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CONTACT:

Mimi Carter, Vice President of Communications and Marketing,
mcarter@corcoran.org, (202) 639-1867
Rachel Cothran, Director of Public Relations,
rcothran@corcoran.org, (202) 639-1833
Media Center: www.corcoran.org/press

CORCORAN PRESENTS *HOW IS THE WORLD? RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY*
March 9–May 26, 2013



“Sometimes, when I go out with a camera, I don’t have a plan. But I do go out every time and question how we make photographs of the world. It’s the same question that photographers have always asked: how is the world? And, what are the new ways to find that out?”

—Paul Graham

WASHINGTON, D.C.—On March 7, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art and Design** will open [*How Is the World? Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Photography*](#) (March 9–May 26, 2013). The exhibition includes works by photographers Edward Burtynsky, Rineke Dijkstra, Paul Graham, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Hank Willis Thomas, and others.

Photography has changed dramatically since the Corcoran first began to build its photographic collection in the late 19th century. Driven by a vast array of technologies, image making is more ubiquitous than ever. What does it mean to make photographs in the 21st century, when images are everywhere? Highlighting a selection of works that have entered the collection through museum purchase and the generosity of individual patrons, the exhibition provides a view of the diverse practices and thematic range of contemporary photographers. It borrows its title from Graham, who has said that he uses his camera to answer the question “How is the world?”

How Is the World? brings together work as varied as Paul Graham’s dramatic redefinition of street photography, Rineke Dijkstra’s contemplative portraits of adolescents, Hank Willis Thomas’s exploration of spectacle and African American identity, and Edward Burtynsky’s striking examination of the oil industry’s impact on the land. Collectively, the works address issues of identity and representation, our relationship with nature, and photography’s ability to evoke the past while reinventing how we view the present. The exhibition is organized by Kaitlin Booher, assistant curator of photography and media arts, and Lauren Schell Dickens, assistant curator of contemporary art.

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ALSO ON VIEW

***Cynthia Connolly: Letters on Top of Buildings* March 2–June 23, 2013**

Cynthia Connolly's series *Letters on Top of Buildings* is on view at the Corcoran until June 23, 2013. An alumna of the Corcoran School of Art (now the Corcoran College of Art + Design), Connolly documented Washington's legendary punk rock scene from the 1980s into the 1990s, making portraits of its most committed participants and producing the photography book *Banned in DC*. More recently, Connolly has directed her lens toward commercial displays and details of vernacular architecture, particularly elements of our surroundings in transition or



facing obsolescence. Much of this work draws on traditions established by photographer Walker Evans and California artist Ed Ruscha, both important inspirations for the artist. Connolly's series *Letters on Top of Buildings* is rooted in childhood memories of riding in the backseat of her mother's car, with a view across the building tops from Los Angeles's elevated freeways. These typographic signs, which advertise resident businesses, seem like relics of a bygone era, exemplars of a more colloquial period of commercial marketing and civic pride. The twelve photographs that comprise *Letters on Top of Buildings* are a promised gift to the Corcoran's permanent collection.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEDIA ARTS COLLECTION

In the late 19th century, the Corcoran was among the first museums in the United States to acquire photographs. The museum began collecting photography and media art in earnest in the 1970s and has since obtained works in a wide variety of media made between the 1850s and the present day. The collection now includes more than 6,500 photographs, videos, and digital works, which together reflect diverse ideas and styles important to the evolution of photographic history.

VISITOR INFORMATION

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

MEMBERSHIP

Corcoran Gallery of Art membership offers special access to the Corcoran's renowned collection, temporary exhibitions, lectures, films, concerts and an array of social events. Members also receive valuable discounts at the Corcoran Shop, Todd Gray's Muse at the Corcoran, and the Corcoran College of Art + Design. Corcoran Members may visit *How is the World?* an unlimited number of times for free. For more information, contact the Membership office at (202) 639-1753, membership@corcoran.org or online at www.corcoran.org/membership.

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 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.



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 Friday and Sunday: \$10 adults; \$8 full-time students (with ID) and seniors (62+). Free: active duty military, children under 12, Corcoran Members free.

Images:

Paul Graham. *Port Authority, 17th August 2010, 11.01.33 am.* 2010. Three pigment prints, mounted to dibond. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Museum Purchase, Firestone Contemporary Art Fund. 2013.001a-c © Paul Graham, courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York.

Cynthia Connolly, *Motel, McKinney, Virginia, 12–29–2008.* Gelatin silver print, 13 3/4 x 19 1/4 inches. Courtesy of the artist and intended gift of Annie and Paul Mahon, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. © 2013 Cynthia Connolly.

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