

A Hidden Garden in the Heart of Shreveport

By Emily Young Feazel—Shreveport, Louisiana

The R. W. Norton Art Gallery, nestled on 43 sculpted acres in the old South Highlands neighborhood of Shreveport, Louisiana, has been free and open to the public since its inception in 1966. The museum's eclectic permanent collection of almost 9,000 objects spans over 4,000 years, ranging from Egyptian Old Kingdom to contemporary Neo-realism. Upwards of 300 artists are represented in canvas, paper, and other media, including several hundred sculptures from miniatures to life-size, Classical marble works from Greece and Rome, 16th-century tapestries that once graced the palace of a French king, colonial silver from the hand of Paul Revere, decorative arts in glass and porcelain, and much more.

The beauty of the Norton is not limited to inside the museum. The surrounding 40 landscaped acres are given over to botanical gardens in which tens of thousands of plants provide a visual delight year-round. The evolution of the original scattered plantings into an overarching botanical garden is the work of Kip Dehart and her grounds crew. She designed and oversaw the construction of all the various ecosystems, and their attendant plant beds, from the emergent and marginal water feature plantings to the dry and dusty cacti, other succulents, and various woody species

of the xeriscape garden. Recent additions include a Japanese maple area featuring more than 50 varieties of this delightful little tree, and two new beds outside the museum's gates where walkers, joggers, and casual passerby can sit and enjoy the day even when the gardens are closed.

Rated "one of the South's favorite spots" by *Southern Living* magazine, the Norton's gardens are perhaps best known for their thousands of native and hybrid azaleas. Each spring, usually sometime between the ending weeks of March and early April, these plants burst forth in pinks, whites, purples, oranges, and yellows, like clouds of cotton candy sprawling beneath the understory. The original azalea plantings were the work of Mrs. Margaret Norton in the early 1960s and her vision has continued to this day.

After last year's severe winter, we are looking forward to a beautiful 2022 season full of bright color. To celebrate this spring renewal, our Twilight Talkies series of free movies on the lawn will kick-off on March 25, 2022. Soft breezes through the towering pines overhead create the perfect backdrop to enjoy a relaxing movie under the stars. From Hawaiian to BBQ to hot dogs and ice cream, local food trucks never fail to provide delectable sweet and savory treats.



In a further indoor salute to all things vernal, the Norton will be hosting its 6th annual BLOOM! Juried Exhibition, a dynamic and diverse assortment of floral-themed works of art. Although this exhibit began with featuring local and regional artists, over the past few years it has grown to include international artists from across the globe, including Greece, Great Britain, and Austria, among others. This year, BLOOM! can be viewed in the museum's special exhibit galleries from March 25–May 8, 2022. So, please come and enjoy the beauty and excitement of the R. W. Norton Art Gallery! For more information, visit www.rwnaf.org or call (318) 865-4201.

Address:

R. W. Norton Art Gallery
4747 Creswell Ave.
Shreveport, Louisiana 71106

Museum Hours:

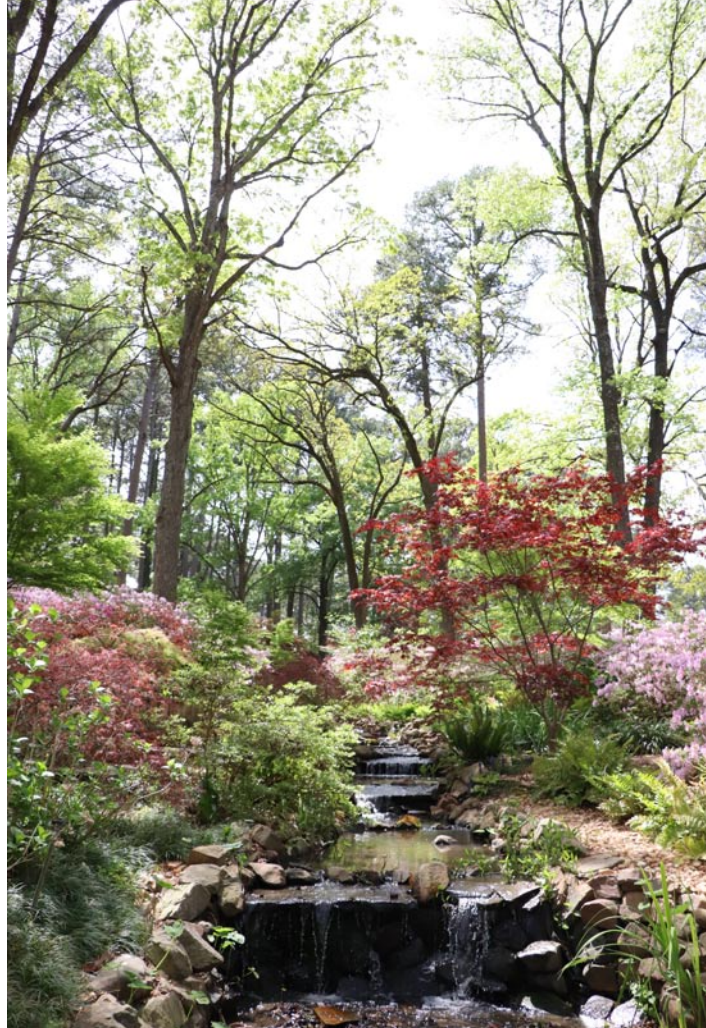
Thursday through Saturday: 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Closed: Monday - Wednesday

Botanical Garden Hours:

Monday and Tuesday: 4:00 pm - Sunset
Wednesday - Sunday: Sunrise - Sunset

About the Author:

Emily Young Feazel is Designer, Exhibits & Special Events at the R.W. Norton Art Gallery.



Photos by Emily Feazel, courtesy of the R.W. Norton Art Foundation.



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