

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with David Driskell

PERSON

Driskell, David C.

**Alternative Names:** David Driskell; David Driskell

**Life Dates:** June 7, 1931-

**Place of Birth:** Eatonton, Georgia, USA

**Residence:** Hyattsville, MD

**Occupations:** Curator; Fine Artist; Art Professor

## Biographical Note

Artist and scholar David Driskell is regarded as one of the world's leading authorities on African American art. Driskell was born on June 7, 1931 in Eatonton, Georgia. Educated in North Carolina's public schools, he earned his undergraduate degree at Howard University and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Driskell also pursued post-graduate studies in Art History at the Netherlands Institute for the History of Art in the Hague and studied African and African American

cultures independently in Europe, Africa, and South America.

In 1976, Driskell opened his groundbreaking exhibition, "Two Centuries of Black American Art", at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The show prompted the creation of similar shows around the country. Driskell also penned the show's catalogue, an invaluable text to art scholars who previously had very little information available on African American artists.

Since 1977, Driskell has served as cultural advisor to Camille and Bill Cosby and curator of the Cosby Collection of Fine Arts. He placed works of African American artists on the set of "The Cosby Show". This is credited with creating a new class of African American art collectors.

Driskell has contributed significantly to the study of the role of African American artists in society. He has written five exhibition books, co-authored four others, and published more than forty catalogues from exhibitions he has curated. Driskell has lectured extensively in North America, Europe, Africa, and South America and has taught at numerous universities.

In 1998, the University of Maryland established the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora. The Center honors Driskell's career as artist, educator, philanthropist, collector and art historian.

## Related Entries

**Howard University** [STUDENTOF]

[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

**Catholic University of America** [STUDENTOF]

[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

**The Netherlands Institute for Art History** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Talladega College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Cosby Collection of Fine Arts** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Curator**

**Bowdoin College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Visiting Professor**

**Talladega College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1955 to ?]

**Instructor**

**University of Maryland (1812-1920)** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1977 to ?]

**Professor**

**Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture**  
[MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board Member**

**American Federation of Arts** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board Member**

**The Cosby Foundation Scholarship Advisory  
Committee** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board Member**

