

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***CULTURE WARS: THEN AND NOW* PRESENTED AT THE CORCORAN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
TRANSFORMER AND THE NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST CENSORSHIP**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – On **Saturday, March 26**, the **Corcoran Gallery of Art and College of Art + Design**, along with partners **Transformer** and the **National Coalition Against Censorship** will present *Culture Wars: Then and Now*, a **FREE** one-day symposium examining past and current debates about freedom of expression and public support for the arts.

“In light of recent censorship by the Smithsonian Institution and threats by congressional leaders to pull arts funding from national arts institutions, including the National Endowment for the Arts, *Culture Wars: Then and Now* presents very timely conversation examining how freedom of expression and public support for the arts are currently being debated,” said Victoria Reis, executive and artistic director of Transformer.



*Culture Wars: Then and Now* will examine censorship in four unique discussions: *Censorship Examined*, *Culture Wars Redux*, *Give Me a Revolution: Artists' Responses to Censorship*, and *Free Speech & Arts Funding*.

“We are convening this symposium because the fear of controversy and subsequent institutional self-censorship that come in the wake of a censorship incident are much more dangerous than the incident itself,” said Svetlana Mintcheva, director of programs at the National Coalition Against Censorship.

All panels will be held at the Frances and Armand Hammer Auditorium from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 26 and are free and open to the public. “The Corcoran is pleased to partner with Transformer and the Coalition to

put this important discussion, and subsequent dialogue, on the center stage, where it belongs,” said Corcoran Director and President Fred Bollerer.

Marshall Reese of Ligorano/Reese Collaborations and a participating panelist in *Culture Wars* said: “During the first week of December, I had this strange sense of *déjà vu*. Once again, politicians were censoring a major art exhibition, and it was *even* the same artist, David Wojnarowicz. It was almost as if I had been asleep for the past 20 years. And yet, it's become clear, this isn't just some weird Twilight Zone like aberration; it's the onslaught of an attack on not just our civil liberties, but with what's happening in Wisconsin on the American way of life.”

To further punctuate aspects of the conversations taking place throughout the symposium, video works via Franklin Furnace's *The History of the Future! A Franklin Furnace View of Performance Art* will be shown in the Corcoran Atrium during the lunch break and between panel sessions.

A reception for panelists and attendees will follow in the Corcoran Atrium from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Pre-registration is encouraged; to register, visit <https://getinvolved.corcoran.org/culturewars>.

**\*\*\*Media seating is available, to reserve, contact Kristin Guiter, [kguiter@corcoran.org](mailto:kguiter@corcoran.org). The full-day symposium will be streamed live at [www.corcoran.org](http://www.corcoran.org).\*\*\***

### ***Censorship Examined***

**10–11 a.m.**

In this presentation, *Culture Wars: Then and Now* keynote speaker, Robert Storr, Dean, Yale School of Art, will examine visual arts censorship within the context of American culture and history.

(Screening of Linda Lewett's video *Perfect Moment at WPA* prior to panel)

### ***Culture Wars Redux – What did we (what do we) consider offensive?***

**11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.**

Panelists include Philip Brookman, chief curator and head of research, Corcoran Gallery of Art and former curator of Washington Project for the Arts; Dennis Barrie, director of cultural and interpretive planning, Las Vegas Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement and former director of the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center; Jane Livingston, independent curator, author, and former associate director and chief curator at the Corcoran Gallery of Art; and H. Louis Sirkin, attorney and founding member of Sirkin Kinsley & Nazzarine, who represented Dennis Barrie and CAC in the obscenity trial provoked by the 1989 Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective, *The Perfect Moment*. The discussion will be moderated by Svetlana Mintcheva, director of programs at the National Coalition Against Censorship.

### ***Give me a Revolution: Artists' Responses to Censorship***

Open with screening of Martha Wilson's October 24, 2008 performance *Barbara Bush: All Washed UP* and Guerilla Girls' *HERSTORY* and/or “animation” piece.

**2–3:30 p.m.**

Panelists include Mike Blasenstein and Michael Dax Iacovone from the Museum of Censored Art; Orameh Bagheri from LA Raw; Bill Dobbs of Art+; and Marshall Reese of Ligorano/Reese Collaborations. The discussion will be moderated by Victoria Reis, executive and artistic director of Transformer.

### ***Free Speech & Arts Funding***

**4–5:30 p.m.**

Panelists include Nora Halpern, vice president of leadership alliances, Americans for the Arts; Michael Keegan, president, People for the American Way; Robert Atkins, art historian, activist, author, and co-editor of *Censoring Culture: Contemporary Threats to Freedom of Expression*; David A. Smith, senior lecturer in American History at Baylor University,

Waco, TX and author of *Money for Art: The Tangled Web of Art and Politics in American Democracy*. The discussion will be moderated by Andy Grundberg, associate provost and dean of undergraduate studies, Corcoran College of Art + Design.

### **ABOUT TRANSFORMER**

Transformer is a Washington, DC based 501(c)3 artist-centered, non-profit, visual arts organization providing a consistent, supportive, and professional platform for emerging artists to explore and present experimental artistic concepts, build audiences for their work, and advance their careers. A catalyst and advocate for emerging contemporary artists and emergent expression in the visual arts, Transformer connects and promotes emerging visual artists based locally, nationally, and internationally through exhibitions and programs partnerships with artists, curators, commercial galleries, museums and other cultural institutions. For more information, visit [www.transformergallery.org](http://www.transformergallery.org).

### **ABOUT THE NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST CENSORSHIP**

The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), founded in 1974, is an alliance of 50 national non-profit organizations, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups. United by a conviction that freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression must be defended, we work to educate our own members and the public at large about the dangers of censorship and how to oppose them. For more information, visit [www.ncac.org](http://www.ncac.org).

### **ABOUT THE CORCORAN**

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, a privately funded institution, was founded in 1869 as Washington's first and 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. Founded in 1890, the Corcoran College of Art + Design is 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, visit [www.corcoran.org](http://www.corcoran.org).

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