



## This Art World Power Couple Will Open Their D.C. Museum This Fall

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A rendering of the forthcoming Rubell Museum in Southwest D.C.

courtesy of Beyer Blinder Belle

More than ten years after Miami-based art collecting couple Don and Mera Rubell bought the old Randall Junior High School site in Southwest D.C., the museum the art moguls envisioned there finally has a plan to open this fall.

The Rubell Museum DC will open to public on October 29, according to a press release Wednesday. It will feature exhibitions dedicated exclusively to the couples' collection of contemporary art, which contains more than 7,400 works from more than 1,000 artists. The 32,000-square-foot space at 65 Eye Street SW will house galleries, a bookstore, and a cafe with indoor and outdoor dining.

It will also be free for D.C. residents, according to the release. A spokesperson for the museum did not immediately return DCist/WAMU’s request for comment on pricing for out-of-state guests.

“Creating a museum for sharing our collection with the people who live and work in our nation’s capital and those who visit the city from across the U.S. and around the world fulfills a longtime dream for us,” Mera Rubell said in a statement.



The Rubells — Don is the brother of infamous [Studio 54 owner Steve Rubell](#) — first began presenting their collection to the public in 1993. In 2019, they opened [an expanded version](#) of their flagship Rubell Museum in Miami’s Allapattah neighborhood, featuring works from artists such as Keith Haring, Yayoi Kusama, and Natalie Ball. The pair has one of the largest private collections of contemporary art in the world, [according to their website](#), and their influence can be a huge boon for [young and emerging artists](#).

In addition to the museum, the Randall School’s redevelopment will include a 492-unit apartment building called “Gallery 64,” where 20% of the units will be dedicated to affordable housing, according to the press release. A spokesperson for the project did not immediately return DCist/WAMU’s request for comment on a timeline for the residential development.

An official opening date for the museum marks the end of more than a decade of development setbacks for the Rubells and an even longer period of limbo for the school itself. Built in 1906, Randall Junior High School was converted into a men’s shelter and art studios in 1978. The Corcoran College of Art and Design bought the building off the city in 2006 with plans to open an art school and build apartments, but the project ultimately failed amid the broader economic downturn.

The Corcoran sold it to the Rubells in 2010 for \$6.5 million, and the couple — who also own the [temporarily closed Capitol Skyline Hotel](#) down the block — planned to convert the old building into a [contemporary art museum](#) and 12-story residential building. Back then, the Rubells were working with the [Telesis Corporation](#), but development still ran into financial trouble during the fallout from the Great Recession. In 2017, California-based Lowe Enterprises [signed on](#) as the project's new developer, and in 2021, news broke that the long-awaited museum was [reaching completion](#) and expecting to [open in 2022](#).

The area surrounding the forthcoming Rubell Museum certainly looks a bit different than it did when the couple first purchased the Randall school land back in 2007. South of the school sits Nationals Park and MLS stadium Audi Field, and the still growing Navy Yard neighborhood, including the [Yards Park](#) development to the east. [Culture House DC](#) (formerly the Blue Whino Arts Club), a local arts non-profit and event space, also sits nearly directly behind the Randall school.