



David B. Dahlquist is a nationally recognized public artist and design consultant. Since 1988, he has completed more than 30 large-scale public commissions across the country. In 1994, Dahlquist established Dahlquist Clayworks Inc., which in 2004 became a part of RDG Planning & Design. Dahlquist now leads the RDG Dahlquist Art Studio, which is a comprehensive design and fabrication studio with a staff of eight professional artists. Commissions for private, institutional and public clients range from tilework and sculpture to major architectural installations.

The Art Studio works with other artists, architects and design professionals to create unique components for custom applications in buildings and the landscape. Through a process of “artistic fact-finding,” Dahlquist develops concepts and imagery related to history and the site. He places specific emphasis on the thoughtful integration of artworks within a project.

Dahlquist is a former assistant professor at Iowa State University. He currently serves as an adjunct professor in art for Grand View College, the Des Moines Area Community College and Des Moines Art Center. In 1997, he served as an Iowa Sister States’ cultural delegate to China, where he was invited to lecture at several universities and ceramic institutes. He has also received artist’s project grants from the Iowa Arts Council and Department of Cultural Affairs. Dahlquist served as the co-chair of the Mayor’s Public-Art Taskforce for the city of Des Moines, which established the first public art program and ordinance for the city. He is currently a member of the executive committee for the new Des Moines Public Art Foundation, part of the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation.

### **PROJECTS (PARTIAL LIST)**

Dahlquist and the Art Studio have completed installations integrated into architectural construction at the Iowa Department of Public Safety Building in downtown Des Moines and Motor Vehicle Division Building for the Iowa Department of Transportation in Ankeny. A notable private commission completed is the Paragon Prairie Tower in Urbandale. The tower is clad in the largest Italian glass mosaic tile mural in the United States and pays homage to the history of the native Iowa prairie landscape. The major destination icon has become a cultural landmark for the region.

For several years, Dahlquist has been part of a series of multi-disciplinary design teams in the “Art-in-Transit” program of the Iowa Department of Transportation, responsible for creating a variety of different “experiences” for new rest areas and welcome centers across the state. These projects have received awards for engineering excellence, specifically related to the functional integration of the artwork. Dahlquist had the opportunity to work with the renowned public artist, Siah Armajani, who believes that public art must function as part of the infrastructure of the surrounding environment. Dahlquist makes pieces that function on many levels. This is true with respect to issues of site lines and safety, as well as careful selection of materials and related issues of on-going maintenance with respect to a project. Working with architects and engineers ensures that what is proposed will work structurally, as intended, and last.

The majority of Dahlquist’s public artwork has been related to “Art-in-Transit” projects and other transportation-related venues. His work demonstrates significant experience integrating artwork and telling stories, conscious of the factors of time and scale, relevant to people both in vehicles and on foot. In so doing, he makes meaningful connections between people and the surrounding environment. This work includes a major installation for the Arts and Science Council in Charlotte, North Carolina, and a recent piece for the Court Street Transportation Center in Iowa City. In the recent past, the Art Studio has created installations for several rest areas and welcome centers for the Iowa Department of Transportation. These sites are located in: Decatur, Woodbury, Johnson, Scott, Adair, Cedar, Franklin, Pottawattamie, and Story Counties. Each project began with site-specific research to develop a unique, regional theme

integrated within and responding to the building's architectural character and surrounding landscape.

Dahlquist's work depends upon many different elements "orchestrated" in a way that the public is welcomed into and moved by the experience. The effect of light is one of these elements. In theatre, lighting is critical to shaping and setting the tone of the performance. Lighting is employed in many unique sculptural and functional forms. Dahlquist pays close attention to the impact of lighting as a site changes from day to night, and the role it plays in creating ambiance, dimension and exciting new places.

Mediums used in public art projects to produce both structural and ornamental pieces include clay, glass, steel, glass fiber reinforced concrete, stained glass, relief-modeled terra cotta, bronze casting, custom glazed ceramic tile, mosaic, digital glazed ceramic, and other materials.