

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art closes Monday for summer renovations

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Gallery walls at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art lay bare Friday as renovations begin for the summer. The museum will be closed until September beginning Monday. Todd Van Emst/tvemst@oanow.com

Gallery walls at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art laid bare on Friday as workers prepared for the museum to close for summer-long renovations on Monday.

Sunday will be the public's last chance to visit the museum before doors close until they reopen the week after Labor Day.

Renovations will include applying sound dampening material to the ceilings of the Grand Gallery, the Dwight and Helen Carlisle Lobby and the Museum Café to improve acoustics and placing a film on windows in the Grand Gallery to filter glare and help with temperature control.

To make way for scaffolding work, the 30-foot Dale Chihuly glass chandelier that hangs in the museum's rotunda will be disassembled over three days, said museum director Marilyn Laufer.

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The nearly 2,000 pound sculpture's more than 600 individual glass pieces will be unraveled piece by piece, cleaned and reassembled at the end of construction.

"It'll be clean and shiny and wonderful," Laufer said, adding that 13 years of dust has collected on the piece.

Some of the take-down process will be live-streamed on the museum's Facebook page between Wednesday and Friday, said Charlotte Hendrix, the museum's communications and marketing specialist.

Storage space will also be renovated to create 75 percent more space. A new storage system, similar to what other museums use, will be installed to redistribute the space.

"It's not that we're really enlarging the footprint, it's just that we're clearing things out and putting in a new design system so that it'll be more effective and efficient," Laufer said.

Art stored in the museum will be moved upstairs during work in the basement storage, and staff will examine the collections and reorganize them.

Planning for fall expeditions will continue throughout the summer, including events surrounding Leo Twiggs's nine-piece exhibition called Requiem from Mother Emmanuel. Twiggs, an African American artist from South Carolina, created the collection in memory of nine victims of the shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 17, 2015.

The museum will also prepare for the Out of the Box outdoor exhibition that will feature 10 to 15 pieces from Jean Shin, an artist who works primarily with recycled materials. A corn maze Shin made with recycle plastic soda bottles, called MAiZE, will also be exhibited inside.

The outdoor walking path and gardens will remain open throughout construction. Hendrix added that the museum is looking for other ways to keep active in the community, such as participation with the city of Auburn's youth camps and partnership with city events, such as the Summernight Downtown Art Walk.