



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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

1214 Cole Student Activities Building  
College Park, Maryland 20742  
301.314.2615 TEL 301.314.0679 FAX  
driskellcenter@umd.edu  
www.driskellcenter.umd.edu

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**NEWS RELEASE**

Date: June 22, 2010  
Contact: Dorit Yaron  
Title: Deputy Director  
Phone: 301.405.6835  
Email: [dyaron@umd.edu](mailto:dyaron@umd.edu)

## **THE DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER RECEIVES A MAJOR GIFT OF ARTWORKS BY AMERICAN ARTISTS FROM THE BENNY ANDREWS AND NENE HUMPHREY COLLECTION**

COLLEGE PARK, Md. - A new donation by artist and art collector Nene Humphrey will help enhance and diversify the permanent collection of the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora at the University of Maryland. Humphrey's generous gift comprises 156 works of art from the Benny Andrews and Nene Humphrey Collection. "This wonderful gift moves the Driskell Center solidly on its way to becoming a national leader in the field of African American Art," says Center Director Robert Steele. "The Andrews and Humphrey donation will also help ensure the strength and vitality of the Driskell Center art collection for future generations of scholars, students, artists and the general public."

The core of the Driskell Center's permanent collection came from an initial gift of artwork from Professor Driskell, which provided a strong foundation for a representative collection of African American art. Since 2001, additional works have been donated by artists, art collectors, and artists' estates. From Professor Driskell's initial gift, the Center's collection has grown to nearly 1,000 works of art, upon which the Benny Andrews and Nene Humphrey Collection expands both physically and conceptually. The Center's collection also includes several works purchased through a special acquisition fund set aside by Mr. Eddie and Mrs. Sylvia Brown.

Throughout his lengthy career, Benny Andrews championed for the representation of minorities and women into major art collections worldwide. The Benny Andrews and Nene Humphrey Collection reflects this goal in its diversity of representation, and includes works by significant American artists such as Richard Anuszkiewicz, Leonard Baskins, Ed Clarke, Lesley Dill,

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David C. Driskell, Mel Edwards, Reginald Gammon, Red Grooms, Leroy Henderson, Karl Knaths, Alvin Loving, Richard Mayhew, Phillip Pearlstein, R.H. Polk, Betye Saar, Vincent Smith, Raphael Soyer, May Stevens, Alma Thomas, Leo Twiggs, James Van Der Zee, Carl Van Vechten, Jack White, and Richard Yarde. The gift also includes a photograph by Mrs. Humphrey, a nationally-recognized artist, whose work is concerned with the process and materials of art-making, and addresses issues of the body, domesticity and the female identified world. Humphrey and the late Benny Andrews amassed one of the most important collections of American art.

Born in Georgia in 1930, Benny Andrews attended the Art Institute of Chicago, where he drew inspiration from local jazz clubs. After graduating, he moved to New York City and began his professional career as an artist. His body of work, which includes painting, collage, drawing, and printmaking, explores the lives of African-Americans. Andrews died in 2006, but his legacy persists as his work is included in the collections of, among others, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Art Institute of Chicago, IL, and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia.

The David C. Driskell Center seeks to create an infrastructure which highlights the legacy of Professor Driskell as a collector. Interestingly, Benny Andrews and Professor Driskell collected one another's artwork, making this a particularly exciting acquisition. Further, Andrews' acute awareness during his lifetime of race, gender, and inequality in art mirrors that of Professor Driskell, and both of their collections reflect this dedication. In this way, Nene Humphrey's gift will not only aid the Driskell Center in its goal of establishing a world-class collection of African American art, but will help to redefine American art as a whole.

### **About the David C. Driskell Center**

The David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora at the University of Maryland, College Park celebrates 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. Established in 2001, the Center provides an intellectual home for artists, museum professionals, art administrators, and scholars of color, broadening the field of African diasporic studies. The Driskell Center is committed to collecting, documenting, and presenting African American art as well as replenishing and expanding the field of African American art.

For more information on the David C. Driskell Center, please call 301-314-2615, email [driskellcenter@umd.edu](mailto:driskellcenter@umd.edu), or visit [www.driskellcenter.umd.edu](http://www.driskellcenter.umd.edu).