Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Maintaining a Cultural Legacy through Preservation

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Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Maintaining a Cultural Legacy Through Preservation

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Seton Hall University

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Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Maintaining a Cultural Legacy Through Preservation

Miesha Hardison
Our heritage is all that we know of ourselves; what we preserve of it, our only record. That record is our beacon in the darkness of time; the light that guides our steps. Conservation is the means by which we preserve it. . . . It is a commitment not only to the past, but to the future.¹

Philip Ward,
The Nature of Conservation: A Race Against Time

¹ website: http://palimsest.stanford.edu/aic.
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Introduction
Tradition Meeting New Challenges

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) have illustrated their position as progenitors of African American art and culture in developing some of the first repositories of African American art. Yet, maintaining that tradition will only develop through a commitment to preservation. A recent exhibition that opened at The Studio Museum in Harlem, located in New York City, addressed this issue of preservation at HBCU's. The exhibit, To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the result of a three year project, achieved three goals; first, a selection of objects from each of the six HBCU's chosen to participate were conserved; secondly inappropriate conditions under which objects were stored and handled were identified, and finally HBCU students and faculty were introduced to concepts, ethics, and practice of fine art conservation.\(^2\) This exhibit includes Edmonia Lewis' The Old Arrow Maker and His Daughter, a sculpture rescued by conservators at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, from further deterioration. This work was molded in 1866 and carved in 1872, and depicts a Native American father and daughter drawn from the popular poem, The Song of Hiawatha (1855) by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.\(^3\) The sculptural image is a rendition of the verses that speak of Hiawatha carving arrowheads as his daughter Minnehaha weaves mats. This work belongs to the Tuskegee University Collection, where improper storage

\(^2\) Pre-publication planning draft for To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
and neglect led to deterioration of the piece. Substantial losses included the left front leg of the deer, the tool held in the arrow maker's right hand, and a section of fur on his robe due to long-term embedded grime and dirt.\cite{4} Lewis' work is central to the development of African American art. It is one of few works by an African American women sculptor created in the mid-1800's. The work employed the classical style of the Greeks. A conservation project, which involved art historical research, identified an early image of the work. This source allowed for conservators and restorators to make replacement parts for the deer's leg and fur robe molded from a modern resin that simulates the surface of the marble.\cite{5}

Unfortunately, Lewis' work is not the only piece to suffer from neglect. Instead, it represents a common situation among HBCU art collections due to limited financial and personnel resources. Projects such as To Conserve a Legacy, enable HBCU's to strategically assess the problems particular to their collection and equip them with resources that enable them to confront those challenges.

It is clearly apparent that preservation is a major issue confronting HBCU's. These schools are aware of the unprecedented art collections they govern yet the practice of art conservation has unfortunately ranked last on the list of institutional priorities. Only recently has there been a public interest in these collections in response to the growing popularity of African American art. As a result, HBCU's are faced with complying with standard preservation practices using limited financial resources. The focus of this paper is to inform

\cite{3} Richard Powell and Jock Reynolds, To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 211.
\cite{4} Ibid, 166.
concerned professionals in the museum field of HBCU's long tradition of
dedication and commitment to African American aesthetics, despite the less-than
ideal conditions that exist within their collections. It will also analyze current
preservation practices of a select group of HBCU's and present basic
components of preservation that will help them continue their tradition of
excellence. This will dually prepare these collections for the future and educate
professionals in the field about the conservation challenges facing each
institution. This will increase the level of professionalism within the institution
specifically and the museum profession in general.

There are three major institutions that stand out for their exceptional
collections of African American Art: Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia;
Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia; and Howard University in Washington,
DC. Case studies of these institutions will prove that HBCU's have historically
acted as the guardians of African American art and culture. A survey of three
comprehensive collections highlights the role of HBCU's as a rich resource. I
would like to remind these institutions of their continuing obligation to preserve
African American aesthetics.

I plan to achieve this analysis through explaining the function of
preservation in museums in chapter one. In the second chapter I will explore the
relevance of preservation in validating African American art history. And finally,
in chapter three I will present the case study profile of each university while

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid, pre-planning publication draft.
highlighting their history of collecting, current preservation practices, and my evaluation of how each university rates in the three major components of preservation. The three major components of preservation presented in this paper will be, research methods and accessibility, establishing a critical voice, and examination of the standard art historical structure.
Chapter One
Preservation: An Essential Function in the Museum

Museums as institutions are a result of a tradition that was largely shaped by public need. The museum’s main purpose is to collect and preserve the evidence of the physical world and human accomplishment, to be used to further human knowledge and understanding. The foundation of each museum translates into the institution’s particular mission. This mission is determined by the individual vision of each institution, yet accountable to the basic standard of organization exposed by the American Association of Museums’ Accreditation Program. It defines a museum as “an organized and permanent non-profit institution, essentially educational or esthetic in purpose, with professional staff, which owns and utilizes tangible objects, cares for them and exhibits them to the public on some regular schedule.” There are three organizational traits outlined by, The American Association of Museums’ Commission on Museums for a New Century Report, related to the museum’s ethical obligations:

- The goal of the museum as organization is to carry out the accepted mission of museums in a manner appropriate to the particular institution. Each museum gives those activities its own special character.

- The organization is driven to excel at its goals by such factors as institutional pride, the incentive to meet professional standards and the desire to maintain a tradition of excellence and service.

- The success of the organization is measured by its ability to meet high professional standards, define its constituencies responsibly, communicate its goals to those constituencies and involve them in the full complexity of its

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8 Ibid, 74.
9 Ibid.
mission. The organization is the mechanism by which the purpose of the institution is achieved.\textsuperscript{10}

The museum profession is measured by high expectations of quality and ethics, as they are viewed as repositories for the nation’s most treasured possessions. This merits a strong level of commitment on the part of the institution to comply accordingly with professional standards of operation. The museum’s primary function is the care of collections. This also involves the assessment and organization of information concerning the quantity and location of objects, assessing preservation needs, the strengthening of institutional commitment to collections care, and informing policy makers, funding sources and the public about critical needs of the collection. In the governance of HBCU art collections these major issues regarding standards of operation were instituted at the inception of the collection and remain policy, yet they are ignored in practice. Only through continual practice will HBCU’s be able to confront the art world with the strength of their collections and the ability to stand as a viable asset in incorporating African American aesthetics into the mainstream pool of art interpretation.

