

THE SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE

AFRICANA HERITAGE

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85th Anniversary Gala to Celebrate the Legacy of Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson

BY STEVEN G. FULLWOOD

When Howard Dodson retires as chief of the Schomburg Center in 2011, he will have spent an extraordinary 26 years contributing to the development of the Center and to the preservation of black history, black culture, and black genius. Born in Chester, Pennsylvania in 1939, Howard Dodson, Jr., is the oldest of four children and the only son of Lou Birda Jones and Howard Dodson. He received his B.S. in English and social studies from West Chester State College (1961), and his M.A. in history and political science from Villanova University in 1964.

After working for the Peace Corps in Ecuador and later in Washington, D.C., Dodson's disillusionment as a result of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination led him into what he termed an "early retirement" in 1968. The 29-year-old decided to go

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Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson with Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad at the Center on November 18, 2010.

Bob Gore

Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad Named Next Director of the Schomburg Center

On Wednesday, November 17, 2010, The New York Public Library's President Dr. Paul LeClerc announced that Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad had been selected as the next Director of the Schomburg Center. Dr. LeClerc made the appointment after the unanimous recommendation of a nine-member search committee.

"After spending time with Dr. Muhammad, it was easy for me to see why he was the unanimous choice of the Search Committee" Dr. LeClerc explained. "He is a brilliant scholar doing path-breaking work in African-American studies, is eloquent and charismatic, is deeply committed to the Harlem community, embraces the

Schomburg's function of acquiring and preserving the cultural record of peoples of African descent, and knows how to exploit the internet to bring young people into the Schomburg to discover its extraordinary treasures."

Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson met and spoke with Dr.

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Schomburg Center Acquires Dr. Maya Angelou Papers

On Friday, October 29, 2010, the Schomburg Center held a ceremony to announce the acquisition of the Maya Angelou Papers. Dr. Angelou, Membership Chair of the Schomburg Society, joined The New York Public Library President Dr. Paul LeClerc and Schomburg Center Director Howard Dodson to share the good news.

"This remarkable collection documents the life of a legendary writer whose eloquent,

honest, and brave words have inspired generations," said Dr. LeClerc. "Through Dr. Angelou's personal letters, drafts, handwritten manuscripts and so on, the public will get a privileged look at the life and creative processes of an American icon. We are immensely pleased and very proud to have Dr. Angelou's important collection at The Schomburg Center, an institution that stands for open access to information, the preser-

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Terrence Jennings

Dr. Maya Angelou at the Schomburg Center press conference and celebration to announce the acquisition of the Maya Angelou Papers.

I am pleased to report that I can now breathe a sigh of relief. And so can you. Some nine months ago, The New York Public Library initiated a search process to identify and secure the next Director of the Schomburg Center. A stellar committee headed by New York Public Library Trustees Gordon Davis and Henry Louis Gates received and reviewed an applicant pool of some 200 prospective candidates. The pool included senior and junior scholars from leading universities and colleges throughout the country as well as individuals with corporate, library, and non-profit cultural institution backgrounds.

Davis and Gates were ably assisted by committee members Rev. Calvin Butts, Pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem; Ray McGuire, Library Trustee and a Managing Director at Citicorp; Darren Walker, Ford Founda-

tion's Vice President of Education, Creativity and Free Expression Program; Eric Foner, Professor of History at Columbia University; Aysha Schomburg, Schomburg Corporation President; Ann Thornton, Andrew W. Mellon Director for the Research Libraries, and Library Trustee Katharine J. Rayner.

knowledge about black people—their history, heritage, and legacy. I saw and heard his equally passionate commitment to using knowledge about the black experience to solve the problems facing black people today. I found him to be a warm, sensitive, deeply caring human being who recognized and respected the achievements of our ancestors and the obstacles they have overcome. All of this was added to the fact that he is highly intelligent, tech savvy, has experience auditing fortune 500 companies, and has written a path-breaking book revealing the complicity of the U.S. academy and the media in the criminalization of black peoples. Finally, he is comfortable with and in himself and is able to relate easily to people of all classes, races, and ethnicities from the academy and the halls of government to the people on the street. And he is young—38-years-old, able to connect with people in their 20s to 40s. All of these factors make him the ideal person to become the 21st century leader of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Dr. Muhammad will take office in July 2011. In the interim, he and I will be working to make his transition into the position as smooth as possible. There will be a number of welcoming and orientation events and activities over the next six months during which you will have an opportunity to meet Dr. Muhammad and learn more about his vision for the Center.

