

# Works of Jamaican artist featured in Harvard exhibit

Edward Strickland

(Bryan McFarlane: Recent Paintings at the Afro-American Library, Lamont Library, Harvard University, through December 20.)

Under the guidance of its manager, Rene Westbrook, the Afro-American Library at Harvard University provides cultural services that go beyond books and periodicals. Currently on display are paintings by Bryan McFarlane, a young Jamaica artist who has been in the United States since 1980. He is a member of the Afro-American Master Artist in Residence Program at Northeastern University, and he teaches at Massachusetts College of Art.

McFarlane's works at the Afro-American Library are exclusively landscapes in oil, watercolor and pastels. Their locales are Jamaica, whose lush vegetation and blue-green mountains dominate his canvases, and New England suburbs, whose shapes of roof-tops call forth distinctly different painterly approaches.

His watercolor, "Poetics of Winter, I" depicts buildings in Brookline, Massachusetts with cool colors, whites, blues and pinks. Compositionally, it is dominated by the angles of buildings. This focus on patterns

of angles becomes nearly abstract, like the works of Paul Klee, in "Poetics of Winter, III," where buildings are minimally stated within the mosaic of gray outlines.

McFarlane's tropical scenes are subjective. Memories and dreams of Jamaican mountains are rendered in clearly differentiated brush strokes of olive-greens, blues, forest-browns and purples. His style suggests a cross between the American impressionist, Theodore Robinson, and Oskar Kokoschka. A search for an underlying order in nature leads McFarlane to lay his colors in strokes whose directions oppose each other, like an impressionistic herringbone tweed pattern. His love of bold, broken color, broadly laid on, links him to expressionism.

His compositions tend to an overall, mosaic-like design of color out of which the particular shapes of "Banana Pods" or a "Mountain" emerge. Seeing the particulars in the absence of naturalistic focus takes an effort on the part of the viewer. But when McFarlane is at his best, as in "Hello Jamaica," his mosaic of angular brush strokes link up excitingly with large trapezoidal and variously sized parallelogram forms which rise from the broad whites of foreground roof-tops

toward distant mountains.

In his "Dapine Panorama" winding paths lead into blue-green mountains where spots of sunlight catch the edges of small cottages and dense foliage, suggest a protectiveness in these overgrown, ever green mountains where slaves could hide from their masters beneath its hospitable cover.

*The writer is associate professor of psychology at University of Massachusetts at Boston. He teaches the Psychology of perception.*

## ● cinema

*continued from page 14*  
the tale of a young princess trying to get back to her people.

This story became "Star Wars" which has grossed almost \$70 million.

The second chapter, "The Empire Strikes Back" scored over \$55 million. "Return Of The Jedi" has pulled in more than \$67 million.

Twentieth Century Fox Studios has grossed an astronomical \$207 million by transposing and enlarging upon a film made by Akira Kurosawa over twenty



Bryan McFarlane's "Banana Pods" and other landscapes in oil, watercolor and pastels on display at Afro-American Library at Harvard University.

years ago.

This is not the first time that Kurosawa's work has been successfully copied and adapted for the American screen.

"The Magnificent Seven," the epic 60s western which totally reshaped the Western film genre, was lifted almost intact from Kurosawa's "Seven Samurai," released in 1954.

"Rashomon," released in 1950 became the film, "Rage" in the 60s.

Obviously, Japanese cinema - from Godzilla to Jackie Chan (a current "chop-socky" or martial arts entertainment film

Manhattan's Japan Film Center said. "It's Kurosawa's vitality and the dynamic quality of his films, combined with the humanism of Japanese cinema, that makes him special."

Owen's film program (which runs year 'round), is just one spectacular variety of cultural programs sponsored by the Japan Society.

Located near the U.N., the Society has developed increased notice and positive appreciation for all aspects of Japanese culture - particularly film and filmmakers.

If influence stimulates change, then Japan changed Hollywood