

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Mimi Carter, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing,

mcarter@corcoran.org, (202) 639-1867

Rachel Cothran, Director of Public Relations,

rcothran@corcoran.org, (202) 639-1833

CORCORAN PRESENTS ENOC PEREZ: UTOPIA

Latest “NOW at the Corcoran” exhibition on view November 10, 2012—February 10, 2013

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This winter, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design** will present *Enoc Perez: Utopia*. Perez’s lushly figured paintings of modernist buildings at once exploit and question the seductions of architecture as well as painting itself. The exhibition presents two new bodies of work, one focusing on the Marina Towers in Chicago and the other a commissioned painting of the Watergate in Washington, D.C. These architectural portraits evoke modernism’s futurist aspirations as well as the sadness of an always-impossible ideal.



Enoc Perez: Utopia is the fifth in the *NOW at the Corcoran* series, a program dedicated to showcasing the work of emerging and mid-career artists.

The Marina Towers series (2011–12), exhibited for the first time at the Corcoran, consists of eight renditions of Chicago’s iconic skyscrapers, built in 1962. Echoing Claude Monet’s paintings of the Rouen Cathedral and Andy Warhol’s Marilyns, Perez obsessively refigures the city’s architectural icon, shading his palette of reds, yellows, and purples according to mood and time of day. While investigating these structures as symbols of power, futurism, and utopian promise, Perez’s canvases, heavy with paint and physical reality, simultaneously return to them their corporeality.

Perez will install a painting of the Watergate—the Washington, D.C. architectural complex built between 1963 and 1971—in the Corcoran’s Rotunda. The large-scale, black-and-white painting over a printed photograph stretches across the gallery’s two rounded walls. Cinematic in effect, the diptych surrounds the viewer in an experience that is inescapably redolent of the history that brought the building its fame.

“On a basic level, Perez’s work is about painting: the pleasures of its translucent shimmer and viscous clots, the histories embedded in its play of figure and ground, and its ambitions to arrest time,” said Sarah Newman, curator of contemporary art at the Corcoran. “However, somewhat ironically for an artist so invested in the genre, there is little is traditional about his technique.”



Perez uses photographs and found imagery from postcards and magazines and which combines elements of brushwork with a sort of primitive printmaking. Perez first makes a preparatory drawing for each color that will be in a finished painting, coats the back of the paper with oil stick, and then

presses the image from the intermediary paper onto the canvas. This transfer process mimics the processes of mechanical reproduction while drawing upon conventional painting techniques.

Perez uses this mongrel technique to probe the medium’s ability to reconstitute time and place, exploring how technology and memory create experience. Over the last 15 years he has sought out landmarks of the modernist style, tracing a map of the urban environment that is as much mental and social as it is physical. His painted city includes the Seagram Building and Lever House in New York City, the Eero Saarinen TWA Terminal at JFK Airport, and Casa Malaparte on the island of Capri, Italy.

Perez stated: “Skyscrapers are the embodiment of American aspiration. They are large scale manifestations of that aspiration—abstract shapes that redefine our ideas about what is possible. Painting is also about ideas and possibility. My goal is to join these two—to take abstract ideas of ambition and possibility and make them concrete.”

On Monday, November 26 at 7 p.m., Perez will appear in conversation with Curator of Contemporary Art Sarah Newman, and will meet with students as a participant in the Corcoran College of Art + Design’s Visiting Artists program, which extends the roster of its dynamic faculty by facilitating critiques, lectures, classroom visits and more with artistic professionals from around the world who have achieved excellence in their fields.

Information for *Enoc Perez: Utopia* is online at <http://www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/enoc-perez-utopia>.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Enoc Perez was born in Puerto Rico in 1967 and moved to New York in 1986, where he continues to live and work. He received his BFA from Pratt Institute in 1990 and his MFA from Hunter College in 1992. He has had one-artist exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2007), and the Lever House (2007), and his work has been included in exhibitions across the United States in Europe, including *Skyscraper: Art and Architecture Against Gravity* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2012), *Painting the Glass House* at the Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2008), and *The Undiscovered Country* at UCLA’s Hammer Museum (2004). His paintings are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Puerto Rico, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami. This is his first exhibition in Washington, D.C.

ABOUT NOW AT THE CORCORAN

NOW at the Corcoran is a series of exhibitions that presents new and site-specific work by emerging and mid-career artists. It highlights work that addresses issues central to the local, national, and global communities of Washington, D.C., and that responds to the collections, history, and architecture of the museum. *NOW* programming has a dynamic and integrated relationship with the Corcoran College of Art + Design. As the only visual arts college in Washington, D.C., the Corcoran's active base of practicing art students and faculty makes it a natural center for making, displaying, and thinking about contemporary art. Visiting artists participate in guest lectures, workshops, and studio critiques with students.

VISITOR INFORMATION

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

ABOUT THE CORCORAN

Established in 1869, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art** was America's first museum 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: Enoc Perez, *Watergate, Washington, D.C., June 2012, 2012* (detail). Oil and acrylic on synthetic canvas, two paintings, each 163 x 624 in. Courtesy of the artist and Acquavella Galleries, New York.

Page two: From left to right, Enoc Perez, *Marina Towers, Chicago, November 2011, 2011*; *Marina Towers, Chicago, January 2012, 2012*; *Marina Towers, Chicago, May 2012, 2012*. All works oil on canvas, 110 x 90 in. Courtesy of the artist and Acquavella Galleries, New York.