The first will be during the *The State of African American and African Diaspora Studies: Methodology, Pedagogy, and Research* conference, which will take place at the Center and at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York from January 6-8, 2011. Dr. Muhammad will participate in the opening of the conference plenary, which I will moderate. A special feature of the 85th Anniversary Gala Celebration will be a symbolic passing of the torch from me to Dr. Muhammad. The Gala will take place on Monday, January 24, 2011 at Jazz at Lincoln Center. I trust you will plan to attend both of these programs, as well as others, as part of his introduction to the Center and its constituents, as well as to Harlem and the larger black world.

“Dr. Muhammad will take office in July 2011. In the interim, he and I will be working to make his transition into the position as smooth as possible.”

— *Howard Dodson, Schomburg Chief*



I met Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad on the day of his official appointment by Library President Dr. Paul LeClerc. We spent about an hour and a half talking in advance of the formal press announcement. Fifteen minutes into the conversation, I concluded that they had made the right choice. I have had that judgment reaffirmed every day since. What did I see that led me to this conclusion?

First, I heard and saw his passionate commitment to defend, promote, and advance



Terrence Jennings

(Left to right): Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts, member of the Schomburg Director Search Committee and Pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church; Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center; Aysha Schomburg, member of the Schomburg Director Search Committee and the great-granddaughter of Arturo Schomburg; Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad, and Paul LeClerc, President of The New York Public Library, at the press conference at Abyssinian announcing Dr. Muhammad as the next Director of the Schomburg Center on November 17, 2010.

Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad Named Next Director of the Schomburg Center

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Muhammad at length at Abyssinian Baptist Church before the public announcement. “I am pleased to extend my congratulations to Khalil Muhammad,” Dodson said. “I am both confident and excited about his continuing the Schomburg’s critical mission and legacy. I have felt strongly that the Center’s [new] leader must come from the next generation, and I intend to help ensure that he is well prepared to hit the ground running.”

The day after the announcement, Dodson and Acting Andrew W. Mellon Director of the New York Public Libraries Ann Thornton, introduced Dr. Muhammad to Schomburg staff members at a special breakfast. “There is nothing in this country, and arguably, in this world, that can match the history and legacy, the foundation, and the scholarly infrastructure of the Schomburg,” Dr. Muhammad said. “As passionate as I have been about why history matters to the world we live in, and why



Dr. Muhammad with his father, Ozier Muhammad, at the press conference.



black history matters, even more so to the country we live in, there is no better place than the Schomburg Center to ensure that those lessons are taught and re-taught, because America has an infinite capacity for forgetting.”

Dr. Muhammad, a Chicago native and great-grandson of Nation of Islam founder Elijah Muhammad, is the son of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* photographer Ozier Muhammad and is

currently an assistant professor of history at Indiana University. He has recently completed his first book in African-American studies, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*. Dr. Muhammad will assume the Director’s position in July 2011.

85th Anniversary Gala to Celebrate the Legacy of Howard Dodson

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to Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, taking with him boxes of books and using the local library to study the histories of African, European, and American people. Dodson had worked in Mayagüez before and it was a place that nourished his spirit.

In the fall of 1969, Dodson returned to the United States and enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley (UCB). His timing was prophetic. “I was attracted to UCB because I had been there recruiting for the Peace Corps in 1966 and 1967,” Dodson recalled. “At the time I was considering where I would like to go and UCB came on the radar screen. And at that time UCB was inaugurating a PhD program in the history of black people and race relations.” Dodson

“Howard Dodson’s legacy at the Schomburg, and within the broader national and international cultural communities, is simply immense.”

— *Paul LeClerc, President of The New York Public Library*

studied with a number of scholars such as Leon Litwack, Winthrop Jordan, Lawrence Levine, Nathan Huggins, and John Ralph Willis. Although he did not complete his dissertation, “The Political Economy in South Carolina: 1780-1830,” his findings helped to define and refine his revisionist aim at rethinking black culture and black history.

