

A blue-tinted portrait of Amiri Baraka, looking thoughtfully to the left. The image serves as the background for the entire poster.

# AMIRI BARAKA

MEETINGS  
AND  
REMARKABLE  
JOURNEYS

Exhibition and Symposium

SEPT 16 - NOV 30

The Robert and Sallie Brown  
Gallery and Museum

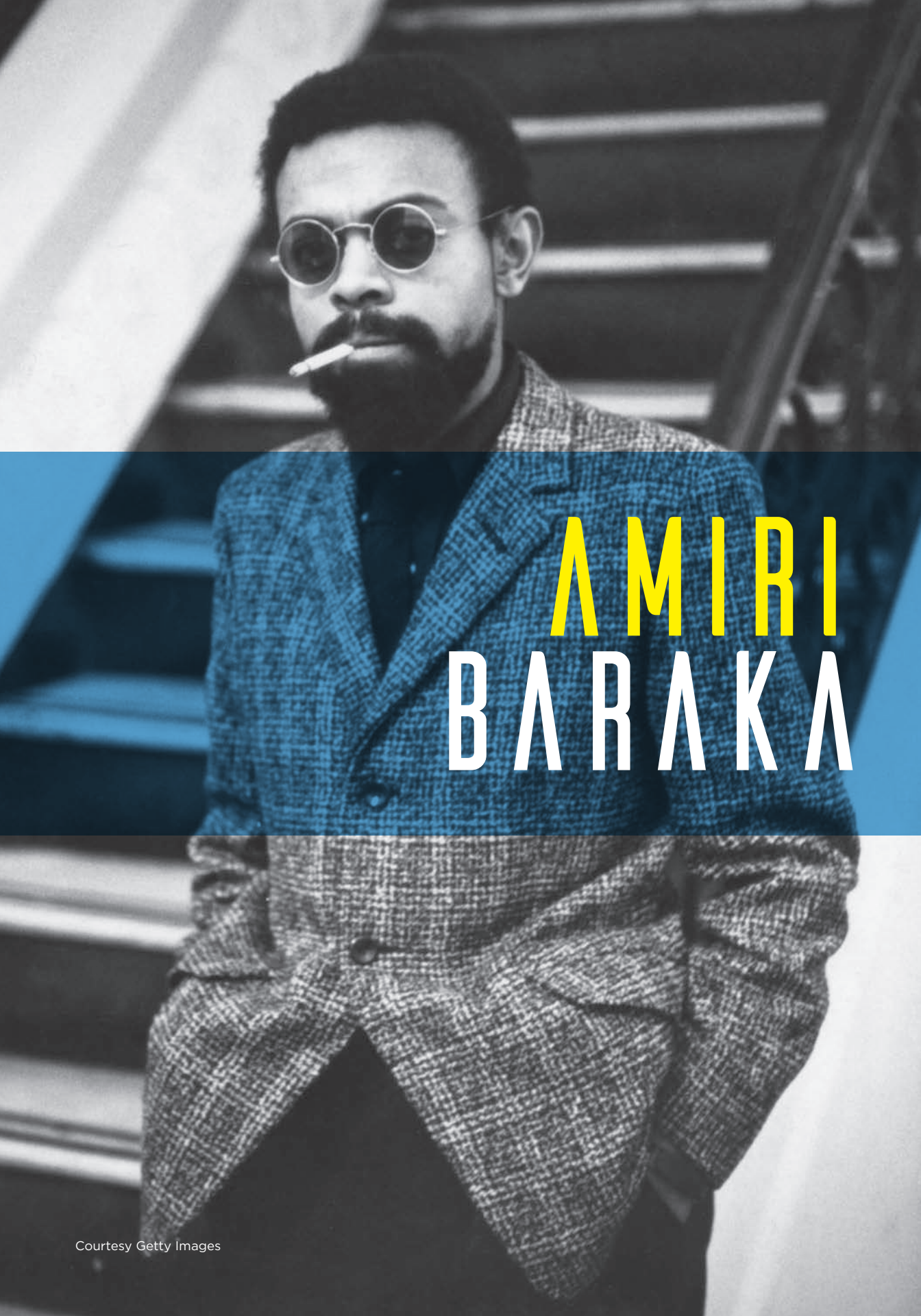
The Sonja Haynes Stone Center  
for Black Culture and History

