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16th Annual James Porter Colloquium

The James Porter Colloquium

4-2005

## Program Booklet: 16th Annual James Porter Colloquium

Department of Art

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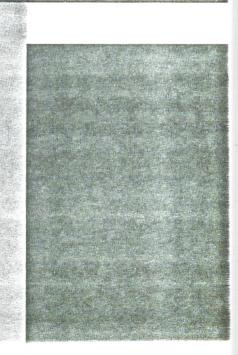
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Canonical Formations in African American Art and Art History:

MEANINGS INTERPRETATIONS VALUATIONS April 14 – 16, 2005

HOWARD UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, DC



This year's presentation of the Howard University Department of Art's James A. Porter Colloquium is presented in conjunction with the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora and the Howard University Gallery of Art.

All Colloquium events will be held at the Armour J. Blackburn Center on the campus of Howard University, with the exception of the Thursday evening's Annual David C. Driskell Lecture to be held on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park and Friday evening's Private Sale to be held in Howard University's Fine Arts Building, Room 2016.

Armour J. Blackburn Center Ballroom and Hilltop Lounge Howard University Campus

202.806.7047 tel

Driskell Center at the University of Maryland, College Park Room 2203 Art-Sociology Building 301.314.2615 tel Transportation from Colloquium available.

Admission to all Colloquium sessions and lectures is free and open to the public

#### **Hotel Information**

Holiday Inn Central 1501 Rhode Island Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20005 202.483.2000 tel.

#### **Transportation**

TRAIN: Amtrak 1.800.USA.RAIL Union Station, Washington, DC AIR: Reagan National and Baltimore Washington International Airports

Taxi Service: Yellow Cab of Washington, DC

202.544.1212 tel.

Metro: Shaw-Howard University Station on Metro's Green Line

# Canonical Formations: Meanings, Interpretations, Valuations

Our 2005 Porter Colloquium theme, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Professor James A. Porter's birth, draws from the core of Professor Porter's work in defining African American art as a distinct area of study in American art history. The theme traces developments in African American art history from Porter's Modern Negro Art (1943) through David C. Driskell's Two Centuries of Black American Art (1976), through Deborah Willis' Reflections in Black (2000) and onto Michael D. Harris's Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation (2003) and Lisa Farrington's Creating Their Own Image (2005). This year's Colloquium invites further investigations of influential essays that reflect divergent poetics as well as interpretative strategies on African American Art. This body of publications has reframed the issues and created new models for research, criticism and pedagogical practices.

The Porter Colloquium continues its tradition of boldly promoting innovative perspectives, ground breaking scholarship and open critical dialogue on African American Art. During this year's three-day program, scholars, artists, and cultural critics will examine the ideas that influence how works of African American artists are viewed, interpreted and valued. The Colloquium will offer competing theoretical claims, critique and analyze critical terms challenging Eurocentric hegemonies, and chart the course for revisions in African American art historical discourse. The Colloquium also aims to expand the analysis of art production by artists of color, acknowledging the complexity of artistic construction, and the necessity to carefully examine these works throughout the African Diaspora. To this end, the Colloquium reveres the legacy of Professor Porter and honors artists of color with clear and probing analyses of our visual traditions.

On behalf of the Howard University Department of Art and the Colloquium Executive Committee we welcome you and your colleagues to this year's Colloquium.

Floyd Coleman Colloquium Coordinator Bennie F. Johnson Assistant Colloquium Coordinator

## 16TH ANNUAL JAMES A. PORTER COLLOQUIUM ON AFRICAN AMERICAN ART Canonical Formations: Meanings, Interpretations, Valuations

In Honor of Dr. David C. Driskell

## Thursday, April 14, 2005

Howard University Blackburn Center

9:30 am REGISTRATION

MODERATOR: Gwendolyn Everett, Howard University, Colloquium

OPENING REMARKS 10:00

Richard English, Office of the Provost, Howard University

Coni Porter Uzelac, Wesport Foundation

10:30

AFRICAN AMERICAN ART HISTORY—THEN AND NOW

MODERATOR: Teresia Bush, Hirshhorn Museum, Smithsonian Institution Leslie King Hammond, Maryland Institute, College of Art

