

Edwards retrospective to open at Neuberger

Melvin Edwards, one of the nation's most respected sculptors, receives his first major retrospective exhibition in a show at the Neuberger Museum of Art, SUNY Purchase. The exhibit, entitled "Melvin Edwards Sculpture: A Thirty-Year Retrospective 1963-1993," opens on Friday, April 4, and will run to June 27.

The exhibit includes 130 metal sculptures and includes examples from his series of "Lynch Fragments" and "Rockers" as well as pedestal pieces and large-scale outdoor works. Seventy of the works in the show are culled from the "Lynch Fragment" series which Edwards describes as reminders of the suffering of African-Americans and a symbol of the strength that is forged through suffering. The chains, spikes and padlocks, he says, play dual roles. They are symbols of oppression that also, in a positive sense, are used to join or bind. The resulting bound objects are stronger and more resistant to outside forces than the individual components, he says.

The large-scale "Rockers" are inspired by memories of his grandmother's rocking chair and motivated by the desire to create motion in large-scale sculpture.

Edwards has traveled frequently to Africa and he uses African words and

phrases for some of his titles. The titles convey a cultural pride and serve to teach young and old of a heritage that he says should not be forgotten.

Edwards was born May 4, 1937 in Houston, Texas, the eldest of four children. His first exhibit was in Barnsdale Park, Los Angeles, in 1959. He has since shown his works in the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, Dartmouth College and museums and other colleges and universities across the nation. He has had solo exhibitions in Lusaka, Zambia, and Nairobi, Kenya, and he is a member of the board of important art organizations.

The retrospective was organized by Dr. Lucinda H. Gedeon, director of the Neuberger, a specialist in African-American art. A 145-page full color catalogue accompanies the exhibition and features essays by art critic Michael Brenson, African-American art historian, Lowery S. Sims, Metropolitan Museum associate curator of 20th century art, and Josephine Gear, art historian.

The museum is open Tuesday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is a requested donation. For more information call 251-6133.