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David Driskell (American, 1931-2020)

Born: June 7, 1931, Eatonton, GA

Education

1964 Study Certificate in Art History, Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorischs Documentatie, Den Hague, Netherlands
1962 MFA, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
1955 BFA, Howard University, Washington, DC
1953 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME
1937-49 Public Schools of North Carolina

Selected Solo Exhibitions

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, 2021
Portland Museum of Art, ME, 2021
High Museum, Atlanta, GA, 2020, 2014
Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport, ME, 2017, 2006
Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, ME, 2016
Greenhut Galleries, Portland, OR, 2015, 2013, 2011, 2008
DC Moore Gallery, New York, NY, 2022, 2019, 2012, 2006, 2003
David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 2011, 2008
York College of Pennsylvania, York, PA, 2010
Greenville County Museum of Art, SC, 2008
Flint Institute of Arts, MI, 2007
Hampton University Museum, VA, 2007
Stella Jones Gallery, New Orleans, LA, 2003
Noel Gallery, Charlotte, NC, 2002
Newark Museum, NJ, 2000

Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art, The Paul Robeson Gallery, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 2000

Bomani Gallery, San Francisco, CA, 1997, 1993

Diggs Gallery, Winston Salem State University, Winston-Salem, NC, 1994

Foster-Tanner Fine Arts Gallery, Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, FL, 1994

Midtown Payson Galleries, New York, NY, 1993

Pellon Gallery, Washington, DC, 1990

Amelia Wallace Gallery, SUNY College Old Westbury, NY, 1989

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME, 1989

Fisk University Museum, Nashville, TN, 1987

Goodwin Art Gallery, Talladega, AL, 1987

Johnson Gallery, North Carolina State University, NC, 1981

Middlebury College, VT, 1981

Collectors Gallery, New York, NY, 1980

Foundry Gallery, Washington, DC, 1980

University of Maryland Art Gallery, College Park, MD, 1980

Center for Visual Arts Gallery, Normal, IL, 1979

Bowie State College Gallery of Art, Bowie, MD, 1978

Carl Van Vechten Art Gallery, Fisk University, Nashville, TN, 1976

Coordinated Art Program of the Atlanta University Center, Atlanta, GA, 1974

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME, 1973

Virginia Davis Laskey Library, Scarritt College for Christian Workers, Nashville, TN, 1972

Chattanooga Art Gallery, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, TN, David Driskell, 1971

Tennessee Fine Arts Center, Nashville, TN, 1963

Carl Van Vechten Art Gallery, Fisk University, Nashville, TN, 1966

Barnett Aden Gallery, Washington, DC, 1957

Savery Art Gallery, Talladega, AL, 1956

Selected Museum Group Exhibitions

American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

Amistad Center for Art & Culture, Hartford, CT

Anacostia Museum, Washington, DC

Arkansas Fine Arts Center, Little Rock, AK

Baltimore Museum, Baltimore, MD
Birmingham Museum of Art, AL
Brooklyn Museum, NY
Bowdoin College Museum, Brunswick, ME
Brooks Memorial Gallery, Memphis, TN
California Afro-American Museum, Claremont, CA
California Museum of Photography, Riverside, CA
Carver Museum, Tuskegee, AL
Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA
Colby College Museum, Waterville, ME
Columbus Museum of Fine Arts, OH
Corcoran Gallery Art, Washington, DC
The David C. Driskell Center, College Park, MD
Detroit Institute of Arts, MI
Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis, TN
The Farnsworth Museum, Rockland, ME
Figge Art Museum, Davenport, IA
Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, TN
Fowler Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, CA
Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, TN
Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY
L.B.J. Memorial Library Museum, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
Katzen Arts Center, American University, Washington, DC
Knoxville Museum of Art, TN
Louisville Arts Workshop, KY
Mason-Scharfenstein Museum of Art, Piedmont College, Demorest, GA
Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta, GA
The Monmouth Museum, Lincroft, NJ
Museum of Biblical Art, New York, NY
The National Academy Museum & School, New York, NY
The National Gallery Museum of Art, Washington, DC