Linda Crocker Simmons, RLJ Companies (Barnett-Aden

Jeffreen Hayes, Howard University Gwendolyn Everett, Howard University

12:30-1:30 pm LUNCH

2:00-3:40 PANEL

ART AT HOWARD

MODERATOR: Sandy Bellamy, Reginald F. Lewis Museum Scott Baker, Howard University Gallery of Art PANELISTS:

Peter Robinson, Art at Howard: The Porter Years, NASA (Ret.) Teixeira Nash, Art at Howard: The Porter Years, Arts/Culture

Edward Jesse Shaw, The Howard School of Artists, University

of Florida

3:40-5:00 Travel to Opening Reception & Driskell Center Lecture

OPENING RECEPTION 5:00

4TH ANNUAL DAVID C. DRISKELL LECTURE 6:00

> KEYNOTE: Sharon Patton, Director, Smithsonian Institution, National

> > Museum of African Art

## Friday, April 15, 2005

Howard University Blackburn Center

9:30 am REGISTRATION LECTURE ON PORTER 10:00-11:00 Edmund B. Gaither, National Museum of Afro-American Artists LECTURE ON DRISKELL 11:15-12:20 pm Tritobia Hayes Benjamin, Howard University 12:30-1:45 LUNCH **KEYNOTE ADDRESS** 2:00-3:00 Richard A. Long, Emory University (Emeritus) 3:00-4:20 ART HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES MODERATOR: Sandra Davis, Howard University Alvia Wardlaw, Texas Southern University Dewey Mosby, Colgate University Patricia Hills, Boston University Allan Gordon, California State U. at Sacramento 4:20-4:25 Break 4:30-5:45 PANEL EXPLORING THE LANGUAGES OF VISUAL ARTS DISCOURSE

MODERATOR: Jeffreen Hayes, Howard University Raymond Dobard, Howard University PANELISTS:

Kellie Jones, Yale University Al Smith, Howard University

Keith Morrison, San Francisco State University

## Saturday, April 16, 2005

Howard University Blackburn Center

9:30 am

REGISTRATION

10:00-11:10

PANELS

'ART ON MY MIND'

MODERATOR: Deborah Willis, New York University

PANELISTS:

Lisa Collins, Vassar College

Margo Crawford, Indiana University

Adrienne Childs, University of Maryland-College Park

Franklin Sirmans, Curator

11:15-12:30 pm

HIP-HOP: NEW SENSIBILITIES, NEW EXPRESSIONS

MODERATOR: Kristopher J. Cheeves, Howard University

PANELISTS: Imani Perry, Rutgers University

Bennie F. Johnson, Howard University

12:30-1:30

LUNCH

1:45-3:00

PANELS

ARTIST'S PANEL

PANELISTS:

MODERATOR: Clécia Queiroz, Howard University Lou Stovall, Workshop Inc., Washington, DC

Akili Ron Anderson, Washington, D.C.

Yvonne Pickering Carter, Washington, D.C.

3:10-4:10

PUBLISHING THE WORD: PRESENTING TEXTS ABOUT TEXTS

MODERATOR: Bennie F. Johnson, Howard University

Salah Hassan, NKA, Cornell University PANELISTS:

Juliette Harris, International Review of African American Art,

Hampton University

Rebekah Mosby, National Public Radio

4:20

ALUMNI EXHIBITION & RECEPTION

"A Proud Continuum: Eight Decades of Art at Howard University"

Howard University Gallery of Art

16TH ANNUAL JAMES A. PORTER COLLOQUIUM BENEFIT GALA

In Honor of Dr. David C. Driskell Armour J. Blackburn Center Ballroom

6:00-7:30

Cocktails & Silent Benefit Auction Hilltop Lounge, Blackburn Center

7:30-11:00

Benefit Gala

Blackburn Center Ballroom

Award Presentation & Tributes

Live Jazz • Live Benefit Auction



## James A. Porter (1905 -1970)

A pioneer in establishing the field of African American art history, James A. Porter was instrumental as the first scholar to provide a systematic, critical analysis of African American artists and their works of art. An artist himself, he provided a unique and critical approach to the analysis of the work. Dedicated to educating and writing about African American artists, Porter set the foundation for artists and art historians to probe and unearth the necessary skills essential to their artistic and scholarly endeavors. The canon is borne from Porter's determination to document and view African American art in the context of American art.

