



National Academy of Design inducts eight new members, including Rashid Johnson, Julie Mehretu and others

The nominations come as the Academy announces plans for an exhibition space in New York following the sale of its Upper East Side buildings

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The National Academy of Design (NAD)—the venerable New York-based association of artists and architects established in 1825—has announced the induction of eight new National Academicians. The artists Julie Mehretu, Rashid Johnson, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Joanne Greenbaum, Joanna Pousette-Dart, Gary Simmons, Peter Halley and the architect Andrew Freear join more than 400 international NAD members.

The announcement follows the publication of a holistic restructuring plan for the NAD released in September, in which organisers briefly outline plans to remediate the institution's checkered financial past.

Over the last decade, the NAD has often lacked funds to honour academicians' requests for scholarships and benefits. But the institution amassed a \$66m endowment between 2016 and 2019 from the sale of the three Upper East Side buildings that housed its headquarters, museum and art school, providing substantial long-term financial stability.

“This is a transformational moment to reinvent America’s oldest artist-led organisation and create a national forum for new work and ideas in contemporary art and architecture,” Gregory Wessner, the executive director of the NAD, tells *The Art Newspaper*. “We are committed to building a transparent, resilient and financially robust organisation.”

Part of the restructuring plan includes the construction of a forthcoming space comprising temporary and permanent galleries, offices, storage spaces, a research library and other features. The space will not be “a Beaux-Arts townhouse on Fifth Avenue”, like the museum building that closed in 2016, but will be “a New York space”, Wessner said in a previous interview.

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The NAD also plans to boost its digital programmes, including artist conversations with academicians, and will use the interim to organise satellite exhibitions featuring works from its 8,000-piece collection, such as the traveling show *For America: Paintings From the National Academy of Design* currently on view at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California.

The institution—currently headquartered in Gramercy Park—has occupied 14 different spaces in its history, relocating as programme needs and finances warranted. The new plan is being closely overseen by a group of artists and board members, and is expected to roll out before the NAD’s 200th anniversary in 2025.

The Academy was founded by Samuel Morse, Asher Durand, Thomas Cole and other artists to “promote the fine arts in America through instruction and exhibition”. More than 2,300 academicians, from Thomas Eakins to Jasper Johns, have donated works to the institution, a stipulation of the membership.