

# DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER'S FALL 2013 NEWSLETTER

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## **A Letter from the Acting Executive Director**

Greetings!

I hope that your summer has been a pleasant one and that, like all of us at the David C. Driskell Center, you are looking forward to an exciting year.

As important as keeping you informed is talking to you about the future of the Center. I would like to begin that conversation by talking about the important role that the Center can play in not only continuing to document and promote the artistic legacy of the African American Artists to the canon of art, but also in participating in the discourse regarding its value and unique importance. In spite of the many achievements of artists of color in the institutional (museums) and commercial (auctions, international private collectors) art world in the past 10 years, there remains an inconsistency in opportunities, critical reviews and assessment of the works and careers of major artists and emerging talents. The Center is poised to become a critical voice in articulating this need and establishing a platform for its importance and historical relevance.

I have been blessed throughout my career as a practicing artist to have been able to work with some of our most acclaimed artists of color – many of those who have never received proper recognition for their contributions. The Center recognizes both the absence of a critical and honest dialogue around those unacknowledged contributions, as well as the almost absent critical discussion of currently practicing artists. These absences in discourse are illuminated by the David C. Driskell Center Archives – particularly by the letters and correspondence of David Driskell over some 60 years to some of America's most important artists and cultural leaders. We cannot allow our meaning and value to always be assigned or defined by forces or circumstances by which we have no influence or participation.

I am excited to be a part of an already successful year and am looking forward to continued successes as we progress on our journey. We hope that you enjoy the Center's news and updates throughout this newsletter.

With best regards,

Prof. Curlee R. Holton  
Acting Executive Director



*Dorit Yaron – Deputy Director,  
David Driskell, and Prof. Curlee  
Holton – Acting Director in  
Athens, Greece for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual  
International Conference on Visual  
and Performing Arts 2013.*



## RECENT NEWS

On July 1, 2012, Prof. Curlee R. Holton was appointed as the Center's Acting Executive Director; he has since agreed to continue this appointment for one more year.

What an exciting time we had this year! Our exhibition *African American Art Since 1950: Perspectives from the David C. Driskell Center* opened in the fall 2012; it then traveled to the Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH, and will be opened in January 2014 at the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture, Charlotte, NC before traveling to the Figge Art Museum, Davenport, IA. Our spring exhibition *Convergence: Jazz, Films, and the Visual Arts* closed in May 2013 and travels to the American Jazz Museum in Kansas City, MO, where it will open in October 2013.

In 2012 the Driskell Center was also honored with the gift of more than 270 works, valued at more than \$2.4 million, from the Sandra and Lloyd Baccus Collection; Sandra served as a board member and was a huge fan of both Prof. Driskell and the Center.

As we are sure you will all agree, one of our most important assets at the Center is Prof. David C. Driskell himself. The Center has been working closely with Prof. Driskell on several projects, including an exhibition of his works presented in May in Osaka, Japan. *A Vision of Paradise* was a huge success which involved working with students and faculty from the University of Osaka.

In addition, Dorit Yaron, the Center's Deputy Director, presented a talk about African American art and the contribution of Prof. Driskell to the field at the 4th Annual International Conference on Visual and Performing Arts in Athens, Greece. David was very excited to go back to Athens after more than 50 years and he celebrated his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday with us at a party hosted by two of his students from Howard University (1961).



*Alison Saar, En Pointe,  
2010, Wood, bronze,  
graphite, and rope  
87 x 52 x 30 inches  
Elements: wood figure  
w/ attached bronze antlers,  
rope, pulley, hardware  
± 175 lbs, hung from ceiling  
Image courtesy of LA Lower  
Gallery, Venice, CA*



## NEW & UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

We have an exciting exhibition program for the upcoming academic year 2013-14; in the fall, we will present ***Allison Saar: Still...*** an exhibition of 11 sculptures created from 2010 through 2012. This is the first time the Center will present a sculpture only exhibition, and it will be thrilling to see the gallery with sculptures on the walls, floors, and even hanging from the ceiling!

