

NORTON MUSEUM OF ART

1450 S. Dixie Highway
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

norton.org

Norton Museum of Art Welcomes Shawn Yuan as Elizabeth B. McGraw Senior Curator of Asian Art



Portrait of Shawn Yuan, courtesy of the San Antonio Museum of Art.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (March 18, 2025) — The Norton Museum of Art has appointed Shawn Yuan as the Elizabeth B. McGraw Senior Curator of Asian Art. The Norton, Florida’s largest art museum, is internationally known for its Collection of Contemporary art, Early European art, Modern art, and Photography, as well as Chinese art.

Yuan will oversee the Asian Collection, which primarily focuses on Chinese art. In his new role, Yuan also will focus on works created by artists of other Asian cultures. His tenure at the Museum will begin April 7.

Yuan joins the Norton from the World Heritage Center in San Antonio, Texas. Prior to his role at the World Heritage Center, he held positions at the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, and the Crow Museum of Asian Art at the University of Texas, Dallas.

At the Norton, Yuan will be responsible for developing, growing, and interpreting the Museum’s Asian Collection, encompassing more than 700 objects, including bronzes, ceramics, decorative arts, glass, jades, porcelain, and works of various other mediums. The Norton’s Asian Art Collection was an early addition to the Museum’s holdings, which began in 1942 under the Museum’s founder, Ralph Hubbard Norton, just one year after the Museum opened.

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The Museum's earliest acquisitions for this area of the Collection consisted of Chinese jade and bronzes, and expanded over the years to include ceramics, lacquer, export and import porcelain, and most recently, paintings. Yuan's hiring marks the Norton's broadening scope of collecting to more robustly include other Asian cultures such as Japan, Korea, and India.

"We are impressed by Shawn's enthusiasm for our collections, and his passion for making these venerable works of art relatable to modern audiences," said Ghislain d'Humières, Kenneth C. Griffin Director and CEO. "I look forward to working with him and collaborating on the development of innovative, original exhibition programming that expands the Norton's storied Chinese holdings and welcomes new audiences through the focused inclusion of work from diverse Asian cultures."

Yuan has curated several original exhibitions, including *Samurai Spirit: Swords, Accessories, and Paintings*; *Creative Splendor: Japanese Bamboo Baskets from the Thomas Collection*; *Elegant Pursuits: The Arts of China's Educated Elite, 1400-1900*; *Korean Ceramics from the San Antonio Museum of Art Collection*; *Radiant Wisdom: Tibetan and Indian Buddhist and Hindu Art from the John Hendry Collection*; *Texas Collects Asia*; and *Tending the Afterlife: Chinese Tomb Art from the Neolithic Period to the Ming Dynasty*.

"I have long admired the Norton's exceptional collection of Asian art, particularly its remarkable holdings of Chinese art," Yuan said. "Thanks to visionary acquisitions throughout the Museum's history, the Collection features outstanding examples across all major categories, spanning more than 3,000 years of Chinese history."

Yuan fills a position that will soon be vacated by Laurie Barnes, who is retiring after 19 years as the Elizabeth B. McGraw Senior Curator of Chinese Art. During her tenure, Barnes expanded the Collection, leading the Norton to acquire several rare and noteworthy works, such as a 10th-century "Secret Color" Yue stoneware box and a set of paintings depicting a late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) Lantern Festival celebration in the city of Nanjing. She also was a contributing author to *Chinese Ceramics: From the Paleolithic Period through the Qing Dynasty*, a bilingual encyclopedic survey published by Yale University in collaboration with the Beijing Foreign Languages Press and curated the critically acclaimed 2015 exhibition *High Tea: Glorious Manifestations East and West*, a wide-ranging exploration of the art and culture of tea. Barnes leaves a lasting impact on the Norton's community and is thrilled to observe the direction that Yuan takes the Museum's expanded Asian Art department.

"It will truly be an honor to work with this esteemed Collection and contribute to its continued growth," Yuan said. "I also look forward to collaborating with the Norton team to create exhibitions that serve as a gateway to Asian cultures while enriching the vibrant and diverse cultural landscape of South Florida."

ABOUT THE NORTON MUSEUM OF ART

The Norton Museum of Art, Florida's largest art museum, is home to a distinguished collection of art, with holdings in Contemporary, early European, Modern and Asian Art; and Photography.

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Founded in 1941 by Ralph Hubbard Norton and his wife, Elizabeth Calhoun Norton, the Museum collects, preserves, and exhibits art, and engages visitors through exhibitions, events, and live entertainment featuring local musicians and performance artists. Public programming is year-round and designed to inspire conversations and build community through the power of art. The Museum is accessible to all.

The Museum's expansion and renovation was led by London-based architecture firm Foster + Partners, adding a building and more than 12,000 square feet of new gallery space, an educational center, a store and restaurant, a sculpture garden, and a Great Hall, serving as the Museum's "living room." The campus is home to renovated, Museum-owned, 1920s-era cottages that house artists-in-residence.

The Norton's Senior Curator of Asian Art is endowed by a generous gift from John and Marjorie McGraw, in memory of Elizabeth B. McGraw. The Museum also is pleased to acknowledge Heidi and John Niblack, whose commitment and leadership continue to make the Asian Art program possible.

Visit the Museum's website at Norton.org or connect on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

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