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THE CORCORAN, THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART AND
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY TO ENTER HISTORIC COLLABORATION

February 21, 2014 - The Corcoran Gallery of Art and Corcoran College of Art + Design, the National Gallery of Art and the George Washington University (GW) today announced a proposed collaboration that would safeguard and increase access to the Corcoran's iconic collection as a resource for the public in Washington, DC, maintain the historic Corcoran building as the renovated showplace for an important new program of exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and strengthen and elevate the Corcoran College and its programs. The collaboration would raise the stature of arts education in the District and expand the benefits, services and interdisciplinary opportunities that both the National Gallery of Art and GW provide to students, museum-goers, and the Washington community.

The three institutions are now entering a discussion period to set the definitive terms of a collaboration, under which the Corcoran College of Art + Design would become a part of the George Washington University. GW would operate the College, maintain its distinct identity and assume ownership of, and responsibility for, the Corcoran building. The National Gallery of Art would organize and present exhibitions of modern and contemporary art within the 17th Street historic Flagg building, under the name ***Corcoran Contemporary, National Gallery of Art.***

Now and throughout this period of discussion, the gallery will remain open. There are no plans to close the gallery at this time.

The National Gallery would also maintain a Corcoran Legacy Gallery within the building, displaying a selection of works from the collection that are closely identified with the 17th Street landmark. These and other works of the Corcoran collection would become the responsibility of the National Gallery of Art. Works accessioned by the National Gallery would bear the credit line “Corcoran Collection.”

Not a single work of art will be sold. Curators from both museums will work in concert to review the esteemed Corcoran collection. The National Gallery of Art will determine what it can bring into its collection and the works will be identified as Corcoran Collection, as in Mellon Collection, Kress Collection, etc. Of that group, many works will be integrated into the Gallery’s collection on view, some may undergo conservation and study, and some will go into storage. All of the Gallery’s works on paper and photographs are available to the public by appointment when not on view. Some of the objects could go on loan. A plan will be developed between both institutions for art not accessioned into the Gallery collections to be distributed to Washington museums.

The proposed arrangement among the three prominent Washington, DC, institutions comes as the culmination of a five-year effort by the Corcoran’s Board of Trustees to preserve the 17th Street building as both a museum space and a home for the College and to ensure the future of the Corcoran collection as a treasure accessible to all. Due to the challenges faced by the Corcoran, its Board has sought to achieve these goals by exploring collaborations with other cultural and educational institutions.

“This coalition among our three institutions will open important new possibilities for Washington, DC,” said Peggy Loar, Interim Director and President of the Corcoran Gallery of Art and Corcoran College of Art + Design. “The Corcoran’s great cultural, educational and civic resources that are at the heart of this city will not only remain in Washington but will become stronger, more exciting and more widely accessible, in a

way that stays centered on the Corcoran’s dedication to art and mission of encouraging American genius and opens the galleries free to all. We are deeply grateful for the bold imagination of the boards of all three institutions for working to make this outcome possible.”

"All of us at the National Gallery of Art are excited at the prospect of working with the Corcoran and George Washington University in a unique collaboration that ensures the Corcoran legacy, keeps the core collection in the nation's capital and offers great opportunities for exhibitions of contemporary art and programming," said Earl A. Powell III, Director, National Gallery of Art.

“The George Washington University will work with the Corcoran to create a world-class arts education program in close affiliation with the National Gallery of Art,” said GW President Steven Knapp. “Such a program, situated in this iconic Washington landmark, will offer unparalleled opportunities for students and scholars, and provide a powerful new focus for the arts in the heart of the nation’s capital.”

The terms stipulate that the Corcoran would continue as a non-profit organization, committed to its original mission: “Dedicated to Art and Encouraging American Genius,” continuing its 145-year history of pursuing and supporting new art and new ideas. The Corcoran would support the National Gallery of Art’s and GW’s stewardship of the Corcoran name and legacy, consult with and provide advice to the National Gallery and GW on programs and interconnected activities and promote the important role of contemporary art and artists in provoking new thinking and realizing exciting new cultural initiatives.

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