

## Norton Simon Museum

This is a guide to the Norton Simon Museum as part of the Visions and Voices program.

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## General Information

The [Norton Simon Museum](#) is at

411 West Colorado Boulevard  
Pasadena, California 91105  
(626) 449-6840

## Hours

Parking is free and no reservations are required

## Directions

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## Introduction

The Norton Simon Museum is located on the corner of Orange Grove and Colorado Boulevards in Pasadena—the corner where the Rose Parade turns. Named for industrialist [Norton Simon](#), it is home to one of the most remarkable and important collections assembled by a 20th century private collector. Its strengths are Early Renaissance through 20th century paintings and sculpture, Indian and Southeast Asian art, and major print collections by Rembrandt, Goya, and Picasso. The Museum also owns important 20th century photography, as well as the Galka Scheyer Blue Four Collection comprised of works by Klee, Kandinsky, Feininger, and Jawlensky.

Housed in a striking curved facility designed by Pasadena architects Ladd & Kelsey in 1969, various spaces were converted to galleries in 1977 by architect Craig Ellwood, with a major interior renovation by Frank Gehry in 1996-1999. The sculpture garden was redesigned by landscape designer Nancy Goslee Power in 1999, and includes a cafe operated by The Patina Group.

There is also an excellent [shop](#) which sells a large selection of books on American, European and Asian art, photography, gardens and architecture as well as a variety of stationery, prints and posters that feature works from the Museum's collections.

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## Museum Garden


NSM Garden/Landau 

Photo by [Robert Landau](#)

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## Director, Collection Development

[Profile Image](#)

**Amy Navratil Ciccone**

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#### Collections

The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. There are three temporary exhibition spaces within the Museum; the curatorial department mounts three to six exhibitions centered on the collection per year. To extend the impact of these exhibitions and to explore genres and themes within the permanent collection, the Museum offers six to ten free public programs per month, including scholarly lectures and symposia, adult education courses, music and dance performances and hands-on activities for children.

Please see Further Reading at the [Find Books](#) tab for a brief list of books about the Norton Simon Museum

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14th-19th Century Art [Comments \(0\)](#) [Print/Mobile Page](#)




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## 14th-19th Century European Art

## European art, 14th-16th centuries

Comprised of masterpieces from the Early Renaissance, the High Renaissance and Mannerism in both Northern and Southern Europe, this section includes some of the most important works in the U.S. Works include Raphael's *Madonna and Child with Book*, the spectacular altarpiece by Guariento di Arpo, Dieric Bout's *Resurrection of Christ*, Lucas Cranach's the Elder diptych of *Adam and Eve*, and important portraits by *Giorgione* and *Bellini*.

## European Art, 17th-18th centuries

One of the Museum's most significant--as well as most popular--paintings is Zurbarán's *Still Life with Lemons, Oranges and a Rose* from the Spanish Baroque. There are several paintings by Rubens, as well as 3 portraits by Rembrandt, one of which, his *Portrait of a Boy*, was once thought to depict the artist's son Titus. French works include paintings and drawings by Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin's *The Holy Family with the Infant St. John the Baptist and St. Elizabeth*, co-owned with the Getty Museum.

French and Italian paintings from the 18th century are of particular note, including works by Boucher, *Watteau*, *Canaletto*, and a ceiling painting by *Tiepolo*.

## European Art, 19th century

The most important collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art in Southern California on exhibit at the Museum, including paintings by *Manet*, *Monet*, *Renoir*, *Cézanne*, *van Gogh*, and *Gauguin*. There are over 100 works by Degas, including nearly every one of his bronze sculptures, the most famous of which is the *Little Dancer, Aged 14*. This section also includes paintings by *Ingres* and *Goya*. Numerous monumental bronze sculptures by Rodin (including *The Thinker*) are placed throughout the grounds.

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**Amy Navratil Ciccone**

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## Subjects:

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#### Asian Art

One of the Museum's greatest strengths is its world-acclaimed collection of art from **South and Southeast Asia**, with superb examples of this region's sculptural and painting traditions. On permanent display are holdings from **India, Pakistan, Nepal, Tibet, Cambodia and Thailand**, as well as selected works from **Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam**. The collection is particularly rich in art from the Indian subcontinent, including monumental stone sculpture from the **Kushana** and Gupta periods, and a remarkable group of **Chola bronzes** from southern India. A selection of the Museum's Rajput paintings from India is always on view, as are several **thankas**, or religious paintings, from Tibet and Nepal.

Highlights include the bronze sculptures **Buddha Shakyamuni**, c. 550, India: Bihar, Gupta period, and **Shiva as King of Dance**, c. 1000, India: Tamil Nadu; and the gilt bronze **Indra**, 13th century, Nepal.

The Museum's impressive Japanese woodblock prints, the majority of which were formerly in the collection of Frank Lloyd Wright, are featured in exhibitions.

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## Exhibitions

## Current Exhibitions

Vuillard

**Gaze: Portraiture after Ingres**  
October 30, 2009 - April 05, 2010

About the time of Ingres's immense memorial exhibition in 1867, portraiture had reached its apogee in France. And yet, a perceptible shift in the genre was taking place. Moving out of the constructed world of the studio into the world around them, Impressionist artists turned their attention and their brushes away from baronesses and comtesses toward their wives, friends and even familiar local characters—in other words, to the lives of the modern world.



**Divine Demons: Wrathful Deities of Buddhist Art**

August 14, 2009 - June 28, 2010

Visitors to the Museum are accustomed to viewing peaceful, benevolent Buddhist deities, such as smiling Buddhas deep in meditation or serenely blissful bodhisattvas beckoning to us. But scattered throughout the Asian galleries is a striking assortment of demonic, wrathful deities—figures that bare fangs, drink blood, wear garlands of severed heads or are surrounded by fiery halos.

