



Az Rashidi & Paul Schulhof photo by Gregory Gentert

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Dubuque Museum of Art selects Schulhof Rashidi Architects**

**DUBUQUE, Iowa, September 21, 2023**—The Dubuque Museum of Art (DuMA) recently selected Schulhof Rashidi Architects to design a new Museum of Art campus on the 700 block of Locust. The new Museum will be a centerpiece for a revitalized downtown, creating an entire campus centered on the Museum’s current location and a deeper connection to nearby Washington Park and the surrounding blocks.

The principals of Schulhof Rashidi are Paul Schulhof and Azadeh Rashidi, architects whose practice focuses on educational and cultural facilities. In their work with the firm Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, they served on the leadership team for the public spaces of David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City, the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago, the Hood Museum at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, and the US Embassy in Mexico City. Following a highly competitive global search, Schulhof Rashidi were selected by DuMA for the firm’s commitment to building community, experience with cultural sites, and joyful approach to design.

“DuMA’s new museum is a once-in-a-generation opportunity,” said Schulhof. “We have the chance to help to revitalize historic downtown Dubuque just as development in the riverfront and Millwork districts have revitalized those areas. We envision a building and a campus that will be a new layer in the longer history of the city, a destination within the larger fabric of Dubuque.”

The architects envision the museum building at the center of an arts campus, acting as a lantern to draw visitors to the area. The space surrounding the new DuMA will be as important as the building itself, the two working together to build a cultural and architectural ecosystem with a “24-hour presence,” serving the public whether the Museum is open or closed. With these initial ideas in mind, the process of designing has begun with the architects visiting Dubuque for an immersive listening tour in which they met with Museum staff, civic leaders and residents. A community advisory committee including artists, parents, activists, educators, retirees and

young professionals will ensure that a wide range of perspectives and needs are incorporated throughout the design process.

“We started trying to understand what people in Dubuque are excited about,” said Rashidi. “What’s emerging as unique to Dubuque is both its size and the strong ties within its community. Everywhere we go, we’re running into people we’ve already met, and we’re amazed at how civic-minded the citizens are and how excited they are by developments like the riverfront and the Millwork district. It’s an excitement that’s hard to build in a larger city.”

Several central ideas emerged during the listening tour that will become pillars of the design process. “People aren’t talking about the way the building should look,” said Schulhof. “Instead, they talk about what should happen there and what it needs to feel like.” The key, the architects agree, will be creating a flexible and magnetic exterior space for programming with transparent transitions to the Museum building itself. “We want to break down the boundary between the inside and the outside,” Rashidi elaborated. “We’re considering how you can design spaces to be an art museum and much more than an art museum at the same time. It’s a whole-campus approach rather than a single-building approach.”

Schulhof and Rashidi drew inspiration from one of the most important paintings found at DuMA, Grant Wood’s *Appraisal*. After completing the painting, Wood returned to it and literally reframed it, cutting off the bottom section and in doing so refocusing the composition. “The Museum will be reframed within the context of Dubuque as Dubuque will be reframed by the Museum,” said Schulhof.

“The goal is not only to create a unique building but also a building unique to its place,” according to Gary Stoppelman, DuMA’s executive director. “We want to be authentic to our region—its people, its landscape, its existing architecture. Those are the connections that endure.”

Rashidi’s approach at Dartmouth allowed “the art to absolutely sing out from the walls,” said John Stomberg, Director of the Hood Museum of Art. In describing her work with Tod Williams Bille Tsien Architects, Stomberg added, “the architects have always been one step ahead of us, designing for our needs while creating a lasting testament to the creative spirit.”

**The community is invited to meet the architects and learn more about their process at two upcoming events. The Museum will kick off the celebration of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and introduce Schulhof and Rashidi at its gala September 29, 2023. Tickets are available at [dbqart.org](https://dbqart.org). The architects will return for a free Community Day at DuMA on October 28, 2023.**

The selection concluded a highly competitive search conducted in collaboration with Anser Advisory, a national capital program and project advisory firm and division of Accenture. 43 firms from around the world responded. The project is part of the Museum’s 2022–2026 Strategic Plan which is available on [dbqart.org](https://dbqart.org). Prior to the selection of the design architects, a 2022 Building Operational Feasibility Study with AEA Consulting and Straka Johnson architects estimated that the campus would have a projected gross floor area (GFA) of 47,159 square feet, plus 10,000 additional square feet of outdoor space, almost quadrupling the footprint of the current DuMA.

DuMA is now engaged in robust fundraising efforts to secure support for the project and its impact on the community. This effort will dramatically increase student and family programs with interactive and immersive art experiences and galleries that showcase, for the first time, the depth and breadth of DuMA’s collection. As a welcoming new icon in the heart of downtown, the new campus will support city-wide efforts to attract, retain,

and entertain residents and tourists. Individuals interested in supporting the project may contact Emma Stapleton, Director of Advancement at [estapleton@dbqart.org](mailto:estapleton@dbqart.org).

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**About the Dubuque Museum of Art**

The Dubuque Museum of Art (DuMA), founded in 1874 and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 2004, is Iowa's oldest cultural institution. Named a national affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in 2016, DuMA's mission is to create engaging art experiences that excite, inspire, and connect our community. The Museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 1pm to 4pm. More information can be found at [dbqart.org](http://dbqart.org).

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