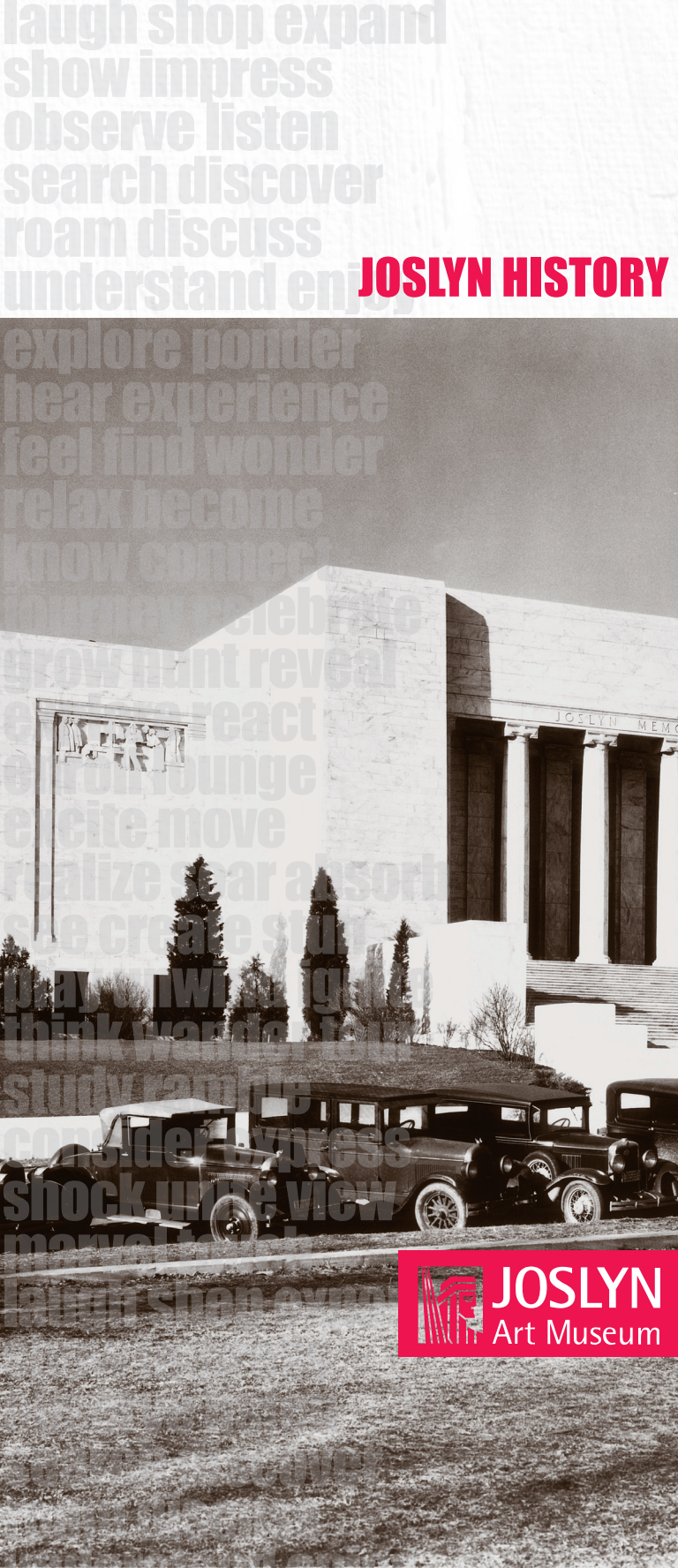


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## JOSLYN HISTORY

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**JOSLYN**  
Art Museum

## THE JOSLYNS

New Englanders George and Sarah Joslyn came to Omaha in 1880. Mr. Joslyn quickly became a successful businessman with the Western Newspaper Union and by the time of his death in 1916, the company was recognized as one of the largest newspaper service organizations in the world. George was also the richest man in Nebraska.

The Joslyn's loved Omaha and actively supported community projects, toward which it is estimated they gave more than \$7 million. They often opened their home, Lynhurst (dubbed "Joslyn Castle"), to parties of underprivileged and orphaned children.

After George's death, Sarah Joslyn devoted herself to creating a memorial to her late husband that would not only perpetuate their shared interests in music and art, but would benefit the greatest number of people possible. She decided to build a concert hall surrounded with art galleries. At its opening in 1931, the new museum received as gifts several private art collections as well as those of the Art Institute of Omaha and the Friends of Art.

During the opening day festivities in 1931, Sarah Joslyn quietly slipped into the crowd of 25,000 who lined up to see the magnificent new building. "I am just one of the public," she remarked to those who recognized her, adding that the museum was her gift to the people of Omaha and that it was up to them to determine what to do with it. "If there is any good in it, let it go on and on."

## THE BUILDING

When this extraordinary Art Deco building opened its doors, it was hailed as both an important addition to the city as well as to modern American architecture. Construction took three years and cost nearly \$3 million. In 1938, the Joslyn Memorial (as it was called) was listed among the 100 finest building sin the United States. The remarkable interior comprises 38 marbles and stones from around the world. The exterior and retaining wall alone filled 250 boxcars with Georgia Pink (Etowah Fleuri) marble.

Omaha architects John and Alan McDonald placed the building firmly in the Great Plains by utilizing American Indian themes, most notably the abstracted thunderbird found on the capitals of the entrance columns and throughout the interior. The sculptural panels on the east half of the building refer to the European settlers of the area, and those on the west to the American Indians. The east façade's inscriptions, sculptural panels, and bronze doors are dedicated to George Joslyn.

The interior of the 1931 structure features a great procession of public spaces – foyers and a colorful fountain court with a balcony – leading to a 1,000-seat concert hall surrounded by galleries. The Founder's Room, the only room in the Museum paneled with wood, connects the north and the south galleries.

A 58,000-square-foot addition, the Scott Pavilion, was built in 1994. Designed by internationally recognized British architect Sir Norman Foster, it is clad in Georgia Pink marble taken from the same quarry that supplied the 1931 building. It features soaring galleries with skylights and is connected to the original structure by a glass atrium.

In 2009, the Museum completed a major campus redevelopment project that added a sculpture garden, a Discovery Garden, flowing water features, enhanced entrances and drives, renovated and expanded parking, landscaped green spaces, rich granite pathways, an entrance plaza to welcome visitors, and important sculptures by nationally and internationally renowned artists.

