



A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR A NEW CORCORAN:
BUILDING ON EXISTING STRENGTHS
TO FORGE NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND DIRECTIONS

APRIL 2013



The purpose of this document:

- To outline a set of opportunities that the Corcoran has identified and is able to achieve on the basis of its existing strengths
- To provide an understanding of the nature, aspirations, and future activities of the Corcoran as an artistic and cultural force in the nation's capital
- To inform the evolving vision for the institution as determined by the Corcoran itself, its future leaders, and its partner institutions
- To relay information of value to community members, patrons, and philanthropic partners who share in our determination to achieve a sustainable and exciting future for the Corcoran



Our strategic framework is derived from a process of in-depth research and discussion, including:

- Data-gathering and data evaluation:
 - Driven by the Board of Directors from 2010 to 2013
 - Informed by input from numerous national and international experts, peers, and senior staff
 - Predicated on the need for a sustainable financial future for the Corcoran, based on its 140-year legacy and the qualities that differentiate it from other institutions locally and nationally
- The creation of concepts, execution strategies, and deliverables based on:
 - Findings by Lord Cultural Resources (2010–11) and its associated experts
 - Corcoran Futures Concept Paper: A highly focused document created by the Board and staff in late 2011/early 2012 on parameters for any new direction
 - Creative Exchange (December 2012): A detailed, staff-driven review of the strengths and potential of the Corcoran
 - Multiple Detailed Board Discussions (2011–13)
 - Feedback, guidance, and opinions from senior staff (2010 – 13)



The purpose of the Corcoran established in our founding documents and reaffirmed during our deliberations guides our strategic approach for the future.

Core Philosophy: *Encouraging, Presenting, and Reflecting American Genius*

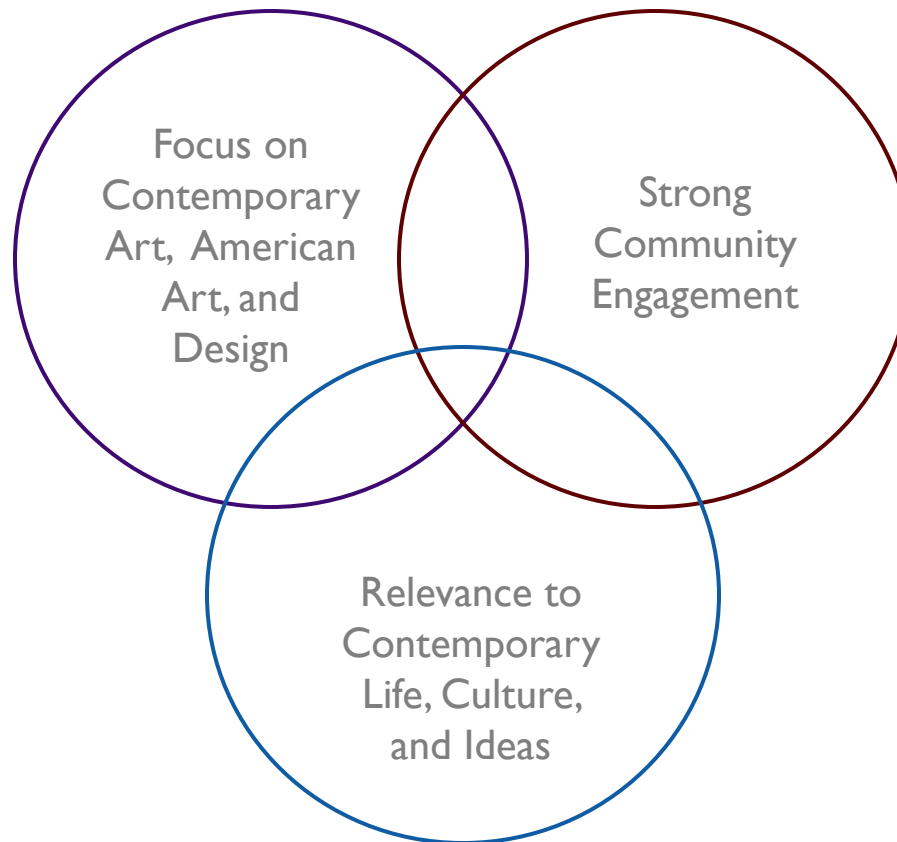
- The Corcoran is a forward-looking cultural and educational institution, focused on celebrating and fostering creativity, operating at the intersection of art and contemporary life and ideas.
- Our activities include preserving, collecting and exhibiting; teaching and learning; and engaging with the communities we serve.
- We encourage and disseminate research and artistic production that reflect and address the cultural, social, economic, and political issues of our day to guide our students, staff, and audience toward more informed outcomes of benefit to society.
- As the only institution in Washington, D.C., that is both a Gallery and a College, we are the one institution that can bring issues to life in ways that are creative and insightful, and that promote and foster access to Contemporary Art, American Art, and Design in the context of national debate and discussion.