Born December 22, 1905 in Baltimore, MD, Porter had a long, illustrious career in the visual arts, as an artist and historian. Under the direction and encouragement from James V. Herring, head of the Art Department at Howard University, Porter studied painting, drawing, and art history. Upon graduating with a bachelor of science in 1927, he accepted a position as instructor of painting and drawing at Howard. Being an educator did not keep Porter from honing his artistic skill and creating art. Throughout his academic professional career, Porter painted and exhibited nationally and internationally. This dedication was acknowledged in 1933 when he received the Schomburg Portrait Prize, from the Harmon Foundation, for the painting entitled, Woman Holding a Jug (1930). Porter was highly regarded for his finely rendered portraits, as exemplified in his award.

While Porter never stopped nurturing his artistic ability, he also did not stop educating himself. After he completed undergraduate work, Porter attended the Arts Student's League in New York. He also studied in Paris at the Institute of Art and Archeology at the Sorbonne, in which he received a Certificat de Presence in 1935. When Porter returned to the United States, he pursued a master of arts in art history from New York University in 1937. Porter's thesis, which would later become the foundation for Modern Negro Art, focused on African American artists and artisans.

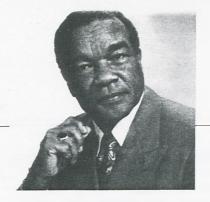
During his educational pursuits, Porter met Dorothy Burnett, a librarian at the Harlem branch, where he researched neglected black artists. On December 27, 1929, Porter and Dorothy were married. They had a one daughter, Constance Porter. This union would prove to be important, not only personally but also professionally. Dorothy worked with Porter, as she provided bibliographic information critical to his investigations. Dorothy, along with Porter, has a rich relationship with Howard University. She was the director of Moorland Spingarn Research Center where she catalogued information about African and African American history and culture.

Porter's interest in nearly forgotten and often ignored artists of African descent came from reading a brief article on African American landscape artist Robert Scott Duncanson. Due to the brevity of the account, Porter was inspired to research Duncanson and other artists of African descent. Were it not for this article, Modern Negro Art may have not come to be.

Modern Negro Art, published in 1943, was the first comprehensive study of African American art. It is in this examination that Porter placed African American artists within the framework of American art. He was the first to recognize and document the significant contributions these artists made to the history of American art. With Porter's systematic approach, Modern Negro Art became and still is the grounding for African American art history and for texts to come later.

Porter, a devout educator, taught at Howard for more than forty years, heading the Art Department and the Art Gallery. Because of his dedication, the National Gallery of Art selected him as one of America's Outstanding Men of the Arts. An honor he received with twenty-four others, he was presented the award by Lady Bird Johnson in 1965.

James A. Porter left a cultural and educational legacy to those passionately involved in the area of African American art. The drive to explore and firmly document artists of the Diaspora continues today. Porter's artistic and historical work provides a solid foundation in which current and future scholars can build upon. Many scholars owe Porter for the inspiration to probe the depths of African American visual culture and attest to its significance to American culture.



Dr. David C. Driskell 2005 Honoree

Dr. David C. Driskell has elevated African American art and art history to a level his mentor, James A. Porter envisioned for the field. A visionary, Driskell is a formidable presence in the visual arts. Driskell has distinguished himself as a curator, collector, artist, and a pioneer in the history of African American art. Expanding the canon set forth by Porter, Driskell has accelerated the exploration and appreciation of art of the Diaspora through his active participation in assembling exhibitions and publishing on the area. With Driskell's warrior mentality and extending the path paved by his mentor, art by African and African Americans is continually receiving critical attention.

A native of the South, Driskell was born in Eatonton, Georgia in 1931, and educated in North Carolina as a youth. Entering Howard University in 1951, as an undergraduate, Driskell came under the tutelage of James A. Porter. He graduated with a bachelor of arts in 1955. Driskell attended Catholic University of America where he received a master of fine arts degree in 1962. While completing both degrees. Driskell embarked on an academic career. Here, Porter and Driskell's careers begin to parallel.

