



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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A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE, COURAGE, AND STRENGTH
CHARLES WHITE - HEROES
PRESENTED BY THE DAVID C. DRISKELL CENTER

COLLEGE PARK, Md. – **HEROES: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN-** The Art of **Charles White**, a collection of over 50 works created by artist Charles White, featuring drawings, prints, and paintings spanning from the 1930s to the 1970s. From early drawings to works that incorporate the experience of a lifetime, the works in this exhibition represent a broad slice of a storied and rich career. The exhibition will open at the Driskell Center on **Thursday, January 30th, 2014**, with an opening reception from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and will remain on display until **Friday, May 23rd, 2014**.

Charles White (1918-1979) flourished in the face of conflict. His work draws much of its strength from the racism he faced during his childhood in Chicago. In the later part of his career, he struggled to maintain a representational style when the mainstream of American art was shifting towards the Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism of artists like Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock; again, these difficulties served as a catalyst to propel the quality and scope of his work. White envisions steadfast heroes: heroes not born of privilege or power, but rather created by the achievement of the human spirit.

Whether the piece is a drawing, painting, linocut, or lithograph, White uses strong lines to instill in his richly detailed figures a sense of dignity and quiet heroism. In *Awaiting His Return* (1946, charcoal on paper), White presents a woman, head in hand, eyes sad yet hopeful. The altered perspective lines of the drawing invite the viewer to look beyond what is plainly visible; the soft charcoal shading contained within the harsh, sharply angular confines of her body indicate the distances between pain and resolve—the struggle of the hero.

The majority of the works in this exhibition—the largest collection of White’s work displayed in several decades—have never before been seen. The works come from the Arthur Primas Collection, which includes more than five hundred works of art by African American artists and artists of the Diaspora. The exhibition is curated by Charlotte Sherman of the Heritage Gallery in Los Angeles, CA. It is organized by Landau Traveling Exhibitions and has traveled

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to the North Carolina Central University Art Museum in Durham, North Carolina in 2012; the exhibition will continue to travel following its closing at the Driskell Center.

In conjunction with the *Heroes* exhibition, the David C. Driskell Center is proud to feature several works by Charles White from the Center's permanent art collection, most notably *Sammy Davis Jr.* (1959, graphite drawing mounted onto acrylic painted board) and *Creole Madonna* (1934, color crayon on paper), recently donated to the Center from the Sandra and Lloyd Baccus Collection. In addition, the Center will present a Drawnathon, an event where students and local art enthusiasts will attempt to complete the longest drawing ever created at the University of Maryland, College Park campus. The event will be held on Saturday, April 26, 2014. Additional details will be available on our website.

ABOUT CHARLES WHITE (1918-1979)

Born April 2, 1918 on the south side of Chicago, Charles Wilbert White became interested in art at a very young age. In 1938, he completed a two-year program in a single year, graduating from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Benefiting from one of the New Deal programs administered by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, White and other artists were employed by the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

White accepted a position teaching drawing at Dillard University, New Orleans in 1941. A year later, after receiving the Julius Rosenwald Fellowship Award, he moved to New York City, home of his first solo exhibition at the American Contemporary Art (ACA) Gallery in 1947. In 1949, White became co-founder of the Committee for the Negro Arts (CNA) in New York City, an organization dedicated to helping emerging black artists solidify a position in the professional realm.

White received numerous awards such as the John Hay Whitney Fellowship Award, 1955; the gold medal at the International Show, Germany, 1960; the Childe Hassam Award from the American Academy of Art, 1965; and a gold medal at International Intergrafik, Berlin, 1977. Additionally, White has been exhibited in many institutions including the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1954; the Heritage Gallery, L.A., 1964; Oakland Art Museum, Oakland, CA, 1966; University of California, Los Angeles, 1966; and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, 1976, among others. He passed away at age 61 on October 3, 1979 in Los Angeles.

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 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. The David C. Driskell Center's Exhibition Program is supported, in part, by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council.

The David C. Driskell facility is wheelchair accessible. The Driskell Center Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 11a.m. to 4p.m. with extended hours on Wednesday until 6p.m. The Driskell Center Gallery will additionally be open on the following Saturdays: February 22nd, March 29th, April 26^h, and May 10th from 11a.m. to 4p.m. The Driskell Center observes all University of Maryland closings due to inclement weather and holidays, including the Spring Break holiday March 16th-23rd. For further information regarding this exhibition and future activities at the Driskell Center, please call **301.314.2615** or visit www.driskellcenter.umd.edu. All exhibitions and events at the David C. Driskell Center are free and open to the public.

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