

CORCORAN

GALLERY OF ART • COLLEGE of ART+DESIGN

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CORCORAN PRESENTS *AMERICAN JOURNEYS—VISIONS OF PLACE*
Reinstallation of Historic American Art Galleries Opens This Fall



WASHINGTON, D.C.— On September 21, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design** opens *American Journeys—Visions of Place*, a new installation of the Corcoran’s renowned pre-1945 American paintings and sculpture collection that conveys the changing notion of place in the history of American art. Featuring more paintings—approximately 110—than have ever been on view in the galleries of historic American art, and for the first time in over a decade integrating paintings and sculpture for a total of approximately 125 works on view, the reinstallation reflects the Corcoran’s commitment to American art as one of its three core collection areas.

Led by Bechhoefer Curator of American Art Sarah Cash, the reinstallation is devoted to how the ideas of place and American artistic identity have shifted over time through increased communication and connectedness. Beginning with the invention of photography and the advent of railroad and transatlantic travel, and further developed through international art exhibitions, the installation focuses on artists’ revolutionary access to new aesthetic ideas.

“I am delighted to be able to present treasures from the American Art collection, known as one of the finest in the

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world, including many works that have not been seen in decades,” said Cash. “Visitors will have the opportunity to understand how changes—societal, physical, and technological—affected, inspired, and freed artists working in the pre-World War II era.”

The galleries will be installed in a variety of styles to evoke the time in which the works were created. Two galleries will feature a “Salon-style” hang, with works presented from eye-level up to the ceiling as exhibitions often were designed in the nineteenth century. The reinstalled galleries will be divided into four sections: “Pride of Place: The New Nation,” “The Lure of Paris,” “New York in the New Century,” and “Beyond Borders: Modernism.” The first three sections concentrate on the idea of geographic place: artists’ focus on and depictions of the new nation and its inhabitants beginning in the late eighteenth century, the lure of Paris and France for artists in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, and the transforming nature of New York around the turn of the twentieth century. The final section examines the nascent erasure of any one center of the American art world; included works will draw attention to the increased internationalization of art during the interwar years.

“Pride of Place: The New Nation” includes portraits, genre paintings, Hudson River School landscapes, images of the American West, and sculptures. Masterpieces such as Rembrandt Peale’s *Washington before Yorktown* (1824; reworked 1825) and Frederic Edwin Church’s *Niagara* (1857) portray the new nation’s history and landscape. “The Lure of Paris” features John Singer Sargent’s *En route pour la pêche* (1878) and William James Glackens’ *Luxembourg Gardens* (1906), among other Impressionist and expatriate pieces, realist works, and sculptures that reveal the importance of Paris and France for American artists. “New York in the New Century” includes works that address the city’s rapidly changing character by artists such as George Bellows and Childe Hassam. In “Beyond Borders: Modernism,” seminal works by Marsden Hartley and Aaron Douglas, among others, highlight the increasingly international influences on American art between World Wars I and II.

American Journeys concludes with a glimpse across the decades to British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare’s sculpture *Girl on Globe II*, installed in the center of the Salon Doré, a grand eighteenth-century period room in the Gallery’s Clark Wing. The 2011 sculpture exemplifies the complete permeability of borders: there is, effectively, no longer one place, nationality, or center of the art world.

In addition to a cell phone audio tour, a number of visitor engagement and learning tools accompany the reinstallation. iPads located in the galleries allow visitors to zoom in on images and obtain detailed information about the art on display. For Rembrandt Peale’s *Washington before Yorktown*, visitors explore the results of a major recent conservation treatment on that painting. In addition to the in-gallery iPads, an app gives visitors the opportunity to personalize their experience with the collection through music, games, and other interactive content. Curator Sarah Cash will discuss the thought and process behind the reinstall during a Curator Talk on Wednesday, October 9.

In 2011, the Corcoran announced the release of *Corcoran Gallery of Art: American Paintings to 1945*, the first publication to authoritatively catalogue and interpret the Gallery’s collection of American paintings. The landmark publication—the first published on the collection in more than 40 years—comprises a fully illustrated 336-page hardback

volume as well as a [companion online component](#) and features essays and research on the Corcoran's signature paintings. An in-depth essay documents, for the first time, the illustrious collecting history of the Corcoran, America's first dedicated art museum and Washington's largest nonfederal art museum.

American Journeys—Visions of Place is made possible through the generous support of the Women's Committee of the Corcoran.

Major support for the conservation of Rembrandt Peale's *Washington Before Yorktown* was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the MARPAT Foundation, the Stockman Family Foundation, and the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation. Additional support for the conservation was also provided by the Women's Committee of the Corcoran and the generous donors to the 2012 Annual Appeal.

The following individuals generously collaborated with Corcoran staff members on this project: Clare Brown, Lisa Lipinski, and James Mole, Corcoran College of Art + Design faculty; Maizie Clarke, Matthew Horton, Laurie Feld, Ashley Hinkle, and Julia McCann, Corcoran College of Art + Design students; Donna Kirk, Mark Leithausen, Carroll Moore, and D. Dodge Thompson, National Gallery of Art; David McCullough; Dorie Lawson; and Rebecca Singerman.

ABOUT THE PRE-1945 AMERICAN COLLECTION

The Corcoran's signature and world-renowned collection of American art dating from 1718 to 1945 began as the private holdings of William Wilson Corcoran. His initial collection of landscape paintings, genre scenes, portraits, and sculptures has grown to encompass over 500 paintings, 200 sculptures, and 2,400 works on paper. Key 20th-century acquisitions were made beginning in 1907, with the advent of the Corcoran's Biennial. The collection's particular strengths include Hudson River School painting, American Impressionism, and early 20th-century realism.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Corcoran's hours of operation are as follows: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission is \$10 for adults, and \$8 for seniors (62+) and students (with valid ID). Free: children 12 and under, active duty military (with ID), Corcoran Members.

MEMBERSHIP

Corcoran Gallery of Art membership offers special access to the Corcoran's renowned collection, temporary exhibitions, lectures, films, concerts and an array of social events. Members also receive valuable discounts at the Corcoran Shop, Todd Gray's Muse at the Corcoran, and the Corcoran College of Art + Design. Corcoran Members may visit the Corcoran an unlimited number of times for free. For more information, contact the Membership office at (202) 639-1753, membership@corcoran.org or online at www.corcoran.org/membership.

ABOUT THE CORCORAN

Established in 1869, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art** was one of America's first museums of art—dedicated, in the words of founder William Wilson Corcoran, to “encouraging American genius.” Today it is Washington, D.C.'s largest nonfederal art museum, 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. A dynamic schedule of special exhibitions complements a range of educational programming, which together enrich the perspectives of the visiting public, support the local arts community, and encourage thoughtful interpretation of today's most compelling social issues. **The Corcoran College of Art + Design** was founded as a school of art in 1890 and stands as Washington's only four-year accredited college of art and design. The College is one of the few in the nation whose educational model includes an integral relationship with a museum, fostering the talent of the next generation of artists. For more information about the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design**, visit www.corcoran.org.



Images:

Page one: Albert Bierstadt, *The Last of the Buffalo*. 1888. Oil on canvas. 71 x 118 3/4 inches. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.
Gift of Mary (Mrs. Albert) Bierstadt, 09.12

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