

Film tells of 2 men's struggles in jungle

Rapids, flora and fiddling Indians in a rain forest make a new Eden in the wilderness of 18th-century South America. In the new Roland Joffe film "The Mission," this Eden, like the original, harbors serpents and poses dilemmas. Such a powerful story of conflict set in one of the most magnificent areas of the world makes for a spectacular motion picture.

The main characters of "The Mission" are Jesuits caught in a struggle among Spain, Portugal and the Catholic Church. Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons) comes to the rain forest to set up a mission for the Guarani Indians, a people seeking shelter from the slave traders who prey upon them. When the Treaty of Madrid of 1750 adjusts the borders of Spanish and Portuguese control, the Jesuits in Spanish territory are ordered to abandon their missions. Each priest decides for himself how to best serve God and his charges.

Rodrigo Mendoza (Robert De Niro), murderer and mercenary, first meets Father Gabriel as an enemy. Later, as a prisoner, he looks to Gabriel for guidance in penance. Mendoza's task of carrying a large bundle of armor up the rocks beside the waterfalls brings him to a moment of catharsis and an eventual admittance into the order.

Irons and De Niro turn in excellent performances as men who ultimately serve God in the ways they know best. Gabriel is a very peaceful man, who charms the natives with his oboe and wins them over to a life of piety, music and peaceful coexistence. He teaches them to sing and play the violin, and even to make violins. Irons makes the character seem absolutely good but not holier-than-thou or unbelievable.

As a violent man of passion, Mendoza wishes to attain the peace of the Jesuits but cannot fully achieve it. He chooses to fight for what he believes in. De Niro expertly brings out the many facets of this

Elizabeth Ellen
Cinema

complex character.

"The Mission" is definitely a two-man show. In the final scene, the death and destruction of the battle become secondary to the expressions of the two characters. Both men are facing martyrdom, and looks of understanding and compassion pass between Irons and De Niro.

"The Mission" is an absolutely male-oriented film. The only female characters besides the anonymous Guarani women are Mendoza's girlfriend and her nurse. The only purpose his sweetheart serves is to provoke him to commit murder, while the nurse is merely a prop. The setting is a traditionally male domain, and the sometimes needless conflicts and acts of violence are male-oriented as well.

Of course, this orientation is historically accurate, as most European women of the period were not roughing it in the South American rain forest or making policy decisions for churches or states. While not necessarily a weakness, the film's unsupplemented male viewpoint limits its consideration of duty, sacrifice and love for fellow humans.

One of the marks of an excellent film is an ability to work on several levels. "The Mission" has a plot that is compelling enough to carry the film on literal interpretation, but at times it also has an allegorical dimension. Scenes of Jesuits struggling up cliffs are clearly symbolic of other sorts of struggles, and the visual image of a Guarani cutting Mendoza's burden from his back carries more spiritual weight than most church sermons. The opening sequence in which a priest is crucified and sent over the falls is gut-wrenching, both for the horror of the cruelty and for the religious



Robert De Niro stars as Rodrigo Mendoza in 'The Mission'.

connotations of death on a cross.

Even without benefit of viewing its competitors, one can easily see how "The Mission" claimed the Best Picture Award at the 1986 Cannes Film Festival. It is a classy examination of both high and unsavory

conflicts. Enhanced by a wonderful score and exquisite scenic beauty, the film achieves one of the most basic goals of art. It takes a story from another place and time and renders it real enough to make a viewer feel it.

Ackland exhibits works by art faculty

By GILLIAN FLOREN
Staff Writer

Those who can, do; those who can't, teach. For those of us immersed in academia, it is all the more of a relief when this reasoning is soundly refuted by a display of faculty accomplishments.

The annual faculty exhibit at the Ackland Art Museum opened this week. It is a collection of works as varied in media and technique as the creators are in backgrounds and experiences they bring to the UNC art department. The sum of the parts is impressive, but the whole of the show, with credit given to organizer Charles Millard, is substantially greater.