National Museum, Santiago, Chile
The Newark Museum, NJ
Oakland Museum of Art, CA
Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma City, OK
The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC
Portland Museum of Art, ME
Portland Art Museum, OR
Rhodes National Gallery, Salisbury, Rhodesia
The Paul Robeson Gallery, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
San Diego Fine Arts Gallery, CA
Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Loretto, PA
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, NH
Jan Shrem and Maria Manettie Shrem Museum of Art, University of California, Davis, CA
Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC
Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, MO
Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, NY
The Susquehanna Art Museum, Harrisburg, PA
The Treet Gallery, Bates College, Lewiston, ME
The White House, Washington, DC
The Art Gallery at The University of Maryland, College Park, MD
University Galleries of Illinois State University, IL
University Museums, University of Delaware, Newark, DE
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT

Selected Awards, Prizes, and Citations

Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, MA, 2018
Cummings Award for Artistic Excellence, Colby College, Waterville, ME, 2017
Skowhegan Lifetime Legacy Award, New York, NY, 2016
MECA Award for National Leadership, Maine College of Art, Portland, ME, May, 2002
The Frederick Douglass Award, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 2002
The Governor's Arts Awards, Baltimore, MD, 2002
Presidential Medal of Honor in Humanities, The White House, Washington, DC, 2000

The President's Medal, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 1997
Distinguished University Professor of Art, University of Maryland, College Park, MD,
1995-98
American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1993-94
Amistad Research Center Creative Award, 1993
The President's Achievement Award in Art, Lincoln University, 1991
Governors Award, Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, 1986
Friends of African Art, Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, for Recognition of an
Outstanding Career as a Lecturer, Exhibitor and Writer, 1982
Meritorious Service in Art, Borough of Brooklyn, and Brooklyn Museum, 1977
Meritorious Service in Art, City of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art,
1976
Purchase Award, Birmingham Museum of Art, 1972
Purchase Award, Tougaloo College Gallery, 1973
Purchase Award, Arkansas Fine Arts Center, 1975
Museum Donor Award, American Federation of Arts, 1962, 1964
Purchase Award, Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1965
Harmon Foundation Special Award, 1964
2nd Award in Graphic Arts, Atlanta University, 1961
John Hope Award in Art, Atlanta University, 1959
Charles W. Allen Award in Art, Howard University, 1954-1955
Bocour Progress Award in Art, Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, 1953

Selected Scholarships, Fellowships, and Grants

Travel Grant, Republic of South Africa, 2001, 1997
Travel Grant, London, England, 1990 (Private Foundation)
Research and Travel Grant: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and France, 1990 (Private
Foundation)
Research and Travel Grant, Tokyo, Japan, 1987
Research & Travel Fellowship (African Culture in the Americas: Brazil), 1983, 1985, 1987
(Private Foundation)
Research Fellowship Assignment, Art & Humanities, University of Maryland, 1984
Fellow, Yaddo Foundation, Summer 1980
R.C.F.A. ICRAAE Travel Grant, Mexico City, Mexico, 1978

R.C.F.A. ICRAAE Travel Grant, Jerusalem, Israel, and Athens, Greece 1973
U.S.I.A. Supplementary Grant for African Lectureship & Travel, Sierre Leon, South Africa;
Ethiopia, Tunesia, Tanzania & Liberia, 1972
U.S.I.A Supplementary Grant for European Lectureship & Travel, England and Holland, 1972
American Film Institute Grant, 1969
National Endowment for the Arts (Institutional Grant), 1969, 1975
Fisk University - Rockefeller Foundation Faculty Fellowship (Research), 1967 and 1970
Fellowship for Summer Study, Netherlands Institute for the History of Art, The Hague, 1964
Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship for Museum Study in Greece, Italy, Spain, France, Holland,
Denmark and England, 1964
Special Study Grant for Graduate work, The Catholic University of America, Danforth
Foundation, 1961-62
Scholastic Scholarship in Art, Howard University, 1952-55
Artist Scholarship, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, 1953