While at UCB, Dodson and other graduate students were offered internships at the Institute of the Black World (IBW), a collective of black intellectuals who believed that black liberation was both a political and intellectual project. It was originally the research arm of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change founded in Atlanta, Georgia by Coretta Scott King in 1968, but soon became its own entity. Dodson became an intern and continued his education with scholars, thinkers, and writers such as Vincent Harding,

Toni Cade Bambara, Stephen Henderson, C. L. R. James, Walter Rodney, Lerone Bennett, Jr., St. Clair Drake, and others. In 1974 he returned to IBW and assumed the directorship until 1979 while simultaneously teaching African-American studies at Emory University.

As IBW struggled financially to support itself, Dodson felt he needed to better understand the flow of money from grant giving organizations. His inquisitiveness led to a consultancy with the National Endowment for the Humanities, which began as an assignment two or three times a month and resulted in a full-time job. Dodson continued working with IBW serving as its project director until 1984.

In 1983, Dodson became a consultant to the Schomburg Center, guest curating an exhibition called *Censorship and Black America*, which explored the various ways in which Black Americans had been—and continue to be—censored. In a complementary program, Dodson highlighted the need for such an exhibition and explained that “the freedom to be human in black America—to think, to speak, to assemble, to travel, to associate with others, to express oneself in song culturally through song, dance, dress— has too frequently been de-

“My experience in working with Howard Dodson is dealing with a man of passionate determination and commitment to setting the record straight about the history and culture of African, African-American and African-Diasporan history and culture.”

— *Roberta “Bobbi” Yancy, former head of Public Affairs and Development*



“For me Howard leaves a multifaceted legacy of a learned and deep affection for Africa and its Diaspora; an intolerance to bigotry and a strategy to defeat it; and abiding joy in all his endeavors.”

— *Christopher Moore, Research Coordinator Schomburg Exhibitions and Special Programs*

clared illegal or offensive, and suppressed.”

As the newly appointed Director in 1984, Dodson set his sights on populating the newly constructed library building and led the 1991 renovation of the 135th Street Branch library that housed the original collection. Dodson’s tenure is often characterized by his foresight, vision, and energy. “His important work builds upon the groundbreaking work of his predecessors, former curators, and directors, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, Lawrence Reddick, and Jean Blackwell Hutson,” said Diana Lachatanere, Curator of the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division at the Schomburg Center. “Those visionaries provided the foundation upon which Howard Dodson continued to add and build the Schomburg Center into a world-class archival repository and cultural center. In many ways his vision is their vision.”

of Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson



Dodson furthered Arturo Schomburg's book collecting sensibilities, Reddick's public programming efforts, and Hutson's significant community outreach to publicize the vast and rich collection. Under his tenure, the Center's holdings grew from five to 10 million items, he increased programming, and initiated capital projects that expanded the Center's capacity and developed its infrastructure. Dodson formally established the Scholars-in-Residence Program in 1986. This was the first New York Public Library program of its kind,

“Howard’s role as director has been multifaceted: he has simultaneously served as curator, producer, convener, historian, educator, and fundraiser. His leadership has promoted a deeper interest in and engagement with the history and culture of people of African descent and has made the Schomburg a destination—in person and online—for those seeking inspiration and understanding.”

—Ann Thornton, Acting Andrew W. Mellon Director of the New York Public Libraries

“Under Howard’s leadership the Center has expanded its mission to much more fully encompass Africa and the larger African Diaspora. It is a very important development that has enabled patrons to be exposed to a wider world, new scholarship, and exciting programs and exhibitions.”

—Sylviane Diouf, Curator of Digital Collections

assisting scholars and professionals whose research in the black experience can benefit from extended access to the Center's resources in varied formats and perspectives. .

“Howard Dodson has done more to advance research on the peoples of African descent in the Americas than any other person since Arturo Schomburg and W. E. B. DuBois,” said Colin Palmer, Director of the Scholars-in-Residence Program. “A visionary, he identified and procured the archival resources upon which this research depends and he has done much to stimulate fresh conceptual approaches to the study of black people from a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.”

“Under his direction, I literally watched the Schomburg Center grow into what is now the renowned research center on black history and culture. I am forever grateful for his leadership and his friendship.”

—Aisha H.L. al-Adawiya, Secretary, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Predictably Dodson's activities as Director have taken different forms at different times. As a visionary, he has guided the Center through major fund-raising and physical expansion projects, including successful multi-million dollar capital campaigns. As a scholar, Dodson has furthered scholarship on the African Diaspora by working with the Center's curators to acquire and make available its rich, diverse collections.

