

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CORCORAN PRESENTS *PUMP ME UP: D.C. SUBCULTURE OF THE 1980s***  
*First museum exhibition to explore the visual culture of the era in Washington*  
February 23–April 7, 2013



**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—*Pump Me Up: D.C. Subculture of the 1980s* is the first exhibition to explore the thriving underground of Washington, D.C. during the 1980s, giving visual form to the raucous energy of graffiti, Go-Go music, and a world-renowned punk and hardcore scene.

The exhibition explores the visual culture of the “other D.C.,” demonstrating its place in the history of street art as well as that of America’s capital city. In the midst of notorious problems with drugs and corruption, D.C. gave birth to an infectious visual culture captured in the exhibition through Globe posters, graffiti, graphic art, archival photographs, and ephemera. *Pump Me Up* tells a local history from a local point of view while providing a framework for the contemporary surge of interest in street art and underground graphics. The exhibition is curated by D.C.-area native and graffiti historian Roger Gastman and coordinated by the Corcoran’s Curator of Contemporary Art Sarah Newman.

“I’m glad to share my collection and D.C.’s story with the Corcoran,” says Gastman. “When this work was being made, those creating it would have never have dreamed that it would be given a sense of permanence in a museum.

This was a time of a thriving DIY ethos, where the canvas was the street and the sidewalk was a stage.”

*Pump Me Up* traces the history of graffiti in Washington while emphasizing its inextricable ties to the burgeoning forms of local music. The exhibition highlights the vibrant scene that sprang up around Go-Go, a local form of funk pioneered by Chuck Brown and others, including the stripped-down “Go-Go graffiti” style. Started by neighborhood “crews,” this style became a hallmark of the D.C. style of graffiti writing. Around the same time, an underground hardcore and punk scene sprang up in venues like the Wilson Center and the 9:30 Club.

Ephemera, photos, flyers, posters, records, newspaper clippings, stage clothes, instruments, video loops, and much more, all largely made between 1980 and 1992, will fill the Corcoran’s Atrium and Rotunda, bringing the era to life. The exhibition includes sections on graffiti writers (notably the work of COOL “DISCO” DAN), the D.C. punk, hardcore, and Go-Go scenes, concert posters made by the Baltimore-based Globe printing press, and visual culture from the drug wars.

A 320-page publication, entitled *Pump Me Up: D.C. Subculture of the 1980s*, will be published alongside the exhibition. The book includes a foreword by Sarah Newman, curator of contemporary art at the Corcoran. “The Legend of

COOL ‘DISCO’ DAN,” a 90-minute documentary about the storied local graffiti writer, will be released in tandem with the exhibition. The film, produced in collaboration with Joseph Patisall, is narrated by Henry Rollins and features interviews with Chuck Brown, civil rights advocate Walter Fauntroy, Marion Barry, and graffiti writers including GO-GO TONYA F and Dan himself.



Gastman began writing graffiti as a teenager in Bethesda, Maryland. Since then, he has founded and published the pop culture magazines *While You Were Sleeping* and *Swindle*, with Shepard Fairey, and authored a dozen graffiti art books including *The History of American Graffiti* (with Caleb Neelon; Harper Collins, 2011). In 2011 he curated, with Jeffrey Deitch and Aaron Rose, the exhibition *Art in the Streets* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Gastman’s film production credits include Banksy’s *Exit through the Gift Shop*, and the graffiti documentary *Wall Writers*, and he is currently directing a documentary for Sanrio/Hello Kitty on the history of the brand and its fans.

The exhibition is coordinated by Sarah Newman, curator of contemporary art at the Corcoran. For more information, visit <http://www.corcoran.org/exhibitions/pump-me-dc-subculture-1980s>.

*Pump Me Up: D.C. Subculture of the 1980s* is organized by Roger Gastman and the Corcoran Gallery of Art and made possible through the support of Scion and the 9:30 Club. Washington City Paper is the official media sponsor.

Curatorial assistance provided by Iley Brown, Caleb Neelon, and Joseph Patisall.

## **PRESS PREVIEW**

Media are invited to a press preview for *Pump Me Up: D.C. Subculture of the 1980s* on Friday, February 22 at 7 p.m. at the Corcoran, 500 Seventeenth St. NW, Washington, D.C. RSVP to [pr@corcoran.org](mailto:pr@corcoran.org) by Monday, February 18.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAM**

### **Curator's Talk: Roger Gastman**

**Wednesday, February 27, 7 p.m.**

**\$10 members; \$12 public**

To complement *Pump Me Up*, the exhibition he curated, graffiti historian Roger Gastman discusses the street art of Washington, D.C. An exhibition viewing and book signing follows the talk. More info: [https://getinvolved.corcoran.org/roger\\_gastman](https://getinvolved.corcoran.org/roger_gastman).

## **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. Beginning January 9, 2013, extended hours will change from Thursdays to Wednesdays. Admission to *Pump Me Up: D.C. Subculture of the 1980s* 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 *Pump Me Up: D.C. Subculture of the 1980s* an unlimited number of times for free. For more information, contact the Membership office at (202) 639-1753, [membership@corcoran.org](mailto:membership@corcoran.org) or online at [www.corcoran.org/membership](http://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](http://www.corcoran.org).



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Images:

Page one: *COOL “DISCO” DAN at Good Hope Road, Southeast Washington, 2008*. Photo by Rosina Teri Memolo.

Page two: *Various Hardcore 7” records, 1980s*. Photo by Aaron Farley. Collection of Roger Gastman.