Selected Bibliography

- 2026 Whyte, Murray. "A curator who changed our understanding of American art, and of America," *The Boston Globe*, January 23, 2025, illus.
- 2025 Robinson, Shantay. "The Year in Black Art: Six Group Exhibitions," *ARTnews*, December 9, 2025.
- 2025 Close, Cynthia. "David C. Driskell: Art & Vision," *Artists Magazine*, November/December 2025, pp. 62-69, illus.
- 2025 Asuaje, Andrea. "Portland museum showcases collected, original pieces by Black scholar David Driskell." *GBH*, September 12, 2025, illus.
- 2025 *Photography and the Black Arts Movement 1955-1985*, ed. Philip Brookman and Deborah Willis, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2025, p. 61, illus.
- 2025 Cummings, Faith. "What Rujeko Hockley Can't Live Without," *New York Magazine*, online, May 23, 2025.
- 2025 Scott, Chadd. "Fisk University, David C. Driskell and Nashville's Overlooked Role in Shaping Black Art in America," *Forbes*, March 24, 2025, illus.
- 2024 Valentine, Victoria L. "David C. Driskell and Friends' Presents Works by Some of the Most Significant Figures in Modern and Contemporary African American Art," *Culture Type*, online, August 24, 2024, illus.

- 2024 McGee, Julie L. "Amistad II: A Bicentennial Celebration for All," *American Art*, vol. 38, no. 2, Summer 2024.
- 2024 Gray, Megan. "5 works of art that represent freedom at Maine museums," *Sun Journal*, online, June 30, 2024, illus.
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- 2024 Jenkins, Mark. "How a network of D.C. schools produced giants of American art," *The Washington Post*, online, June 12, 2024.
- 2024 Robinson, Shantay. "How the Harmon Foundation Played a Pivotal Role in Supporting the Artists of the Harlem Renaissance," *ARTnews*, online, May 22, 2024.
- 2024 Solomon, Tessa. "The Best Booths at Expo Chicago, from an Ode to Hometown Heroes to Solo Showcases," *ARTnews*, online, April 12, 2024.
- 2024 Siler, Brenda C. "The Legacy of Artist and Educator David C. Driskell is Honored in New Exhibition," *The Washington Informer*, online, March 13, 2024, illus.
- 2024 "Film and online panel to discuss 'David Driskell: In Search of the Creative Truth,'" *Penobscot Bay Pilot*, online, January 20, 2024.
- 2023 Perrée, Rob. *A Black Collage: My History with African-American Art*, Prinsenbeek, The Netherlands: Jap Sam Books, 2023, illus.
- 2023 Bernier, Celeste-Marie; Jenkins, Earnestine Lovelle; and Simone, Alaina. *Black Artists in America: From Civil Rights to the Bicentennial*, Memphis, Tennessee: Dixon Gallery and Gardens, 2023, pp. 10-11, p. 22, illus.
- 2023 Jenkins, Mark. "Phillips Collection showcase of African modernism defies expectation," *The Washington Post*, online, October 19, 2023
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- 2023 Valentine, Victoria L. "Latest News in Black Art: International African American Museum Opened, Spelman Museum Launching National Collection Tour, Kadir Nelson's Ju;y 4th Vision & More,"
- 2023 Ha, Paul C. "Let's Keep in Touch," *The Brooklyn Rail*, July/August 2023.
- 2023 Jenkins, Mark. "Three tributes to the wide range of photographer Frank Stewart," *The Washington Post*, June 22, 2023.
- 2023 Cross, Greta. "Celebrate Black history during Springfield's first city-wide Juneteenth weekend festival," *Springfield News-Leader*, online, June 3, 2023.

