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## HIGH MUSEUM OF ART NAMES ARTIST RENEE STOUT AS 2010 RECIPIENT OF THE DAVID C. DRISKELL PRIZE

*Honoring Excellence in African American Art and Scholarship,  
The Driskell Prize will be awarded on April 19, 2010, in Atlanta*

ATLANTA, February 8, 2010 – The High Museum of Art has named artist Renee Stout as the 2010 recipient of the David C. Driskell Prize. Named after the renowned African American artist and art scholar, the Driskell Prize is an annual award that recognizes a scholar or artist in the beginning or middle of his or her career whose work makes an original and important contribution to the field of African American art or art history. Based in Washington, D.C., Stout works in a variety of media including photography, sculpture, painting, drawing and printmaking. As the sixth Driskell award recipient, Stout will be honored at the Driskell Prize Dinner in Atlanta on Monday, April 19, 2010.



Photo by Mary Noble Ours

“Renee Stout is a visual artist fully incorporating every available resource to create works relevant to both past and present,” said Michael E. Shapiro, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director of the High. “Her ability to draw upon the implications of the African Diaspora and highlight African culture through her imaginative and distinctive art exemplifies the qualities of a David C. Driskell Prize recipient. We are pleased to support her vision and development through this award.”

Stout’s mixed-media works examine the impact of the African Diaspora and the traditions of her African heritage as well as the themes of self-exploration, empowerment and healing. Using a variety of media and visual languages—including African aesthetics and secondhand materials—Stout pieces together narratives that tie history to contemporary society.

Imaginary characters recur in Stout’s work, adding whimsy and humor to the challenging and often depressing subject matter. The character Madame Ching appears in many works, including the 1993 piece “Traveling Root Store #2: Madame Ching Goes High Tech,” in which Stout pits a vintage doctor’s bag, vials and herbs against Madame Ching’s new-age custom computer. The keyboard on the computer is altered to Madame Ching’s needs, with various buttons being replaced to assist her in reaching deities. Also present in many works is Stout’s alter-ego Fatima Mayfield. “Fatima Mayfield, a fictitious herbalist/fortuneteller, is the vehicle that allows me to role-play in order to confront the issues, whether it’s romantic relationships, social ills or financial woes, in a way that’s open, creative and humorous,” said Stout.

Renee Stout received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Carnegie Mellon University in 1980 before moving to Washington, D.C., where she began to study her African American heritage, the wellspring of her subsequent work and career. As an arts advocate, Stout served on the panel of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities as well as George Washington University’s panel “Art School, Confidential:

## **HIGH MUSEUM OF ART/ 2010 David C. Driskell Prize Winner Renee Stout**

Rethinking Art Education.” In 1999 she won the Anonymous Was a Woman award and her second Pollock-Krasner Foundation award. Recent awards and recognition include the Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant and a fellowship as the first artist-in-residence at Johns Hopkins University (2009). Throughout her career, Stout’s participation in numerous solo and group exhibitions has been met with international success. She currently lives and works in Washington, D.C.

The selection process for the 2010 recipient of the Driskell Prize began with a call for nominations from a national pool of artists, curators, teachers, collectors and art historians. The final winner was chosen from these nominations by review-committee members Richard Powell, John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art History, Duke University; Jacquelyn D. Serwer, Chief Curator, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution; and Michael Rooks, Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

### **David C. Driskell Prize**

Established by the High in 2005, the David C. Driskell Prize is the first national award to honor and celebrate contributions to the field of African American art and art history. Past recipients include scholar Krista A. Thompson (2009), artist Xaviera Simmons (2008) and curator Franklin Sirmans (2007). A cash award of \$25,000 accompanies the prize. Proceeds from the High Museum’s annual Driskell Prize Dinner go toward both the David C. Driskell African American Art Acquisitions Fund and the David C. Driskell African American Art Endowment. Through the David C. Driskell African American Art Acquisitions Fund, the High has acquired works by artists such as Radcliffe Bailey, Nick Cave, Willie Cole, John T. Scott and Renee Stout.

### **David C. Driskell**

David Driskell is a practicing artist and scholar whose work on the African Diaspora spans more than four decades. The High’s relationship with Driskell began in 2000, when the Museum presented the concurrent exhibitions “To Conserve a Legacy” and “Narratives of African American Art and Identity: The David C. Driskell Collection,” which examined African American art in the broad historical context of modern and contemporary art. Born in 1931 in Eatonton, Georgia, Driskell is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Howard University in 1955 and his Master of Fine Arts degree from Catholic University in 1962. He also attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 1953 and studied art history in The Hague, Netherlands, in 1964. *More information about Driskell is available at [www.driskellcenter.umd.edu](http://www.driskellcenter.umd.edu).*

### **High Museum of Art**

The High Museum of Art, founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 12,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. The High’s media arts department produces acclaimed annual film series and festivals of foreign, independent and classic cinema. In November 2005, the High opened three new buildings by architect Renzo Piano that more than doubled the Museum’s size, creating a vibrant “village for the arts” at the Woodruff Arts Center in midtown Atlanta. In October 2006, the High launched an unprecedented three-year partnership with the Musée du Louvre in Paris to bring hundreds of works of art to Atlanta. *For more information about the High, please visit [www.High.org](http://www.High.org).*

### **The Woodruff Arts Center**

**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART/ 2010 David C. Driskell Prize Winner Renee Stout**

The Woodruff Arts Center is ranked among the top four arts centers in the nation. A not-for-profit center for performing and visual arts, its campus comprises the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art, Young Audiences and the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Playhouse.

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