



Smithsonian  
***National Museum of African American  
History and Culture***

# News

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## **Smithsonian Names Architect for National Museum of African American History and Culture**

The Smithsonian today announced that Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup is the architectural team chosen to design the National Museum of African American History and Culture to be located on the National Mall near the Washington Monument. The selection was made by a jury chaired by Museum Director Lonnie G. Bunch III. Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup was among six architectural firms that entered a design competition in January.

“I am pleased to have the opportunity to work with this talented team,” said Bunch. “Their vision and spirit of collaboration moved all members of the design competition jury. I am confident that they will give us a building that will be an important addition to the National Mall and to the architecture of this city.”

Philip G. Freelon, FAIA, speaking on behalf of the Freelon Adjaye Bond team, said “This is an incredible time for us as designers—and this museum represents a unique opportunity to give form and substance to the powerful vision that has been established by the Smithsonian leadership. We are truly honored to have been chosen as the architects from such a distinguished list of competitors.

In describing their competition entry, Freelon said, “Our model illustrates a design concept—not a finished building. The design process now begins in earnest with the full engagement of the museum and Smithsonian Institution staff. Together, we will advance the ideas that have been explored to date in an inclusive and collaborative environment.”

Freelon Adjaye Bond said in its design concept materials, “The National Museum of African American History and Culture—the institution and the building—embodies the African American spirit. Majestic yet exuberant, dignified yet triumphant, the building will be worthy of the museum’s vision, and its prominent place on the National Mall.”

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The team selected by the Smithsonian consists of four firms that have joined together for this unique project—The Freelon Group, Adjaye Associates, Davis Brody Bond and SmithGroup. The Freelon Group will be the architect of record and Phil Freelon will serve as the design guarantor—making sure that the design reflects the values and priorities of the museum and the Smithsonian. The Freelon Group designed the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture in Baltimore.

David Adjaye will be the lead designer. He designed the Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo, Norway, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver. Davis Brody Bond is involved in the planning, design and execution of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center in New York. The firm also led the restoration and expansion of the New York Public Library. The SmithGroup is an international architectural and engineering firm with offices in Washington, D.C., that designed the Normandy American Cemetery Interpretive Center in France.

The building design will take up to three years, with construction to begin in 2012. Set to open in 2015, the museum's total cost is estimated to be \$500 million, including design. During the design phase, the Smithsonian will seek approval from the National Capital Planning Commission. In addition, the Institution will continue to consult with other Washington, D.C., agencies and organizations, including the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Park Service and the National Coalition to Save Our Mall.

Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup was one of 22 teams that responded to the Request for Qualifications in summer 2008. The six firms selected to participate in the design competition were announced in January 2009. The architectural team will work directly with the Smithsonian's contracting office to respond to the formal Request for Proposal.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture was established in 2003 by an Act of Congress. Although it does not have a building yet, the museum is collecting artifacts; conducting seminars and symposia, including a recent two-day program on Black Power; gathering African American oral histories for StoryCorps, a joint program with National Public Radio and the Library of Congress; and creating traveling exhibitions such as "Let Your Motto Be Resistance." In addition, the museum has its own gallery in the National Museum of American History, which currently is exhibiting "The Scurlock Studio and Black Washington: Picturing the Promise."

Jury members for the design competition were:

- Lonnie G. Bunch III (chair), director, National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Mike Bellamy, P.E., director, Smithsonian's Office of Engineering, Design and Construction
- Robert Campbell, architecture critic, Boston Globe
- Maurice Cox, director of design, National Endowment for the Arts
- James A. Johnson, member of the museum's council, vice chairman of Perseus LLC and former chairman and CEO of Fannie Mae
- Robert Kogod, member of Smithsonian Board of Regents and chair of the board's facilities committee and president of Charles E. Smith Management LLC
- Sheryl Kolasinski, AIA, director, Smithsonian's Office of Planning and Project Management
- Franklin D. Raines, member of the museum's council, former chairman and CEO of Fannie Mae and former director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget
- Linda Johnson Rice, co-chair of the museum's council and CEO of Johnson Publishing Company Inc. (publisher of Ebony and Jet magazines)
- Adèle Naudé Santos, dean of the School of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and principal architect for the San Francisco-based firm, Santos Prescott and Associates

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