding art collection, with his purchase of Duveen lock, stock and barrel, Simon planted his foot squarely in the market for Old Masters and began seriously his quest to build a collection that included earlier European art, especially early Italian art. This exhibition examines his remarkable and stunning maneuver 50 years in hindsight, and reveals his uncanny strategy that ultimately brought to Pasadena important Italian works by Bernardino Luini, Francia, Vincenzo Catena and Antoniazio Romano, as well as French, Spanish and northern works by Gerard David, Jusepe de Ribera, Peter Paul Rubens, Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Hyacinthe Rigaud.

“Lock, Stock and Barrel: Norton Simon’s Purchase of Duveen Brothers Gallery” is curated by Chief Curator Carol Togneri. A small publication, along with a series of educational events, is being organized in conjunction with the exhibition. More information can be found at www.nortonsimon.org.

Related lectures

The House of Duveen: Restoration in the Service of Early 20th-Century Taste

Carol Togneri, Chief Curator and John Griswold, Conservator, Norton Simon Museum

Saturday, October 25, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Duveen Brothers Gallery’s propensity to “restore” artworks to make them more appealing to American buyers has, in some cases, rendered the paintings, sculptures and decorative arts far removed from the artists’ original intentions. Others have been transformed from a fragmentary condition to appear as fully realized masterworks. Togneri and Griswold discuss the rich trove of objects on view, many for the first time at the Museum, in the exhibition *Lock, Stock and Barrel*.

London—New York—Paris: Duveen Brothers and the Market for Decorative Arts Between 1880 and 1940

Charlotte Vignon, Associate Curator of Decorative Arts, The Frick Collection, New York

Saturday, November 22, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Why are so many European *objets d’art* found in collections across the United States today? In this lecture, Vignon explores the successful career of Joel, Henry and Joseph Duveen of Duveen Brothers Gallery in their dealings in Chinese porcelains, 18th-century French decorative arts and medieval and Renaissance art.

Duveen and the Canon

Nicholas Penny, Director, The National Gallery, London

Saturday, January 10, 2015, 5:00–6:00 p.m.

Penny explores the taste in all the arts which Joseph Duveen and his firm promoted with such success over such a long period—a taste eventually enshrined in the National Gallery of Art in Washington—and the parallel development of alternative, modernist values. The lecture looks back to earlier dealers and decorators and forward to the situation today.

"Europe has a great deal of art, and America has a great deal of money":

Joseph Duveen and the Building of The Huntington Art Collections

Catherine Hess, Chief Curator of European Art, The Huntington Art Collections

Saturday, February 7, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Art dealer Joseph Duveen's observation in the title to this lecture reveals the simple truth at the center of his secret to success. In this lecture, Hess examines how, by facilitating the exchange of European art for American money, Duveen became wealthy, Gilded Age patrons accumulated collections of art, and, when this art found its way into the country's nascent cultural institutions, the American Art Museum was born.

About the Norton Simon Museum

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of Indian and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum's collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. Two exhibition spaces feature rotating installations of artworks not on permanent display.

Location: The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 W. Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena, Calif., at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit www.nortonsimon.org. Hours: The Museum is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from noon to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed on Tuesday. Admission: General admission is \$12 for adults and \$9 for seniors. Members, students with I.D., active military and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m. All public programs, unless stated otherwise, are free with admission. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. Parking: Parking is free, and no reservations are necessary. Public Transportation: The City of Pasadena provides a shuttle bus to transport passengers through the Pasadena Playhouse district, the Lake Avenue shopping district and Old Pasadena. A shuttle stop is located in front of the Museum. Please visit www.cityofpasadena.net/artsbus for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line, the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, is located at 125 E. Holly St. at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit www.metro.net for schedules.