

CORCORAN

GALLERY OF ART • COLLEGE of ART + DESIGN

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**CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART AND COLLEGE OF ART + DESIGN ANNOUNCES
THE RELEASE OF *CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART: AMERICAN PAINTINGS TO 1945***
Groundbreaking publication and online resource provides unparalleled access to Corcoran Collection

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Corcoran Gallery of Art today released *Corcoran Gallery of Art: American Paintings to 1945*, the first publication to authoritatively catalogue and interpret the Gallery’s collection of American paintings, one of the finest and most renowned collections of historic American paintings in the world. This landmark publication – the first published on the Corcoran Collection in more than 40 years – comprises a fully illustrated 336-page hardback volume as well as a companion online component and features fascinating 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.



The two-part publication, *Corcoran Gallery of Art: American Paintings to 1945*, provides an unprecedented resource on the extensive collection, featuring 98 essays on more than 100 featured works, as well as an illustrated checklist of an additional 422 paintings. Editor and Corcoran Bechhoefer Curator of American Art Sarah Cash examines, for the first time, the Corcoran’s long and illustrious history of collecting and supporting American art. The introductory essay traces the life and collecting interests of William Wilson Corcoran, his support of art and artists in his native city, and the founding and growth of his crowning achievement, the Gallery that bears his name.

The publication’s online resource provides free, searchable access and in-depth research and documentation on each of the featured paintings, including images; provenance information; exhibitions in which the work has been shown;

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published and unpublished references to the work; technical notes (the summary of a conservator's physical examination of the painting); and data on related works. This valuable and exciting tool is available online at <http://collection.corcoran.org/apcat>.

"I am absolutely delighted that such a great deal of valuable information on the Corcoran's beloved collection of American paintings will now be available to art historians, educators, and the general public," said Cash. "This book and website will greatly enhance access to this historic museum's rich collection."

Founded in 1869 by the wealthy Washington, D.C. banker and philanthropist William Wilson Corcoran (1798-1888), the Gallery was established from the private collection Corcoran began in about 1850. Since that time its American paintings collection has grown to more than 500 works dating from 1718 to 1945. These holdings include a remarkable number of iconic works in all genres of American painting, including Samuel F. B. Morse's *The House of Representatives* (1822); Rembrandt Peale's *Washington before Yorktown* (1824–25); Thomas Cole's *The Departure* and *The Return* (1837); Frederic Edwin Church's *Niagara* (1857); John Singer Sargent's *En route pour la pêche: Setting Out to Fish* (1878); Thomas Eakins' *Singing a Pathetic Song* (1881); Albert Bierstadt's *The Last of the Buffalo* (1888); George Bellows' *Forty-two Kids* (1907); and Aaron Douglas' *Into Bondage* (1936). The collection also boasts outstanding breadth and depth in Hudson River School painting, 19th-century portraiture and genre painting, American Impressionism, and early 20th-century realism.

Edited by Bechhoefer Curator of American Art Sarah Cash with contributions by other leading American art scholars, this landmark publication offers both art historians and the general public unparalleled access to the most comprehensive and up-to-date research on the Gallery's American paintings, and highlights the Corcoran's commitment to the study and display of its renowned collection.

Major support for this project was provided by The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc; The Getty Grant Program; the National Endowment for the Arts; The Page and Otto Marx, Jr. Foundation; Martha A. Healy; Ambika Kosada, James Kosada, James Atwood, and Richard Atwood in memory of Joyce Rose Atwood; and Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, Inc.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Sarah Cash, Editor

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Online component at <http://collection.corcoran.org/apcat>.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

Visit www.corcoran.org/programs to register.

Encouraging American Genius and Other Tales from the Front

Thursday, March 31; 6:30 p.m.

Members FREE; Public \$10

On this enlightening evening of art and history, join Sarah Cash, Bechhoefer Curator of American Art, as she presents some of the highlights, discoveries, and behind-the-scenes stories documented in the Corcoran's new book and online catalogue, *Corcoran Gallery of Art: American Paintings to 1945*. This extensive volume and searchable database represent the first catalogue to be published in over 40 years for the Corcoran's distinguished collection of historic American paintings. The talk will trace the collection from its origin in the private holdings of Washington banker and philanthropist William Wilson Corcoran to the establishment of his namesake museum. A light reception and book signing follow the talk.

FREE SCHOLAR'S SELECTION GALLERY TALKS

A series of FREE gallery talks led by leading Washington art historians is scheduled to accompany the release of *Corcoran Gallery of Art: American Paintings to 1945*.

Scholar's Selection: *Thomas Corcoran and Hannah Lemmon Corcoran (Mrs. Thomas Corcoran)*

Thursday, April 14; 6:30 p.m.

