

Great Outdoors OC/LB Chapter presents

Norton Simon Museum

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Great Friends, Great Times, Great Outdoors

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**The Norton Simon Collection
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Norton Simon's activity as a collector spanned more than 30 years and encompassed the purchase of more than 8,000 works of art during his lifetime. He began this pursuit in the mid 1950s with purchases of works by 19th-century painters such as Daumier, Degas, Renoir and Gauguin. The one lasting exception to his focus on French Impressionists and Post Impressionists in these early years was his abiding love of works by Rembrandt. By the end of the 1960s, his pace in buying accelerated, as his tastes expanded to embrace Italian, French, Spanish, Dutch and Flemish Old Masters, as well as 20th-century paintings, sculpture and works on paper by Maillol, Picasso, Henry Moore, Braque and Giacometti, among others.

The velocity of his purchasing reached its height in the 1970s, and Simon's appetite expanded to include ancient stone and bronze sculpture from India, the Himalayas and Southeast Asia. During this decade he also worked in earnest to collect thousands of master prints by painter/printmakers such as Rembrandt, Goya and Picasso. And his collection grew exponentially by 1974 when Norton Simon assumed managerial and financial responsibility for the Pasadena Art Museum, its 1969 Ladd and Kelsey building, and the collections it housed. As he had demonstrated time and time again in his formation of a remarkable group of successful business enterprises, in one skillful move of appropriating the



museum at the corner of Orange Grove and Colorado Boulevards he managed to assemble not only the important Blue Four collection of German Expressionist works amassed by Galka Scheyer, but also stellar mid-twentieth-century paintings, sculpture, prints & photographs that dovetailed perfectly with Simon's existing collection. After some remodeling of the 1969 two-story structure, the Museum was opened in October 1975 as The Norton Simon Museum, and for the first time since he undertook his journey as a collector of art, Simon was able to witness his success with this venture by seeing it installed together, as a splendid whole.

Today, the collection is comprised of about 12,000 objects that showcase—amongst other superlative works—the only painting by Raphael on the west coast, three portraits by Rembrandt, six superb paintings by Van Gogh, over one-hundred works by Degas, and an important collection of Indian and Southeast Asian sculpture that spans over 2500 years of the world's finest cultural creations. With his final purchase on December 22, 1989 of Gustave Courbet's poetic Peasant Girl with a Scarf from ca. 1849, Norton Simon concluded his remarkable career as an art collector, and deeded his priceless collection to all who pass through the doors of his Museum.

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