

Willis Bing Davis



Willis Bing Davis was born in Greer, South Carolina but grew up in Dayton, Ohio where he lives today. He attended DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, graduating in 1959. He also attended the school of the Dayton Art Institute and received his Master of Education degree in 1967 from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Davis also pursued graduate study at Indiana State University from 1975-1976. His career as an educator includes: teaching in the Dayton Public School System; Teaching at DePauw and Miami Universities; and twenty years at Central State University (CSU) in Wilberforce, Ohio. While at CSU, Mr. Davis was also Chair of the Art Department and Director of the Paul Robeson Cultural and Performing Arts Center. He has also served as an artist-in-residence for the School of Education at the University of Dayton, and visiting scholar at Wright State University. He is Acting Treasurer of National Conference of Artists (NCA).

Davis' record as an artist and a curator is equally illustrious, including exhibitions at Studio Museum of Harlem, American Craft Museum, Renwick Gallery, Maryland Institute College of Art, Savannah College of Art and Design, Anacostia Museum, National Museum of Art of Senegal West Africa, United States Embassy Accra, Ghana and Museum fur Angewandte Kunst (Museum of Applied Arts, Frankfurt, Germany).

His art can be found in public and private collections in the USA, England, China, Japan, France, Australia, plus Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Namibia, and Gabon on the Continent of Africa.

Bing's 40 plus years of teaching art included elementary, high school, and universities. His creative and innovative approach to teaching, learning, and human development through the arts resulted in his receiving state, national and international acclaim, including **Ohio Art Educator of the Year, Individual Artist of the Year, Ohio Designer Craftsman of the year, Ohioana Pegasus Award** in 2001, and the **Ohio Governor's Irma Lazarus Lifetime Achievement Award** in 2009, the highest art award given in the state of Ohio.

He participated in the recent *Stop Asking: We Exist* exhibition of African-American craft art at the Society for Contemporary Crafts in Pittsburgh and was curator for the popular and groundbreaking exhibition *Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects: The Legacy of African American Craft Art* that toured the United States in the mid-1990's, organized by the National Afro-American Museum & Cultural Center in Wilberforce, OH.

Since retiring from teaching in 1998, he has opened the Davis Art Studio and EbonNia Gallery in the historic Wright-Dunbar Business District where fine arts and crafts are produced by Bing, Audrey, and son, Derrick Davis. Youth and community art and cultural activities are coordinated through SHANGO: Center for the Study of African American Art and Culture (501C3).

Mr. Davis is a lifetime member of The National Conference of Artists (NCA) the oldest arts organization dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and enhancement of African American visual artists. Davis is the Co-Chair of the Executive Board of Directors of this organization of African American artists, art educators, art historians, museum personnel, gallery owners, collectors, and art students.