



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER
FOR THE STUDY OF THE VISUAL ARTS AND CULTURE OF
AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

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NEWS RELEASE

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A CELEBRATION OF SOUND AND VISUAL IMAGES KICKS OFF WITH THE DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER'S JAZZ EXHIBITION

COLLEGE PARK, Md.—Jazz and the visual arts come together in tandem to unveil American art's foray into the interplay between jazz and the visual arts in *Convergence: Jazz, Films, and the Visual Arts*. The exhibition features more than 70 works by innovative artists and filmmakers, mostly African Americans, whose works depict and/or are influenced by Jazz music and culture. This traveling exhibition offers intimate expressions of sound and imagery that explore the depths of African American visual arts and demonstrate the complexity of American visual culture. *Convergence* will open with a reception at the David C. Driskell Center on Thursday, February 14 at 5:00p.m., and will be on display through May 31, 2013.

The exhibition is organized by the David C. Driskell Center and the American Jazz Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. It utilizes the resources available to the American Jazz Museum, a performing arts institution, and the David C. Driskell Center, a visual arts institution, to point toward the spaces for artistic dialogue between jazz and the visual arts.

More than seventy works of art were selected from the Driskell Center's collections, as well as five films from the American Jazz Museum's prestigious John Baker Film Collection. These works reflect the breadth of visual arts media, which artists have worked with in relation to jazz, and includes: 3-dimensional art; audio and film; photography; paintings; drawings; prints and works on paper; and other mixed media. Themes include: jazz performance influences on visual arts and vice versa; iconic figures in jazz performance and visual art; and iconic jazz films.

Curated by Dr. Robert E. Steele and Dorit Yaron, the Driskell Center's former Executive Director and Acting Director, respectively, and Sonié Joi Ruffin-Thompson, Visiting Curator at the American Jazz Museum, the exhibition showcases the rhythmic sounds of jazz captured in visual art. The focus of this exciting exhibition, however, is also on demonstrating the creative expressions of

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jazz-inspired artists who blend both sound and imagery to arrive at exhilarating representations of American cultural life.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Driskell Center will host several events related to jazz and the visual arts, including a Keynote Lecture, “Looking at the Music: Jazz and the Visual Arts”, by Robert G. O’Meally, PhD., the Zora Neale Hurston Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and founder of its Center for Jazz Studies, on Thursday, February 14 at 6PM. In addition, an American poet and the Thomas E. Donnelley Professor of African American Studies at Yale University, Elizabeth Alexander, will be the guest speaker for the 12th annual Distinguished Lecture in the Visual Arts in honor of David C. Driskell on Thursday, April 11, 2013. Professor Alexander’s lecture will speak about the influence of jazz on poetry. Those events are free and open to the public.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The David C. Driskell Center honors the legacy of David C. Driskell, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of Art, Artist, Art Historian, Collector and Curator, by preserving the rich heritage of African American visual art and culture. The Driskell Center is committed to preserving, documenting, and presenting African American art, as well as replenishing and expanding the field of African American art. This exhibition is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council.

The David C. Driskell facility is wheelchair accessible. The Driskell Center Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 11a.m. to 4p.m. with extended hours on Wednesday until 6p.m. The Driskell Center Gallery will additionally be open on Saturday, March 9, April 27, and May 4, 2013, from 11a.m. to 4p.m. The Driskell Center observes all University of Maryland closings due to inclement weather and holidays, including Spring Break from Monday, March 18 to Friday, March 22, 2013; and Memorial Day on Monday, May 27, 2013. For further information regarding this exhibition and future activities at the Driskell Center, please call **301.314.2615** or visit www.driskellcenter.umd.edu. All exhibitions and events at the David C. Driskell Center are free and open to the public. The David C. Driskell Center’s Exhibition Program is supported, in part, by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council; the Jazz exhibition and its related events are supported, in part, by a grant from the Robert Lehman Foundation, Inc.