

CORCORAN

GALLERY OF ART • COLLEGE of ART+DESIGN

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CORCORAN PRESENTS *DEFERRAL*

A NOW Performance by artist Mary Coble; August 7-10, 2013

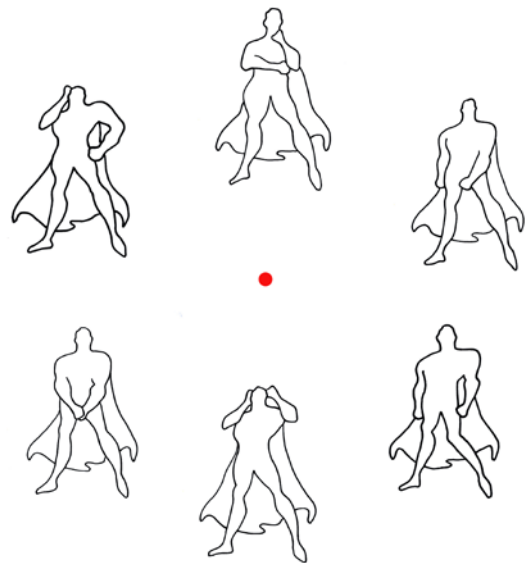
WASHINGTON, D.C.—Starting August 7 and lasting for four days, the Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design presents *Deferral*, a site-specific performance by Mary Coble that addresses the Food and Drug Administration’s policy of refusing blood donations from men who have had sex with men since 1977.

The performance is the latest in the *NOW at the Corcoran* series – the Gallery’s contemporary art program dedicated to showcasing the work of emerging and mid-career artists. *NOW Performance* addresses issues central to the local, national, and global communities of Washington, D.C.

Over four days, Coble and several gay male collaborators encode the curtains of an anatomical theater—formed by hospital curtains in the Corcoran’s Atrium—with text and images from blood donor campaigns, regulations, and debates. The artist writes using her own blood, drawn onsite, while her collaborators work with thread as a stand in for their “illegal” blood. Over the course of the performance, their actions create an increasingly tangled web, enveloping and impeding their shared space while reclaiming the image of the male hero.

Deferral is a reaction to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration policy of refusing blood donations from men who have had sex with men (MSM). The FDA’s deferral policy started in 1983, and since 1992 the FDA has permanently deferred MSM donations, explaining: “A history of male-to-male sex is associated with an increased risk for the presence and transmission of certain infectious diseases, including HIV...” Non-monogamous heterosexuals who have knowingly engaged in intercourse with an HIV/AIDS-positive partner are subject to a one year deferral before they may donate blood.

For Coble, *Deferral* is a commentary on the FDA policy and marketing slogans from blood donation campaigns that laud donors as “heroes” and as “special” while calling those who do not donate “wusses.” According to Coble, “gay men are never allowed to be heroes.”



DON'T BE SUCHA WUSS.

Mary Coble/page two

According to Coble, the Corcoran's setting in Washington, steps from The White House, presented an ideal opportunity. "This is a heated debate in this country," said Coble. "And Washington is where U.S. policy is formed. This FDA policy is just one among many other examples of generally accepted and politically supported homophobia."

The performance is ongoing during museum hours: August 7 from 10-9 p.m.; August 8-10 from 10-5 p.m. For more information, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/now-performance>.

NOW at the Corcoran is funded in part by Altria Group and the Corcoran Gallery of Art's 1869 Society.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Originally from North Carolina, Mary Coble received her BFA from University of North Carolina at Greensboro and her MFA from George Washington University. Through performance, video, and installation, Coble explores the limits of her own body's physical abilities while identifying and challenging social limitations and regulations. Past performances include binding her breasts continually with duct tape, inscribing the names of queer hate-crime murder victims on her body with inkless tattoos, and using flag semaphore to convey the difficulties of human connection and communication.

Coble has performed as part of *Commitment Issues*, FADO Performance Art Network, Toronto (2011); *Global Feminisms*, Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York (2007); and *Performa 05*, Artists Space, New York (2005). She has had solo exhibitions at the Overgaden Institute of Contemporary Art, Denmark (2012) and Galerie Nina Menocal in Mexico City (2007). Her work has recently been included in exhibitions such as *re.act.feminism #2*—a performing archive at the Museum for Contemporary Art, Roskilde, Denmark (2012); *Surface Tension: the Future of Water* at Eyebeam Center for Art and Technology, New York (2012); *Lost and Found: Queering the Archive* at Nikolaj Center of Contemporary Art in Copenhagen, Denmark (2009); and *Uncommon Beauty* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art (2008). Coble's work is in the collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts. She is represented in Washington by CONNERSMITH. She is currently a professor at the Funen Art Academy in Odense, Denmark, and lives in Gothenburg, Sweden.

ABOUT NOW AT THE CORCORAN

NOW at the Corcoran is the Gallery's contemporary art program dedicated to exhibitions and performances by emerging and mid-career artists. It highlights work that addresses issues central to local, national, and global communities of Washington, D.C. On November 2, NOW presents its first D.C.-based artist in *Mia Feuer: An Unkindness*. For more, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/now>.

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 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.

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.



Images:

Page one: *Hero*, 2013. Courtesy Mary Coble.

Page two: *Modification of an American Red Cross campaign image*, courtesy Mary Coble.

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