Cultural institutions across the nation regard preservation as an integral component of cultural viability. Yet most institutions operate in opposition to that declaration. Eighty-four percent of the directors surveyed by \textit{Museums USA}, consider preservation and conservation a very important function of museums, consequently only eight percent identify it as top budgetary priority for the

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, 76.
future. The United States continue to be without a national policy for
conservation, the informed, skilled and ethical care of cultural patrimony,
categorized as virtually the only major nation in the world without a coordinated
effort in this regard.12

Although the nation does not have a national policy for preservation,
individual museums abide by the standards and guidelines set by the American
Association of Museums (AAM). Most mainstream museums such as The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Paul Getty Museum, and the National Gallery of
Art follow basic practices to ensure the safeguard of their objects. The American
Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works outline seven guidelines
that sum up preservation practices at mainstream museums accredited by the
AAM. The basic standards are as follows:13

1. Minimize the effects of light- organic materials should not be displayed in
direct sunlight. Filtering transparent films should block the ultraviolet light
from fluorescent bulbs. Sensitive objects should not be displayed at all times,
but rotated because light damage is cumulative and irreversible.

2. Provide stable, moderate relative humidity and temperature- to prevent
the growth of mold and mildew and to discourage insect activity, organic
materials should be kept in stable conditions around 50% relative humidity.
The use of a humidifier in storage areas helps to regulate the temperature.

11 American Association of Museums, Museums for a New Century, (Washington, DC:
American Association of Museums, 1984), 42.
12 Ibid, 11.
3. Minimize the effects of air pollution- reduce the amount of dust in storage areas and galleries by regularly upgrading and cleaning the filters in heating and air conditioning units. Framing of works of art behind glass will protect them from the abrasive acidic affects of dirt. The use of damp cotton cloths and magnetic wiping cloths are appropriate for routine dusting.

4. Minimize pest activity- display and store organic materials away from excessive dampness. Inspect objects on display and in storage areas regularly for signs of insect activity: adult insects, small wormlike juvenile insects, powdery deposits, and small holes or missing areas. If evidence is found, place the object in an airtight bag and call a conservator for advice.

5. Know how to handle objects- observe carefully the condition and size of the object before an attempt is made to move it. If the object can not be carried alone arrange for help. Before beginning, clear a space to set the object down. Move small objects on a padded tray or basket. Always use clean dry hands or preferably with cotton or plastic gloves to move objects. The acids, oils, and salts in the human skin will tarnish and corrode metals and may damage the lacquer and other materials such as porous ceramics. To move three-dimensional structures lift by the base, never by handles or protruding elements. Move framed works of art in a vertical position by handling secured areas of the frame. Support paper and textile objects with a sheet of white acid free mat board or white blotter paper. Never touch the front or back surfaces of oil paintings, it can cause cracks and other damage. When cleaning a work of art, cleaning solutions, sprays, alcohol or
insecticides should never be used. Use a soft bristle brush for objects and paintings when they are in good condition.

6. **Know how to display objects** - insure that handling devices on paintings and other works of art are strong and secure. Use wall hangers at the appropriate weight of the artwork and the wall onto which it will be hung. Protect objects that are displayed in vitrines or under glass or acrylic. Avoid using sticky substances to secure objects other than microcrystalline wax. Consult a conservator when preparing mounts for objects to be displayed properly.

7. **Storage** - choose materials that are going to be used in storage and display carefully to ensure that the material is compatible with the object. Wood, and wood products and paper products made from wood contain many harmful acids that may not be used with artifacts because it can accelerate the damage and cause staining. Archival quality storage boxes, mats and wrapping tissue made from cotton fibers or from purified wood pulp should be used. These products are offered in both buffered and unbuffered form. Although buffered products are the best choice for paper objects, unbuffered products should be used for photographs, wool, silk, and leather because of their acidic nature. Photographs should be kept in archival albums or inside inert plastic envelopes. Store three-dimensional objects in labeled boxes. They should be separated with neutral pH tissue or unbleached cotton muslin. Protect large, unboxed objects in storage with soft pre-washed muslin cloth or neutral pH tissue and drape them loosely with polyethylene sheeting. Framed paintings and works of art should be stored vertically, the edges protected.
with padding and protected from one another by archival cardboard. Metals should be stored in dry conditions. To avoid tarnishing, silver should be wrapped in Pacific silver cloth or acid free buffered tissue.

These seven basic guidelines will help any size museum maintain a high level of professionalism when enforced through continual practice. By following the outlined steps to ensure the integrity of a collection, an organization can then go forward in establishing a thriving resource. The three major components of preservation can then be enacted (increased accessibility, re-organized art historical structure and a critical voice) to enhance the collection to a higher level of significance. The collection will then stand as a viable resource in accessing an important part of cultural heritage.

There are a variety of organizations that are available to help institutions such as HBCU's update their training on preservation, and provide financial resources, such as grants, that can be used to improve their collections. For example, The Getty Center located in Brentwood, California offers grants for conservation surveys, conservation treatment and research, and conservation training. Likewise, the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training offers preservation technology and training grants. The Heritage Preservation provides grants through the Conservation Assessment Program for general conservation needs and assessment surveys for museums. The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works also provides museums with a service called the Guide to Conservation Services, which assists institutions in locating conservators in their perspective areas and conservators
with particular specialties. An upcoming workshop designed specifically for HBCU's and hosted by SoliNET will present a weeklong workshop on managing preservation, March 3-9, 2000 at the Atlanta University Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The program will inform participants about basic information on preservation and advice on how to implement those practices to meet their own collection's specific needs. Organizations are available and willing to help institutions that are at a disadvantage because of limited staff and financial resources.

The future of preservation is contingent upon conservation, which is the planned management of cultural heritage. The concept of modern conservation was born in 1930 at the International Museums Office of the League of Nations conference held in Rome. It was during this conference that science was recognized as a necessary component in the preservation of art. Professionals in the field met to analyze, “the study of scientific methods for the examination and preservation of works of art,” and at the conclusion of the conference they attest to “the utility of laboratory research as an aid to the study of the history of art and museography...” As we enter the year 2000 scientific issues still remain paramount to conservation, yet new challenges are apparent for the future. Preservation is a concept that is well developed in the museum profession community, yet it remains an abstract concept to the general public. Conservation must therefore face the task of advocating its importance and

validity to the public, who can, in turn influence, the political agenda for the new millennium. The fact that funding for the arts is diminishing and conservation needs are increasing, cultural institutions are placed in a compromising position.

The notion of triage, the action of setting priorities, is already being discussed among museum personnel and archeological site managers. Triage will produce an environment where objects will be categorized according to their level of cultural significance and preserved accordingly. The allocation of resources is not a challenge specific to HBCU's. All cultural institutions continue to face the task of educating the public as conservation remains crucial to the future of cultural property.