- 2023 Joselit, David. *Art's Properties*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023, illus.
- 2023 *African Modernism in America*, edited by Perrin M. Lathrop. Exh. cat., American Federation of Arts and Fisk University Galleries. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023, illus.
- 2023 Scott, Chadd. "How Art, History and Social Justice Came Together At Mississippi's Tougaloo College," *Forbes*, online, February 21, 2023, illus.
- 2023 Feaster, Felicia. "A thrilling exhibition of Black subjects and artists at Spelman," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, online, February 15, 2023.
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- 2022 Valentine, Victoria L. "On View: See Images From 'David Driskell: Mystery of the Masks,' Exhibition Explores Recurring Symbol in Artist's Practice at DC Moore Gallery in New York," *Culture Type*, online, March 26, 2022.
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- 2021 Wanjiru, Ellen J., "HBO Documentary 'Black Art: In the Absence of Light' Debuts February 9," *blackfilm.com*, online, January 19, 2021.
- 2021 Takac, Balasz, "Seven Decades of David Driskell's Art Soon in a Traveling Exhibition," *Widewalls*, January 6, 2021.
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- 2021 Smithgall, Elsa. *Seeing Differently: The Phillips Collects for a New Century*, Washington, DC: The Phillips Collection in association with GILES, 2021, p.43-51, 178.
- 2020 Valentine, Victoria L., "Coming Soon: 'Icons of Nature and History' a Major Survey of David Driskell Opens at High Museum in Atlanta in February 2021," *Culture Type*, December 29, 2020.
- 2020 Smith, Greg. "Q&A: Tuliza Fleming," *Antiques and the Arts Weekly*, June 26, 2020, p. 15.
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- 2020 Genzlinger, Neil, "David Driskell, 88, Pivotal Champion of African American Art, Dies," *The New York Times*, April 7, 2020.
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- 2020 Siler, Brenda C., "David Driskell, Scholar and Advocate for African Diaspora Art, Dies at 88," *The Washington Informer*, April 5, 2020.
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- 2019 "DC Moore Gallery opens exhibition by legendary African American artist David Driskell," *artdaily.org*, April 17, 2019.
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<<http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp>>
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- Recent Work: David C. Driskell*, York, PA: York College of Pennsylvania.
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- May, Stephen. "Charting the Path of a Pioneer," *ARTnews* (May).
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- 2003 Okediji, Moyo. *The Shattered Gourd: Yoruba Forms in Twentieth-Century American Art*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, pp. 69-70.
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- (undated) Lewis, Samella. *The Black Artist Speaks*.

Selected Books and Exhibition Catalogues Authored

- 2001 Driskell, David C. *The Other Side of Color: African American Art in the Collection of Camille O. and William H. Cosby, Jr.* New York: Pomegranate.
- 1995 _____. *African American Visual Aesthetics & Postmodernism*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Press.
- 1989 _____. *Introspectives: Contemporary Art by Americans and Brazilians of African Descent*. Claremont, California: California Afro-American Museum Association.
- 1987 _____. *Contemporary Visual Expressions: The Art of Sam Gilliam, Martha Jackson-Jarvis, Keith Morrison, William T. Williams*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- _____. *Harlem Renaissance Art of Black America*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- 1985 _____. *Hidden Heritage: Afro-American Art*. New York: Art Museum Association.
- 1976 _____. *Two Centuries of Black American Art: 1750-1950*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- 1975 _____. *Amistad II, Afro-American Art*. Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.
- 1970 Atkinson, Edward and David Driskell. *Black Dimensions in Contemporary American Art*. New York: New American Library.
- 1966 Driskell, David C. *Eight Young Printmakers*. Nashville: Fisk University.

- 1958 _____. *Klee, Kandinsky and Other Modern Masters from the Guggenheim Museum*. Exh. cat. Talledega, AL: Talledega College.
- 1956 _____. *Modern Masters from the Guggenheim Museum*. Exh. cat. Talladega, AL: Talladega College.

The African and Afro-American Series

- 1989 Driskell, D.C. *Mary B. Brady and the Harmon Foundation*. Exh. cat. Newark, NJ: Newark Museum.
- 1985 _____. *William T. Williams*. Exh. cat. Winston-Salem, NC: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art.
- 1981 _____. *Vincent Smith*. Exh. cat. Queens, NY: Queens College Art Gallery.
_____. *Claude Clark*. Exh. cat. Oakland, CA: Grand Oaks Gallery.
- 1976 _____. *The Afro-American Collection*. Exh. cat. Nashville, TN: Fisk University.
- 1974 _____. *Keith Morrison*.
_____. *The Rites of Color and Form*. Exh. cat. Nashville, TN: Fisk University.
- 1973 _____. *Peter Clarke: South African Artist-Poet*.
- 1972 _____. *Claude Clark*.
- 1971 _____. *Palmer Hayden*. Exh. cat. Nashville, TN: Fisk University.
_____. *William Artist and Ellis Wilson*. Exh. cat. Nashville, TN: Fisk University.
_____. *Alma Thomas*.
_____. *Aaron Douglas*.
_____. *William Artist and Ellis Wilson*.
- 1970 _____. *Palmer Hayden*.
_____. *The Fisk University African Collection*.
- 1969 _____. *Three Afro-Americans*.
- 1968 _____. *Sam Middleton and Richard Hunt*.
_____. *Elton Fax, Drawing from Africa*.
_____. *Jacob Lawrence: The Toussaint L'Ouverture Series*.
_____. *Contemporary Trends in African Art*.
- 1967 _____. *John Rhoden and Walter Williams*.

