

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **THE DUBUQUE MUSEUM OF ART and THE SCULPTURE FOUNDATION**

**announce**

### **25 FOOT TALL ‘AMERICAN GOTHIC’ SCULPTURE ARRIVES IN DUBUQUE**

**Dubuque, Iowa**— On Wednesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Dubuque will awake to a dramatic site. A towering farming couple in the form of the *God Bless America* sculpture, by renowned American artist Seward Johnson, will be installed on the grounds of the Dubuque Museum of Art in downtown Dubuque. The sculpture itself, as well as the installation process, will be visually stunning.

Beginning at approximately 8am on Wednesday, a huge crane will begin lifting portions of the gigantic sculpture into the air and set them atop one another – first giant pants and skirt of the man and woman, next the torsos and then the heads. This is a good opportunity for television pictures and still photos. The sculpture will take several days to complete, with the final assembly occurring on Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Inspired by painter Grant Wood’s *American Gothic*, sculptor Seward Johnson has transformed the figures into a three-dimensional scene that towers over treetops and looms above pedestrians. The sculpture is part of a series by Johnson using artistic icons – images that have had a significant impact on our culture – and transforming them.

“I want to invite us all to ‘look back’ at these images and discover what we’ve learned since they first became icons to us, and how our understanding or point of view may have shifted since then,” said Johnson, the sculptor. “We accept them as icons, but as an artist I want to ask another question – such as, would they be embraced the same way if they came to us today? Would we view them with more cynicism or can we still see purity at this stage of our social maturity?”

Area residents may already be familiar with this amazing work of sculpture as it has previously been on exhibit on Michigan Avenue in Chicago as well as in Mesa, Arizona; Key West, Florida; and most recently at the Indiana State Fair. It has been the wish of Seward Johnson to have this sculpture come to Iowa – Grant Wood’s home state – and

the Dubuque Museum of Art is proud to be the debut venue for *God Bless America* in Iowa.

Mark Wahlert, Director of the Dubuque Museum of Art, has invited the temporary loan of the sculpture from The Sculpture Foundation, a not for profit entity that encourages the placement and sharing of public art. The Foundation's Director, Paula Stoeke, notes, "One key purpose of public art is to initiate dialogue within communities. This monumental sculpture is provocative in its very presence, and should turn heads as well as start conversations."

*God Bless America* will be on exhibit at the Dubuque Museum of Art until April 4, 2011. In addition, the Dubuque Museum of Art will be highlighting its own world-class Grant Wood collection and hosting numerous Grant Wood-themed programs throughout the exhibition's duration.

***For additional information about the artist or the sculpture contact:***

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