

Doctor and Wife Use Art to Aid Retarded

By JOSEPH McNAMARA

Psychiatry and art make strange companions—except in the novel college course offered by a Staten Island couple.

The course weds the interest of Dr. Ionel F. Rapaport and his artist wife, Marjorie O'Brien. The Rapaports live at 69 Sherman Ave., Tompkinsville, but their course stems from a unique collection of art works of mental retardates and other mental patients.

Dr. Rapaport began his collection when he was assistant professor at the Psychiatric Institute of the University of Wisconsin and his wife taught art at the university's extension division.

Art is a Link

"Art can be used in the diagnosis and therapy of verbally limited or nonspeaking persons," Dr. Rapaport says. "It also offers an avenue for development of the retarded that is often neglected."

He notes that for many, art is the only means of communication.

In their course, Mrs. Rapaport discusses the pictures — he has collected 1,000 — as art and relates them to works of the past. Her husband relates the material to psychiatry. Students include psychologists, sociologists, artists, and others interested in art.

This past semester the Rapaports offered the course at the New School for Social Research and look forward to another course this fall.

Language Barrier

Dr. Rapaport was born in Romania, educated in Strasbourg and Paris, took his medical degree from the University of Paris and his Ph.D. from the Sorbonne. Mrs. Rapaport was born in Idaho, raised in Wisconsin.

They met in Paris where she was studying painting at Ecole de Louvre and Dr. Rapaport was a professor at the French School of Anthropology. They courted for a time through an interpreter until the international lan-