



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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THE DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS GRANT FOR DIGITIZING ITS COLLECTIONS FROM THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

COLLEGE PARK, MD. – The David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora was awarded a grant totaling \$144,450 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services [IMLS] through its Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program. The two-year grant will provide support for the “Driskell Center Digitization Project,” which will preserve, reformat, digitize, and increase access to the Driskell Center's 1,550-object art collection and parts of its archives collections, particularly the David C. Driskell Papers, including 150 audio tapes, 90 visual reels, 1,500 photographs, and 3,500 slides, among other unique resources.

As part of this grant, the David C. Driskell Center will digitize its art collection as well as a selection of objects from the David C. Driskell Papers archival collection including materials that are fragile, especially unique, or in obsolete formats such as VHS and cassette tapes. This activity will provide a coherent and substantial resource to scholars of African American art. Creating digital files and adding them to already existing records, including a searchable online database, will ensure preservation of the collection records for future generations, increase resources, and enhance accessibility to these unique collections. Additionally, the Driskell Center will create a professional development training opportunity in digitization procedures for its staff, students, and interns and will produce digitization management policies to sustain the knowledge at the Driskell Center for

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future professionals. The grant is awarded as part of the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture to organizations committed to preserving and sharing the history of African American life from the period of slavery through present day.

Professor Emeritus of Art David C. Driskell says (on July 17, 2017) that “This major grant from the IMLS will ensure that future generations will have access to some of the important information... that was collected as a result of my friendship with a number of African American artists over the last half of the twentieth century. This Digitization Project will further enhance efforts to make the Driskell Center Archive an important destination for research in African American art.” Professor Curlee R. Holton, the David C. Driskell Center’s Executive Director, adds that “This grant re-affirms the mission of the David C. Driskell Center to collect and preserve historically important documents, photography, and archival materials which are not presently fully accessible to scholars, students, and the interested public. The funds from the IMLS award, and the Driskell Center’s professionally devoted and skillful staff, will ensure that these valuable objects will be given a life in the future.”

This project, titled “The Driskell Center Digitization Project”, will build upon three previous successful grants awarded to the Driskell Center between 2011-2015; an IMLS grant which provided funding to catalog David C. Driskell’s unique archive; a National Endowment for the Arts grant which supported the cataloging of the art collection; and, lastly, a Mellon Foundation “Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives” grant which provided support for the final stages of cataloging Prof. Driskell’s archive and resulted in the creation of a permanent position for an Archivist at the Driskell Center.

The Driskell Center Digitization Project will focus on digitizing photographs, slides, audio, and video materials, the formats of which are under threat of obsolescence and damage from aging; the project will also include photographing the art collection and producing high-resolution digital files as well as organizing, describing, storing, and making those files available to the public and to researchers through the Driskell Center’s website and in-person at the Driskell Center. The archival materials to be digitized pertain mainly to the history and development of African American art, including rare material such as audio tapes of interviews conducted by or of David C. Driskell and photographs of art as well as colleagues of Professor Driskell such as Elizabeth Catlett, Romare Bearden, and Aaron Douglas. The Driskell Center Digitization Project addresses the need to fully understand, acknowledge, and have access to the contributions of African American artists to American art. By preserving, reformatting, and digitizing the Art Collection and portions of the

Driskell Papers, the Center will expand the uses of this important collection, broaden the nation's body of knowledge, and improve preservation and care of the nation's content and collections pertaining to crucial aspects of African American art. More specifically, this project allows the Driskell Center to preserve archival materials which are rapidly aging, disintegrating, fading, and becoming nearly too fragile to use.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's approximately 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Its mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Its grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. In July 2017, the IMLS announced 16 grants to museums in 10 states totaling \$1,485,955 for the African American History and Culture grant program. To learn more about IMLS, please visit www.imls.gov.

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.

The David C. Driskell Center is supported in part by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council. All programs at the David C. Driskell Center are free and open to the public. The facility is wheelchair accessible. The Driskell Center Gallery hours (when an exhibition is on display) are Monday through Friday from 11AM to 4PM with extended hours on Wednesday until 6PM. For further information regarding exhibitions and activities at the Driskell Center, please call 301.314.2615 or visit www.driskellcenter.umd.edu.