



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

Contact: Ms. Dorit Yaron
Title: Deputy Director
Phone: 301.405.6835
Email: dyaron@umd.edu

**THE DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS GRANT
FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**

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 recently awarded a \$60,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA]. The two-year grant will provide support for documenting the Driskell Center's permanent art collection as well as developing a collection management policy; a task central to the Center's mission to expand and replenish the field of African American art. The grant is awarded as part of the NEA's Access to Artistic Excellence Grant program.

The NEA grant for The Center Collection Management Project will provide support for documenting the Driskell Center's art collection assembled since 2001, the year the Center was founded. Since then, the Center's collection has grown from 150 to close to 1,300 works; among them are drawings, paintings, prints, mixed media, and sculptures by artists such as Benny Andrews, Aaron Douglas, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, David C. Driskell, Sam Gilliam, Jacob Lawrence, Faith Ringgold, Augusta Savage, and William T. Williams. Recognizing the historical and artistic value of its permanent collection, the David C. Driskell Center organizes the traveling exhibition *African American Art Since 1950: Perspectives from the David C. Driskell Center*. The exhibition will be on display at the Driskell Center from September 20 to December 21, 2012 and starts its national tour in 2013.

The Center Collection Management Project will include, first, documenting and inventorying all art objects in the Center's art collection, preferably using PastPerfect, a collection management software. Second, developing a set of collection management policy and procedures to increase the

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knowledge and skills of current and future staff members in collection management. The collection management policy will provide guidelines to create and maintain intellectual and physical control of the collection, as well as guide staff members with day to day instructions for administrating the collection. Finally, increasing accessibility to the collection for researchers, students, institutions, and the general public as art objects' records will be available online. Accountability and accessibility underlie the project's major activities while also providing internships, field studies, and graduate assistantship opportunities to college and university students who are interested in entering the museum field.

Dr. Robert E. Steele, who has served as the Executive Director of the David C. Driskell Center since 2004, says: "Having received this major grant from NEA will enable the David C. Driskell Center to provide research tools and access to important works by African American artists while highlighting the contribution of African American artists to the canon of American art. We are profoundly grateful to NEA for this vote of confidence in the work of the Center."

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To learn more about the NEA, please visit www.nea.gov/about/index.html.

The David C. Driskell Center 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. 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 Center exhibition program is supported, in part, by a special fund from the Office of the President at the University of Maryland, and 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 are Monday through Friday from 11AM to 4:00PM 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.

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