Driskell accepted a teaching position at Talladega College in Alabama, just before finishing his undergraduate study at Howard, in 1955. He taught at Talladega until 1962 when he took an associate professor position at Howard. During his tenure at Howard. Driskell pursued post-graduate study at The Netherlands Institute for the History of Art in the Hague. Netherlands. Along with professorial appointments at Talladega and Howard, Driskell taught at Fisk University and University of Maryland.

Distinguished University Professor Emeritus at University of Maryland, Driskell joined the faculty of the Department of Art in 1977, as professor of art. Within a year of his faculty appointment, Driskell became Chairman of the department. He served in this capacity from 1978 to 1983, and continued with his teaching duties.

While contributing to the field of academia. Driskell has organized exhibitions and published texts probing the depths of African American visual art. Most

notable of the exhibitions assembled are Two Centuries of Black American Art, Hidden Heritage: Afro-American Art, and Narratives of African American Art and Identity. Two Centuries of Black American Art and Narratives of African American Art and Identity each have catalogs that accompanied the exhibitions. The numerous books, essays, and articles written by Driskell on the art of the Diaspora are respected around the world.

As an artist, Driskell has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and is included in public and private collections, such as the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Although his primary media are painting and collage, Driskell works in various genres—sculpture, printmaking, and drawing. Driskell's art incorporates his connections to the South and comments on racial and social issues. Depicting diverse subjects, which include portraiture and landscapes, Driskell's artistic techniques are representative of formal aspects of art. the essence of art–color, shape, and texture.

As if being an educator, artist, and curator are not enough, Driskell further pays homage to African American art as an avid collector. Driskell's significant and impressive collection ranges from nineteenth century to present day. His collection embodies painting, sculpture, photography, film, and archival materials. The exhibition Narratives of African American Art and Identity consisted of Driskell's stunning collection. Amassing a collection of this nature for more than forty years, Driskell has served as a consultant for individuals, such as William and Camille Cosby, and institutions, assisting in assembling their collections.

Like his predecessor and mentor, James A. Porter, Dr. David C. Driskell has greatly impacted the field of African American art and art history. Driskell has picked up where Porter's legacy left off. With his diligence, the field has expanded from writing and teaching about the artistic merits of African Americans to collecting the works and organizing insightful exhibitions. Driskell serves as a model for artists, collectors, and scholars in the area. His passion and understanding of the art and the value of the art are clearly evident in all of his accomplishments. A true champion for African American visual activity, Driskell further sets the standard for indepth, profound scholarship and artistic production in African American visual arts.

## Richard A. Long

Keynote Address

A true renaissance man of the arts, Dr. Richard Long, Professor Emeritus exemplifies the high level of scholarship and dedication in academia. Long has an extensive history in the world of academia. With diverse research interests, such as visual art. music, literature, and dance, he has taught and created courses aligned with his areas of study.

Beginning his professorial career at West Virginia State College, Long held teaching appointments at Morgan State, Hampton University, Harvard University, and Emory University. A faculty member of Emory from 1986 to 2001, Long is the distinguished Haygood Professor, Emeritus in the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts.

A man of many letters, Long studied at Temple University where he received his bachelor and master degrees. He then attended the University of Paris on a Fulbright Scholarship in 1957-58. Long received his doctorate from University of Poiters.

Long serves on the editorial boards of numerous journals, such as the Langston Hughes Bulletin and the Zora Neale Hurston Bulletin. Long has published books which include The Black Traditions in American Dance (1989) and African Americans: A Portrait (1993). Long also serves on the boards of the High Museum of Art and the Society of Dance History Scholars. He is also a commissioner for the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art.

## Tritobia Hayes Benjamin

Lecture on Driskell

Exhibiting dedication to education. Dr. Tritobia Hayes Benjamin, contributes to Howard's fine art and art history legacy. She has been affiliated with Howard's Art Department since 1970, following in the footsteps of James A. Porter and her mentor, Lois Mailou Jones.