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Chapter Two
African American Art History Visible through Preservation

African American art is a contemporary branch of art history. African American art history emerged during the New Negro movement in the 1920's under the direction of the philosopher Alain Locke. He encouraged African American artists to use their African heritage as a means to developing a distinctively identifiable unique art. Locke believed in a specifically black aesthetic that, in turn, would promote racial consciousness and pride within the black community. Although he discussed methods of art production, he did not provide guidelines in establishing art historical scholarship or critique of the art he advocated. Without a method of historical documentation and critique, artistic expression cannot be established or gain an opportunity to flourish. As a result African American art history has focused solely on formalism or the history of style (object-oriented analysis). For instance, publications such as Modern Negro Art, 1969 (James Porter), American Negro Art, 1960 (Cedric Dover), and Art: African American, 1978 (Samella Lewis) tend to defend the competency of Black artists to their white counterparts.

A common response to racist judgments on art ultimately creates a defensive reaction. An example is a statement made in the New York Herald in 1867 stating that although the Negro can appreciate art he is unable to produce it. As

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22 Ibid, 6.
23 Ibid.
we enter the new millennium this defensive attitude needs to cease so that
African American art can flourish effectively. This adverse means of defending
the community has hampered the growth of African American art, and hasattributed to its invisibility and validity in the art world. The legitimizing basis of
African American investigation and practice may have been necessary in the
eyear twentieth century. However, when African Americans created and operated
their own institutions beginning in the 1950’s with the civil rights movement, we
see an uncanny mirroring of white institutions. Instead of breaking down the
barriers of exclusion that so adversely affected the African American community
and the value of art the same bias system was instituted. A system that uplifts
a Eurocentric conservatism (a tradition that commonly excludes people of color
and their art) overshadowed by underlying elitism in reference to artists and
concepts of art. This system will commonly highlight artists that are segregated
as masters and concentration will be placed on the artistic trends they influenced.
Although contemporary artists delve into issues of gender, culture, and identity
due to the current trends in expanding opportunities, global awareness, and an
increased accessibility to art, institutions continue to perpetuate cultural
conservatism effected in part by a depletion in funding for the arts.

Preservation will help document varying aspects of African American art, and
help professionals in the field recognize areas of improvement.

24 Ibid.
25 Kinshasha Conwill, "Introduction," in: Richard Powell and Jock Reynolds, To Conserve a
Legacy: American Art Form Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Cambridge: MIT Press
1999), 11.
26 James Smalls, A Ghost Of A Chance: Invisibility and Elision in African American Art
A clear assessment of African American art from its inception to the present allows us to move forward towards recourse within culturally specific institutions. Preservation continues to emerge as a fundamental issue in past and current African American art historical practice. Preservation is at the core of disseminating knowledge and understanding. Through a concerted effort on the part of culturally based institutions, operating systems can be revised that attribute to the current stagnant state of African American art history. Reorganization must focus on three areas: (1) re-establishing research methods and materials and their accessibility to the public; (2) establishing a critical voice on a regular basis, and (3) examining the standard art historical structure, eliminate faults and reorganizing a new system. Preservation is a fundamental component that encourages the use of primary resources; the duplication of journals and exhibition catalogues so they may be easily accessible to academics and the public. Duplication of critical information encourages access to other visual resources such as slides and transparencies. Cataloguing of archival material will encourage new publications with a variety of art historical approaches ranging from biographical to political inquires. Preservation provides a forum for innovative scholarship that could foster new art historical approaches beyond conservatism or elitism. A structure that can encompass all of the varying facets of African American art. And finally, preservation allows for the development of a critical voice. Through constant assessment of preserved work, varying opinions spark interest and encourage outlets for discussion such

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as panels and forums. Critical voices promote appreciation of works, which in turn peak interest of collectors and general audiences.

Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU’s), have traditionally functioned as institutions responsible for the preservation of African American art, history, and culture for more than one hundred years. HBCU’s emerged in the wake of the Civil War as institutions of higher learning founded specifically to educate former slaves and free blacks. The majority of HBCU’s were created in 1863 following the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. White missionaries who encouraged the education of blacks largely established these institutions. Many schools realized the importance of preserving African American art and culture. Often the inception of the institution came along with the establishment of a collection. These institutions have also been associated with the education of prominent artists, art historians, curators, and scholars. There are approximately 104 HBCU’s in the United States. All of which have contributed to the preservation of African American aesthetics in their own ways.

Traditionally these collections were established to create documentation of African American visual culture. As these collections mature a more in-depth level of preservation must exist. This will transcend the collection beyond a mere repository of important artifacts. It will create a body of work that establishes a

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
historical account of African American aesthetics. The result, a repository that encourages the contemporary status of African American art discourse.
Chapter Three
Case Study Profiles

Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta Georgia

History of the University

Clark Atlanta University located in Atlanta, Georgia, emerged out of a 1988 consolidation of Atlanta University and Clark College. Atlanta University was founded in 1865 by the American Missionary Association, and Clark College was founded in 1869 by the Freedman’s Aid Society. Clark Atlanta University represents the largest of the United Negro College Fund institutions; a foundation established to financially support minority students in obtaining a college education. Clark Atlanta University obtains its accreditation through the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelors, masters, specialist, and doctoral degrees through its school of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, International Affairs and Development, Library and Information Studies and Social Work. The University staff and faculty number approximately 1300 with an enrollment of more than 5,000 students, a diverse group from forty-five states and forty-seven countries. Clark Atlanta University has a multi-faceted curriculum, and facilities that are

34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
updated with the growing technology. It is a unique institution that provides specific educational tools in enhancing underrepresented professions with students of diverse and typically marginalized representation to be adequately equipped to succeed.