Join **Ellen G. Miles**, curator emerita, Department of Painting and Sculpture at the National Portrait Gallery, as she discusses Charles Peale Polk's portraits of William Wilson Corcoran's parents, Thomas and Hannah Lemmon Corcoran. A member of the illustrious Peale family of American artists, Polk painted the portraits in Georgetown in the early years of the new American republic, soon after Washington was established as the nation's capital city. Polk captures the Corcorans' appearance and status with great success in these charming images.

Scholar's Selection: *Exploring Studios*

Thursday, April 21; 6:30 p.m.

Using select works of art from the Corcoran's American collection, **Jenny Carson**, assistant professor, Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at Maryland Institute College of Art, will highlight the changing practices in artists' studios from the late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. From the large-scale studio operation of Benjamin West to the more modest studios of American landscape and genre painters, Dr. Carson explores the evolving changes in common artistic practices, materials, and marketing strategies.

Scholar's Selection: *The Longshoremen's Noon*

Thursday, May 5; 6:30 p.m.

In this talk, **Emily Shapiro** will offer an in-depth discussion of John George Brown's 1879 painting *The Longshoremen's Noon*. Distinguished as one of Brown's most ambitious compositions, the work is a rarely painted representation of working-class life in an era in which American art was dominated by landscapes and scenes of leisure-time activities. The talk will place Brown's painting within an art historical and contemporary labor history context, arguing that its popular success rested in the artist's ability to create an image that was sympathetic toward the working class, yet did not alienate the painter's largely upper-middle class clientele. Dr. Shapiro is an independent scholar with prior curatorial experience at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens.

Scholar's Selection: *Pierrot Tired*

Thursday, May 19; 6:30 p.m.

Guy Pène du Bois' moody, enigmatic painting, *Pierrot Tired*, transports viewers to a Parisian cafe in the 1920's. Join **Kerry Roeder** as she explores Pène du Bois' depiction of urban ennui and discusses the history and significance of the

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painting's elusive title. Currently completing a PhD in American art, Roeder has worked in the curatorial departments of the National Gallery of Art and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and held fellowships at the Library of Congress and National Portrait Gallery.

Scholar's Selection: *May Night*

Thursday, May 26; 6:30 p.m.

Willard Metcalf's *May Night* is one of the most beautiful, yet enigmatic, American Impressionist paintings in the Corcoran's collection. Where, when, and why was it painted? Who are the figures depicted? What impact did the painting have on the artist's career? In this gallery talk, **Sarah Cash**, Bechhoefer curator of American art at the Corcoran Gallery of Art will present some of the fascinating discoveries made while researching *May Night* for the American paintings collection catalogue.

Scholar's Selection: *Mount Monadnock*

Thursday, June 2; 6:30 p.m.

Though he is perhaps best known today for his ideal female figure, many with wings, the artist Abbott Thayer was also passionately interested in the natural world. In this gallery talk, **Lee Glazer**, curator of American art at the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art, will discuss the artist's approach to landscape, focusing on *Mount Monadnock*, a snowy landscape whose central subject was an abiding source of inspiration for the artist. A naturalist as well as a painter, Thayer spent much of his life in the shadow of Monadnock, hiking its trails, studying its flora and fauna, and protecting its pristine beauty. In addition to considering the personal and cultural significance of Mount Monadnock as a subject, Dr. Glazer will also consider the story of how the painting came into the Corcoran's collection and its relationship to other early twentieth-century landscapes.

Scholar's Selection: *Flowers on a Window Ledge*

Thursday, June 9; 6:30 p.m.

Flowers on a Window Ledge is one of a number of floral still lifes that John La Farge began in the late spring or early summer of 1861, just two years after he took up painting. La Farge wished to isolate a simple subject matter as a means of teaching himself to paint, but his studies quickly evolved into a fresh, original vision in line with the most avant-garde painting in Europe. In this talk, **Lisa Strong**, manager of curatorial affairs at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, will examine La Farge's work within the context of contemporary French painting in order to illustrate the extent of his achievement.

Scholar's Selection: *Forty-two Kids*

Thursday, July 21; 6:30 p.m.

Join **Adam Greenhalgh**, Ph.D. candidate in art history at the University of Maryland, as he discusses George Bellows's painting *Forty-two Kids* (1907). Exemplary of the artist's acclaimed urban subjects, *Forty-two Kids* conveys the spirit, energy, and mischief of boys frolicking on and around an East River wharf. The painting, however, also provocatively addresses turn of the century fears of biological and social contagion from New York City's growing immigrant population.

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 BA in

Art Studies; a five-year Bachelor of Fine Arts/Master of Arts in Teaching (BFA/MAT); an AFA in Digital Media Design, Fine Art, Graphic Design, and Photography; and MA degrees in Art and the Book, Art Education, Exhibition Design, Interior Design, Master of Arts in Teaching, 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.

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