Core beliefs:

- We believe Contemporary Art, American Art, and Design stimulate creative thinking, re-envision and drive social and economic progress, and prepare the next generation to succeed in an increasingly dynamic world.
- We also believe Contemporary Art, American Art, and Design can reflect present-day culture and are instrumental in its formation, with the power to change how we understand the world and our place in it.
- We believe art and the tools of creative thinking should be accessible to all. We value collaboration and partnerships with diverse audiences as a means to increase accessibility.
- We believe that fully engaging our students with the Gallery and its programs will lead to fresh perspectives on continuing issues.

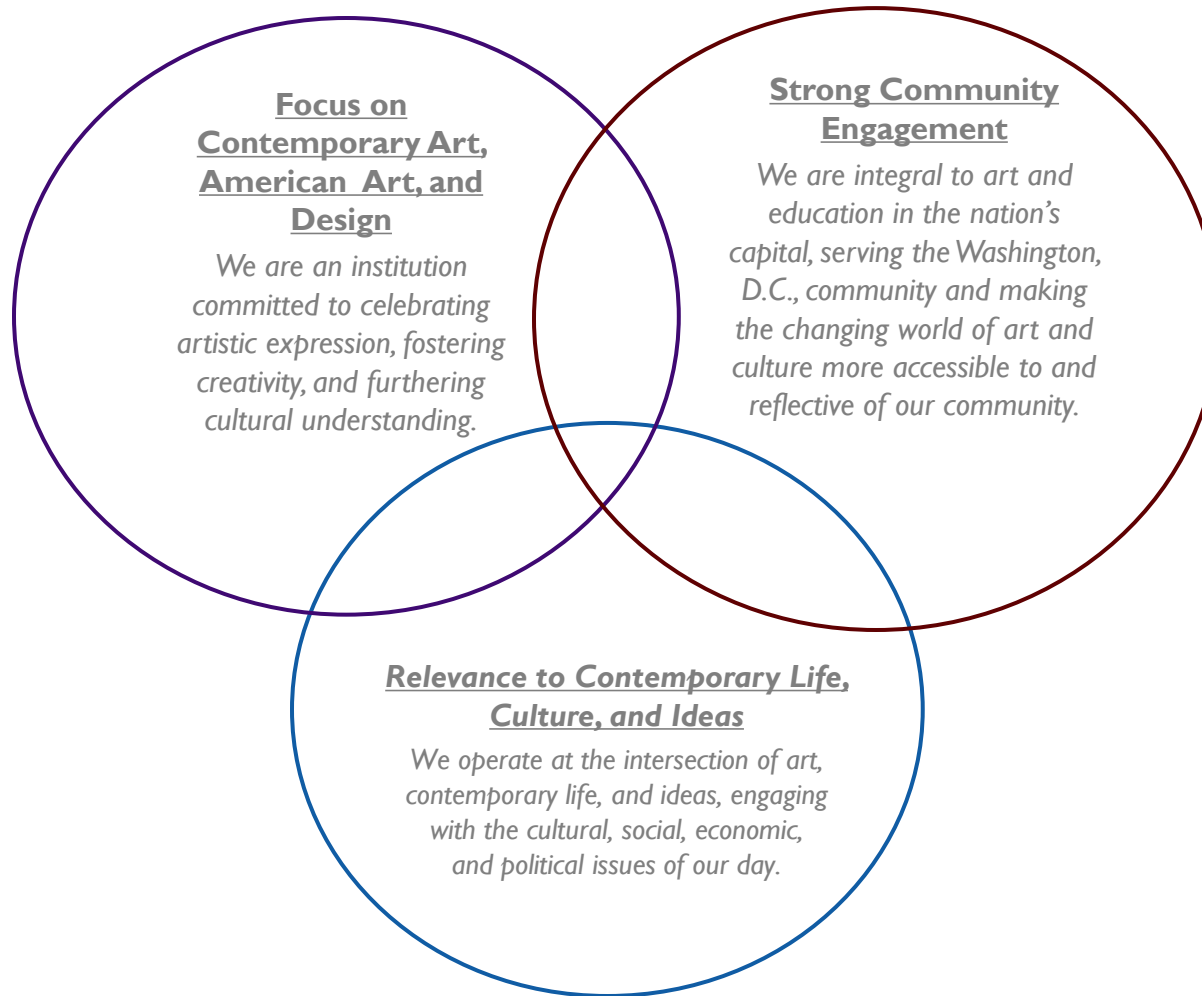


The Corcoran's future will be built on three strategic tenets:



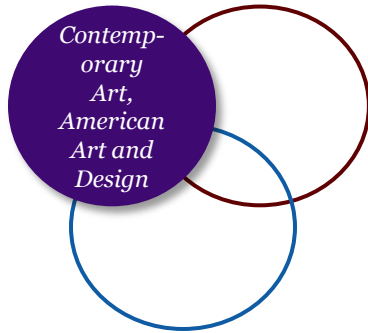


The strategic tenets are grounded in the Corcoran's vision and core beliefs.