**History of Collecting**

Clark Atlanta University's history of preserving and collecting began in 1942, as they were progenitors in fostering exhibition opportunities for artists of color.\(^{37}\) The Clark Atlanta University collection initially emerged from Atlanta University Art Exhibitions. Artist, teacher Hale Woodruff, initiated this annual event between April 1942- April 1970.\(^{38}\) Woodruff established these art annuals in response to his assessment of what the black artist lacked, a forum to show their art, "I wanted to bring art to the community as a whole . . . to give young artists and the older artists a chance to show their works and to exhibit on a national basis."\(^{39}\) Tina Dunkley, current curator of the Clark Atlanta University Art Collection has written extensively on the history of the collection and its development through these art annuals. The first Atlanta University Art Exhibition held on April 9, 1942, resulted in 107 paintings presented by 67 different artists, with purchase prizes ranging from fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars. Artists who won awards in oil painting included William Carter of Chicago, Illinois; Frederick Flemister of Atlanta, Georgia, and Edward L. Loper of

\(^{37}\) Ibid, 18.  
\(^{39}\) Ibid.
Wilmington, Delaware. Awards for watercolors went to Charles H. Alston of New York and Lois Mailou Jones of Washington, DC. The selecting jury included president Rufus Clement of Atlanta University; Jean Charlot; Aaron Douglas, a well-known painter of the Harlem Renaissance and professor at Fisk University; and Luis P. Skidmore, then director of The High Museum of Art in Atlanta, and finally Hale Woodruff.  

The third annual held in 1944 introduced the two categories of sculpture and graphics. During the annual’s short history of three years award prizes tripled to range from five hundred to fourteen hundred dollars. Although these newly developed annuals steadily grew in importance and scope it wasn’t until the fourth annual that national attention focused on a *Time* magazine review that appeared on April 9th. Despite the annuals’ success in capturing the attention of the mainstream art world, a bleak overtone of racial condensation clouded the review: “The canvases were strongly flavored with expressionism and romanticism, but most had a primitive quality peculiarly their own. Painted in splashes of purple, red, black, brown many contained withering wreathing forms, which suggested the rhythm of a voodoo ritual. Favorite subject matter: Negroes. Favorite theme: racial consciousness and antagonism.”

The sculpture *African Youth*, by William Artis and an oil painting, *A Portrait Of Clair*, by John Wilson was illustrated in this *Time* magazine review. This article historically dictates a time when the majority of artists of color had invested interest in destroying the stereotypical images that had bombarded

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40 ibid, description of the first Atlanta University Art Annual.  
41 Ibid.
American society, whereas mainstream artists concentrated on the growing artistic movement of abstract expressionism.

The popularity of these art annuals was evident at the Eighteenth exhibition, where President Clement reported that the number of submissions in the first annual of 129 had increased to 500 in 1959, works accepted into the annual had grown from 107 to 139. This was an indication of a growing level of selectivity, and the number of artists exhibited had increased from 62 to 82. President Clement also noted the underlying theme of negritude (specifically Negro life) had shifted to a more universal climate, and artwork became more representative of international art trends.\footnote{43} This shift in the theme is very important documentation within the Clark Atlanta University collection of an attitude that was influenced by a national optimism on race relations in the United States due impart to a Supreme Court decision in 1954 on school segregation.\footnote{44}

The sixties ushered in the conclusion of the art annuals. New opportunities opened up for artists of color to exhibit in their respective regions.\footnote{45} The University experienced financial difficulties, as the exhibition costs associated with participation in the annuals increased it was clearly impossible to keep up with the inflation. Another important situation that affected the ending of the annuals arose from an internal issue of responsibility within the University. Nora McNiven, Director of Public Relations, at the University also assumed the tremendous task of coordinating the art annuals, upon her departure they could

\footnote{42} Ibid.\footnote{43} Ibid.\footnote{44} Ibid.\footnote{45} Ibid.
not find another to take over the inauderous task of the exhibition in addition to primary responsibilities of public relations.\textsuperscript{46}

1970 marked the year that the Atlanta University Annual exhibitions came to an end. Over the years the Annuals had given awards to very prominent artists including, John Wilson who was awarded fourteen awards, Calvin Bennett with ten awards, William Artis, nine awards, Charles White, Lois Mailou Jones, and Samella Lewis, all won five awards, and Elizabeth Catlett won four awards.\textsuperscript{47} The awards alone speak of the due recognition that artists of color were denied for so many years. A forever testament to that sentiment is the collection of wonderful work that was collected and now remains a rich reservoir at Clark Atlanta University.

Of the nine hundred artists that exhibited at the Annual, some three hundred works of art are comprised within the Clark Atlanta University collection.\textsuperscript{48} Other work within the collection, not obtained through the Annuals, includes gifts from institutions and private donors. These gifts were obtained from the following sources: The Harmon Foundation, The National Collection of Fine Arts, the estate of Judge Irvin C. Mollison and former Atlanta University trustee Chauncey Waddell.\textsuperscript{49} Work received from Judge Mollison and Mr. Waddell include artists such as Palmer Hayden, Malvin Gray Johnson, William H. Johnson, Archibald Motley, Jr., William E. Scott, Romare Bearden, Jacob

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid. 29.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
Lawrence, and other important African American artists.\textsuperscript{50} In 1967 the University purchased three works by Henry Ossawa Tanner.\textsuperscript{51} Another noted artist in the Clark Atlanta University collection is Hale Woodruff. He did a mural that consist of six parts, \textit{Art Of The Negro}, a significant work added to the collection, through a commission that Woodruff received in 1950.

These major works obtained by Clark Atlanta University, stand as testament to the unparalleled commitment to preserving African American aesthetics. The Atlanta University Annuals produced work that now stands as an illustrative documentation of the goals that Alain Locke exposed for blacks during a very segregated artistic atmosphere in America. The work also shows the advances to include black artists within the mainstream, and recognize artistic trends outside the realm of black consciousness. Atlanta University recognized the value of these works, and their importance in chronicling not only an important aspect of African American aesthetics, but also that of American aesthetics. Other aspects of the collection obtained through private donation, gifts, and commissions, work to enhance the exploration of African American culture through the artistic form.

Clark Atlanta University has recently made great strides in maintaining its position as a major guardian of African American art and culture. The history of establishing the collection attests to its influence in the past as being a guardian of art and culture. Yet, recent advances also illustrate its intent to continue that path well into the millennium. In 1996 the Clark Atlanta University collection

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
moved from the former Catherine Hughes Wadell Gallery of the Trevor Amett Library to its present museum space that includes a climate controlled gallery.

