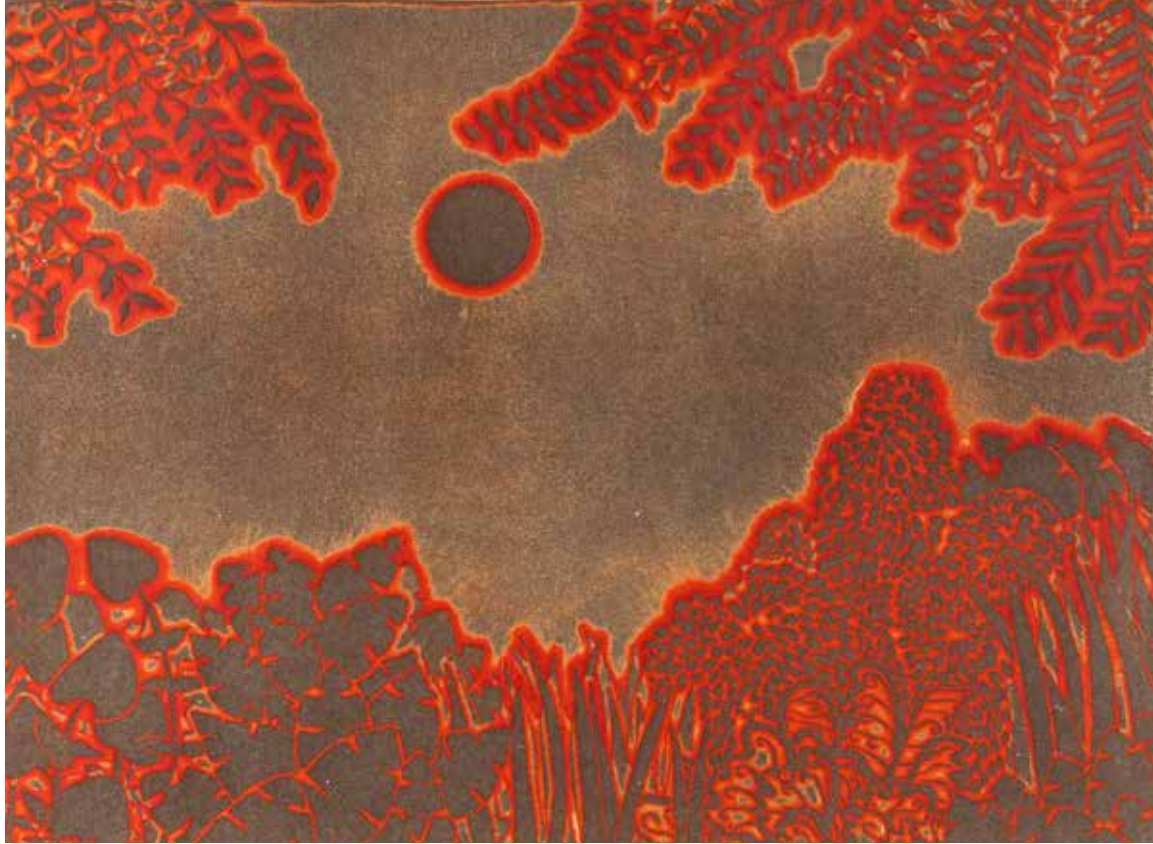


Kindred Spirits

Intergenerational Forms of Expression, 1966–1999





Kindred Spirits: Intergenerational Forms of Expression, 1966–1999 spans the overlapping tenures of David C. Driskell (1966–1976) and Earl J. Hooks (1968–1999) at Fisk University’s art department. The year 1966, Fisk University’s centennial, marked a pivotal transition following the retirement of Aaron Douglas, founder and chair emeritus of the art department and a leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance. David C. Driskell’s appointment as Douglas’s successor ushered in a bold new era of experimentation, pedagogic innovation, progressive exhibitions, and artist-centered programming.

