

A Light Extraordinaire

“I have nothing more to teach you,” said George McNeil, my drawing and painting professor at Pratt Institute, an elite art school in Brooklyn, New York, during my graduate days in the late 60’s. He ignited something within me that I didn’t know I possessed. I readily embraced the concept of abstract expressionism which he exemplified and I became a staunch proponent of the genre.

The abstract expressionist tried to capture dynamic movement, allowing the hand to move randomly across the paper applying chance and accident to mark-making. Drawing to a large extent freed itself from rational control. This method fit me like white on rice. The scribbles, drips, smudges, and textures allowed the unconscious part my psyche to assert and express itself. Extracting images from a blank piece of paper was not only a challenge but playtime as well.

Professor McNeil’s work reflected exactly what the abstract expressionist felt and revealed. His paintings expressed high energy with vibrant colors, involved dancers gyrating across the canvas, bathers, disco, football, graffiti, and at times a childlike quality emerged on the canvas. At other times he included a wide variety of materials in his work...scraps of cloth, images from magazines, and photos of New York street life. Later works depicted charged psychological states and violent emotions.

Because of my affinity for drawing, lithography, and etching, I achieved in black and white what he did in color.



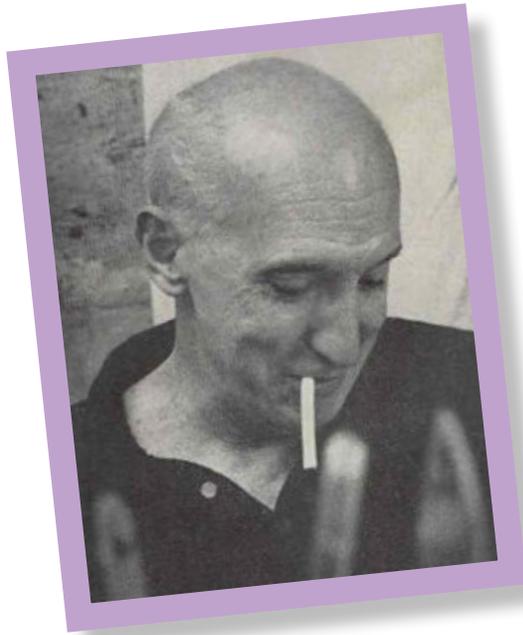
Beach Scene, George McNeil



Woman I, Norma Beasley

Professor McNeil exhibited in a plethora of shows and exhibitions. His work is housed in the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney and many other well-known museums and galleries throughout the United States and the world.

I often wonder if the economics of living had not been so crucial in my survival, I might have joined this luminary and nestled among the stars.



Professor McNeil