

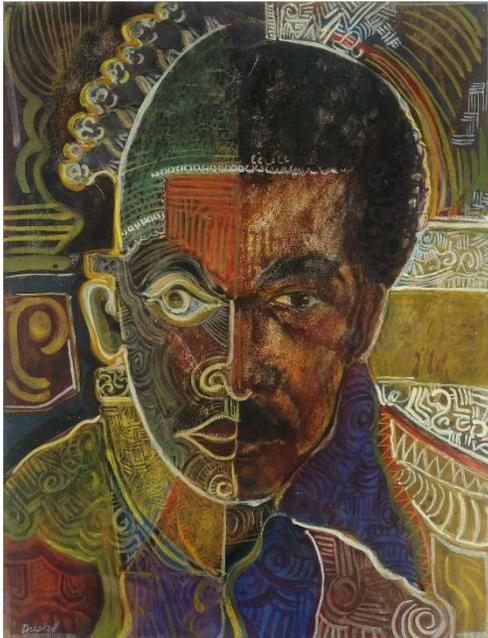
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***Images Available Upon Request**

Cincinnati Art Museum to recognize the work of David Driskell in traveling exhibition “*Icons of Nature and History*”

Feb. 25–May 15, 2022



CINCINNATI—The Cincinnati Art Museum will pay tribute to David Driskell’s legacy as an American artist and educator in the special exhibition [David Driskell: Icons of Nature and History](#), on view from Feb. 25–May 15, 2022. Co-organized by the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, and the Portland Museum of Art, Maine, this exhibition brings together more than 50 highlights from his distinguished career, surveying the artist’s painterly practice from the 1950s forward.

David Driskell (1931–2020), a Georgia native, was one of the most revered American artists of his generation. His vibrant paintings, prints, and collages combine keen observations of America with the imagery and aesthetic innovations of the African diaspora.

Driskell found stimulation for his artistic exploration in his activities as an influential curator, educator, and scholar, who tirelessly asserted the importance of Black artists to the history of American art.

Although his work regularly appeared in galleries and museums during his lifetime in both solo and group exhibitions, his paintings and works on paper are united in this exhibition for the first time. This exhibition is the first major presentation of Driskell’s work since his death in April 2020 at the age of 88. Driskell lectured in Cincinnati in 2000, when the Cincinnati Art Museum presented *Narratives of African American Art and Identity: The David C. Driskell Collection*.

“David Driskell is so esteemed for his influential contributions as a scholar and curator that his career as an artist is sometimes overshadowed,” says Julie Aronson, Curator of American Paintings, Sculpture, and Drawings who is overseeing the Cincinnati presentation. “Yet he was committed to his studio practice and responsive to wide-ranging influences from the history of art and his environment. Brilliant color, nuances of line, and varied textures imbue his art with visual impact and significance. We sense the profound joy he experienced in the creative process.”

The array of media represented, from oil painting to encaustic (hot wax) and collage to woodcut, reveals Driskell’s enchantment with experimentation and vitality in the studio.

The exhibition explores Driskell’s thematic concerns, from the solace of nature to the social tumult of the 1960s and his search for identity through African imagery and forms. His artmaking offered an outlet for expressing his reactions to social injustice and the civil rights movement. He also paid tribute to colleagues and artists he admired in pieces dedicated to Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden.

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The Cincinnati Art Museum has joined in Driskell's mission to display a more inclusive history of American art with important exhibitions of work by Black artists. *David Driskell: Icons of Nature and History* will appear in the museum's galleries alongside [Working Together: The Photographers of the Kamoinge Workshop](#), the first major museum exhibition about the Kamoinge Workshop, a groundbreaking African American photographers' collective founded in New York City in 1963. Though Driskell and the Kamoinge artists worked in different media and with different artistic practices, the exhibitions explore some common themes. Visitors are encouraged to explore both bodies of work and enjoy the commonalities they may find.

Tickets are \$12 for general admission, with discounted rates for students, children, and seniors. Admission is free for members. All tickets grant admission to both *David Driskell: Icons of Nature and History* and *Working Together*.

A range of public programming and events in partnership with multiple community organizations will respond to and build upon the exhibitions' shared themes of mentorship, community, collective action and the need for support and dedicated public platforms for young creatives and Black artists. Full details will be announced closer to the exhibition run.

Photography is allowed with no flash. On social media, share content from both exhibitions using #WorkingIcons.

David Driskell: Icons of Nature and History is curated by Julie McGee, Guest Curator, with Michael Rooks, Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, High Museum of Art, and Jessica May, Managing Director, Art and Exhibitions, The Trustees and Artistic Director, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts (formerly Deputy Director and Robert and Elizabeth Nanovic Chief Curator, Portland Museum of Art).

The exhibition is co-organized by the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, and the Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Major support has been provided by the Henry Luce Foundation. National tour sponsorship is provided by Bank of America. The Cincinnati Art Museum presentation is made possible by Procter & Gamble.

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from the Rosenthal Family Foundation. Special exhibition pricing may vary. Parking at the Cincinnati Art Museum is free. Visit cincinnatiartmuseum.org for more information.

Image: David Driskell (American, 1931–2020), *Self-Portrait as Beni ("I Dream Again of Benin")*, July 13, 1974, egg tempera, gouache, and collage, High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Purchase with David C. Driskell African American Art Acquisition Fund, 2015.74. © Estate of David C. Driskell

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