

CORCORAN

GALLERY OF ART • COLLEGE of ART + DESIGN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE CORCORAN PRESENTS *GRACE BEFORE DYING* IN CONCERT WITH LECTURE BY
AWARD-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER LORI WASELCHUK
Coinciding with the Launch of Master of Arts in New Media Photojournalism
at the Corcoran College of Art + Design**



George Checks Jimmie's Breathing, 2008. Photography by Lori Waselchuk.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Beginning August 11, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design** will showcase works from *Grace Before Dying*, an award-winning photographic documentary by Lori Waselchuk on the groundbreaking new hospice program at Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. The Corcoran will present *Grace Before Dying* in two parts: a selection of photographs in the Corcoran's corridor from August 11 to September 18 and on September 9 in the Corcoran Rotunda a one-day-viewing of the full traveling exhibition. The artist will deliver a lecture, "*Grace Before Dying: Connecting Communities Inside and Outside Prison Walls*," on **Friday, September 9 at 7 p.m.** **The exhibition dovetails with the fall launch of the Corcoran College of Art + Design's latest degree offering, the Master of Arts in New Media Photojournalism.**

Waselchuk's photographs selected for the Corcoran's corridor chronicle the prisoner-run hospice program launched in 1998 at Louisiana's infamous Angola Penitentiary. In documenting the daily life of the volunteers and inmates as they comfort sick and dying inmates, Waselchuk provides a look into how the program fosters a culture of respect and compassion – transforming one of most dangerous maximum security prisons in the United States

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into one of the least violent. The Corcoran's Rotunda will display the traveling portion of *Grace Before Dying*, an installation of five 7' x 7' photo and text panels and two 6' x 7' quilts handmade by the hospice volunteers, on view on September 9.

"Lori Waselchuk's *Grace Before Dying* is a fantastic example of the power of photojournalism. The photographer has gone beyond making compelling images and bringing an unseen world into view. She has taken the visual reporting back to her subjects – into prison and hospice communities – and to a greater public," said Susan Sterner, director of photojournalism programs at the Corcoran. "This work connects communities and has sparked dialogue around hard issues."

The exhibition coincides with the launch of the Master of Arts in New Media Photojournalism this fall at the Corcoran College of Art + Design. The vision of the new program, the first of its kind in an art institution, is to train and empower visual journalists engaged in issues of the day and working with an active awareness of their responsibility to subject and society. Sterner said, "It's all about telling stories in a powerful way and getting them out in front of new audiences."



Paul and Richard Say Goodbye, 2007.
Photograph by Lori Waselchuk.

On **Friday, September 9 at 7 p.m.**, the Corcoran will host Waselchuk for an evening lecture, "*Grace Before Dying: Connecting Communities Inside and Outside Prison Walls.*" A reception and book signing will follow the lecture. The program is free and open to the public; pre-registration is required. For more information and to register, please visit <https://getinvolved.corcoran.org/gracebeforedying>.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

On **Friday, September 9 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.**, Women Photojournalists of Washington Mentorship Committee will present "**Skills in the Field: Visual Journalists on Best Practices for Working in International Settings,**" a free workshop open to the public held in the Corcoran's Frances and Armand Hammer Auditorium. Led by Jamie Rose and Chris Anderson of Momenta Workshops, the talk will discuss photojournalists working abroad while covering issues ranging from logistics, gear, and funding. Registration is not required. For more information on Women Photojournalists of Washington Mentorship Committee, please visit <http://womenphotojournalists.org/>.

ABOUT LORI WASELCHUK

Lori Waselchuk is a documentary photographer whose photographs have appeared in magazines and newspapers worldwide, including *Newsweek*, *LIFE*, *The New York Times*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. She has reproduced photographs for several international aid organizations, including CARE, the UN World Food Program, Médecins Sans Frontières, and the Vaccine Fund. She is a recipient of the Aaron Siskind Foundation's 2009 Individual Photographer Fellowship, a 2008 Distribution Grant from the Documentary Photography Project of the Open Society Institute, the 2007 PhotoNOLA Review Prize, and the 2004 Southern African Gender and Media Award for Photojournalism. Waselchuk was also a nominee for the 2009 Santa Fe Prize for Photography, a finalist in the 2008 Aperture West Book Prize, and a finalist in the 2006 and 2008 Critical Mass Review.

ABOUT MASTER OF ARTS IN NEW MEDIA PHOTOJOURNALISM

The Master of Arts in New Media Photojournalism at the Corcoran College of Art + Design is the first program of its kind, poised to help visual journalists with varying backgrounds study and address the challenges facing photojournalism today. Located in the nation's capital, the program draws on a vibrant community of media outlets and renowned photojournalists who make Washington, D.C. their home. The program emphasizes the individual as a visual reporter and encourages experimentation with new ways of storytelling, documentation, and editing, and explores the latest digital practices taught in conjunction with the enduring fundamentals of visual reporting, editing, and ethics. For more information on the Master of Arts in New Media Photojournalism, please visit www.corcoran.edu.

ABOUT THE CORCORAN

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, a privately funded institution, was founded in 1869. It was America's first dedicated art museum and today is Washington's 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. In addition, a dynamic schedule of special exhibitions is complemented and enhanced by a range of educational programming, which together seek to enrich perspectives, support the local arts community, and encourage interpretation. **The Corcoran College of Art + Design** was founded in 1890 and stands as 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.

