

DAHESH MUSEUM OF ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Pamela Dunn

pdunn@daheshmuseum.org

212.759-0606 x 237

THE DAHESH MUSEUM OF ART LEAVES 580 MADISON *A SEARCH BEGINS FOR A PERMANENT HOME*

New York, NY--The Trustees of the Board of the Dahesh Museum of Art announced today that it will close its current location at 580 Madison Avenue. For the next two years, the Museum will operate out of a Manhattan office space, which will serve as the nerve center for a number of diverse projects while the Board looks to acquire a building. “We are initiating the next stage in the plan to provide the Museum with a home of its own,” said Amira Zahid, the Museum’s Vice-President.

The Dahesh Museum of Art first opened in 1995 at 601 Fifth Avenue and quickly metamorphosed over the last twelve years from a cultural curiosity to a highly respected art institution – a new and welcome element in New York City’s diverse cultural fabric.

“It was always our plan to look for an appropriate site,” Ms. Zahid explained. “In 1997, 2 Columbus Circle became available. The Museum eagerly joined the competition to purchase the building. The Dahesh Museum of Art was a finalist in 1997 and, from 2000 to 2002, when the competition was re-opened, the Museum was one of the top finalists. When the building was awarded to another institution, the Board took a temporary space, the former IBM Gallery at 580 Madison Avenue.”

The Dahesh Museum of Art re-opened in September 2003 with the exhibition, *French Artists in Rome*, which was named one of the top ten exhibitions of 2003 by New York Times chief critic, Michael Kimmelman. The Museum continued to present groundbreaking and popular exhibitions, such as *The Legacy of Homer*, with the *Prix de Rome*-winning early works of such future art stars as Ingres and David; *Stories to Tell* from the Kelly Collection, featuring academically-trained illustrators Norman Rockwell and Jessica Willcox Smith and forgotten masters, such as Dean Cornwell

and Harvey Dunn; and the *Charles Bague* show, which revived the now immensely popular, *Bague Drawing Course*. The greatly expanded Museum Store at street level was an instant success and Café Opaline became a favorite lunch spot for local businesses, shoppers, and tourists. Still, the Museum needed to find a permanent home of its own.

Now in its 12th year, the Museum will not be going underground with this move, but will maintain a presence with ongoing projects in 19th- and early 20th-century academic art. Here are some highlights of activities the Museum will be undertaking:

- The Museum plans to travel at least two shows a year to art institutions, both nationally and internationally. The Dahesh Museum is currently sending two exhibitions to Washington state: *Napoleon on the Nile* to the Frye Museum in Seattle and *A Distant Muse* to the Tacoma Art Museum, both opening in 2008.
- The Museum will continue to loan works from its permanent collection to exhibitions around the world. In 2007 through 2009, paintings from the Dahesh Museum of Art will be on loan abroad to the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli in Italy for *Alma Tadema a Pompeii: La Nostalgia dell'Antico* and to the Musée Fabre in Montpellier, France for *Exposition François-Xavier Fabre: Une rétrospective*. Nationally, another work will also be on loan to the National Gallery of Art, DC and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art for their joint exhibition, *Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture around the Bay of Naples*.
- Currently, more than 200 works from the Collection are available online for global interest and enjoyment on our website, daheshmuseum.org. More images are being added, including past favorites of our visitors.
- For those who loved the Museum Shop and its imported treasures, the Museum is launching its online shop in October with products inspired by major artworks in the collection. Museum publications and books relating to all aspects of academic art will also be available for purchase online.

According to Dahesh Museum Director, Flora Kaplan, “For this next stage, we will strengthen our role as a catalyst of change and a nexus of information in both the academic and curatorial worlds. We will continue to enrich the story of the ‘other 19th century’ through support for scholars, who are creating new ways of understanding the visual culture of the 19th century – its contemporary legacy and its cross-cultural collaborations. We will be maintaining a vital profile and increasing our accessibility through new media and new networks.”

###