

Shy genius Bongani

BONGANI SHANGE, resident artist at the Community Arts Project, Mowbray, is a very private person. One is almost surprised that a slim and broad-shouldered ebony giant of six-foot-four could be so shy, almost to the point of diffidence. It's only when you mention the word 'art' that he opens up and words

flow softly. Now and then he raises his voice to stress a point.

Art is his whole being and he is wrapped up in its creation. Music of all sorts he finds a necessary ingredient. It inspires him to create on paper what he sees around him, and invariably his subjects are people.

Bongani might not

readily open up towards adults but he displays complete empathy with children who gathered around him while the interview was done.

He did not attend formal art classes as art is not a subject taught at African schools but he was always obsessed with creating pictures.

Luckily for Bongani, he has an uncle who is an artist whose fame has spread beyond the borders of South Africa. Sydney Khumalo is a sculpture of distinction as well as painter whose works are sought all over. He was the main inspiration for a youthful Bongani.

Showing his proficiency in graphic works, Bogani has now moved into sculpture.

He has exhibited his works in group showings in Durban and Pretoria, and had a one-man show in Cape Town.