

Norton Simon Museum For Immediate Release

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Norton Simon Museum Presents *Retrospect: 50 Years at the Norton Simon Museum* February 14, 2025 – January 12, 2026

Through rare photographs from the Museum's archive, *Retrospect* highlights both significant and lesser-known stories from the Museum's 50-year history.



Lower-level galleries at the Norton Simon Museum featuring works by Degas, 1989, photographed by Antoni E. Dolinski, Norton Simon Museum Archives

Pasadena, CA – The Norton Simon Museum commemorates its 50th anniversary with the exhibition *Retrospect: 50 Years at the Norton Simon Museum*. On view from February 14, 2025,

through January 12, 2026, in the main-level Focus Gallery, this milestone exhibition examines five decades of art, education, research and community through an engaging collection of rare archival photographs, texts and insights into the Museum's current initiatives. *Retrospect* coincides with the launch of the [Exterior Improvement Project](#), providing a unique opportunity to reflect on the Museum's rich history while looking toward the future.

Retrospect begins with the Museum's name change in 1975 after Norton Simon assumed control of the former Pasadena Art Museum. Captivating archival photography illustrating the initial installation of Simon's celebrated collections and views of the galleries from the late 1970s are presented alongside anecdotal vignettes of the Museum's early staff. Key acquisitions and exhibitions are highlighted chronologically, featuring intriguing stories from the collections, such as the notable donation of Diego Rivera's *The Flower Vendor* (1941) by Hollywood legend Cary Grant. This introductory section traces the evolution of the Museum's exhibition programming, from rotating displays of works on paper to ambitious thematic and cross-collection shows.

A special focus on the Museum's building reveals the rich architectural history woven into its walls. Designed by the firm Ladd & Kelsey for the Pasadena Art Museum, the building features an irregular H-shaped layout and modernist curves, adorned with approximately 115,000 tiles crafted by ceramicist Edith Heath. Archival photographs document the building's evolution, from its early years to the renovations of the interior by Frank Gehry and gardens by Nancy Goslee Power in the late 1990s. Images are in close proximity to renderings of the current Exterior Improvement Project, setting the stage for a new era for the Museum and its campus.

The exhibition concludes by spotlighting the transformative years from 2000 to 2025, a period marked by the expansion of signature programs across its Art, Conservation, External Affairs and Education Departments. In 2001, the theater was refurbished by Arthur Gensler, Jr. & Associates, offering a new venue for film screenings, lectures and performances. Curators, scholars and conservators collaborated to produce an exciting series of scholarly catalogues on the collections. In 2007, the Museum introduced its Masterpiece Loan Exchange program, bringing some of the world's most extraordinary works of art to Pasadena while sending paintings from the Norton Simon collections to museums across the country and in Europe. Diego Velázquez's extraordinary painting *Queen Mariana of Austria* (1652–53), on view at the Museum through March 24, 2025, in the exhibition *Mariana: Velázquez's Portrait of a Queen from the Museo Nacional del Prado*, is part of this exchange program.

Retrospect: 50 Years at the Norton Simon Museum is curated by Dane Reeb, Curatorial Assistant, and Kate Austin, Rights and Reproductions Coordinator.

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 first Friday of the month from 4 to 7 p.m. is free to all. 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.