The University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill



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THE SONJA HAYNES STONE  
CENTER FOR BLACK CULTURE  
AND HISTORY



AMIRI  
BARAKA

# MEETINGS AND REMARKABLE JOURNEYS

Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones), widely regarded as one of the most important writers and critical thinkers in contemporary America, and a seminal figure in the most significant African American artistic and political movements of the past 60 years, passed away on January 9, 2014. This exhibition offers us an opportunity to critically reflect on Baraka's contributions to the social history of the United States, to consider his central role in defining the emerging artistic consciousness of the African American community, and his relevance to a wider and more global conversation on human rights and dignity.

*Amiri Baraka — Meetings and Remarkable Journeys* traces the artistic and political development of Baraka over a period of more than four decades, from his bohemian excursions with the Beat writers the period after which a nascent idea of Black consciousness developed in his work, his move into cultural nationalism followed by a period of revolutionary Pan Africanism, and finally his evolution into a self-defined Third World Marxist. During each of these stages he always offered incisive, critical, and sometimes polemical, analyses of U.S. society and culture, and world affairs.

The exhibition includes posters, photographs, broadsides, publications, documents and original artwork that chronicle significant moments in Baraka's life and help us to follow the evolution of his ideas and politics. Certain tracts of his poems, essays, music reviews, and plays that are representative of each period are highlighted. Visitors will also see rare and rarely seen material including early manuscripts and journals collected by exhibition sponsor and close friend of Baraka, Alden Kimbrough and the Kimbrough family.

Baraka's story, and his life and work, are also viewed in context and the exhibition takes advantage of this unique opportunity to highlight some of his contemporaries who were also key figures in the struggle for Black identity and self-determination. Those contemporaries of Baraka, many who are still active in both artistic and political circles today, were and are key figures in the intellectual evolution of the contemporary black liberation struggle, which, in turn, is a reflection of Baraka's own personal and artistic development. His was a decidedly African American or Black perspective that continued to evolve throughout his lifetime but always, consistently challenged mainstream or Eurocentric world views.

*Amiri Baraka — Meetings and Remarkable Journeys* is intended to offer patrons the opportunity to interrogate the whole of his career in its wonderful and sometimes fearsome clarity, as well as its moments of ambiguity and irresponsibility that became part of the lore about his life. We open the exhibition acknowledging both the imperfection and the genius that marked his life from the very beginning of his career.

No curator could, or would ever claim to have fully accounted for either in showing the letters, writings, photographs, poetry, drama and other artistic and political materials that are generally understood to be part of his legacy. The public Baraka freely and frequently gave away too many personal treasures for any one repository to claim to have the most important of them. We are fortunate that Alden Kimbrough, and the Kimbrough family, kept and maintained the items you see here and continue to make them available to those interested in the meetings and remarkable journeys of Amiri Baraka.

# THE KIMBROUGH FAMILY AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL COLLECTION

The Kimbrough Family African American Historical Collection, perhaps, had its genesis in September 1934, when Dr. Jack Kimbrough, father of Jackie Kimbrough-Ryan, Alden Kimbrough, Mary Kimbrough and John Kimbrough received a gift, an inscribed and dated copy of *Paul Robeson Negro*, authored by Robeson's wife, Eslanda Goode Robeson. The book is dated September 2, 1934, several months after Jack Kimbrough arrived in San Diego to begin his dental practice. We believe this book constitutes the core and one of the initial building blocks of what is now a major comprehensive collection of African Art, books, records, autographs, photographs and other Black archival memorabilia that the Kimbrough children grew up with in the 1930s, 40s and 50s in San Diego.

The Kimbrough children have always credited their parents for instilling in us a thirst for knowledge of Black History and Culture. Jack Kimbrough, himself, as an activist in early Black San Diego History, was elected president of the NAACP in 1947 in San Diego, and organized sit-ins to desegregate hotels and restaurants throughout the city. He also organized the first chapter of the San Diego Urban League and served as its first president. He was also active in his profession as a dentist, and was eventually appointed to the California State Board of Dental Examiners, later becoming their president in 1968 for a two-year term. In 1936, he married Quincella Nickerson, the

daughter of William Nickerson Jr., the founder of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company in Los Angeles. She was a founding member of Las Muncas, a Children's Home Society adoption program for Black and Latino children. She was also a founding member of the African Arts Committee and the Tema, Ghana - San Diego Sister Cities.

