

Differing abstract media enhance Rutgers exhibit

New Jersey artist Mel Edwards and prominent New York painter George MacNeil share the spotlight in two new exhibits currently at Rutgers University's Robeson Center Gallery, 350 Martin Luther King Blvd., Newark.

The two artists share in the influence of the abstract art movement. However, their styles and media differ greatly, providing contrast.

Edwards' geometric wall sculptures are being displayed as part of the gallery's New Jersey Artist Series. His abstract steel designs will be on view in Gallery II until Sept. 13.

The abstract landscapes of George MacNeil are featured in Gallery I of the art center, also through Sept. 13. The 12-painting display, entitled "Abstractscapes," is a small selection from his work from 1977-84.

Edwards is an art professor at Rutgers' Mason Gross School of Creative and Performing Arts in New Brunswick. The exhibit, entitled "Lynch Fragment Series," displays 25 of his wall sculptures representative of his work over the last 10 years. The welded steel, nuts, bolts and barbed wire depict lynch-mob scenes. According to the artist, the sculptures are based on stories told to him by relatives while growing up in the South.

Edwards' sculptures have been widely exhibited, including shows in the Jersey City Museum, Los Angeles

County Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

The influences of the expressionism and structuralism of such artists as Hofmann, Cezanne and Matisse are evident in MacNeil's early pieces, and provide a foundation for his bold colors and straightforward style.

An innovator of abstract expressionism in the 1940s and '50s, MacNeil continued to perfect his style despite the lack of public enthusiasm.

The opposing elements in the paintings create fresh and vibrant landscapes. The artist mixes thin and thick surfaces, hot and cold colors, and delicate and crude lines. This juxtaposition creates the excitement and spontaneity of MacNeil's work.

MacNeil's abstractscapes are only suggestions of a landscape. The relationships between the horizon, ground and figures are not easily grasped. The images of birds, clouds and mountains are simple, yet they have a richness of color and texture.

A former art instructor at New York's Pratt Institute, MacNeil is affiliated with the Gruenebaum Gallery in New York.

The two exhibits are funded in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Summer gallery hours are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.



ART OPENING

EAST HANOVER (Nabisco Brands USA Gallery, River Road and DeForest Avenue)—25th anniversary of the Great Swamp, Monday through Aug. 30.

HOPEWELL (AT&T Corporate Education Center Gallery, Carter Road)—"Flowers in Bloom," featuring colored pencil and ink drawings by Aundrea N. Wright, Friday through Aug. 20.

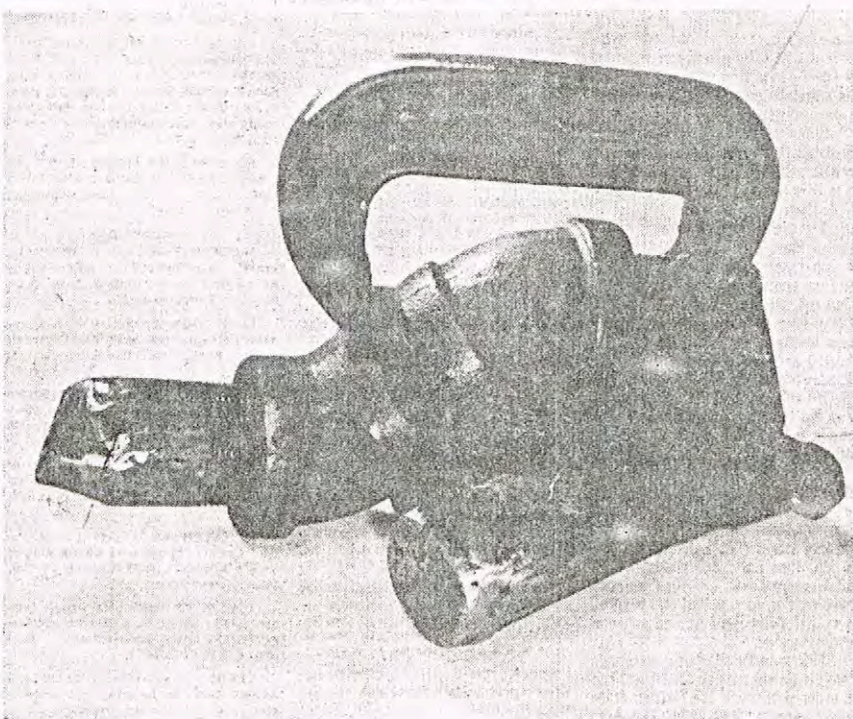
MILLBURN (Fossaner Art Gallery, Paper Mill Playhouse, Brookside Drive)—New Jersey Papermakers, Tuesday through Aug. 15.

NEWARK (The Newark Museum, 49 Washington St.)—"The Painter's Print" features four printmakers working with monotypes. Now through Aug. 16.

PARAMUS (Bergen Museum of Art and Science, Ridgewood and Fairview avenues)—"Through the Eyes of Children," Wednesday through Aug. 25.

PRINCETON (Conant Hall, Educational Testing Service, Rosedale Road)—Paintings and drawings by Ronald Berlin through July 31.

PRINCETON (Princeton Gallery of Fine Art, 8 Chambers St.)—"New Talent, New Jersey," features seven artists from Princeton area. Thursday through Aug. 16.



(Above) 'Landscape abstraction #2,' by George MacNeil, done in 1976 and on view at the Robeson Center of the Rutgers, Newark exhibition

(Left) Edwards' 1983 work 'Hikuba,' made of steel, part of the Robeson Center series in Newark