**Evaluation of Preservation Practices**

In issues of preservation, I rate Clark Atlanta University satisfactorily. In the area of research methods and materials they rank highly in acting as an entity that is dedicated to the preservation of valuable material culture. The staff at the Clark Atlanta Gallery of Art are responsible for a very valuable collection of art that represents a significant aspect of African American art and culture. In the category of using that research material as a basis for general research information, Clark Atlanta University ranks satisfactorily. The primary resource, their collection, still needs in-depth catalogue synopses for each artwork to investigate various important attributes. That information can then be synthesized into a comprehensive resource on African American art. Eventually, this information could be incorporated into general archive materials on American art. Clark Atlanta has made efforts to engage in critical review and research on major works of art within their collection, unfortunately other lesser-known works are left unresearched. These works can provide the key stages and levels of development that give insight into major trends in art history. In the area of research that relates to the accessibility of the primary resource, the collection, or secondary resource being duplicate material, Clark Atlanta University ranks unsatisfactorily, in my evaluation. Because of limited staffing Clark Atlanta University Art Gallery is unable to provide research material readily to those who
request it. This incapability of providing vital information about works of art that are under the jurisdiction of the University is a disservice to the community. The University can alleviate this problem in part by initiating the use of volunteers for administrative purposes within the school community and beyond the university to the community at large. This would enable public access to important works of art. Out of print journals and exhibition catalogues also need to be readily accessible to the public and academics. The duplication of out of print materials poses a large problem in general for African American art. Clark Atlanta also needs improvements in establishing publications with a variety of art historical approaches, ranging from biographical to political. The majority of art historical literature concerning African American art is biographically based. A variety in approach would enable the current biased factors present in common art historical assessment to be identified and corrected.

Another major area of preservation is its affect in creating a critical voice. As a guardian of African American art and culture, Clark Atlanta University could increase its efforts in providing outlets and forums for the discussion of its collection. I know that within the academic circle of the University and surrounding schools that represent The Atlanta University Center, (Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morris Brown College, Spelman College, and the Theological Center) there is constant dialogue concerning the various works of art in the collection. A valuable addition to this method of creating a critical voice is to invite the opinions of outside critics in the art field. Such critics and art historians in the field can be found locally at The High Museum of Art, and The
Atlanta History Center both located in Atlanta, Georgia. On a national level Clark Atlanta University, along with five other HBCU's contributed to an exhibition entitled, *To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities* which explored Black Universities and their holdings in American art. This exhibition traveled nationally to six different venues, opening up an opportunity for critical review and discussion. This venture is exciting and rare for such a significant amount of works from the collection to be seen on a national level. Tina Dunkley, curator of the Clark Atlanta University collection commented on the popularity of the collection, and the constant request from various museums around the nation for work.\(^{52}\) This nation-wide visibility of African American art promotes dialogue about African American art in general and the Clark Atlanta University collection in particular.

Clark Atlanta University's collection plays a key role in maintaining and preserving African American aesthetics. Yet, there are a few issues within preservation that need improvement. A large part of the current issues facing Clark Atlanta University stem from financial restraints and understaffing. Tina Dunkley is the only professional working at the museum to date. She relies heavily on a volunteer staff of students that changes with every semester. The University administration must be the deciding force in helping the museum reach its fullest potential as a valuable resource to its public. Funds need to be raised specifically for the maintenance of the collection. The museum has recently moved into a wonderful museum space that has a climate control

\(^{52}\) Tina Dunkley, personal interview, July 1997.
system, yet the storage area does not have a climate control system.\footnote{Ibid.} Ms. Dunkley has gone to great strides to improve the conditions of the collection, and educate University officials of its importance and value that which require special obligations. Unless a sense of value is established on the part of the University the museum will never fully serve its community, the nation, or the world by withholding pertinent remnants of its history.
Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia

History of the University

Hampton University, formally Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, was founded in April 1868 with two teachers and fifteen students.\(^{54}\) It was with this modest start and a dream to “attract the most promising student in the south and through a strong educational program, create the people who would become the teachers and leaders of their communities.”\(^{55}\) And so began this school’s path to making these concepts of grandeur come to fruition. Today Hampton’s enrollment is at approximately 5,700 students from forty-two states, four territories, and seventeen foreign countries. Since 1978 there have been twenty-four new degree-granting programs, bringing a total of forty-seven baccalaureate programs and sixteen masters’ programs; and in 1992 the first doctorate program was approved. Improvements to campus facilities went hand-in-hand with the construction of twelve new buildings and eight buildings receiving major renovation. Hampton University is one of the Nation’s prominent teaching institutions, as they continue to grow and develop their educational environment.\(^{56}\)

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\(^{54}\) The Legacy Continues: A Photo Essay in Celebration of 125 years of Hampton University History (Hampton: Hampton University Museum, 1992).

\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Ibid, history of Hampton University continued.
Hampton University’s vision for the arts was established in its inception with the founder of the school, Brevet Brigadier General Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Armstrong developed a program that aimed to train “the head, the hand, and the heart.” Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s compassion began early as the son of missionaries and educators. Educated at Williams College, Armstrong joined the Union army in 1862. During this time of war he became an abolitionist. With the conclusion of the war Armstrong received an appointment with the Freedman’s Bureau on the Virginia Peninsula. The Bureau tried to establish a means of relief for the 40,000 African Americans who took up residence on the Virginia Peninsula during the Civil war. Armstrong helped the Bureau to aid these African Americans in need of the fundamentals in life such as food, housing, clothing, and employment. These experiences shaped Armstrong’s drive and commitment to educate. Through the American Missionary Association, Armstrong assumed leadership of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. He remained principal of the Institute until his death in 1893. Armstrong’s vision and commitment later led to the establishment of Hampton University as a major institution of excellence.

In 1893 the founder of Hampton University died, yet the development of his dream lived on as the impact of Hampton and other African American schools produced a new generation of formally educated blacks. Hampton was extended from a three-year to a four-year degree program in the 1903-04 academic year. Hampton’s curriculum continued to change between 1895 and

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57 Ibid, paragraph outlining Armstrong’s relationship with Hampton University.
58 Ibid.
1913 with an increasing degree of scholarship. In 1916 Hampton received accreditation as a four-year secondary school. In 1922 the first bachelor's degrees in Agricultural Education were awarded, and in 1928 the first graduate students were admitted. Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute changed its name to Hampton Institute in 1930 and two years later the school received accreditation as a four-year college. Hampton continued to excel in its academic endeavors in response to the changing climate of the world and apt students. In 1894 the Board of Trustees adopted the name of Hampton University, placing it as a primer institution in America's system of higher education. Included in Hampton University is the College of Continuing Education; and Hampton Institute, the undergraduate college.\(^{59}\)

History of Collecting

Throughout Hampton's development as a University, collecting was apparent and important very early in its origins. As early as 1870 Hampton established an African studies program.\(^{60}\) It was through the content of this program that Hampton began to collect African objects for its museum.\(^{61}\) Unfortunately, a fire destroyed Academic Hall in 1879 and African objects were listed among the museum's losses.\(^{62}\) In the 1880's efforts were rekindled to build the museum collection.\(^{63}\) During this time alumnus Ackrel E. White contributed

\(^{59}\) Ibid, paragraph outlining Hampton University's history.
\(^{61}\) Ibid.
\(^{62}\) Ibid, 48.
\(^{63}\) Ibid, 46.
objects from Sierra Leone, where he served as a missionary. Since then there have been many contributors to enhance the outstanding collection of African art, which includes an extensive collection of work from Zaire (Kuba culture). The collection also includes works from Kenya and Sierra Leone, making Hampton’s African collection one that is nationally praised for its early history and unique individual works.