Their father's special interest in collecting centered on first editions of Black American fiction and Black slave narratives. Later, he specialized in collecting rare African Art, lecturing and exhibiting his collection throughout Southern California.

Alden, Mary and Jackie, using Los Angeles as a base, have maintained the family's continuing interest in historical exhibitions that document Black struggles against racism, sexism and imperialism. Today, we continue to facilitate and organize exhibitions that showcase Black historical memorabilia, rare books, Black liberation art posters, early Black movies posters, with major exhibitions focusing on Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party, African Liberation Movements, and the life and struggles of the great artist Paul Robeson. The Stone Center's exhibition, *Meetings and Remarkable Journeys*, provides an opportunity to present a significant literary exhibition documenting the life and writing career of the great poet, essayist and novelist Amiri Baraka, formerly known as, LeRoi Jones.



# EXHIBITION AND SYMPOSIUM PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

**John Bracey Jr.**, Professor and Chair, W.E.B. Dubois Dept. of Afro-American Studies, Univ. of Massachusetts-Amherst; co-editor, *SOS — Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader* (Ed. with Sonia Sanchez and James Smethurst); *African American Mosaic: A Documentary History from the Slave Trade to the Twenty-First Century* (with Manisha Sinha).

**Alex Carter** is a doctoral candidate at the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst focusing on the Black Panther Party's international influence on social movements, specifically, with the Dalit Panthers of South Asia and the National Black Theatre of Sydney and the political and cultural dialogue between the Black Power movement in the U.S. and aboriginal Australian activists in the 1970s.

**Mae Henderson**, Prof. Emer., UNC at Chapel Hill – author of *Speaking in Tongues* and *Dancing Diaspora: Black Women Writing and Performing*; co-editor with Patrick Johnson of *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*; *Borders, Boundaries and Frames* (1995), co-editor (with John Blassingame) of the five-volume *Antislavery Newspapers and Periodicals: An Annotated Index of Letters*.

**Lita Hooper**, poet and educator whose work has appeared in several anthologies, including *Tempu Tumpu/Walking Naked: African Women's Poetic Self-portraits*, and *Role Call: A Generational Anthology of Social and Political Black Literature and Art*.

**E. Ethelbert Miller** is a board member of The Writer's Center and editor of *Poet Lore* magazine. He is the former director of the African American Resource Center at Howard University and his book of poetry, *In Search of Color Everywhere*, won the 1994 PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award and was a Book of the Month Club selection. He was awarded an honorary doctorate of literature from Emory & Henry College in May 1996.

**Mark Anthony Neal**, Prof., Duke University – author of *New Black Man* (Routledge); co-editor with Murray Forman, *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*; *Black Popular Culture* and the *Post-Soul Aesthetic*; *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture*.

**Woodie King, Jr.**, director, playwright and author who edited some of the most important early collections on Black Drama, dating back to the early 1970s. He also directed Amiri Baraka's *Most Dangerous Man in America* at the Castillo Theater in cooperation with the New Federal Theater (May 28 – June 28). King is a long-time friend and confidant of Baraka and directed both traditional and non-traditional interpretations of his work.



Courtesy AP Images

**Amy Abugo Ongiri**, Jill Beck Director of Film Studies and Associate Professor of Film Studies at Lawrence University and author of *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic*.

**Sonia Sanchez**, has served as the Laura Carnell Professor of English and Women's Studies at Temple University and was awarded both the Robert Frost Medal for distinguished lifetime service to American poetry and the Langston Hughes Poetry Award. One of the most important writers to come out of the Black Arts Movement, Sanchez is the author of sixteen books, including *SOS — Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader* (Ed. with John H. Bracey Jr., and James Smethurst)

**Michael Simanga** is the former Executive Director of the National Black Arts Festival and author of *Amiri Baraka and the Congress of African People: History and Memory* (Palgrave 2015); a novel, *In the Shadow of the Son*, and co-editor (with Sonia Sanchez and Lita Hooper) of the anthology, *44 on 44: Forty-four African American Writers on the Election of the Forty-fourth President, Barack Obama*. He is also co-editor (with Haki Madhubuti, Sonia Sanchez and Woodie King, Jr) of *Brilliant Fire: Amiri Baraka, Poetry, Plays and Politics for the People*.