Benjamin, a graduate of Howard University, is associate dean of the Division of Fine Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences. Benjamin, along with her duties as dean, serves in the capacity of professor of art history and director of the Gallery of Art at Howard.

Holding bachelor and master of arts degrees in art history, from Howard, she earned her doctorate from University of Maryland in the same specialization under the direction of Dr. Driskell.

Benjamin's research area is African American art with particular emphasis on fine arts faculty, past and present, at Howard, like Lois Mailou Jones. Benjamin, a student of Jones. wrote The Life and Art of Lois Mailou Jones (1994) and curated the exhibition *The World of Lois Mailou Jones* is one of numerous publications contributed to the field of African American Art.

## **Edmund Barry Gaither**

Lecture on Porter

Edmund Barry Gaither has established himself as a leader in the museum profession. Director and curator of the Museum of the National Center for Afro-American Artists (NCAAA), since 1969, Gaither has curated, lectured nationally and internationally, and taught college-level courses. His commitment to the visual arts is exhibited in his accomplishments in his career.

Educated at Morehouse College, where he received a bachelor of arts degree and Brown University where he earned a master of fine arts degree. Gaither taught African American art at Spelman College. After a year of instructing at Spelman, he became Chairman of the Art Department of the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts and the Director of the Museum of the National Center for Afro-American Artists. At the time, the museum was only a concept of Dr. Elma Lewis. With a commitment from the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston to aid in the fruition of the museum, the museum came to be and a special relationship began. The collaboration of the NCAAA and MFA afforded Gaither the opportunity to serve as a special consultant at the MFA and to transition into a curatorial position.

As a curator at MFA Boston, Gaither organized nine exhibitions, two of which were monumental to African American art history: "Afro-American Artists: New York and Boston," and "Lois Mailou Jones: Reflective Moments." The Lois Mailou Jones exhibition was one of the earliest one-person exhibition of an African American woman at a major museum.

Gaither, successful as a curator, developed the museum from a conceptual idea to an institution that boasts a collection of three thousand objects. The museum has a thirty-two year history of exhibiting and celebrating visual artists of the Diaspora.

Aside from his curatorial and directorial obligations, Gaither is active in the arts community. He was cofounder of the African American Museums Association, now known as the Association for African American museums, and served as its first president. Gaither also participated in President George W. Bush's Advisory Board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

### Dr. Sharon F. Patton

4th Annual David C. Driskell Lecture

Dr. Sharon F. Patton, a pace setter in the history of African American and African art, has carved a significant path in the field of art history. Her roles in academia and the museum world are evidence of the contributions needed to further the scholarly pursuits of historians and artists in African American art history.

Receiving her doctorate in art history, from Northwestern University in 1980, Patton began her career in academia. teaching at University of Houston and University of Maryland. Tenured at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in the art history department, Patton served as the director of the Center for Afro-American and African Studies.

During her academic appointments, spanning three decades, Patton forayed into the world of art exhibiting institutions—museums and university galleries. Prior to her current position, Patton was the John G.W. Cowles Director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberin College. She also directed the galleries at Montclair State University. Patton has not only served in the capacity of director; she has curated critically acclaimed exhibitions. As the chief curator at the Studio Museum of Harlem, Patton organized "Home: Contemporary Urban Images by Black Photographers." The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s," and the 1991 retrospective of master artist Romare Bearden, "Memory and Metaphor: The Art of Romare Bearden, 1940-1987."

The exhibition, "Memory and Metaphor" provided Patton with the first of two published books. Memory and Metaphor: The Art of Romare Bearden, published in 1991 to accompany the retrospective, provides an insightful, analytical overview of Bearden's oeuvre. Patton's second text, a standard for many courses on African American art, African American Art (1998), establishes the artistic production of black Americans dating from the colonial era to the mid 1990s. This book received Choice's Outstanding Academic Book of the Year award. Along with these significant books, Patton has contributed numerous articles, essays, and catalogs on visual issues of the Diaspora, adding to the discourse of African American art history.

Patton's experience as director, curator, and academician prepared her for her current position as director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, the only national museum dedicated to art of African peoples.

