



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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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

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**DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER PRESENTS WORKS BY ROMARE BEARDEN, SAM GILLIAM,
NORMAN LEWIS, HENRY O. TANNER, WILLIAM T. WILLIAMS AND HALE A. WOODRUFF FROM
THE LARRY AND BRENDA THOMPSON COLLECTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ART**

COLLEGE PARK – *Tradition Redefined: The Larry and Brenda Thompson Collection of African American Art* features seventy two works by sixty seven artists at 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 [UMCP]. *Tradition Redefined* will be on view from Wednesday, February 18, 2009 through Friday, May 29, 2009. The public opening reception will be held on Wednesday, February 18 from 5:00-7:00PM at the Driskell Center's gallery, 1207 Cole Student Activities Building, UMCP.

Larry and Brenda Thompson have amassed a remarkable collection of art by African Americans from around the nation. The strength of the Thompson's collecting process lies in their considered attention to artists who have typically not been recognized in the traditional narratives of African American art. In addition to the work of celebrated artists, the Thompsons have collected works by artists who have been considered emerging, regional or lesser known. The result is a collection that redefines the landscape of American art, offering a more in-depth, inclusive understanding of African American artists and their aesthetic and social concerns.

Curated by the Center's Curator-in-Residence, Dr. Adrienne L. Childs, *Tradition Redefined* presents the breadth of the Thompsons' art collection that spans from the 1890's to 2007. The exhibition features works by artists Amiri Baraka, Romare Bearden, Camille Billops, Joseph Delaney, Norman Lewis, Charles E. Porter, William T. Williams and Hale A. Woodruff,

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among others. Some artists from the Washington, DC area are included as well; among them are David C. Driskell, Sam Gilliam, Evangeline J. Montgomery, Preston Sampson and Bill Taylor.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Driskell Center has published an exhibition catalogue with essays by co-owner of the Thompson Collection, Mrs. Brenda Thompson and Professor M. Akua McDaniel, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Art at Spelman College, Atlanta. The catalogue also includes artist biographies by Curator Dr. Childs. ***Tradition Redefined***'s catalogue includes a foreword by the Center's Executive Director, Dr. Robert E. Steele highlighting the importance of collectors to the field of American art in general and African American art in particular. Finally, the catalogue, which can be purchased for \$25, includes an exhibition checklist and features color reproductions of all the works exhibited in ***Tradition Redefined***. The catalogue is supported in part by a contribution from Larry and Brenda Thompson to the Center's Visual Arts Program.

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 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 preserving, documenting and presenting African American art, as well as replenishing and expanding the field of African American art. This exhibition is supported, in part, by a special fund from the Office of the President at the University of Maryland, College Park, and a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council.

All exhibitions and events at the David C. Driskell Center are free and open to the public. The facility is wheelchair accessible. Assistance for the hearing impaired can be arranged with advance notice by calling 301.314.2615. The David C. Driskell Center Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 11:00am to 4:00pm with extended hours on Wednesday until 6:00pm. The David C. Driskell Center observes all University of Maryland, College Park closings including snow days and holidays. For further information regarding this exhibition and future events and activities at the David C. Driskell Center, please call **301.314.2615** or visit www.driskellcenter.umd.edu.