Artistic networks and geographies, in the context of art historicism, give rise to movements or schools of thought that become canonized or framed many times in retrospect. This exhibition examines how mobility, cultural exchange, and sociopolitical climates shaped the artistic

expressions and consciousness of the artists whose works are on view, placing them within the context of broader artistic movements and art canons while also exploring their influences and highlighting their unique visual languages and schools of thought. Illuminating the interplay between individual and institutional artistic contributions, this exhibition underscores Fisk University’s role in shaping a global cultural discourse.

Kindred Spirits celebrates the profound interpersonal and artistic relationships between students and faculty, colleagues and peers, and the greater Nashville community. These connections form a lineage of kinship, homage, and mutual respect, mapping the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next.

Featuring more than fifty artworks and archival materials, *Kindred Spirits* is co-organized by and on display at both the Frist Art Museum and Fisk University. Visit the Carl Van Vechten Gallery at Fisk University to experience the other half of the exhibition in the heart of the artistic network it celebrates.

Left: Stephanie Elaine Pogue. *Aaron’s Meadow*, 1977. Etching on paper; 22 x 26 in. Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, TN. Photo: Jerry Atnip

From Co-Curator Jamaal B. Sheats

Fisk University, a private Historically Black College and University (HBCU) founded in 1866—just six months after the end of the Civil War—has been consistently recognized for academic excellence. Its importance as a cultural repository is underscored by its university collections that span over four hundred years within the galleries, featuring more than 4,500 objects in African, American modernist, Asian, European, and Oceanic art.

Within these collections, the largest component highlights artists of the African diaspora working from the late nineteenth century to the present—among them Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Aaron Douglas, David C. Driskell, Ben Enwonwu, William Henry Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Suzanne Ogunjami, Henry O. Tanner, and Alma W. Thomas. Fisk University's Carl Van Vechten Gallery and Aaron Douglas Gallery showcase the university's extensive holdings and highlight Fisk as one of the nation's greatest repositories of cultural and archival material.

Kindred Spirits offers a critical retelling of a movement, an institution, and its impact in Nashville, centered on the contributions of artists, teachers, and students. This exhibition brings forward both new and continued scholarship, exemplifying a key component of what Driskell so eloquently described in the foreword of *The Rites of Color and Form: Paintings, Prints, Ceramics, and Sculpture by Earl Hooks and David Driskell*:

An exhibition . . . brings us together as colleagues and friends but most importantly as artists whose common goal is that of sharing with our students and friends the “rites of color and form” that are as much a part of our being as the air we breathe.

Right: Sam Middleton. *Untitled*, 1967. Collage on paper; 71 1/8 x 50 3/4 in. Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, TN. Photo: Jerry Atnip





My hope is that through this exhibition, we will inspire our visitors—a *new generation of thinkers and intellectuals*—to contextualize and recontextualize the contributions of these artists.

I wish to express my gratitude to my co-curator, Michael J. Ewing, who has been a catalyst for this exhibition. I first met Michael in the spring of 2013, when he was a student; today, he is my colleague. His scholarship, leadership, and commitment have been invaluable.

I am equally grateful for a community of thinkers who have supported this project through their research, scholarship, and advocacy, including Earl J. Hooks Jr., Robert Hall, John Simmons, LiFran Fort, Julie McGee, Sarah Battles, Victor Simmons, DeLisa Minor Harris, and the John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library and Fisk University Galleries staff. We extend special thanks to Agenia Clark, president of Fisk University, and Robert Carr, vice president of academic affairs, for their ongoing institutional support.

Jamaal B. Sheats
Associate Provost, Director, Fisk University Galleries

Left: John Simmons. *My House is Your House*, 1973. Mixed media collage; 63 x 54 in. Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, TN. Photo: Jerry Atnip

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Upper-Level Galleries, Frist Art Museum
Carl Van Vechten Gallery, Fisk University

March 14–June 1, 2025

Organized by the Frist Art Museum and Fisk University Galleries and co-curated by Michael Ewing, Frist Art Museum associate curator, and Jamaal B. Sheats, Fisk University Galleries director and curator

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The Frist Art Museum is supported in part by



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Cover: LiFran Fort. *The Kiss*, 1986. Acrylic on canvas; 30 1/4 x 24 1/4.
Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, TN. Photo: Jerry Atnip

**Frist Art
Museum**

