

Committee of One Hundred Project for the 2015 Centennial Restoration of the Panama-California Sculpture Court

The 1915 Varied Industries and Food Products Building was one of ten temporary Panama-California Exposition buildings built along the Prado and on the Esplanade from the Plaza de Panama to the Spreckels Organ Pavilion.

Ornamentation on these buildings was made of *staff plaster* (plaster of Paris mixed with coir fiber). These buildings were meant to last for the year of the Exposition, which was extended for a second year in 1916. Within five years some buildings had deteriorated badly.



The building we know today as the Casa del Prado is not the original building, which had been condemned and was demolished in 1969. The Committee of One Hundred paid to have the ornamentation removed from what was then known as the Food and Beverage Building in the hopes that the building could be reconstructed. In November 1968 the City's Proposition M passed by a 72% vote to replace the Food and Beverage Building.

The original ornamentation was used to make molds for the new building, then was taken to the Chollas Landfill. After realizing that people were climbing a fence to take pieces of the ornamentation, the City and The Committee of One Hundred salvaged 17 pieces and returned them to the Casa del Prado courtyard to create the Panama-California Sculpture Court in 1973. Some pieces were restored at that time. The models for the three Spanish artists were added a year later. These models had been used to create the cast concrete statues that stand above the entry to the Museum of Art.

In 2010, with the support of the City of San Diego's Commission for Arts and Culture and Balboa Park staff, The Committee of One Hundred decided to restore the Panama-California Sculpture Court.



Committee of 100 board members pose with sculpture at the 1973 creation of the Panama-California Sculpture Court
(L to R) Pat DeMarce, Elizabeth Davidson, Mary Adams, Marianne Maynard, Bea Evenson

After 55 years outdoors as ornamentation on the original building and nearly 40 years in the Sculpture Court many of the sculptures were in poor condition:

Sculptures were filthy, damaged, and some had graffiti
Wooden stands were peeling and rotting
There was no interpretive signage

The statue called *Religion* had been missing from the east side of the reconstructed building for several years. It had deteriorated and was removed for public safety.

The original statue *Religion* in the Sculpture Court was restored and new arms were added. It was then used to create a replacement for the missing statue atop the Casa del Prado. The original statue was returned to the Sculpture Court.

From 2011-2014 The Committee of One Hundred had 18 sculptures restored, provided them with new bases, rearranged the placement, and added interpretive signage in English and Spanish. New LED lighting highlights each of the sculptures. The renovated Panama-California Sculpture Court now serves as an outdoor museum, telling the story of a temporary Exposition building, its making and its rebirth. The Sculpture Court is open to the public without charge whenever the Casa del Prado is open.

Nearly one hundred donors contributed to this project, including major support from the Balboa Park Trust at the San Diego Foundation and from the County of San Diego. The project could not have been completed without support from the City of San Diego's Commission for Arts and Culture and the Park and Recreation Department.