“There has been the recurring question of the role educational and cultural programs and exhibits play in the life of an institution like this,” Dodson told *American Visions*. “We see our interpretive programming as a means of focusing attention on the collection[s] and on the issues and themes in the African and African-American Diasporan experience.”

Above all Dodson's legacy can be noted in his insistence on inviting a new generation of researchers into the research space through scholarship programs, exhibitions, and programming, collection development and technology.

“The Dodson years issued in a more aggressive collection development emphasis; a series of conferences, seminars, and exhibitions; and various institutional collaborations and partnerships, both at home and abroad.”

—Mary Yearwood, Curator Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

AROUND THE SCHOMBURG CENTER

On October 14, 2010 New Heritage Theater Group and IMPACT Repertory Theatre produced two staged readings of Lorraine Hansberry's *To Be Young Gifted and Black*: one for schoolchildren and another for a general audience.



Bob Gore



Terrence Jennings

On October 3, 2010 Pamela Issac led a beading workshop at the Center.



Bob Gore

Children's book illustrator Bryan Collier held a special presentation on his book *Dave the Potter* on October 6, 2010.

Helena D. Lewis in *Call Me Crazy: Diary of a Mad Social Worker* on October 8, 2010. Lewis also wrote the script for the play.



Terrence Jennings



Bob Gore

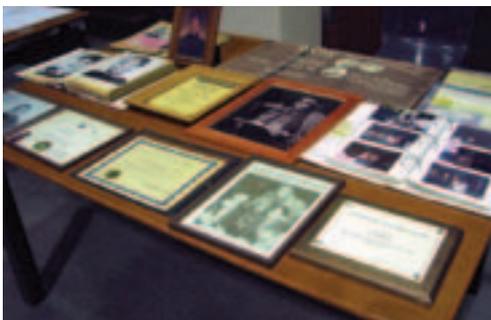
As part of the Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concert Series, the Osmany Parades Quartet performed at the Center on October 23, 2010.



The Schomburg Center held a special dinner at Dr. Maya Angelou's house in Harlem to celebrate the acquisition of her collection on October 29, 2010. (clockwise from top): Dr. Angelou with Jazzmobile's George Wein; Dancer Glory Van Scott, George Wein, Tony Award-winning choreographer/director George Faison, and Howard Dodson; New York City Councilmember Inez Dickens, Tad Schnugg, Rae Alexander-Minter, and U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel, and poet Sonia Sanchez.



Bob Gore



(Clockwise from top:) E. Frances White, Shawnta Smith and Eva Yaa Asantewaa at the Women Thinkers panel on October 25, 2010. Nydia Swaby, Dr. Jewel Woods, LadiSasha Jones, and Esther Armah at the Black Male Privileges program that featured Woods on November 3, 2010. Writers HeruKhuti and Mingas at the Poet Men reading featuring Marvin K. White and Reginald Harris on October 18, 2010. Items from the Ira Jeffries Collection.

Opera at the Schomburg

BY NYDIA ANN SWABY

African Americans have had a profound impact on the development of several musical genres. Their influence on classical music has received very little attention. In an effort to bring more exposure to African-American operatic repertoire, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and New York City Opera will again join forces to present two performances that showcase African Americans' contributions to the genre.

This season's concert series will kick-off on Monday, February 28, 2011 with *A Tribute to Betty Allen*, an opera that honors the dynamic career of African-American mezzo-soprano Betty Allen. An active singer during the 1950s–1970s, Allen (March 17, 1927 – June 22, 2009) was influential in breaking down barriers of racial prejudice in the opera world. She made her New York City Opera debut in 1954 playing Queenie in *Show Boat*. From 1973–1975, Allen's roles at City Opera included Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, Jocasta in *Oedipus rex*, and Eurycelia in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*. Allen was an international concert singer who appeared in recitals throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia. She also served as the Executive Director and later President of the Harlem School of the Arts, and on the Board of Directors for New York City Opera for more than 16 years.

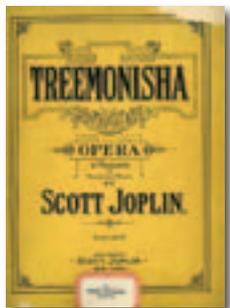
On Monday, June 6, 2011, the Schomburg Center and New York City Opera will present an abridged version of *Treemonisha*, a groundbreaking opera by famed African-American ragtime com-

poser Scott Joplin (January 1868 – April 1, 1917). Set in 1884 on a plantation in Arkansas, *Treemonisha* tells the story of a freed slave who leads a campaign to educate her community about the futility of believing in superstitions. Although *Treemonisha* was never fully staged during his lifetime, Joplin's masterpiece is regarded as a classic American opera that draws on African-American traditions in both the story and the music.