Hampton University also became a pioneer in experimentation in Native American education. In 1978 it became the first eastern off-reservation boarding school. More than 1300 Native American students from at least 65 different tribes attended Hampton within a forty-five year life span of the program. This program initiated the collection of Native American art at the museum. The collection now consists of carefully selected pieces representing Native American culture in its historical diversity. Recent acquisitions that support the original elements of the collection include, Columbian textiles, American Indian textiles and works of art on paper, and contemporary pots made by the Pamunkey Indian Pottery Guild. The future collecting goals will concentrate on contemporary work to give a full spectrum of Native American art.

As early as the 1880’s Hampton was involved in an aggressive collecting venture in hopes of developing and enhancing their museum. By 1894 Hampton’s African and Native American collections had been well established. The Hampton University Museum embarked on a new endeavor in acquiring two
paintings by Henry O. Tanner. This purchase marked Hampton to become the first institution to establish a collection of African American art. This newly established African American collection flourished during a growing relationship with the Harmon Foundation. Fortunately, in 1967 the continued development of this relationship resulted in Hampton's ability to make additions to their collection as the Harmon Foundation dispersed its holdings. The collection experienced an extraordinary enhancement by hundreds of works including important artists such as Hale Woodruff, Palmer Hayen, Archibald Motley, Jr., William H. Johnson, Sargent Johnson, Claude Clark, Malvin Gray Johnson, Aaron Douglas; and two early series by Jacob Lawrence. This addition enhanced the focus of the collection and its holdings of works from the 1920's through the 1950's. Since 1978 the Hampton collection acquired over 500 significant works of art that explore the whole gamete of African American art. Another major addition to the African American collection occurred in 1986 with the purchase of the Countee and Ida Cullen Art Collection. This collection consists of 29 works collected by the famous poet of the Harlem Renaissance. This move encouraged Hampton to further strengthen their holdings in Harlem Renaissance works, which led to the addition of artists Lois Mailou Jones and Walter Ellison. The museum aspired to increase their holdings in nineteenth century African American art as well, resulting in the acquisition of additional paintings by Henry O. Tanner, Joshua Johnston, Robert Scott Duncanson,
Edward Mitchell Bannister, James Ethan Porter, and Grafton Tyler Brown. Within the last ten years Hampton has made a concerted effort to collect work by artists who are trained at or associated with the University. These recent additions include over one hundred works by John T. Biggers acquired through gift or purchase, and Samella Lewis whose work in the collection is represented by all decades. Other artists include Elizabeth Catlett, Moe Booker, Raymond Saunders, David MacDonald, Ron Adams, Greg Henry, and Kwabena Ampofo-Anti.72

The Hampton University Museum collection numbers over 9,000 works of art with special emphasis on three categories of African, African American, and Native American art.73 Jeanne Zeidler, director of the Hampton University Museum states that they will continually add to the collection, selectively, to enhance the cultures represented. She also gives credit to the president of the University, William R. Harvey, for the Museum's growth and expansion since 1978. He has provided a precedence by being an avid collector himself in providing the essentials to build a collection. Due to his efforts, the Hampton University Museum has gained national reputation as a phenomenal repository of African American art and culture. In the late 1980's President Harvey stated that he wanted "to create an environment on the Hampton University campus where the arts can flourish," and he did just that.74
Evaluation of Preservation Practices

Hampton University Museum excels in its commitment to preservation. In the category of preservation involving research methods and materials, Hampton University Museum ranks at the highest level because of its dedication to collecting African American art and its preservation efforts. In using the research material obtained through the collection as a basis for general research information on African American art Hampton rates excellently. They often use information gathered about works in their own collection to report on in their quarterly publication, The International Review of African American Art. In addition to this publication a general resource on African American art has yet to be established among the rich resources at HBCU's. Hampton is taking the right steps toward that goal and produces a plethora of information in their publication that proves useful in establishing such a document. This documentation stands as a valuable bridge in merging African American art research with general documentation on American art. In the area of preservation that relates to accessibility of the collection, Hampton University Museum rates satisfactorily. Hampton maintains a full-time staff of approximately six to ten members: three curators, a director, and an education staff. They are adequately equipped to handle requests for information. This is a very important factor in maintaining a high level of preservation and professionalism. An institution is mandated to conserve material for the benefit of the community. If the information that is contained within that collection cannot be dispersed the institution is presenting a

\[24\] Ibid.
disservice to their community. One aspect of accessibility that needs improvement at Hampton is the availability of out of print journals and catalogues that correspond to important works of art in their collection. Each institution should establish a library of information tracking the exhibition history of works in their collection. Duplicates of these primary resources should be made readily accessible to academics and researchers, and anyone who desires more information. Increased availability enhances the level of developing scholarship, and provides a more comprehensive vision of a work of art. As far as establishing publications that incite a variety of approaches to art historical documentation, Hampton is a leader. Its quarterly publication analyzes works of art and artistic trends from all different aspects. It reviews contemporary works in relation to popular trends, historical influences, political statements, and cultural traditions. This varied approach helps to begin a process of breaking down the biased system that has historically left African American art marginalized. An increase in similar publications provides a current up-to-date review of growing trends in African American art.

Hampton University Museum plays a key role in creating a critical voice with its publication alone. The *International Review of African American Art* provides an important forum for discussion of issues regarding African American art. The periodical not only acts as a viable resource of information concerning Hampton’s collection but also reports on forums and artistic trends in the African American art community as a whole. The Museum benefits from a fairly large

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75 *The International Review of African American Art* is published four times a year by the Hampton University Museum.
staff, a high level of professionalism, and critical reviews. Hampton maintains a truly enriched museum environment to provide the highest level of excellence in preserving its collection and presenting its "essence" through research material, structural analysis, and a forum for critical review.