The exhibition will open at the Driskell Center on **Thursday, September 12, 2013** with an opening reception featuring a gallery tour by the artist from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., it will stay on display through Friday, December 13, 2013.

Alison Saar's work is deeply tied to her multiracial heritage, and it is through this

lens which she so strikingly captures the human spirit. Through her sculptures, she displays the primal intensity of people underlying the civility of everyday life. Saar scrutinizes bigotry and historical burdens and portrays these concepts through a visual and kinesthetic tension, common in many of her pieces. Saar's use of commonplace and specialized materials in her works make them highly unique.

Combining African art and ritual, Greek mythology, and German aspects of expressionism, Saar challenges stereotypes and offers an indictment of human discrimination. This exhibition, organized by the Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, has traveled to the Figge Art Museum, and later it will travel to Bakalar & Paine Galleries, MassArt in Massachusetts.

## NEXT....

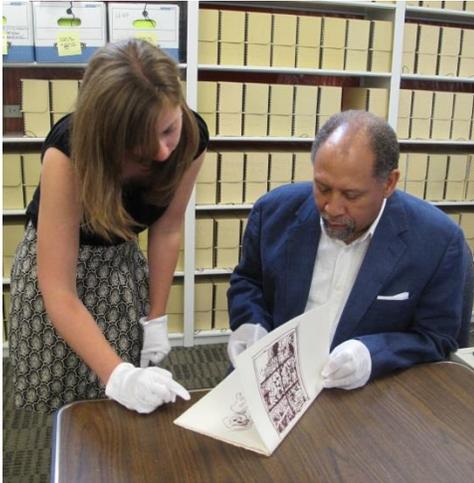
On January 30, 2014 through May 23, 2014, we will present ***CHARLES WHITE - HEROES: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN***, a wonderful exhibition of 47 prints. In addition, we will also exhibit several of White's works from the Center's permanent collection.

## THEN....

Finally, in the fall of 2014, we will present ***Robert Blackburn: Printmaker and Modernist***, a major exhibition and conference, focusing on the contribution of Blackburn to American art. We will keep you informed with additional exciting news about this project.

All exhibition projects at the David C. Driskell Center are supported by the Maryland State Arts Council.





## ONGOING PROJECTS

The Center is the recipient of a \$251,700 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, through the Council on Library and Information Resources, Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives program. This grant provides us with funds to continue to document the Driskell Papers, an archive of more than 50,000 objects, collected by Prof. Driskell over the last six decades.

*Center Archivist Stephanie Maxwell and Prof. Curlee Holton examine a document from the David C. Driskell Center Archives.*

To see some of the art objects and archive material, check out our website at: <http://driskellcenter.pastperfect-online.com>

To learn more about the newest cataloged items from our Archivist Stephanie Maxwell, please also visit our new Archives blog at: <http://driskellcenterarchives.wordpress.com/>

## THANK YOU

I cannot express how grateful I am to have such dedicated and enthusiastic staff and board members to help bring to life our vision of becoming a global, leading institution in the field of African American Art, focusing on Excellence in Education, Collaboration, Innovation, and Creativity. Through their hard work and determination, we are making great progress in connecting the Center to audiences all over the world! We are also working as a team to provide new opportunities for students, both at the University as well as in Maryland's public schools, while continuing our education, exhibition and recognition of the arts well into the future!

The Center continues to strive to (1) reaffirm its purpose as an educational and cultural organization that promotes creativity, diversity, and visual arts education as a foundation for building productive and rewarding lives; (2) enhance the quality of its intellectual and programmatic core; and (3) foster the Center's identity as a vital and engaged institution and community –local, national, and global—partner. This strategic plan builds on the Center's past achievements and provides the framework for the future development of the Driskell Center.

Your unwavering support allows us to continue in the mission of the Driskell Center, and for that we thank you.

~ Prof. Curlee R. Holton