The Schomburg Center has a wealth of information about African Americans in opera. Relevant collections in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division include the papers of: Caterina Jarboro, the first African American to sing opera on an American stage; Berniece Hall, a soprano soloist who performed with De Paur's Opera Gala; Mary Cardwell Dawson, founder of the National Negro Opera Company, and Clarence Cameron White, composer of *Ouanga*, an opera based on the life of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution; as well as a scrapbook for the American folk opera *Porgy*

and *Bess*. One can also find books about Leontyne Price and Marian Anderson in the General Research and Reference Division, photographs of Carlotta Franzel, Shirley Verrett, and Minto Cato in the Photographs and Prints Division, and a video recording of Todd Duncan performing "A Mighty Voice," in the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit www.nycOpera.com.



Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

Scott Joplin's opera *Treemonisha* is in the Center's collection.



New Web site for Digital Schomburg

BY SYLVIANE A. DIOUF

Since 2005, the Schomburg-Mellon Humanities Summer Institute, a six-week program generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has gathered together, at the Center, rising seniors from New York universities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities interested in pursuing graduate degrees in the Humanities.

For the past six years, the students have been offered seminars by eminent scholars and have diligently researched the history of Africans and peoples of African descent from the 1880s to 2010. Going into the Center's collections, they have brought forth the prints, photographs, and documents that illustrate our new curated exhibition, *Africana Age*. The scholars, who year after year, led seminars for the Institute on the various aspects of African, African-American and Caribbean history and culture have contributed the essays that form the basis of the site.

Africana Age retraces the Black World's history of triumphs, tragedies, and challenges over the long 20th century. By the end of the

19th century, Africans and peoples of African descent—except Ethiopians, Haitians, and Liberians—were living under some form of European colonial domination. The history of Africa and its Diaspora was dismissed as insignificant. Black cultures were ridiculed, stereotyped, and scorned.

Over the course of the last 100 years, European colonial regimes have collapsed, independent African and Caribbean nations have emerged, racial segregation in the U.S. has been overturned, and apartheid in South Africa is a thing of the past. Africans and peoples of African descent have begun to gain access to economic and political power, and African and African Diasporan cultures have emerged as dominant cultural expressions around the globe. At the dawn of the 21st Century, challenges remain but triumphs have been numerous.

With seventeen essays, more than 500 images, as well as maps and audio and video clips, *Africana Age*, the latest addition to Digital Schomburg, offers a unique wealth of information and analysis on the past, the present, and the future of Africa and the African Diaspora in the Western Hemisphere.

Schomburg Center Holds Summer Institute for Educators



Bob Gore



(Clockwise from above): Sixty-five school teachers, college professors and community educators gathered for lectures each morning in the American Negro Theater. Howard Dodson provided the teachers with an exclusive curator's talk for the current exhibition, *What's Up @ the Schomburg?* Schomburg historian Chris Moore leads the eager group on his Harlem Renaissance Revival Walking Tour.

BY DEIRDRE LYNN HOLLMAN

During the last week of July 2010, 65 educators attended the Schomburg Center's first Summer Education Institute in over a decade: *Black History 360°: Connecting Black American History to the Global Black Experience*. The inspiration for *Black History 360°* was simple—if educators are charged with educating American students to be global citizens in the 21st century, then they must demonstrate how everyone's history and culture is an integrally linked human story of the world.

As the Schomburg Public Education Manager, I organized a three-day institute to unite educators and graduate students with premier historians and scholars under three themes: "Africa: The Making of the African Diaspora;" "Africans in New York: From New Amsterdam to Harlem," and "21st Century Black: African Americans and the Black World."

These themes were chosen with the aim of increasing teacher content knowledge and to elevate student achievement. "Making of the African Diaspora" aimed to help learners understand the cultural, regional, and linguistic diversity of black Americans and all people of African descent. Further, "Africans

in New York" aimed to acknowledge the historic and tangible role of Africans in colonial New York, while empowering all learners to craft a sense of belonging to New York City in a manner that fostered a positive identification with ancestral legacy and upward mobility. Finally, "African Americans and the Black World" aimed to inspire learners to use their education and agency to advance social justice wherever there is a need.