**James Smethurst**, Professor, W.E.B Dubois Dept. of Afro-American Studies, UMass Amherst, co-editor, *SOS — Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader* (Ed. With John H. Bracey Jr., and Sonia Sanchez); *The African American Roots of Modernism: Reconstruction to the Harlem Renaissance; Radicalism in the South since Reconstruction* (Ed. With Chris Green and Rachel Rubin); and *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*.

**Komozi Woodard**, Assoc. Prof., Sarah Lawrence College - author of *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka and Black Power Politics; Editor, The Black Power Movement, Part I: Amiri Baraka, From Black Arts to Black Radicalism; Freedom North; Want to Start a Revolution?: Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*.

# EXHIBITION AND SYMPOSIUM FILMS

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## **Norman Mailer vs. LeRoi Jones or The White Negro vs. The Black Nationalist**

Courtesy of Museum of Broadcast Communications (Chicago)  
Produced by David Susskind / 1966 / 50 min.

From David Susskind's *Open End* series, titled *The Negro Revolution*, sees a radicalized Jones facing off against author and intellectual gadfly Norman Mailer. The two discuss a broad range of topics (the history of slavery, Lyndon Johnson, technology) but it's Jones who holds the floor, parrying with Susskind and Mailer as he portents, in no uncertain terms, the coming of the Black Power movement.

## **The Breath Courses Through Us: A Documentary About the New York Art Quartet**

Courtesy of Alan Roth, director & producer; and Asymmetric Pictures  
Dir. Alan Roth / 2013 / 75 min.

*The Breath Courses Through Us* is a documentary film about the early 1960s avant-garde jazz group, the New York Art Quartet. *The Breath Courses Through Us* mirrors 1960's improvisational style of "free jazz" that subverted the traditional structure of jazz. Unfolding in free time and enveloped in their music, the film helps the viewer better understand the human element of the creative process. The New York Art Quartet was John Tchicai (saxophone), Roswell Rudd (trombone) and Milford Graves (percussion), the group formed in 1964 and lasted only until the end of 1965. Poet Amiri Baraka often read his poetry at their gigs, and read his famous poem, *Black Dada Nihilismus*, on the group's first album.

## **The New-Ark**

Courtesy of the Harvard Film Archive  
Dir. LeRoi Jones / 1968 / 25 min.

The second film Jones scripted and directed came at the invitation of the Public Broadcast Laboratory. This largely unseen documentary, an invocation of the politics of Black Cultural Nationalism, was shot entirely in Jones' birthplace, Newark, NJ, where, in 1965, he relocated from Harlem. Scenes inside The Spirit House theater-school, are intercut with shots of a community's struggle for organization and self-determination after the devastating riots of 1967.



## Soull: Baraka the Artist

Courtesy of WNET New York Public Media  
1972 / 52 min.

A landmark entertainment-variety-talk show, which aired on New York's WNET Channel 13, SOUL! was not only a vehicle to promote African-American artistry, community, and culture, but also a platform for political expression and the fight for social justice. It showcased classic live musical performances from funk, soul, jazz, and world musicians, and featured in-depth, extraordinary interviews with political, sports, literary figures, and more. This episode, dedicated entirely to the artistry of Amiri Baraka, sees host Ellis Haizlip discussing with Baraka the politics of Pan-Africanism and developments within the Black Arts movement, interspersed with Baraka reading from his work. Recorded and broadcast live on November 8, 1972.

## The Baraka Statement

Courtesy of WNET New York Public Media  
1975 / 15 min.

Excerpted from the news digest program *The 51st State: A Trains, Atoms and Apples*, Baraka here reads from his work and, in an interview, definitively renounces separatism, speaks of the troubles continuing to face his native Newark, and articulates the Third World Marxist ideology he adopted in the mid-1970s.

