

The future of the Corcoran Gallery, Washington DC, remains uncertain

The institution hopes a \$2m V&A blockbuster exhibition of modernist design will draw visitors and sponsors

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Six months after Paul Greenhalgh took over as director of the Corcoran Gallery and College of Art and Design in Washington, DC, the institution's future remains uncertain. The tenure of his predecessor, David Levy, ended with the gallery struggling unsuccessfully to raise funds for a new wing by Frank Gehry. When Mr Greenhalgh's first act as director was to sack half the curatorial team and cancel all but one of the exhibitions on the calendar, the institution appeared to be in its death throes. But since then, the board of trustees and senior staff have begun a strategic planning process.

Mr Greenhalgh's goals include developing temporary exhibitions that will increase attendance and improve the display of the permanent collection by turning office space into galleries. The staff remains pared down to six full-time curators, two each in American art, photography and contemporary art, and Mr Greenhalgh says he will oversee the European painting and decorative arts departments.

Both he and the chairman of the board, Jeanette Ruesch, believe that blockbuster exhibitions are key to the Corcoran's success. The main event for 2007 is the survey "Modernism: Designing a New World, 1914-39" (17 March-21 July 2007), organised by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. At

\$2m it is the most expensive exhibition the Corcoran has ever mounted and the institution has yet to secure a sponsor. Mr Greenhalgh and Ms Ruesch say they are confident they will raise the money, but the show will be a test of whether the institution can join the international circuit for exhibitions.

Meanwhile, Ms Ruesch says she would like to begin renovating the Corcoran's building next fall, but has not raised the money to do so. She says the gallery ended the past fiscal year with a \$100,000 surplus but the endowment is around \$14m which cannot support an annual budget of over \$20m.

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