

Norton Simon Museum For Immediate Release

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The Norton Simon Museum Commences Major Exterior Improvement Project

Planned 2025 renovations will enhance the Museum's exterior, preserve iconic tile facade, and revitalize the Sculpture Garden while keeping galleries open for visitors.



Rendering of the Norton Simon Museum's new main entrance and accessible pedestrian path, courtesy of ARG and SWA.

Pasadena, CA – The Norton Simon Museum announced today its exterior improvement project. This \$14-million initiative will enhance the beauty of the building's façade and gardens, while also improving the Museum's appearance along Colorado and Orange Grove Boulevards. Construction begins on January 7.

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“For half a century the Norton Simon Museum has inspired visitors from all over the world,” says Walter W. Timoshuk, President & Chief Executive Officer of the Museum. “This important project will improve the visitor experience and ensure the Museum’s exterior spaces and presence along Colorado Boulevard reflect the elegant galleries and superb quality of the Norton Simon art collections.”

The Museum’s partner in this project is Architectural Resources Group (ARG), known for their work on such sites as Pasadena City Hall, the Pasadena Conservatory of Music and the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens. ARG has enlisted an outstanding team of specialists, including the landscape architecture firm SWA and the signage firm Hunt Design, among others. Morley Builders is in charge of construction.

“It’s an honor to work with a museum of this caliber,” adds Liz MacLean, principal from ARG and architect on the project. “Designed and renovated by notable architects, and clad with Edith Heath’s beautifully distinctive tile, the building provides boundless inspiration for the new design’s form and materials. This project creatively incorporates security and accessibility through a re-envisioned entrance, rejuvenates the Museum’s Sculpture Garden, and includes conservation of its iconic curvilinear facades.”

The project coincides with the Museum’s 50th anniversary, which will kick off in February with an exhibition entitled “Retrospect: 50 Years at the Norton Simon Museum” and continue throughout the year with special programs, a publication and the exhibition entitled “Gold.” A large community celebration is planned for October, coinciding with the planned completion of the exterior improvement project.

Overview of the Project

The Museum’s building, designed in the 1960s by local firm Ladd & Kelsey for the Pasadena Art Museum, is noteworthy for its distinctive curved exterior walls, clad in ceramic tiles designed by Edith Heath from Heath Ceramics. In the late 1990s, more than 20 years after the Museum became the Norton Simon Museum, the interior galleries were extensively remodeled by architect Frank Gehry to create a more suitable space for the Norton Simon collections. At the same time, the Sculpture Garden was transformed by Nancy Goslee Power with a design intended to evoke Claude Monet’s garden in Giverny, France. The Museum’s main entrance walkway was refreshed to create a seamless transition as visitors move into the galleries and out into the Sculpture Garden.

The 2025 exterior improvement project will primarily address several areas that were not part of the previous renovations. Most noticeably, there will be improvements along Colorado Boulevard,

including new signage on the building and near the main driveway, an accessible pedestrian path from Colorado Boulevard to the entrance, new gates and security walls for the driveways and walkway, a wider east driveway and climate-appropriate landscaping. Enhanced lighting for the pedestrian and vehicular entryways will provide a safer experience during evening hours.

One of the distinctive features of the Museum's building is the approximately 115,000 ceramic tiles that cover its exterior. Designed by ceramist Edith Heath (1911–2005), the tiles underwent a conservation study in 2023 to better understand their condition and to create a plan to clean and conserve them. Over the past several years the Museum has partnered with Heath Ceramics to re-create tiles for use when the original tile are either missing or too damaged for repair. Tiles on select areas of the building will be cleaned, repaired and, where necessary, replaced. Heath tiles will also be used on a new wall at the eastern edge of the south lawn.

Planned work in the Sculpture Garden includes refurbished paths and hardscape in the Café area, additional seating, new plantings in areas that have died due to drought and irrigation issues, a new drainage system that utilizes swales and bioswales, rebuilding of the pond, and a new solid wall along the south and west perimeter of the garden. While the overall look and feel of the garden will be maintained, these important repairs necessitate the closure of the garden for the entire construction period.

Impact on Visitors

The Museum's galleries, theater and store will remain open throughout the project. The Museum's Sculpture Garden will be closed for the entire construction phase, which is anticipated to take nine months. Food services will be temporarily relocated to the lower-level courtyard (accessible by stairs and the elevator). At times, one of the driveways will be closed, and vehicles will be directed to use the other driveway. As the new pedestrian path is built, a temporary path will be erected.

To stay updated on the progress of the Exterior Improvement Project and its impact on visitors, follow the Museum's social media channels or sign up for the e-newsletter at nortonsimon.org.

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.

Museum 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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