

Madge Tennent's Hawaii On Display at Academy

By JEAN CHARLOT

Drawings by Madge Tennent are featured in a new show at the Academy of Art.

Retrospective in nature, the show spans over 50 years of her work. It offers an excellent opportunity to reappraise an artist so long and so intimately linked with Hawaii.

Painters of subjective leanings achieve statements concerned mostly with selves. More extroverted types have something to say about their models. Only in rare cases do the two outlooks fuse into oneness.

None can separate the inner self of a classical Greek sculptor from the marble bodies he carved. No one may wrench Gauguin away from his Maori models.

Madge Tennent is undoubtedly one of these rare artists. For her, Hawaii is herself.

Made in Paris when she was a student, her early life

drawings testify to an intense academic training.

Her portraits also prove her capacity for analytical outlook.

FREE EXPRESSION

Once she had fallen in love with Hawaii, never again was she able to flaunt her knowledge of anatomy. The rules of correct proportions were swept under by the sweep and swirl of free expression.

Hers is a Hawaii of massive bulks, regal features and childish gestures — robust bodies clad in muumuus of a 19th Century cut.

Some may say that this is not all of Hawaii, rather a synthesis that comes close to subjective fabrication.

Maybe so.

And yet tons of cement poured into the making of 10s of skyscrapers will never be able to erase or weaken this primeval image: Madge Tennent's Hawaii.