

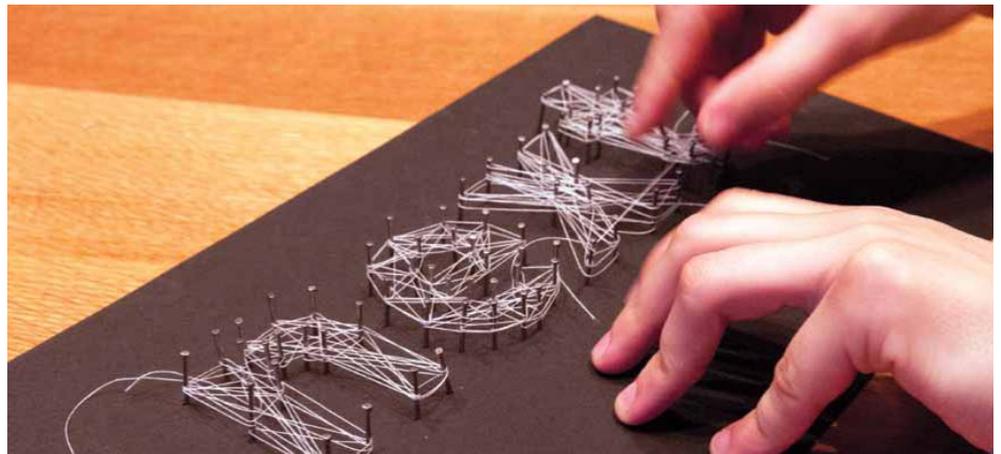
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CORCORAN DESIGN LAB STUDENTS CREATE *NEXT AT THE CORCORAN: CLASS OF 2012 DESIGN CONCEPT***

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Design Lab, the Corcoran’s innovative undergraduate course that works as an in-house design studio, created the design concept for *NEXT at the Corcoran: Class of 2012* (April 14–May 20, 2012). The concept, “Interweaving Connections,” refers both to the Corcoran as cultural connector and to the Corcoran College of Art + Design experience.



A two-semester course, Design Lab offers a select group of students the unique opportunity to design and oversee production of projects for the Corcoran. Design Lab students gain experience interacting with clients, managing deadlines, understanding and working within the limitations of their projects, and scheduling timelines.

“I felt it was particularly important for a student group to work specifically on *NEXT*,” said Maria Habib, the Corcoran’s senior director of design and instructor of Design Lab. “As a true collaboration between the Gallery and College, this exhibition is designed *for* students, *by* students, specifically to showcase the wealth of talent in our College.”

Elements of the design process covered in the course include writing design briefs and contracts, conceptual and design development phases, producing print-ready artwork, and fabrication coordination and supervision. The team consists of student designers in their junior year, along with a Design Lab Manager position filled by a graduate—a senior—from the previous semester.

“Interweaving Connections” makes use of string as a metaphor. String—and the paths and webs forming the various design elements—represents each individual student and his or her personal and artistic journey while at the

Corcoran. Ken Zinser (BFA 2012), Design Lab Manager, explains: “As the strings overlap and converge, they create a network that unifies us despite our differences in style, medium, and methods of expression. At the same time, the web it forms connotes the creative thought process that we, as artists, experience.”

After formally presenting the concept and gaining approval, Design Lab students collaborate with Corcoran staff and faculty to realize the concept across media and into the galleries.

“Participating in Design Lab has given me a better idea of what it would be like to work for a real-world design studio,” said Zinser. “We came up with a lot of good ideas, but putting them into practice was where the real creativity came into the picture.”

On Friday, April 27 at 11 a.m., Maria Habib, Director of Design, moderates a talk on Design Lab as part of the *NEXT at the Corcoran* Gallery Talk Series. She and Design Lab students will talk about the process of developing *NEXT*’s visual identity and overseeing its expression in print, online, and in the galleries. This and others talks in the Series are free; pre-registration is encouraged. For a full menu of public programming and to register, visit [www.corcoran.org/next](http://www.corcoran.org/next).

## **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](http://www.corcoran.org).



Image: Corcoran Design Lab students working on the *NEXT at the Corcoran* identity. Photo by Maria Habib.