Our newly affirmed focus on Contemporary Art, American Art, and Design will bring change to our collections, curricula, and programs, and inform how we engage with partners.



The Legacy

- The Corcoran's founder, William Corcoran, was one of America's greatest contemporary collectors of the day; over many decades the institution's collection broadened and became more diffuse.

Immediate Action

- Revive the Corcoran Biennial, with a unique American perspective on both American and international artists who address contemporary issues and ideas

Short-Term Action

- Reinvigorate the core collection and exhibitions addressing photography, lens-based work, and new media
- Strengthen relationships with leading contemporary artists, collectors, and collections, locally and globally, to accelerate discovery, exchange, and exhibition

Long-Term Action

- Refocus the collection on Contemporary Art, American Art, and Design through acquisition of new collections and the selective deaccessioning of others to align the collection and programs with our strategic framework
- Work with students, faculty, art historians, and leading scholars to generate new curricula, exhibitions, and public programs that add new perspectives to continuing issues
- Emphasize the new world of technology in arts and culture, leveraging the capital's history of photojournalism, and engagement with web-based creativity and technical innovation



The Corcoran will build on its legacy as an integral part of the nation's capital.



The Legacy

The Corcoran is differentiated from all other institutions in the National Capital Region through its undergraduate and graduate art teaching degree programs and activity with museum-based educators, making possible deeper, more extensive, and more varied programs to our constituents.

The Corcoran has a 20-year history of education and engagement in the nation's capital with examples such as:

- ArtReach – opportunities for communities without regular access to art
- Corcoran Family Day, engagement with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, programs for local youth through the DC Public Schools, and more
- Collaborations with international constituencies through embassies and other public programs

Immediate Action

- Seek partnership with a top-tier educational partner, allowing us to extend the College's impact in the National Capital Region
- Adapt to changing demographics, visitorship, and ways of viewing art by increasing our presence “outside the museum walls,” initiating programs to bring our art into all corners of the capital region

Short-Term Action

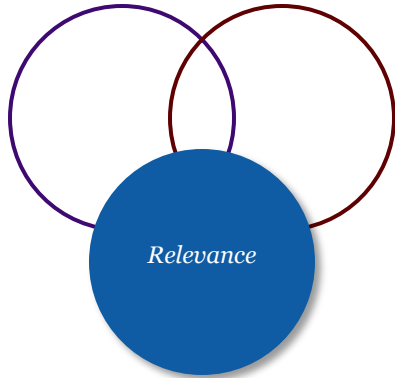
- Work with a broader set of entities across the region, including foundations, political organizations, and schools at all levels, to advance arts education for children and adults

Long-Term Action

- Develop partnerships with other leading museums and research centers, in the U.S. and abroad, and provide an opportunity for artists and scholars to pursue American genius as reflected in the Corcoran's collections, curricula, and programming



The Corcoran will be a catalyst for timely public discussion in the nation's capital, through our own groundbreaking programs and our cooperation with other institutions.



The Legacy

The Corcoran has a history of presenting exhibitions that are relevant to contemporary life and ideas, and for educating students and artists who explore issues most important to our communities.

Immediate Action

- Sharpen focus on being relevant in what we exhibit and teach, and how we exhibit and teach it, through the integration of art, ideas, and social issues
- Increase the pace of our work to keep up with the rate of political and social discourse

Short-Term Action

- Independently and with partner institutions, develop programs on issues relevant to modern life, politics, and business

Long-Term Action

- Work more deeply and broadly with other entities in the D.C. area to bring art and culture into political discourse wherever it may occur, and vice versa
- Strive to redefine the role of art and culture in contemporary life, education, governance, and innovation



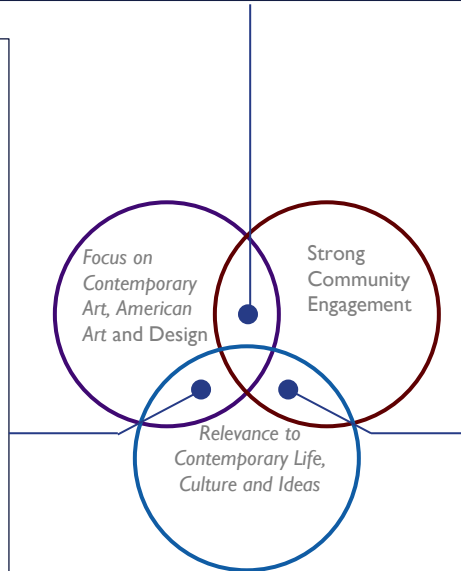
Cooperation, innovation, and excitement live at the intersections.