Articles And Essays

- 1992 Driskell, David C. "Artist, Scholar David Driskell Crusades for Cultural Understanding," *Detroit Free Press*, Sunday, July 26.

- 1991 _____. "Denying Credit, An Incomplete Arts Curriculum," *New Art Examiner* (February).
- 1982 _____. "Jacob Lawrence, The Toussaint L'Ouverture Series," *United Church*, February.
- _____. *Myth and Ritual in Afro-American Art*. Exh. cat. New York: Studio Museum in Harlem.
- _____. "Walter Williams, Creator of The Constant Vision," *An Ocean Apart: American Artists Abroad*. New York: Studio Museum in Harlem.
- _____. "Black Artist and Craftsman," *Portland Review of the Arts*, Spring.
- 1981 _____. "Black Women Artists, An Introduction," *Forever Free*. Springfield, IL: Illinois State University.
- 1980 _____. "The Legacy of Afro-American Art," *New Art Examiner* (June).
- 1978 _____. "Bibliography of Afro-American Artists," *American Quarterly* (December).
- 1976 _____. "Black American Artists, 1750-1950," *Smithsonian* (September).
- 1970 Atkinson, Edward and David Driskell, "Black Dimensions in Contemporary Art," *New American Library*.

Selected Lectures, Residencies, and Visiting Artist Invitations

Visiting Artist, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, ME, 2004, 1976

Resident Artist, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, ME, 1978

Visiting Professor of Art, Bates College, Lewiston, ME, 1973

Visiting Professor of Art, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME, 1973

Acting Chairman and Director of the Gallery of Art, Howard University, Washington, DC, 1963-64, 1965-66

Public Collections

Arkansas Fine Arts Center, Little Rock, AK

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD

Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR

David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Experimental Printmaking Institute, Lafayette College, Easton, PA

Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, ME
Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, TN
Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC
Greenville County Museum of Art, SC
Hampton University, Hampton, VA
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
Library of Congress, Washington, DC
Museum of Art, Bates College, Lewiston, ME
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME
Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, MO
The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
University Museums, University of Delaware, Newark, DE
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA
West Virginia University Art Museum, Morgantown, WV

Academic Positions

Professor of Art, University of Maryland, College Park, 1977-98, Emeritus 1998
Professor and Chairman, Department of Art, University of Maryland, College Park, 1978-83
Professor of Art and Chairman, Dept. of Art, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, 1966-77
Associate Professor of Art, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 1962-66
Assistant Professor of Art, Talladega College, Talladega, Alabama, 1955-62

Doctor of Fine Arts

Colby College, 2000
Mane College of Art, 1996
CCNY, Baruch College, 1994
Bowdoin College, 1989
SUNY College at Old Westbury, 1989

Tougaloo College, 1977

Howard University, 2010

Doctor of Humane Letters

University of Delaware, 2011

Fisk University, 1997

Talladega College, 1993

Rust College, 1991

Daniel Payne College, 1977

The David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora was founded upon Driskell's retirement in 1998 from the University of Maryland, College Park, MD. The Driskell Center will explore and celebrate the rich influences and traditions of African and African American society and culture as part of a university known for its strong commitment to multiculturalism and diversity. The Driskell Center will be a preeminent venue for African Diasporic Studies and a nexus of study for the College of Arts and Humanities, the university, the region and the nation.