



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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NEWS RELEASE

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DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER TO PRESENT *SHIFTING: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN ARTISTS AND THE POWER OF THEIR GAZE*

COLLEGE PARK, MD. — 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 is proud to announce its spring exhibition, *Shifting: African American Women Artists and the Power of Their Gaze*. The exhibition, organized by the Driskell Center, is curated by the David C. Driskell Center’s Executive Director, Professor Curlee R. Holton, assisted by Deputy Director, Dorit Yaron. The exhibition will be on display at the Driskell Center from Thursday, March 2nd, 2017 through Friday, May 26th, 2017, with an opening reception on Thursday, March 2nd, from 5-7PM.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION: *Shifting: African American Women Artists and the Power of Their Gaze* showcases the works of nearly 40 well-known and emerging African American female artists who use a wide range of media, including prints, photography, paintings, and videos. The list of artists includes:

Ahuja, Mequitta
Amos, Emma
Booker, Chakaia
Bright, Sheila Pree
Brown, Iona Rozeal
Browning, Jillian Marie
Catlett, Elizabeth
Charlton, Zoë
Cox, Renée
Edison, Diane
Faustine, Nona
Fuller, Meta Warrick
Holder, Robin
Humphrey, Margo

Ingersol, Tonya
Jackson, Stefanie
Jones, Lois Mailou
Lewis, Samella
Long, Christina
Lovelace O’Neal, Mary
Martin, Delita
McIver, Beverly
Monroe, Janine (formerly J.
Jackson)
Pickett, Janet
Richmond-Edwards, Jamea
Ringgold, Faith
Roberts, Lucille D. Malkia

Robinson, Aminah Brenda
Lynn
Saar, Alison
Saar, Betye
Sherald, Amy
Simmons, Xaviera
Sligh, Clarissa T.
Stout, Renée
Thomas, Mickalene
Walker, Kara
Weems, Carrie Mae
Willis, Deborah

For years, a woman’s place in most societies has been defined first and foremost by her gender. As noted by the French scholar Simone de Beauvoir, women are defined as “the other” while men are defined as “the one”; to belong to “the others” or “the one” is evident through sight. According to the British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey, who wrote extensively on the subject of the “Male Gaze,” women are always the objects of the gaze, never the possessors of the gaze.

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Shifting explores how African American female artists turn their gaze on the world around them, as well as on themselves and on other women. Not attempting to provide one answer, this exhibition serves as a platform for creating a dialogue around the questions: Whose gaze is it? Is the male gaze also the female gaze? Are women looking at themselves through the male gaze?

Shifting features art made by African American women asserting their own artistic authority and, in many ways, reshaping and redefining the art world and culture at large. “Gaze” has a wide range of possible meanings. There is the conventional, “steady intense look;” but we cannot escape the broader implication of “the Gaze” when we examine its self-defining authority and power. This exhibition and scholarly discussion will highlight the major theoretical and aesthetic shifts that have occurred in the art making strategies of female artists, particularly the African American artists and how those shifts of self-authority have empowered them to direct their “gaze” upon the world. The Driskell Center believes it is timely and critically important to establish a series of national dialogs around dynamics of race and cultural pride, womanhood, and femininity as critical elements of a national artistic vision.

PANEL DISCUSSION: In conjunction with the exhibition, the Driskell Center will present several programs. The most ambitious of these is a panel discussion to be held at 3pm on Friday, March 3rd, 2017. The purpose of this panel is to recognize and critically examine the contribution of African American women artists to the American art canon and understand how they have both impacted and responded to the contemporary art world. The panel will be lead and moderated by Lisa Farrington, Art Professor and Chair of the Department of Art and Music at John Jay College, NYC. The additional participants are: Kirsten Pai Buick, Ph.D., Associate Professor, College of Fine Arts, Department of Art and Art History, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Elsa Barkley Brown, Associate Professor of History and Women’s Studies and Affiliate Faculty in African American Studies and American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park; M. Nzasi Keita, Associate Professor of English, Ursinus College; Kelli Morgan, The Winston & Carolyn Lowe Curatorial Fellow for Diversity in the Fine Arts at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; and Dr. Deborah Willis, University Professor and Chair of the Department of Photography & Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, NYC. The papers presented at the panel will be included in a publication to be released after the exhibition opens.

RSVP for the panel is required by February 28th, 2017 at driskellcenter@umd.edu or 301.314.2615.

ABOUT THE DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER

The David C. Driskell Center honors the legacy of David C. Driskell—Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of Art, Artist, Art Historian, Collector, Curator, and Philanthropist—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. All programs at the David C. Driskell Center are free and open to the public. The facility is wheelchair accessible. For further information regarding exhibitions and activities at the Driskell Center, please call 301.314.2615 or visit www.driskellcenter.umd.edu. The Driskell Center’s programing is supported by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council.

The Driskell Center Gallery’s hours are Monday through Friday from 11AM to 4PM with extended hours on Wednesday until 6PM. The Driskell Center Gallery will additionally be open on the following Saturdays: March 11th, April 8th (Slow Art Day), April 29th (Maryland Day), and May 13th from 11AM to 4PM. The Driskell Center observes all University of Maryland closings due to inclement weather and holidays. The Driskell Center Gallery will be closed for the University of Maryland’s Spring Break, March 19 - 26, 2017.