

CORCORAN

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CORCORAN PRESENTS *AMERICAN METAL: THE ART OF ALBERT PALEY*

June 28–September 28, 2014



WASHINGTON, D.C. —This summer, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art and Design** will present *American Metal: The Art of Albert Paley*, a retrospective survey of work by one of the world's most distinguished metalsmiths. Spanning his remarkable 50-year career, the exhibition traces Paley's work as a jeweler and forger of metal, and progresses through his recent, large-scale sculptural projects to reveal the artist's unique place in American art. Eric Turner, Curator of Metalwork, Silver, and Jewelry at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, curated the exhibition for the Corcoran.

American Metal includes approximately 75 objects in a variety of media, including paper, cardboard, wood, steel, bronze, and glass. Paley began his career as a jeweler and goldsmith before turning his full attention to blacksmithing in the early 1970s. The first of six galleries introduces Paley's innovative style with his *Portal Gates*, commissioned for the

Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery in 1974. The rest of this gallery is devoted to jewelry, furniture, and domestic metalwork, followed by a gallery featuring gates and doors. Two galleries focus on naturalistic works, and a fifth gallery will show photographs, drawings on paper, and various models that provide insight into the artist's working process and design techniques. The final gallery is devoted to steel maquettes and photographs of the artist's more recent, site-specific works. A 12-foot-high maquette for *Hallelujah*, a sculpture commissioned for the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences of West Virginia in Charleston, West Virginia, will be displayed outside the galleries. These objects encompass a full view of Paley's innovative aesthetic and technical virtuosity.

Paley's site-specific outdoor sculptures—called “architectural jewelry” by the artist—are individually distinctive and integrated into urban and suburban environments. From his jewelry and domestically-scaled works to his monumental outdoor sculptures, such as Rochester Institute of Technology's *Sentinel*, 2003, made from COR-TEN steel, stainless steel, and bronze, Paley continually pushed the boundaries of making art with iron and steel.

“Albert Paley, in every step of his career, has challenged, upended, and redefined the role of craft, ornament, and fine art in modern, urban life,” said curator Eric Turner. “He not only established a valid, contemporary ironwork aesthetic, but with his more recent site-specific sculptures, has humanized the harshness of urban environments.”

American Metal serves as a homecoming of sorts for the artist, who, in 1972, won a competition to create a pair of gates for the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C.—the original home for the Corcoran Gallery of Art before its present location on Seventeenth Street NW. The resulting commission for *Portal Gates*, 1974, was a pivotal moment in the artist's career, setting him on a course for many other large-scale commissions and decades of focus. Paley's work can be seen throughout the region; among others, *Epoch*, 2004, stands at the corner of Ninth and G Streets NW, *Washington National Cathedral Gate*, 2007, can be seen at the National Cathedral, and *The Beckoning*, a massive sculpture for the National Harbor in Fort Washington, Maryland, was completed in 2009.



“Albert Paley has over many years developed a strong relationship with Washington, D.C., and the Corcoran Gallery of Art,” says Peggy Loar, interim director and president, “From the Renwick's *Portal Gates*, to the colorful outdoor sculpture *Epoch*, completed in 2004, to the gates he created for the Washington National Cathedral's Good Shepherd Chapel in 2007, Paley's art enlivens the capital city as we move through its public and private spaces.”

Paley is the first and remains the only metalsmith to be awarded the coveted Institute Honors, 1995, from the American Institute of Architects, the AIA's highest award to a non-architect.

Work by Albert Paley can be found in the collections of more than 40 major museums including the Corcoran Gallery of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the British Museum, London; and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. To date he has had 37 solo exhibitions and has contributed to many group projects, several of which traveled internationally. One of the most significant of these foreign exhibitions was the ground-breaking project, *Towards a New*

Iron Age, held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1982, which helped to establish a contemporary aesthetic for ironwork. A distinguished professor, Paley holds an Endowed Chair position at the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Paley received both his BFA and MFA degrees from the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. He has received honorary doctorates from the University of Rochester (1989), the State University of New York in Brockport (1996), St. Lawrence University (1997), and the University of Gothenberg in Sweden (2012).

