

Norton Simon Museum For Immediate Release

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The Norton Simon Museum Presents
Mariana: Velázquez's Portrait of a Queen from the Museo Nacional del Prado
December 13, 2024–March 24, 2025

On special loan from the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, Diego Velázquez's extraordinary painting *Queen Mariana of Austria* (1652–53) will be exhibited on the West Coast for the first time.



Pasadena, CA – The Norton Simon Museum presents *Mariana: Velázquez's Portrait of a Queen from the Museo Nacional del Prado*. On view from December 13, 2024, through March 24, 2025, the exhibition is centered on the nearly life-size portrait *Queen Mariana of Austria* (1652–53) by 17th-century Spanish painter Diego Velázquez (1599–1660). One of the highlights of the Prado's world-renowned collection of works by the artist, this masterpiece has never before been exhibited on the

West Coast, and its presentation at the Norton Simon Museum offers visitors a rare opportunity to see this remarkable work in person.

Velázquez's *Queen Mariana of Austria* is one of the artist's most accomplished portraits, depicting the 18-year-old monarch in full splendor. She is clad in quintessential Spanish fashion, wearing a luxurious black and silver dress over the rigid support structure known as the *guardainfante*—which is so-called because its dramatically wide hips could mask pregnancy. The young queen, who had recently recovered from the birth of her first child with King Philip IV, gazes out with a somber, almost inscrutable expression, somewhat at odds with the spirited flamboyance of her beribboned wig and colossal feathered headpiece. Mariana was Velázquez's first major composition after returning to Madrid from several years in Rome, and it ushered in a distinctive and final chapter of the artist's storied career. For the first time, the artist focused primarily on images of women and children, which he depicted with great sensitivity and a new flair for color.

At the Norton Simon Museum, the portrait of the young queen will be surrounded by an international group of artists whose works were collected by the Habsburg court. Paintings by Nicolas Poussin, Guido Reni and Peter Paul Rubens, all highlights of the Museum's collections, will be displayed side by side to evoke Mariana's quotidian access to remarkable works of art and to invite comparisons between Velázquez and artists he knew and admired. The Velázquez portrait will also be shown in relationship to the Museum's paintings by Jusepe de Ribera, Bartolomé-Esteban Murillo and Francisco de Zurbarán, displayed in an adjacent gallery, providing a unique chance to experience this essential quartet of 17th-century Spanish painters under one roof.

The loan of *Queen Mariana of Austria* continues a new exchange partnership between the Norton Simon Museum and the Museo Nacional del Prado, which was launched with the loan of Francisco de Zurbarán's *Still Life with Lemons, Oranges and a Rose*, on view in Madrid from March 18 to June 30, 2024. Signed works by Velázquez are exceedingly rare and appear in only a handful of American institutions. The Prado possesses a remarkable 48 paintings by Velázquez—nearly 40 percent of the artist's extant body of work—including many of his most iconic compositions. *Queen Mariana of Austria* was exhibited in the United States only once before, when it was lent to The Metropolitan Museum of Art for a 1989 retrospective.

The exhibition is organized by Chief Curator Emily Talbot and Associate Curator Maggie Bell. It will be accompanied by a range of special events, including a lecture series and musical performance co-organized with Spain Arts + Culture. Information will be available at nortonsimon.org.

Mariana: Velázquez's Portrait of a Queen from the Museo Nacional del Prado is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities.

Image credit: Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez (Spanish, 1599–1660), *Queen Mariana of Austria*, 1652-1653, oil on canvas, 92.20 x 51.97 in. (234.20 x 132 cm), Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, (P001191), ©Photographic Archive Museo Nacional del Prado

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 South 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.

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 nortonsimon.org. **Hours:** The Museum is open Thursday through Monday, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. (Friday and Saturday to 7 p.m.). It is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday. **Admission:** General admission is \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors. Members, students with I.D. and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. The Museum provides free admission to all from 4-7 p.m. on the first Friday of each month. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free but limited, and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** Pasadena Transit stops directly in front of the Museum. Please visit <http://pasadenatransit.net> 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. **Planning Your Visit:** For up-to-date information on our guidelines and protocols, please visit nortonsimon.org/visit.

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