

EDNA MANLEY, THE SEVENTIES

An exhibition of 80 works by renowned Jamaican artist, Edna Manley opened on Monday night (April 14) at the National Gallery, Devon House.

Entitled "Edna Manley, the Seventies," the exhibition is a survey of the artist's work of the past decade, and the Gallery's salute to the Institute of Jamaica's centenary celebration.

These works include wood carvings and drawings and a portfolio of silk screen prints which are destined for both the local and United States markets.

A large crowd, headed by Governor General, Florizel Glasspole; the Prime Minister, Michael Manley and Mrs. Manley; Parliamentarians; Members of the Diplomatic Corps; artists and art lovers turned out to share this special evening with Mrs. Manley.

The Chairman of the Board of the National Gallery, John Maxwell who welcomed the guests and apologised for the unavoidable absence of the guest speaker, Sir Philip Sherlock, told the guests that they were attending a function which marked Mrs. Manley's 80th year. He said she was Jamaica's senior practising artist and "the mother of the Arts." He then read Sir Philip's speech.

Sir Philip in paying tribute to Mrs. Manley, described her as "a woman of great loyalty and courage, an artist of extraordinary perception," who "had enriched our lives by her

example and her work."

Speaking of what he termed "the electric decade of the 30's," he observed that we were fortunate to have "an artist in our midst ... whose vision matched the time, a sculptor who strove for technical perfection" and who built these elements into the art movement.

Sir Philip noted that Mrs. Manley stimulated many artists like Huie, Campbell and Daley, as well as poets like George Campbell and Mike Smith who "grew up to be themselves." He ended his tribute with a poem dedicated to Mrs. Manley which was written when he first saw her drawing, "The Ascension."

Among other persons who paid tribute to Mrs. Manley were Miss Pamela O'Gorman, Director of the School of Music and Professor Rex Nettleford both of whom attested to Mrs. Manley's work as an artist both

nationally and internationally.

At the end of his tribute, Professor Nettleford announced that Mrs. Manley was being awarded the Order of Merit (O.M.) for her original, unique and lasting contribution to the development of Art and Literature in Jamaica, for the central role she has helped to make them play in the self-government movement and the process of nation-building and in recognition of the considerable international distinction and eminence she has achieved both for herself and for her country in the field of sculpture.

Following the announcement, Mrs. Manley was presented with the insignia by the Governor General.

She replied graciously to the tributes paid to her, and exhorted her audience to "go back to the love of country, the love of people, and the love of work."