

Jean Charlot Reviews Art Academy Shows

The Honolulu Academy of Arts opened on Thursday three exhibitions by well known artists of Hawaii: Juanita Vitousek, Shirley Russell and Robert Lee Eskridge. The three shows will be on view through September 24.

Mr. Eskridge's paintings are reviewed in another paper by Jean Charlot, internationally known painter who is now on the University of Hawaii's art department staff.

A review of the work of Mrs. Russell and Mrs. Vitousek by Mr. Charlot follows.

Primitive Note In Mrs. Vitousek's Work Appeals To Charlot

"While much can be said of painting in terms of style, technique and related specialized matters, one should not forget how these are but a means to an end, and that this end, unlike the studio talk that engrosses only artists, is simply the expression of a personality."

"In a group show where each artist, represented by a single picture, is elbowed and jostled around by many other works, it is easy for public and critic alike to misjudge the quality and scope of a painter's oeuvre."

"It is a pleasure to meet each artist in circumstances at once more extensive and more intimate, where each may display the many facets that go to make a single human personality."

"Juanita Vitousek's watercolors are as bold in washes and as decided in color as those of Robert Lee Eskridge. Beyond that, a different personality emerges."

"The fact is all the more striking as both painters have recorded in many a case the same scenes."

PRIMITIVE NOTE

"Though the handling of paint is far from primitive, there is in these watercolors at times, a primitive note that Juanita Vitousek has made her own through her love of things Hawaiian."

"These things are the more humble achievements, the profile and texture of a poi pounder, the eroded grain of a wooden pig board, the rasping colors of a folk blanket."

"At least, I read these leanings in her work, for example in the naive church facade, centered plumb in the middle of the picture, so different from the sophisticated compositions that she can also contrive."

"Other scenes partake of the vignette, not in the feeling that remains always big, but in a composition that inscribes itself in the free form of a near oval rather than in the rectangle of the paper."

BIGNESS OF ROCKS

"For me, the climax of her personality exists in the studies of rocks, shorn of all the addendas that would suggest picturesqueness, shorn even of what local color would help us place these rocks in these islands."

"These are forms both real and abstract, faceted by erosion and by a keen optical analysis into the semblance of oyster shells, of prehistoric bones, of crystal shapes where geometry, rather than picturesqueness is at the roof of the esthetic urge."

In these watercolors, so simple in subject matter as to be almost bare, I read a bigness worthy of a muralist of the school of Giotto."

Mr. Charlot Finds Growth of Personality In Shirley Russell Oils

"Shirley Russell's oil paintings extend in time over a period sufficient to call this show a retrospective, though the latest works predominate."

"These paintings express a personality and this element of change along the years that is the characteristic of a living personality."

"An earlier Shirley Russell of still life with dolls (not shown) tends to the pretty."

"In her later work there is a true growth, one could say a conversion to an approach to art depurated of much that is nice, leaving behind much routine knowledge for the sake of an exploration, of a re-assessment of means that, in a painter of this proven ability, comes close to being heroic."

"Personages and landscapes alike are now but a means to probe deep into the truer problems of painting, so truly pictorial that they can hardly be expressed in words."

"For the sake of the orchestral whole, each part of the picture is severely played down in an understatement of the subject matter that gives an abstract hue to the painting."

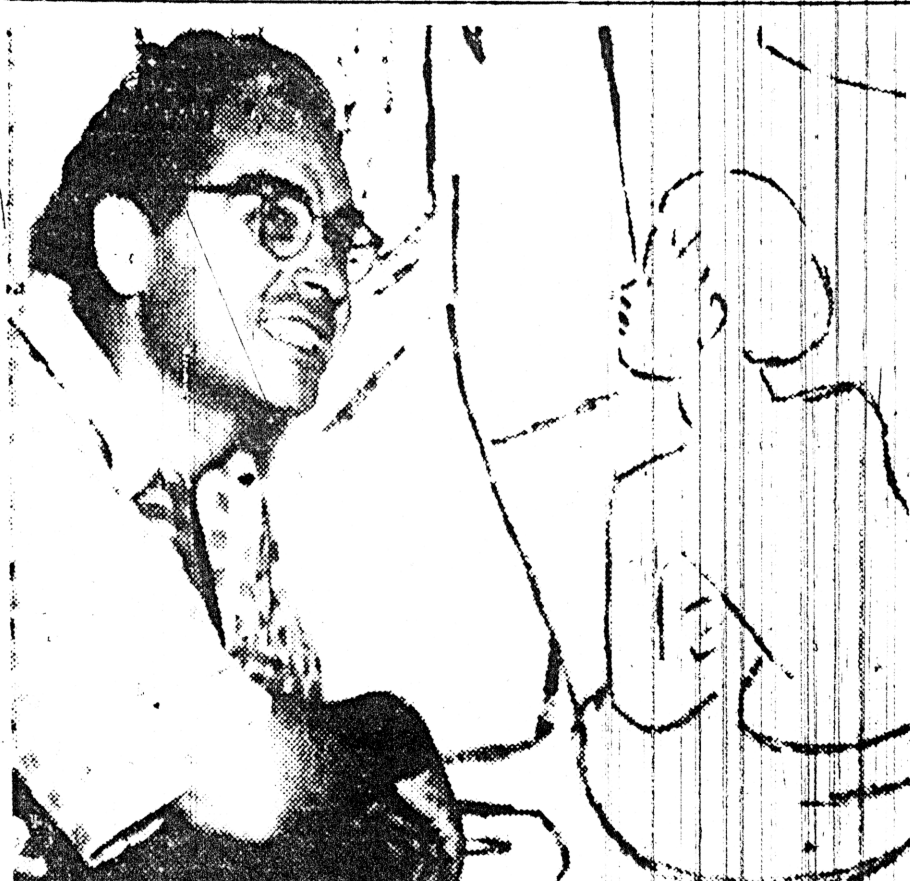
"I especially remember a landscape of small shacks superimposed on a hillside, ascending and receding in space with a suggestion of Egyptian perspective. The colors are disembodied from the objects floating and reforming into patterns all their own."

"A small picture of leafless white tree trunks involves us in a directional maze as abstract as any. Color also has travelled far away from the pretty beginnings."

"Now the dominant note, expressive of the new personality, is an intense acidulated apple green that weaves in and out of the later still-lives with the same insistency that do the peculiar indigo-blues in the skies of El Greco."



JUANITA VITOUSEK'S WATERCOLOR, "Street Scene, Napoopoo" is a typical Hawaiian scene such as may still be found on the neighbor islands. It is included in her current one man exhibition at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Also having one man shows there are Shirley Russell and Robert Lee Eskridge. Closing date is September 24.



JEAN CHARLOT, INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS ARTIST who now teaches art at the University of Hawaii, is having a one man show of his recent lithographs in the patio of the Library of Hawaii. Two of the prints are Hawaiian, "Hula Dancer" and "Hawaiian Drummer." The Hawaiian Drummer is particularly appealing as it is a color lithograph which recaptures the mood of the hula performer of ancient Hawaii. Other lithographs in the show are of Mexican subjects, the types which first gave Mr. Charlot fame as an interpretive artist. Three of the lithographs in the show have never been exhibited before. The show remains through September 24.—Walter Johnson photo.