## Forthcoming Exhibitions



**Plants, Flowers and Fruits: Ellsworth Kelly Lithographs**

April 23, 2010 - August 23, 2010

Ellsworth Kelly (born 1923), best known for his large-scale, color field painting, first experimented with reductive geometry in paint and wood in 1949.



**Hiroshige: Visions of Japan**

June 04, 2010 - January 17, 2011

Drawn from the Norton Simon Museum's extensive collection of Japanese woodblock prints, Hiroshige: Visions of Japan features approximately 150 prints by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858), one of the greatest and most prolific artists of his time.

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## Modern &amp; Contemporary Art and Prints &amp; Photographs

## Modern and Contemporary Art

An extensive collection of Modern and Contemporary Art is housed at the Museum, with major works by [Picasso](#), [Matisse](#) and [Braque](#). The Galka Scheyer collection of works by the Blue Four artists boasts paintings and works on paper by [Paul Klee](#), [Lyonel Feininger](#), [Alexei Jawlensky](#) and [Vasily Kandinsky](#), a selection of which are always on display. Although not always on exhibit, works in sculpture, collage, and assemblage by [Cornell](#), [Rauschenberg](#), and [Ed Kienholz](#) are among the collection of Post-War American Art. Californian art from the 1950s through the 70s is a particular strength, including objects by [Ed Ruscha](#), [Sam Francis](#), [Diebenkorn](#), and [Larry Bell](#).

[Maillol](#), [Brancusi](#), [Henry Moore](#), and [Noguchi](#) are notable sculptors of the early 20th century whose work is installed throughout the galleries and garden.

## Prints and Photographs

The Museum's print collection is focused on 3 of the greatest painters-printmakers: [Rembrandt](#), [Goya](#), and [Picasso](#), each of whom is celebrated for his pioneering experiments in graphic art. Most of Rembrandt's prints are in the collection, and there are multiple editions of Goya's suites of *Los Caprichos*, *La Tauromaquia*, and *Los Proverbios*, 1864. Every phase of Picasso's career as a printmaker is represented, including his illustrated books, *bon à tirer* lithographs, and a selection of linocuts.

Later 20th-century works on paper include a large group of prints from the Tamarind Lithography Studio from 1960 to 1970, a collection of artists' books, and various suites by such artists as [Edward Ruscha](#) and [Ed Moses](#).

The photography collection is comprised of works by Modernist photographers, including [Edward Weston](#), [Frederick Sommer](#), [Minor White](#) and [Manuel Alvarez Bravo](#). Contemporary works are particularly strong with examples of the experimental photography of USC professor [Robbert Flick](#), [Robert Heinecken](#), [Edmund Teske](#) and [Todd Walker](#), all of whom embraced mixed media, multiple exposure and solarization.

*Please note that, due to their delicate nature, photographs and prints are not on permanent display but are frequently featured in exhibitions.*

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## Helen Topping Architecture and Fine Arts Library

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850 Bloom Walk, B-4  
University Park Campus  
Los Angeles CA 90089-0294

Phone: (213) 740 1956  
Email: [afa@usc.edu](mailto:afa@usc.edu)  
Campus map code: WAH

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## Further Reading

All of the following are available in the Helen Topping Architecture and Fine Arts Library

*Masterpieces from the Norton Simon Museum.* 1989  
N665.A77 1989

Barnett, Vivian Endicott. *The Blue Four Collection at the Norton Simon Museum.* 2002  
N6868.5.E9B376 2002x

Brettell, Richard. *Nineteenth Century Art in the Norton Simon Museum.* 2006-  
ND457.B698 2006 v.1-2

Muchnic, Suzanne. *Odd Man In. Norton Simon and the Pursuit of Culture.* 1998  
N5220.S66M83 1998

Pal, Pratapaditya. *Asian Art at the Norton Simon Museum.* 2003-2004  
N7260.P35 2003 v.1-3

Sander, Gloria. *The Collectible Moment: Catalogue of Photographs in the Norton Simon Museum.* 2006  
TR6.U62P37 2006

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## Architecture and Gardens



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## Architecture

## The Museum Building

In 1964, the trustees of what was then the Pasadena Art Museum hired architects Thornton Ladd and John Kelsey to design the building that now houses the Norton Simon and Pasadena museum collections. The Museum, built on Carmelita Park property, opened to the public on November 24, 1969. The exterior of its striking curvilinear shape is covered in 115,000 handmade deep umber tiles, designed by famed Sausalito ceramic artist, [Edith Heath](#) (1911-2005). As the sun rises and sets, these tiles reveal their delicate tones and highlights. They serve as a reminder of Pasadena's many Craftsman-style homes as well as the San Gabriel Mountains that tower over the city to the north.

Since its opening in 1969, the building has undergone several changes. In 1977 Craig Ellwood and Associates created additional exhibition galleries in the lower level from existing non-public space. It underwent a major interior renovation by USC alumnus [Frank O. Gehry](#) from 1996 to 1999, and the simple auditorium was converted to an elegant theater in 2000 by [Arthur Gensler, Jr. & Associates](#).

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## Sculpture Garden

The current garden was designed in 1999 by noted Southern California landscape designer, [Nancy Goslee Power](#), the 79,000-square-foot garden includes more than 180 species of trees, shrubs, vines, ground cover and perennials. The meandering pond features various species of water lilies and bog plants. Two magnificent trees, a Moreton Bay Fig and a Cockspur Coral Tree, stand as centerpieces in the garden. Its most important feature, however, is its collection of superb bronzes by such artists as Maillol, Rodin, and Henry Moore.

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