## One P.M.

Courtesy of Pennebaker Hegedus Films  
Dirs. Jean-Luc Godard, D.A. Pennebaker & Richard Leacock / 1972 / 55 min.

In November 1968, Jean-Luc Godard, with the assistance of D.A. Pennebaker and Richard Leacock, came to America to document what he believed was the impending sequel to the American Revolution. This excerpt, filmed outside of Baraka's Spirit House at 33 Stirling Street in Newark, NJ, sees Baraka and the Spirit House Movers, an ever-evolving group of actors, poets, and musicians, running the voodoo down on white America and, by extension, one very befuddled pro-Chinese Swiss filmmaker.

## Dutchman

Dir. Anthony Harvey With Al Freeman Jr. & Shirley Knight / 1967 / 55 min.

Premiering in March 1964, *Dutchman* won Baraka an Obie Award, the most prestigious distinction given to an off-Broadway production. Made into a film three years later, the play's action concerns the relationship between Clay, a Black man from the aspiring middle class, and Lula, a blonde seductress of unknown origin whose infernal presence hints at the lower depths. *Dutchman* is an allegory, one whose power derives from Baraka's mastery of poetic language and prophetic insight into the political and spiritual turmoil to come (for Baraka and the nation as a whole) after the assassination of Malcolm X.

## Medea

Courtesy of director Ben Caldwell and University California Los Angeles (UCLA) Film & Television Archive  
Dir. Ben Caldwell / 1973 / 7 min.

A collage piece made on an animation stand and edited entirely in-camera, *Medea* combines live action and rapidly-edited still images of Africans and African Americans which function like flashes of history that the unborn child will inherit. Caldwell invokes Baraka's poem *Part of the Doctrine* in this experimental meditation on art history, Black imagery, identity, and heritage.

## BaddDDD Sonia Sanchez

Courtesy of filmmakers Barbara Attie, Janet Goldwater and Sabrina Schmidt Gordon and California Newsreel  
Dirs. Barbara Attie, Janet Goldwater, Sabrina Schmidt Gordon / 2015 / 90 mins.

A documentary rich with readings and jazz-accompanied performances of her work, with appearances by Questlove, Talib Kweli, Ursula Rucker, Amiri Baraka, Haki Madhubuti, Jessica Care Moore, Ruby Dee, Yasiin Bey, Ayana Mathis, Imani Uzuri and Bryonn Bain, the documentary examines Sanchez's contribution to the world of poetry, her singular place in the Black Arts Movement and her leadership role in African American culture over the last half century. She emerged as a seminal figure in the 1960s Black Arts Movement, raising her voice in the name of black culture, civil rights, women's liberation, and peace as a poet, playwright, teacher, activist and early champion of the spoken word.



### About the Robert and Sallie Brown Gallery and Museum

The Robert and Sallie Brown Gallery and Museum at the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History is dedicated to the enrichment of visual culture on campus and in the community. The Brown Gallery supports the Stone Center's commitment to the critical examination of African-American and African diaspora cultures through formal exhibitions of works of art, artifacts and material culture.

### History and Overview of the Stone Center

The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a campus-wide Center situated under the Provost's Office. We play a central role in defining and supporting the academic mission of the University. We have a commitment to broaden the range of intellectual discourse about African Americans and to encourage a better understanding of the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora and their perspectives on important social and cultural issues.

— | THE SONJA HAYNES STONE CENTER | —  
*for* BLACK CULTURE AND HISTORY | —  
*The UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL*

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# AMIRI BARAKA

## MEETINGS AND REMARKABLE JOURNEYS

Exhibition and Symposium

### Special Thanks to Our Co-Sponsors

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Douglass Hunt Lecture Fund/Carolina Seminars  
The Alden and Mary Kimbrough Collection, Los Angeles  
The Friends of the Robert and Sallie Brown Gallery and Museum  
Institute of African American Research  
Department of Jazz Studies

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**The exhibition and all events associated with it are free and open to the public. The Stone Center is ADA compliant. Free visitor parking is available in the Bell Tower parking deck behind the Stone Center after 5pm. Call for directions and for visitor parking before 5pm.**



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