# Acknowledgments

As of April, 2005

The Porter Colloquium wishes to express our sincere gratitude for the generous efforts and contributions of the following individuals and organizations to this year's Colloquium:

Jeremy Austin
Scott Baker
Mark Becker
Sandra Bellamy
Dean Tritobia Hayes Benjamin
Kathryn Clay
Anthony Coleman
Kathryn Coney
Deirdre Cross
Sandra Davis
Dr. Raymond Dobard
Allan Edmunds
Scott Habes

Scott Habes Peter Hanning Juanita & Mel Hardy Jeffreen Hayes Brian Hodge

Sandra Jackson Kera Johnson Eileen Johnston Reiss Joseph Vanessa Joseph

Gina M. Lewis Flo McAfee Jeff McCauley Roberta McLeod Cecily Morgan Tatiana Nelson

Oggi Ogburn Fleur Paysour

Linda Crocker Simmons Dr. & Mrs. Robert E. Steele Malia Salaam-Steeple

Halima Taha Coni Porter Uzelac Joyce Wellman Dorit Yaron Armour J. Blackburn Center and Personnel Brandywine Workshop Collector's Club of Washington Howard University College of Arts & Sciences

Howard University Department of Art Howard University Gallery of Art David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora

Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture

JP Morgan Chase Pomegranate Books University of Maryland Art Gallery The Word Express, Inc.

An additional note of special gratitude to the artists, collectors and organizations who generously contributed work for this year's Colloquium Art Benefit Event Series.

Afrika Midnight Asha Abney Akili Ron Anderson Deidra Bell Donald Benjamin Juliette Bethea Jane Wheat Bettistea Brandywine Workshop Lilian Burwell

Gwendolyn Carter-Aqui Kevin Cole

Floyd Coleman Tim Davis

Terry A. deBardelaben Raymond Dobard David C. Driskell Liani Foster

Bonnie & Larry Frazier Aziza Claudia Gibson-Hunter

Sam Gilliam Jarvis Grant Juanita & Mei Hardy

Bill Harris Francine Haskins James Hill

The Family of Earl Hooks Margo Humphrey Hubert Jackson Martha Jackson-Jarvis Kera & Bennie F. Johnson Doris C. Kennedy Winston Kennedy Viola Burley Leak Arnetta Lee Percy B. Martin E.J. Montgomery Betty Murchison Teixeira Nash Winnie Owens-Hart Parish Gallery Jefferson Pinder Michael B. Platt Reginald Pointer Georgette Seabrooke Powell Stephanie Pogue Estate Amber Robles-Gordon

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Cynthia P. Sands
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Lou Stovall
Gloria R. Sulton
James L. Wells, Jr.

Deborah Willis

Notes	
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Cover Image: David C. Driskell, Boy with Birds, 1953 The David C. Driskell Collection



The James A. Porter Colloquium is the Fading forum for scholars, artists curators and others in the field of African American Art and Visual Culture. Established at Howard University in 1990, the annual Colloquium is named in honor of James A. Porter the pioneering Art Historian and Professor, whose 1943 publication Modern Negro Artials the foundation for the field of study. The Colloquium continues his legacy through dynamic programming scholarly research and artists as David Drisker. Ann Gibson, Leslie King Hammond, Michael D. Harris, Samelia Lewis, E. Montgomer, John Scott, Deborah Willis and Judith Wilson.

# 2005 Porter Colioquium Executive Committee

Juliette Betnea
Claudine Brown
Rachelle Browne
Dr. Floyd Coleman
Dr. Gwendolyn Everett
Larry Frazier
Bennie F. Johnson
Winston Kennedy
E.J. Montgomer
Gioria Sulton
Dr. Deporan Willis

## Porter Colloquium Endowment Fund

We sincerely thank you for and encourage you to continue your generous support of the Colloquium, your contributions help to ensure the Colloquium's scholarship, programs and activities for years to come. Contributions may be made throughout the year to the Porter Colloquium, Howard University Department of Art. 2455. Sixth Street, NW Washington, DC 20059 ATTN: Floyd Coleman. Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.

## 17th Annual Porter Colloquium

Join us next year for the 17th Annual Porter Colloquium April 20 through 22, 2006 – Howard University Visit Portercolloquium.org