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Curlee Holton Appointed Interim Executive Director of UMD's David C. Driskell Center

COLLEGE PARK, Md. – The College of Arts and Humanities has appointed Curlee R. Holton the interim executive director of the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora (Driskell Center) at the University of Maryland, effective July 1, 2012.

Holton is currently the David M. and Linda Roth Professor of Art and Founding Director of the Experimental Printmaking Institute (EPI) at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Trained as a printmaker, Holton focuses his work on the voices and issues of the African American experience and specializes in teaching African American art history.

“I am thrilled Curlee agreed to serve as the interim executive director of the Driskell Center,” said Dean Bonnie Thornton Dill. “The Driskell Center is one of the jewels of this university and Curlee will continue to build momentum and extend the programs of the center during this period of transition.”

Holton, who succeeds Robert E. Steele after retiring this year, will continue teaching and directing the EPI at Lafayette College while providing leadership and continuity for the Driskell Center. He will be supported by Acting Director Dorit Yaron who will take on additional duties and the day-to-day management of the center in Holton's absence.

“The Driskell Center is unique among cultural arts institutions in that its founding was inspired by the achievements of distinguished artist and scholar, David C. Driskell,” said Holton. “My commitment is to protect its assets, promote its educational programming and future exhibitions, enhance and add on to the center's collections, and create new funding strategies.”

An active member of the center's advisory board, Holton has worked with several renowned African American artists to produce limited edition prints used to raise funds for the center. He is also a long-time collaborator and colleague of the center's namesake and distinguished university professor emeritus, David C. Driskell.

“As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the center, it's exciting to see a person like Curlee Holton take on the leadership role,” said David C. Driskell. “His stature in the field of African American Art will insure confidence among center donors, supporters and the African American Art community.”

An artist-scholar, Holton is an internationally renowned printmaker and painter whose work has been exhibited professionally for over 25 years in more than 40 one-person shows and over 80 group shows in such prestigious national and international venues as the 7th International Biennale in Cairo, Egypt; Taller de Artes Plásticas Rufino Tamayo in Oaxaca, Mexico; the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Whitney

Museum of American Art. He has presented more than 70 public lectures on the subjects of his work, African American art, and contemporary printmaking.

Holton earned his M.F.A. with honors from Kent State University and his B.F.A. from the Cleveland Institute of Art in Drawing and Printmaking.

“As we welcome Curlee,” Thornton Dill said, “we also express gratitude to Bob for eight years of dynamic leadership to the center, and we wish him well in his retirement and congratulations on the part-time position he will assume this fall in the newly constituted Graduate School Office for Diversity Initiatives.”

About the 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. For further information about the center, visit www.driskellcenter.umd.edu.

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