Educators gained valuable content knowledge and learned inquiry-based approaches to teaching using the Schomburg's rich resources both on-site and on-line. Key texts and curriculum materials were provided daily, including primary and secondary resources, exhibition guides, bibliographies, and sample activities. Highlights from the three-day institute include:

- A presentation by Dr. Sylviane A. Diouf, Historian and Curator of the Schomburg Center Digital Collections, on new research on the individual, family, and community history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- A curator's talk with Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson, on the exhibition

What's Up @ The Schomburg?

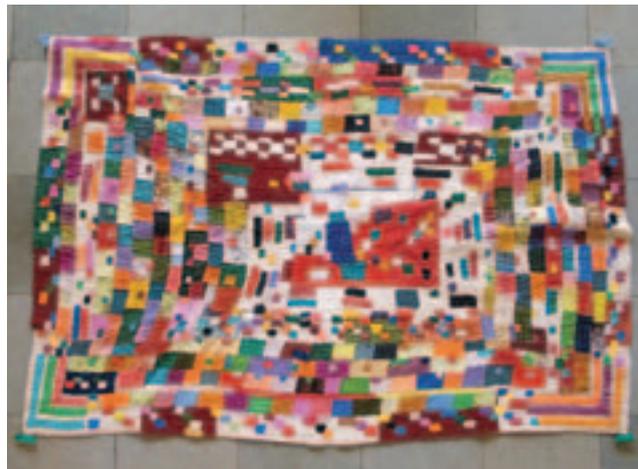
- An exclusive artist talk with award-winning illustrator Jerry Pinkney about how he envisions and illustrates stories from the slavery era.
- A workshop exploring how people of African descent have sought educational opportunities, during and after slavery, yet confronted race laws and practices intent on limiting their prospects by Gloria J. Browne-Marshall, JD/MA, John Jay College & Founder /Executive Director, The Law and Policy Group, Inc.
- A joint presentation about the precious, and often misunderstood, history of Haiti by Nathalie Pierre, PhD Candidate, History, New York University, and Steven G. Fullwood, Archivist, Schomburg Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division.

The Schomburg Summer Education Institute will convene again from July 25-29, 2011. Save-the-dates and sign-up for updates and registration information by emailing: schomburged@nypl.org.

EXHIBITION:

Soulful Stitching: Patchwork Quilts by Africans (Siddis) in India
 Latimer/Edison Gallery
 February 1—June 30, 2011

The Siddis of Karnataka, India are the descendants of both early African immigrants to South Asia and enslaved Africans brought to Goa on India's west coast by the Portuguese beginning in the 16th century. Gradually, they escaped slavery and moved southward into the remote Western Ghatt mountains of Northern Karnataka in order to create free, independent African Diaspora communities. While they have adopted, adapted, and integrated many aspects of Indian cultures, Siddis have also retained and transformed certain African traditions. In



the visual arts, one tradition stands out: the patchwork quilts known as *kawandi*. Mixing together a vibrant array of well-worn clothing fabrics, Siddi quilts are highly individu-

alistic, yet quilters share many clear and precise opinions about quality, beauty, and the need to “finish properly” the corners with triangular patches called *phulas*, or flowers. Catholic and Muslim Siddi women sometimes incorporate crosses or crescents in their designs, and baby quilts in particular are often bejeweled with lots of small, colorful patches called *tikeli*.

This exhibition is curated by Henry J. Drewal, Evjue-Bascom Professor of African and African Diaspora Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

A unique take on the life's work of poet Essex Hemphill was the subject of an extraordinary exhibition, *Take Care of Your Blessings: Items from the Essex Hemphill/Wayson Jones Collection*, last November. The Black Gay & Lesbian Archive, the largest archive of materials created by and about black queer life, produced the exhibition as a part of The Audre Lorde/Essex Hemphill Memorial Lecture, an annual event meant to commemorate the lives of the American poets, Audre Lorde (1934 -1992) and Essex Hemphill (1957-1995), as well as encourage exciting scholarship and literary production within the communities to whom their poetry and prose spoke.