Overall, the Hampton University Museum is a remarkable institution in preserving all aspects of African American aesthetics. Of course standards of preservation can always be improved, yet Hampton stands as a prime institution in all areas concerning the maintenance of their collection. One of the contributing factors to the success of the Hampton University Museum is the support of the administration and the president. The museum is encouraged by the president to raise resources to adequately care for their collection, which is evident by the museum space they have recently moved into that contains four major galleries, three to showcase the collection's focus, and one for changing exhibitions.76

76 Ibid.
Howard University, Washington, DC

History of the University

Howard University is located in Washington, DC. The mission of this historically black university is to provide an educational experience of exceptional quality at a reasonable cost. A specific emphasis is placed on providing educational opportunities for African American men and women and any other disenfranchised groups. Howard University defines itself as a comprehensive research-oriented university, "defined by its core values, the excellence of its activities- its instruction, research, service- and by its enduring commitment to educating youth, African Americans and other people of color in particular, for leadership and service to our nation and the global community." The history of Howard University began in November 1866, shortly after the Civil War, with the member of The First Congregational Society of Washington and their desire to establish a theological seminary for African Americans. This concept soon grew to include a provision for establishing a university. Within two years the university established the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Medicine. The university was named Howard University after the Civil war hero General Oliver O. Howard, both founder of the university and Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau. The University charter was enacted.

77 website: www.howard.edu.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
by Congress and approved by President Andrew Johnson on March 2, 1867. The charter designated this newly established institution as "a university for the education of youth in the liberal arts and sciences." Financial support of the university in its early history was largely provided by The Freedman's Bureau. Congress approved a special appropriation for the university in 1879 that was amended in 1928 to authorize an annual federal appropriation for construction, development, improvement and maintenance of the University.

History of Collecting

The Howard University Gallery of Art was formally established in 1928 through action by the Board of Trustees, as a result of funds being offered by a philanthropic couple of the Washington, DC, area. The initial purpose in establishing the gallery was to "make revolving exhibitions of contemporary arts and crafts available for visitation and study to students." This purpose soon expanded to include loan exhibitions of varying cultures, periods and countries. The Howard University Gallery was first established on the first floor of the Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel on April 7, 1930 with a loan exhibition circulated by the College Art Association. The loan exhibition created an

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82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
environment for excitement and further development. The Howard University Gallery of Art then created a policy and program for the development of a permanent collection. The adopted policy included the following statutes: “to make good works of art available on a permanent basis to the university community; to establish, at least, the nucleus of a loan collection to be made available for use by reputable cultural and university centers; and to gather into the collection, whenever possible, significant works by contemporary artists without reference to the race, color, or creed of the individual artist.”

The permanent collection, at The Howard Gallery of Art, was largely established by the generosity of alumni and friends of the university. This concept of drawing upon resources from the immediate community of constituents still remains true today. The first director of the museum responsible for fostering these relationships was Professor James Vernon Herring. His efforts resulted in the acquisition of Henry O. Tanners’, Return from the Crucifixion, the artist last completed work before his death.

Howard’s collection has also benefited from art foundations, various government branches, and friends of the gallery. During the 1940’s the liquidation of army posts such as Fort Huachuca in Arizona, led to the reallocation of federally owned works of art to Howard’s collection. These works of art were then given to art centers

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69 Ibid.
throughout the country, the Fort Huachuca collection was allocated to Howard University. It was the transference of that collection and other allocations by the government that greatly augmented the collection adding paintings and prints to their newly established collection.\footnote{Ibid.}

In 1941 the Howard University Gallery of Art was relocated to the east wing, ground floor of Founders Library and remained there for ten years. In this space the gallery continued its policy of loan exhibitions as they hosted a variety of traveling exhibitions as well as shows for the faculty and students. The final relocation of the gallery took place in 1961. The Fine Arts complex, which includes, Cramton Auditorium, Ira Aldridge Theatre, and the Lulu Vere Childers Hall (the College of Fine Arts) still remains its home today. The gallery's specific location is in Childers Hall where there are three interconnecting galleries to accommodate the growing collection.\footnote{Ibid., the relocation history of the Howard University Gallery of Art.}

Since the gallery's relocation to the new space Howard has accessioned a multitude of works to enhance its new space. In 1954 Alain Locke bequeathed all of his paintings, books, sculpture, and memorabilia to the Howard University collection. His bequest included three hundred pieces of African sculpture and handicraft and African American art, mostly representing the 1930's and 1940's.\footnote{Ibid.} Three other major donations that now make up the core of the collection were given by the Samuel Kress Foundation in 1961: Renaissance and Baroque work, the Irving Gumbel collection of prints and the Beatrice Cummings
Mayer's bequest of African work in 1990.\textsuperscript{94} The Samuel Kress Foundation gifted a "study collection" that includes twelve Renaissance and Baroque paintings and one sculpture.\textsuperscript{95} This collection was donated because of Howard University's commitment to teaching art history. Some important works in the collection include Giorgione and His Circle, Bernardino Licinio, and the Circle of Domenico Ghirlandaio. The Gumbel collection of prints by European etchers, engravers, mezzotinters, and wood-engravers span the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. The addition of this gift extended the existing collection of prints to include work that covered French Impressionism, German Expressionism, and American Realism of the 1930's and 1940's.\textsuperscript{96} The collection includes notable etchers such as Callot, Lorraine, and engravers such as Heinrich Goltzius, and Lucas Van Leyden.\textsuperscript{97} The Beatrice Cummings Mayer collection includes 121 African objects donated in memory of her late husband Robert B. Mayer.\textsuperscript{98} The acquisition of these works expanded the collection's representation of African art to include works from both Central and South Africa.\textsuperscript{99} The Howard University Gallery of art has an overall collection that has a six part focus- African American art, African art, the Kress study collection, the Far Eastern and Decorative arts collection, the Irving Gumbel print collection, and the Twentieth Century Fine art collection. The Gallery mainly serves as a research center for the University and scholarly communities, and work from each of the major categories is available for scholarly study by appointment.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
Evaluation of Preservation Practices

As an institution dedicated to issues regarding preservation, Howard University Gallery of Art rates satisfactorily. In reference to research methods and materials they rank highly as a scholarly institution dedicated to enriching the students and professional community with an opportunity for practical experience with the objects that represent their theoretical study. In the category of Howard being an institution that uses its research material as a basis for general research information they rank satisfactorily. They emphasize and encourage in-depth research on objects within their collection by those who require more information, yet they need to make an appointment to do so. It is understandable that educational protocol be enforced, yet important information about each work of art synthesized into a concise document would enable better access to those unable to make an appointment. A re-occurring obstacle crucial to preservation consists in providing access to that rich resource, while many HBCU's are only able to provide limited access. Regarding issues of access Howard ranks satisfactorily making provisions for a limited level of scholarly in-depth study for their primary resource. They rank satisfactorily in providing duplicate information when the primary source is inaccessible. Their staff is small, including the Director of the Gallery, Tritobia Benjamin, Scott Baker, and a secretary for the Art Department. They are limited in staffing but always sincere in providing information in regard to the collection. Howard University Gallery of Art is similar

