

CORCORAN

GALLERY OF ART • COLLEGE of ART + DESIGN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CORCORAN PRESENTS ROBERT IRWIN'S *GYPSY SWITCH*
November 20, 2010 – March 6, 2011



WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Gypsy Switch*, a new work by pioneering artist Robert Irwin, is on display now at the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design** through March, 2011. Housed in a dedicated gallery on the Corcoran's upper level, the work is composed of thirty-three fluorescent lights arranged to create an environment activated with light and color, shadow and reflection.

Now in his eighties, Irwin was a central figure within the California Light and Space movement that originated in Los Angeles and its surrounding area in the 1960s. He and other artists associated with this group, including James Turrell and Maria Nordman, created site-responsive installations inspired by the possibility of sensory transformation through art.

Irwin's work seeks to expand the realm of human perception through art and architecture. For more than five decades he has challenged the conventions of his field—working in painting, sculpture, and installation art, as well as creating major public earthworks and architecture. Born in Long Beach, California in 1928, Irwin began experimenting

with abstract expressionist methods of painting in the late 1950s. Moving through his early Abstract Expressionist style, he began to seek the reduction of his art to its most elemental forms by refining his palette, abandoning the use of frames, and making sculptures where the specific conditions of the installation were as important as the object itself.

By 1970 he had departed completely from object-based studio practice. Irwin began to work on projects that specifically addressed architecture and landscape. His numerous public works include the architectural design and grounds for the Dia: Beacon, in Beacon, New York, and the extensive Gardens of the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles. In preparation for a major exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego in 2007, Irwin returned to making work in the studio.

ABOUT THE CORCORAN

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, a privately funded institution, was founded in 1869 as Washington's first and largest nonfederal museum of art. It is known internationally for its distinguished collection of historical and modern American art as well as contemporary art, photography, European painting, sculpture and the decorative arts. Founded in 1890, the Corcoran College of Art + Design is Washington's only four-year college of art and design offering BFA degrees in Digital Media Design, Fine Art, Fine Art Photography, Graphic Design, Interior Design, and Photojournalism; a five-year Bachelor of Fine Arts/ Master of Arts in Teaching (BFA/MAT); and two-year Master of Arts (MA) programs in Interior Design, Exhibition Design, Art Education, and at the Book, and New Media Photojournalism. The College's Continuing Education program offers part-time credit and non-credit classes for children and adults and draws more than 2,500 participants each year. For more information about the Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design, visit www.corcoran.org.

Image:

Robert Irwin, *Gypsy Switch*, 2010. Light, shadow, reflection, color. 72 x 211 ¼ x 4 ¼ inches. © Robert Irwin. Photo credit: Philipp Scholtz Rittermann. Photo courtesy Quint Contemporary Art.

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