Ackland Assistant Director Timothy Riggs cited two works by Dennis Zaborowski as especially impressive. "I saw them stacked against a wall when the show was going together," Riggs said. "I like Dennis' work very much. But I was very impressed by how much better they looked when they were hung on the wall in that slightly confined space that Charles created for them." Zaborowski, a member of the art

faculty for 19 years, is displaying "Lovers" and "The Reluctant Dancer" in the show. The works, in charcoal and colored chalk on paper, are rife with frenetic abstract expressionistic lines that bring his figures to life.

On the opposite side of the wall from "Lovers" hangs a work by Jerry Noe, a sculptor on the faculty. "Broken Sections" is a sculpture in neon. Noe's primary medium for the past 15 years. "I had been doing welded steel, and I looked around and everybody else was doing welded steel," Noe said. He said he started hanging around a sign shop and discovered the potential of neon as a medium for sculpture.

"Neon has a really high visual presence, and I like that," Noe said. "I don't want my work to be ignored."

The vivid tube of neon encircling "Broken Sections" does indeed immediately capture the viewer's eye and never lets one escape completely the work's visual grasp.

Noe said, though, that not everyone is as enthralled with neon as a medium as he is. "Some people

TV's 'Star Trek' producer chosen as guest lecturer

By MARIA HAREN
Staff Writer

"Star Trek" fans rejoice. The producer of "Star Trek," Gene Roddenberry, will lecture in the department of radio, television and motion pictures March 1-6, according to University faculty.

Harold M. White, Jr., a visiting professor in the RTVMP department and coordinator of the event, said the department had chosen Roddenberry because of his broad range of experience in broadcasting.

Roddenberry is one of four lecturers whose visit is supported by the Hanes-Willis Fund, a grant that brings visiting professors to the University.

The grant, awarded in late October 1986, allows several lecturers to visit the University for a week, instead of one lecturer visiting for a semester as usual, White said.

"These are people that probably wouldn't come for a semester, but could come for a week," he said.

Roddenberry plans to speak to television and motion picture production classes, as well as classes in popular culture, space communications and broadcast law. Topics will include the communications revolution, network censorship and production, White said.

"He will probably give a general lecture of his choosing to the department, which department majors and

faculty could attend," he said.

Roddenberry, a former visiting lecturer at the University of Hawaii, had to submit a complete biography to a RTVMP nominating committee, which decided whether he had the qualifications for the grant, White said.

"We needed to know who would be the most beneficial candidate to nominate," White said. "So he had to go the entire nine yards."

Roddenberry is a best-selling novelist and a motion picture and television producer, creator and writer. He holds three honorary doctoral degrees and has received several writing awards for his television series.

"He's the only Hollywood producer to have a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame," White said.

Although the choice would be left to Roddenberry, a public lecture may not be possible, he said. "We haven't yet checked into the available facilities for a public lecture," White said.

White said that Roddenberry was a little concerned about speaking at his own discretion because of several "interesting experiences" he had encountered on previous lecture circuits.

"But he has said he has never had a bad experience, just some institutional inconveniences," White said.

say it's not art because it's not bronze or oil paint," he said. "Or they think it's too garish, or they associate it with beer and pizza signs."

Contrasting with Noe's sculpture in medium, technique and concept, are three works by Beth Grabowski, the art department's newest faculty member. Grabowski teaches printmaking, and two of her displayed works are examples of her monoprnt technique.

Her third work in the show, "A Matter of Perception," in oil stick on paper, is a visual metaphor representing the psychological process one goes through when choosing between two desirable options, one known and the other imagined.

"I started with the cliché 'the grass is always greener on the other side,'" Grabowski said, explaining the two-panel work.

When a person is faced with a choice, one is illuminated and given meaning by the other, she said.

"Usually when we make the choice, we find out that the other side is not all that different," she said.

Other artists contributed works to the exhibit: Richard Kinnaird, who uses juxtaposition of different colors and patterns to create a collage-like effect in his paintings; visiting faculty member Allen Ruppberg, who emphasizes concept over visual representation in his hand-drawn version of an old newspaper clipping; and James Gadson, whose dynamic oils explode in geometric confetti on an electric red backdrop.

With this show as evidence, one can say that many who can, do indeed teach. For this, the University ought to feel privileged. The faculty exhibit is well worth the walk to the far edge of campus.

Recent works by UNC faculty members will be displayed through Feb. 15 at the Ackland Art Museum.

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