Essex Hemphill (1957-1995) was a groundbreaking thinker, writer, and activist whose published works include *Ceremonies: Prose and Poetry* (1992), *Conditions: Poems* (1986) and *Earth Life* (1985) and his poetry and prose have been published widely in anthologies such as *In The Life: A Black Gay Anthology* (1986) and *Tongues Untied* (1988), and periodicals such as *Thing*, *Pyramid Periodical*, *Essence*, and *Gay Community News*. He was also the



Daniel Cima

editor of *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men* (1991).

Take Care of Your Blessings: Items from the Essex Hemphill/Wayson Jones Collection featured rare and unpublished manuscripts of Essex Hemphill's as well as copies of his first two chapbooks, *Plums* (1982) and *Diamonds Was in the Kitty* (1983), assorted photographs, fliers, posters, and programs. Wayson Jones, a musician who collaborated with Hemphill in the performance group Cinque (along with Larry Duckette) and later as a duo (Hemphill and Jones) in the 1980s, donated the material to the Black Gay & Lesbian Archive.

The 2nd Annual lecture on November 8th featured poet Cheryl Clarke who used

Hemphill's poem, “Heavy Breathing,” as the centerpiece for her talk. The lecture was sponsored by the Africana Studies Concentration and co-sponsored by the Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean, the PhD Program in English at CUNY, and the Black Gay & Lesbian

Archive Project, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. Films featuring Hemphill and his work, *Tongues Untied* and *Black Is...Black Aint* also premiered at the Anthology Film Archives in conjunction with the lecture.

On Sale Now: Women's Jazz Festival tickets. Please call the Schomburg Shop at (212) 491-2206 to order your tickets today!

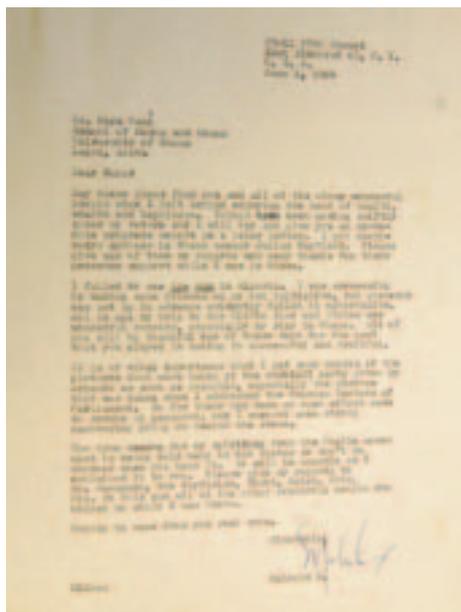
Schomburg Center Acquires Dr. Maya Angelou Papers

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vation of culture and the advancement of knowledge.”

The acquisition of the collection, which will be housed and archived at the Schomburg Center and available to the public after 18 months of processing, focuses on the great writer’s literary career spanning some 40 years. “As the Schomburg’s National Membership Chair, now in her 10th year of service, Dr. Angelou already has a home here in the heart of Harlem,” said Mr. Dodson. “But this great, unique collection encompassing her journey to greatness beyond the community, the city and the nation, has special significance for The Schomburg; it is a valuable legacy for generations now and those to come and it is being acquired on the eve of the Center’s 85th anniversary. We are indeed happy she and these treasures are with us.”

Dr. Angelou said she always expected her collection to find a home at the Schomburg. “The Schomburg is a repository of the victories and the losses of the African American experience,” she said. “I am grateful that it exists so that all the children, Black and White, Asian, Spanish-Speaking, Native American, and Aleutian can know there



Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library. (Bob Gore)

A letter from Malcolm X to Maya, June 1964.

is a place where they can go and find the truth of the peoples’ history.” The Collection comprises a treasure trove of rare, never-before-seen personal, and professional papers, from yellow notepads to original draft pages, the wealth of which span her writing career. There is early original correspondence with such luminaries as James Baldwin, who first encouraged her to write her story, and Malcolm X.

Visit www.schomburgcenter.org and click on Digital Schomburg, then Audio and Video Resources to view the announcement ceremony.

SCHOMBURG SOCIETY CONSERVATORS

The Schomburg Center is pleased to acknowledge the following donors of gifts of \$1,000 or more from July 17, 2010 to November 18, 2010.

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- Cynthia E. Burke
- Melva D. Burke
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Black History Month 2011: 28 Days of Black Pearls from the Schomburg Center

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by others
and
documented by
those who lived
it—correctly
aligns you and me
and our children
in the continuing
struggle to fully
claim our dignity
in all areas of life.



Dr. Maya Angelou

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