Contemporary Art, American Art, Design + Community Engagement

- As pioneered by *30 Americans*, establish advisory committees comprising business, education, marketing, and social leaders
- Use the Corcoran's resources to advance the state of arts education in support of local and national standards of learning
- Establish and strengthen programs that bring local artists, designers, and art into the community, both formally and informally, through special events and performances at experimental off-site venues
- Expand programs that embed College students and artists-in-residence in the community

Contemporary Art, American Art, Design + Relevance to Life & Ideas

- Define “contemporary” not just by the date of creation but by relevance to current challenges
- Augment the Visiting Artist Series by tying it to the issues of local, national, and global impact
- Work with leading performing arts organizations, think tanks, universities, conferences, etc., to host conversations, co-host performances, and stage art events that are relevant to modern discourse
- Seek to engage in, and to lead symposia of national importance

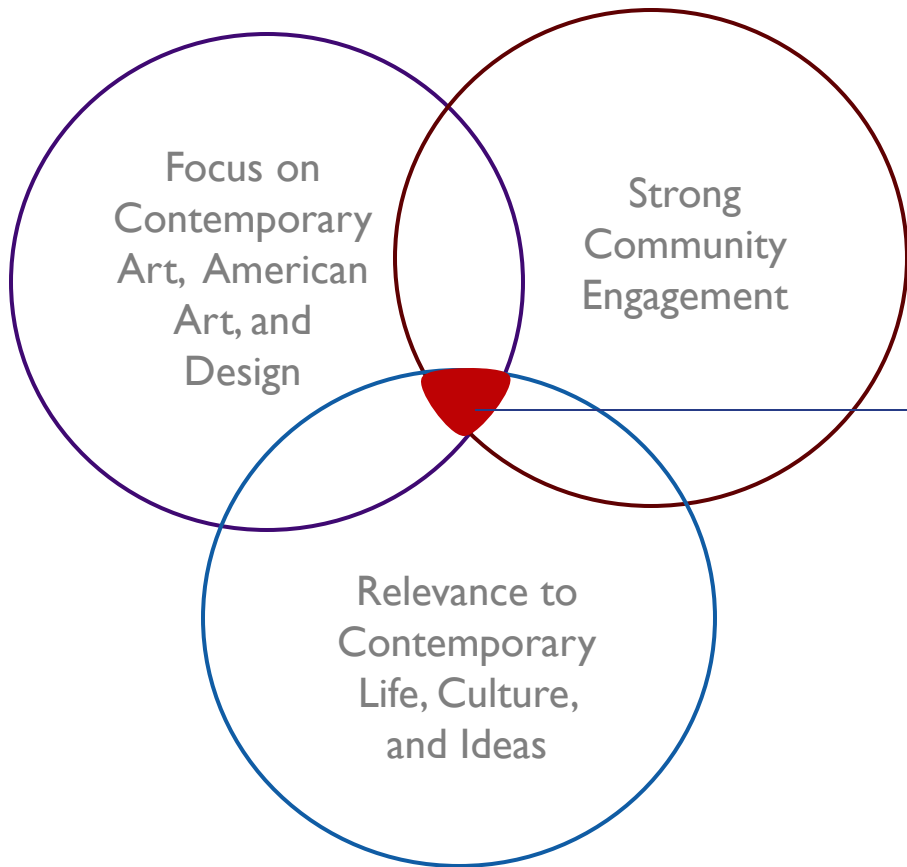


Community Engagement + Relevance to Art & Ideas

- Initiate an “open studio” program to bring local residents and students into the creative process
- Create the tools for displaying the next generation of art, and for teaching the next generation of students, to provide our audiences with a continuum of learning
- Work with other community institutions for the visual arts, design, and performing arts to highlight common themes
- Seek opportunities to work with the D.C. business community to link arts, innovation, design, creativity, and business



In conclusion, The Board of Trustees of the Corcoran reaffirms the Corcoran’s founding premise of “encouraging American genius” as our core philosophy and guiding principle for the future.



At its core, the Board’s framework:

- Asserts the strong desire that the College and Gallery collaborate to achieve a shared vision, and remains committed to developing strong and beneficial additional academic partnerships
- Reaffirms a full commitment to the Corcoran’s students and an experience characterized by excellence, intellectual pursuit, and future professional opportunity
- Is configured to support Corcoran programs and activities which align with issues in contemporary life and culture, and to reinvigorate the collections with a focus on new cultural expression and open dialogue
- Remains dedicated to the broad community of the capital region and to the unique cultural experiences the Corcoran can provide for its local and national audiences
- Is dedicated to strengthening the representation of the Board of Trustees and staff to align with the enhanced vision for the Corcoran in order to assure its stability and excellence into the future