

THE INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA,

For the Encouragement of Literature

Science and Art.

KINGSTON, JAMAICA, W.I.

MANLEY, EDNA

May 16, 1980

THE HONOURABLE EDNA MANLEY, O.M.

Mrs Edna Manley is the doyen of artists in Jamaica. As Jamaica's foremost sculptor and inspirer of other artists she was awarded the Gold Musgrave Medal of the Institute of Jamaica in 1943 for the encouragement of Art and Literature. This was the first gold medal awarded by the Institute since the awards began in 1904.

Of Edna Manley's unique achievement as a sculptor, it is difficult to speak temperately. Dr David Boxer, Curator of the National Gallery of Jamaica speaks of "the inspired and formal elegance of [her] first Jamaican works"; "the voluptuous masses ... tamed by an underlying cubist geometry" in her work of the Twenties, the "poetic ambiguity" of the Ndomi sculptures. And, overall, Dr Boxer points to her development of "a personal iconography which was to be highly influential in creating a nationalist iconography in the late Thirties and Forties". Her work in the Seventies is currently in display at the National Gallery of Jamaica.

Mrs Manley stands out as a brilliant leader both in Art and in Literature. She was the Editor of the seminal literary review FOCUS in which was published poems, short stories, plays and essays representing the modern movement in Jamaican literature. Edna Manley was a remarkable editor - a suggested omission or inclusion would transform a minor work into a masterpiece.

Mrs Manley who married National Hero Norman Washington Manley in 1921 has two sons, Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica since 1972 and Douglas Manley, who held ministerial office.

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