COLOMBUS OHIO -- Painter Pheoris West said the “Past, Current & Upcoming African American Artists” exhibit has given him an opportunity to meet artists who are relatively new to the scene and reconnect with his peers.

By CHRIS BOURNEA

Staff Writer

Fans of central Ohio artists can see the work of established artists as well as those who are making a name for themselves in “Past, Current & Upcoming African American Artists,” currently on view in the Elijah Pierce Gallery of the King Arts Complex, 867 Mt. Vernon Ave.

The 65 works featured in the exhibit represent a variety of media, from oil and acrylic paintings to woodcarving, bronze and stone sculptures and mixed-media works.

“When I think of art, it lifts the spirit,” said King Arts Complex Executive Director Demetrius Neely. “Art helps us process this thing called the human condition.”

The exhibit provides a unique opportunity for visitors to the Elijah Pierce Gallery to view the work of veteran artists as well as those who are just beginning to assemble a body of work, said Bettye Stull, the exhibit's curator.

"What a privilege for new artists to show with seasoned artists, artists who have been showing all over the world," she said. "We have such great artists here in Columbus, Ohio, certainly with an international reputation."

During an opening reception on Nov. 1, artists featured in the exhibit shared their thoughts on the future of Columbus' African-American arts community.

Stone carver Omar Shaheed, whose works have been exhibited in Los Angeles and Negril, Jamaica, said his career has thrived since he's lived in Columbus.

"Columbus has really been good to me," Shaheed said. "I've been able to create work I couldn't have imagined creating anywhere else."

Painter Wendy Kendrick said she enjoyed discovering Columbus' art community when she moved here 20 years ago. She thanked supporters for keeping Columbus' Black art scene alive.

"It's so important for you to come out and support us," Kendrick said. "It encourages us. It allows us to connect with each and every one of you."

Painter Pheoris West said the "Past, Current & Upcoming African American Artists" exhibit has given him an opportunity to meet artists who are relatively new to the scene and reconnect with his peers.

"I think it's an honor to be in an exhibition such as this," he said. "I'm really excited that we have artists from the past, some of my good friends, and new artists."

One of the newer artists featured in “Past, Current & Upcoming African American Artists,” April Sunami, said the exhibit has provided her with valuable exposure.

“I’m honored to be here and to be part of this vibrant arts community,” she said.

Woodcarver Queen Brooks, who has been a staple on the local and national art scenes for more than 20 years, said she has enjoyed familiarizing herself with the works of up-and-coming artists.

“I’m so looking forward to meeting new artists that I don’t know and whose work I’m thrilled to look at,” she said.

Artist Thelma Golden said the “Past, Current & Upcoming African American Artists” exhibit serves as a reminder of the importance of supporting African-American art.

“Black art has not died. We need more collectors,” she said. “If you like that artist, support that artist.”

For exhibit hours and more information, call (614) 645-5464 or visit Kingartscomplex.com.