

From: 25th Anniversary
Pub. Norman
Manley Award
Foundation.
(1994)

Art 1985

MALLICA REYNOLDS

"KAPO", O.D, is being honoured in 1985 for his work as an artist of great accomplishment. Born in the early part of the century when Jamaica was still under colonial rule, it is significant that he had no exhibition here until we gained our Independence. Since then he has gained national and international fame.

A vital artist, his work spills out onto the canvas in a totally honest fashion and confronts us. He is convinced that his artistic power is God given.

He has won many awards and prizes including a silver musgrave medal from the Institute of Jamaica and multiple prizes in our Festival competitions. He was awarded the Order of Distinction for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts.

KAPO is a Jamaican Art Institution - a national treasure. His work is covered in major collections here and abroad, and hangs in major museums in Europe and the Americas. He can properly be termed a "Nationalist Painter" who has developed a distinct and unique style which ranks him as the true innovator. He has contributed magnificently to the development of the truly indigenous iconography of the Jamaican school.

The Jamaican school, is essentially of Art that has developed as an integral part of the national, anti-colonialist consciousness underlying the cultural and intellectual life of the island since the 1920's.

It is properly and customarily dated from 1922 when we had the good fortune to have Edna Manley arrive among us. She nurtured the seeds of the Ja-



maican school and took pride and joy in the flowering.

KAPO is an integral part of this movement and has played a critical role in honing our cultural identity.

Dr. David Boxer, the distinguished Director, Curator of our National Gallery says of KAPO, "In this unique artist we have one of the finest painters of our time ... an undoubted master."

Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga said succinctly, "He is one of our country's great resources. There is a strong link between his art and the African tradition which forms so important a part of Jamaica's Heritage. There is a clear relationship to that tradition in the unity of the spiritual and the representative forms in his work."

KAPO has exhibited in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, London, Toronto, Ottawa, Amsterdam, and last

but not least, Kingston. His work is even in a Royal Collection.

Professor Nettleford says, "Artists like these closely observed and keenly studied are as guides to the aesthetic certitude which must be rooted in our own creative potential if the world is to take it seriously as creators rather than imitators ... they are the embodiment of that creative tension between tradition and revolution, between an ancestral past and groping but hopefully, self assured future."

KAPO himself says, "It is not easy to paint - it is not easy to do anything. Don't you even think that things will fall down from the sky. You must work and work together."

The journey continues but to mark its progress we honour one of the most original and powerful painters that Jamaica has yet produced. A man born Mallica Reynolds, but known and loved as KAPO.