An illustrated catalogue, including an essay by curator Eric Turner and an introduction by decorative arts specialist Paul Greenhalgh, will accompany *American Metal: The Art of Albert Paley*. Published by the Corcoran, the 80-page catalogue will cost \$40 and will be released in a limited edition of 500 copies. It will be sold in the Corcoran Shop online and in-store.

For more information about *American Metal: The Art of Albert Paley*, visit

<http://www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/american-metal-art-albert-paley>.

American Metal: The Art of Albert Paley is organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art and made possible through the generous sponsorship of Buchanan, Ingersoll, and Rooney, P.C.

Major funding was received from Anne and Ronald Abramson, Edward Lenkin and Roselyn Atzwanger, Robert and Arlene Kogod, Fleur S. Bresler, Giselle and Ben Huberman in honor of the James Renwick Alliance, John and Mary Fendrick, Colleen and John Kotelly, David M. Schwarz Architects Charitable Foundation, Annette M. and Theodore N. Lerner Family Foundation, Julie Walters and Sam Rose, and an anonymous donor.

Generous support is also provided by Sharon and Bob Buchanan, Elmerina and Paul Parkman, Bill Rosenthal and Jerry Gebo, Ryna G. Cohen in memory of Melvin S. Cohen, Deena and Jerry Kaplan, Diane and Marc Grainer, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Schwartz, Barbara and Arnold Berlin, Myra and Stephen Kurzbard, Lila Fendrick in honor of Barbara Fendrick and in memory of Daniel Fendrick, SIGAL Family Foundation, and Mrs. Lois U. Jecklin and Dr. Dirk C. Jecklin.

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Additional support is provided by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

PRESS PREVIEW

Members of the press are invited to a preview for *American Metal: The Art of Albert Paley* on Tuesday, June 24 at 10 a.m. at the Corcoran, 500 Seventeenth Street NW, Washington, D.C. RSVP to rcothran@corcoran.org by June 20.

EXHIBITION-RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Free Summer Saturdays

Saturdays Memorial Day through Labor Day, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

For more information, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/freesummersaturdays>.

Corcoran Uncorked: Heavy Metal

Wednesday, July 16, 5-9 p.m.

Tour the exhibition, check out a welding demonstration, and enjoy drinks while heavy metal classics play throughout the evening. For more information and to register, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/events/corcoran-uncorked-heavy-metal>.

FREE Family Day—Ultimate Urban Safari!

Saturday, July 19, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Free; No registration required. All ages welcome.

Join us for a wild summer day dedicated to the animal kingdom. Spurred on by Albert Paley’s exhibition, discover how creatures big and small can inspire through workshop activities, book readings, and a live performance. Participate in an animal welfare community service project that day and make a difference! For more information, visit: <http://www.corcoran.org/pride>.

FAMILY GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION

Pick up a FREE exhibition family guide at the front Admissions desk. Sketch, play games, and build your own sculpture as you explore how Albert Paley goes from an idea to a finished work of art. Ideal for ages 5-10.

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, European art, contemporary art, photography and media arts, and 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](http://www.corcoran.org).



Hours

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Wednesday: 10 a.m.–9 p.m.

The Corcoran is closed on Monday and Tuesday.

Admission

Wednesday through Sunday: \$10 Adults; \$8 full-time students (with ID) and seniors (62+); active-duty military and children under 12 free; Corcoran members free.

Images:

Page one: Albert Paley, *Portal Gates*, 1974. Forged steel, brass, copper, and bronze. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., Commissioned for the Renwick Gallery, 195.117.1a–b.

Page two: Albert Paley, *Clay Center Maquette "Hallelujah"*, 2009. Painted steel. Courtesy of Paley Studios. © Courtesy of Paley Studios Archive