

Symbolism Is Big in Sculptor

Manley's Work

Burnett

on

Art

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Edna Manley, whose sculpture is being exhibited at Spelman College through the balance of this month, has had an active and rewarding life in many respects. She was born in Cornwell, England, but after her marriage at the age of 20, she moved with her husband to Jamaica, where

her husband and son, successively, were prime ministers.

But more importantly, in some ways, she has had 50 productive years to be active in the arts in an area in which she could be an example and in which she could strengthen Jamaican life, bringing it into contemporary society in a meaningful way. Her own

work and her influence in supporting others at a time and in a place such as Jamaica have offered challenges not

many people are afforded in their lives.

With those things in mind, one can more fully appreciate the significance of the exhibit at Spelman.

IN THIS country, we are used to seeing sculpture which has the general conformations of the Manley work. We see it here in Atlanta in the work of Julian Harris, and on the national scene, we have seen it in the work of Zorach and many others who were powerful forces in the period between the world wars and into the 40s.

The images are the "semi-abstract," the Art Deco images, the highly stylized figures which were so important as a phase in 20th Century art, leading from naturalistic representation and often sterile classicism to the more clinical forms of abstract art.

Mrs. Manley's work has an agreeable, sympathetic, direct quality which undoubtedly will continue to maintain itself for some time to come, even among the changes which have inevitably taken place in Jamaica as well as the rest of the world.

she apparently was attracted to the humanistic themes of the Jamaican native population very early in her career

and her work in its best examples, seeks out those qualities she saw among the blacks of her island home.

Symbolism is extremely

important in the sculptural forms in which she worked and her versions of "The Night," "Young Girl," an Eve-like theme, "The Generations," "Horse of the Morning," and others, typify the sculptor's penchant for containing literary meanings in three dimensional design.

Her carving, and in this exhibit, the works are executed primarily in wood although she has used all mediums, is economical, sure handed and strong.

National Library of Jamaica

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