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
to the other two HBCU's in providing easily accessible out of print catalogues and journals. Yet, Howard needs to improve access to these important resources to the art community. Another aspect of preservation regarding research methods and materials consisted in establishing publications that include a variety of art historical approaches. Howard should establish a publication that enriches the field of African American art by analyzing important works within their collection and the different influences that determine various trends. The Howard University Gallery of Art has a plethora of information at their fingertips, and a magnificent staff of art and art history professionals. Unfortunately, their staff is bound by limited time and the priority of their individual class loads. It would be ideal for Howard's residence art historians and artists to gain greater access to works in the collection. A rotation of educational study and analysis by differing professionals at various times within the school calendar would allow for Howard to truly capitalize on the wealth of its primary resource and those equipped professionals who can interpret it. This information could then be organized into a publication, that could initially be brought to the public once or twice a year, with an increase as the program became more established. Publications by institutions that house these important works of art should provide access to that material on a regular basis. This will not only increase the visibility of African American art but will also inform the art world about the rich resources of the Howard University Gallery of Art. Producing a publication that recognizes African American art specifically will invite further art historical interpretation. Such
publications would validate the significance of African American art and highlight the need for their preservation, essential in reaching that goal.

The second important component in preservation discussed in reference to the Howard University Gallery of Art is the establishment of a critical voice. Howard University's currently limited financial and professional resources keeps the institution from realizing its fullest potential in providing a forum for critical analysis. The administration, too, must provide the art department with the support needed in utilizing their primary resource, their collection. Howard University is located in our nation's capital, a perfect asset in encouraging professionals around the nation to gather for forums and discussions concerning African American art. Howard also establishes strong ties with its surrounding community and alumni who can also be a rich resource in financial development and public outreach in accordance with programming. There are a multitude of positive factors that can work for the success of the university in its endeavors toward developing a critical voice. Howard University Gallery of Art also has a magnificent collection of work that transcends the boundaries of African American art and focuses on other significant cultures and trends within the general scope of international art. This is a perfect asset in providing an international dialogue that can benefit both the art world and Howard University.

Overall the Howard University Gallery of Art stands out as an institution dedicated to the preservation of its collection. A greater effort can be made in addressing higher levels of preservation through a concerted commitment by the University administration to extend their vision beyond the local community.
Another important hindrance is the limited access to its collection. The collection should be displayed more frequently on its own rather than the common practice of augmenting traveling shows by work in the collection. Focus on the collection will enhance its visibility in the art world, which may enhance its funding opportunities. In conjunction with Clark Atlanta University, Howard Gallery of Art will never fully flourish to its highest capabilities without the support and guidance of the President and administration. Special interest on the part of the university administration needs to be established for the benefit of the museum. Some administrators may not understand the rich resources they govern. Howard Gallery of Art stands out as a major contributor to tell the history of African American art and culture. The concern is whether they will continue to establish themselves as a contributor to the future preservation of African American art.
Conclusion
Sustaining a Tradition of Excellence for the Future

In conclusion, the three case studies presented, Clark Atlanta University, Hampton University, and Howard University show that HBCU’s have been instrumental in the establishment of repositories of African American art and culture. They have historically acted as guardians of an African American aesthetics within this country. In exploring their current status and their ability to maintain a legacy through preservation I have analyzed each institution according to three major components inherent in the practice of preservation. These components are: (1) research materials and methods, (2) developing a critical voice, and (3) examining the standard art historical structure. All institutions rate satisfactorily in research materials and methods. However, all must improve their individual collections by providing more interpretation and catalogue information. This would support the preservation of the significance of each work. All three universities could also benefit from the duplication of critical material such as out-of-print catalogues and journals. This would give immediate access of vital information to the public and scholars. An increase in accessibility creates an environment for the dialogue concerning African American art to flourish in conjunction with maintaining a crucial standard of preservation. Regarding the issue of creating a critical voice, Hampton University is far more advanced. Their quarterly magazine provides a publication solely dedicated to art historical issues concerning African American art and culture. They stand out
as an example to Clark Atlanta University and Howard University in developing
similar outlets that encourage a discussion about African American art. Clark
Atlanta University has been vital in providing an opportunity to review African
American art when it did not exist with the Art Annuals. Initial enthusiasm that
helped to develop these collections must be maintained as these institutions
encounter the next millennium. In the area of art historical expertise, all of the
Universities need to make a concerted effort and commit themselves to
establishing innovative ways of exploring artistic trends. There are plenty of art
professionals present at HBCU's who are specifically trained in African American
art. It is this specified training in conjunction with a magnificent collection at their
fingertips that can produce a phenomenal new approach to interpreting art.

In reevaluating the importance of preservation to the growth and stability
of these collections, a new vision based on conservation is a major factor in
placing these universities as guardians for the next hundred years. Preservation
figures as a cornerstone for the development of these collections and it will
remain the most important factor in their endurance. HBCU's are continually
expanding their collections, but until issues of preservation are carefully
accessed and backed by a plan of action, the current acquisitions promote the
demise of older works that are not properly cared for. In establishing a
foundation based on the principalities of preservation, these universities could be
a very powerful force in validating African American aesthetics.

The basic practices of preservation are crucial to maintaining these
universities' positions' as guardians of African American art and culture. Through
preservation practices these universities can expand the current collections. Once basic principles of preservation are maintained the current status of works already stored will be enhanced allowing for more work to be obtained. A regulated work ethic and physical environment will enable the growth of these current collections. These universities can then present themselves as a proper repository that attracts future donors. This ensures longevity of the collection in the future. A level of professionalism and ethical standard must be observed and maintained at these universities according to regulations determined by the profession.

In the past Clark Atlanta University, Hampton University, and Howard University initiated policies that allowed them to collect works representing very important aspects of African American culture. It is through their early vision that we may enjoy and learn about African American culture through art. Specifically for the black community these universities represent a major force in preserving African American art. As progenitors and caretakers of such valuable remnants of Black and American culture these universities take on an arduous task of maintaining a high level of professionalism in reference to providing for their collections. Preservation remains the foundation to maintaining a legacy for these institutions for the benefit of their immediate communities, the nation, and an increasingly international art community.
Bibliography


