

JOHN EDWARD SVENSON – Public Art + Design Exhibition

Saturday, February 7, 2026 | **Opening Reception** | 6 – 9 pm | *Ginger Elliott Center at Claremont Heritage* | 840 N Indian Hill Blvd. Claremont, CA 91711

Gallery Talk w/ David Svenson – Wednesday, February 11, 2026 | 6:30 – 7:30

Closing Reception: Saturday, February 28, 2026 - 6 – 8 pm

Gallery Hours: Monday – Friday 10:00 – 3:00 | Enter thru Garner House

The exhibition will feature maquettes, models, and photographs documenting many of John Svenson's monumental public artworks and design projects. Highlights range from his work for the Los Angeles County Fair—including the monorail design and collaborations with noted sculptor Albert Stewart—to his extensive collaborations with Millard Sheets for Home Savings & Loan banks, as well as other civic and institutional commissions. Together, these works reveal the breadth and significance of Svenson's oeuvre.

The exhibition runs concurrently with *Generations of Creativity: The Art of the Svenson Family*, on view from January 24 to March 22, 2026, at the Chaffey Community Museum of Art (CCMA), 217 South Lemon Avenue, Ontario, California.

Over a lifetime devoted to sculpture across many scales and media, John Edward Svenson maintained a deep and enduring relationship with wood. "There is a direct connection to the material—one can observe the grain and understand the life of the tree. If I am lucky, I can express this life and create something of beauty," Svenson reflected. An understanding of natural form, drawn from flora and fauna, lies at the core of his artistic practice.

Svenson began working in wood as a child and continued throughout his life. Unlike materials such as bronze, which require multiple intermediary processes, wood carving is both time-consuming and immediate. For Svenson, the act of carving was deeply personal and therapeutic.

Aside from wood John experimented with many materials that were more suited for public works which we are emphasizing in this exhibit. The process and materials for making maquettes to propose to clients are some of his most creative works. From quick sketches to the finished monument and the involvement working with a community of architects, engineers and fabricators was the way he worked.

Born in Los Angeles in 1923, Svenson grew up on a citrus grove in the Pomona Valley. Following World War II, he used the GI Bill to study art at Claremont Graduate School, Scripps College, and Pomona College. He went on to work extensively with sculptor Albert Stewart and artist-designer Millard Sheets. Over the course of his prolific career, Svenson created more than twenty-three sculptures for Home Savings & Loan banks, along with numerous public works in California and Alaska. His sculpture and medallic work are represented in public and private collections nationally and internationally. In 1966, he was nominated to the National Sculpture Society by Albert Stewart and his mentor, Paulanship, and was elevated to Fellow status in 1971.