

Norton Simon Museum For Immediate Release

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The Norton Simon Museum Acquires Edgar Degas Sculpture

Degas Bronze Joins the Collection as the Museum Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary

On view starting October 2, 2025



Pasadena, CA – The Norton Simon Museum announced today that it has acquired *Arabesque over the right leg, left arm in front*, a bronze sculpture by Edgar Degas, the renowned 19th-century French artist known for his vivid depictions of racehorses and ballet dancers. This work joins the Museum’s collection of more than 100 objects by Degas that span nearly every decade of his career, one of the largest public collections of the artist’s work in the world.

“We are delighted to bring this extraordinary bronze into the Museum’s collection during our 50th anniversary year,” said Emily Talbot, Vice President of Collections and Chief Curator. “Not only does it fill a gap in the Museum’s collection of Degas’s bronzes—one that we have been trying to close for

nearly 50 years—but it also honors Norton Simon’s commitment to collecting Degas’s works, and his fascination with the complex history of casting his sculptures in bronze.”

In 1977, two years after opening the museum that bears his name, Norton Simon acquired 69 master casts of sculptures by Edgar Degas. Called the *modèle* bronzes, Simon’s set was the only one cast directly from the artist’s original wax and clay statuettes, and it served as the matrix or template for the serial edition of Degas’s sculptures that may be seen in museum collections around the world.

When Simon purchased the *modèles*, three were inexplicably missing from the group of 72 bronzes authorized by Degas’s heirs and cast by the Parisian foundry of Adrien-Aurélien Hébrard between 1919 and 1921 (the *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen* and *The Schoolgirl* were cast separately). The *modèle* of *Horse Trotting, the feet not touching the ground* was located in the foundry’s possession in 1979, and Simon swiftly bought it. But the other two *modèles*, a dancer elongated in a balletic pose known as an *arabesque*, and a horse lowering its head to drink, were presumed lost.

In 2001, the Norton Simon Art Foundation committed funds to purchase serial casts of *Arabesque over the right leg, left arm in front* and *Horse at Trough* to complete the collection, but a cast of the desired quality, with documented provenance, remained elusive until now. Although not a *modèle*, this beautiful and well-documented cast of *Arabesque over the right leg, left arm in front* became available in late 2024, just as the Museum was poised to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Thanks to specialists at The Fine Art Group, the art advisory firm that brought the sculpture to our attention and facilitated its sale, the Museum acquired it in late summer. Originally modeled by Degas in the mid- to late 1880s, the *Arabesque* captures the artist’s confidence in rendering this gravity-defying pose (although the wax original, now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., requires an external armature to maintain its balance).

Arabesque over the right leg, left arm in front is on view starting on October 2 in the Norton Simon Museum’s 19th-century wing alongside a selection of Simon’s *modèles*—a fitting tribute to the Museum’s founder as the institution enters its next chapter.

To learn more about Degas’s three-dimensional works and the significance of the Museum’s collection of the artist’s *modèle* bronzes, watch Chief Curator Emily Talbot’s video [here](#).

High resolution image available upon request.

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 800 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens.

Special Notice: From early January until early November 2025, the Museum's exterior areas are under construction, which will result in improvements to the Sculpture Garden and entrance. The Sculpture Garden is closed for the duration of the project. To learn more, visit our [website](#).

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 A 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.

Image credit:

Edgar Degas (French, 1834-1917), *Arabesque over the right leg, left arm in front*, modeled mid- to late-1880s; cast 1919-22, bronze, 11 3/8 x 15 1/4 x 6 1/4 in. (28.9 x 38.7 x 15.9 cm), Norton Simon Art Foundation