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A French Artist Matures

By JEAN CHARLOT

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Navy, he recorded sights seen from port-of-call to port-of-call.

To do so, he evolved a technique of pictorial reporting, a shorthand done in ink and gouache on paper.

The list of his previous one-man shows suggests the scope of his naval itinerary: Tahiti, Noumea, Toulon, Kobe, Beyrouth, Martinique.

In our milieu where Oriental know-how with the brush is met at every turn, Buffet's shorthand, with its own je-ne-sais-quoi is a useful reminder that Europe too has its own calligraphic flair.

For the non-French, the quality of French paintings should measure up to France's other imports, fashions and perfumes.

In Buffet's case, his flair is so innate as to escape any suggestion of conscious smartness.

His shorthand notations having met with applause, a lesser man would be tempted to follow the primrose path and reap what rewards accrue to a Frenchman who makes it his profession to be French.

But Buffet is truly an honest man, genuinely preoccupied by the implications of that gift of art-making that is his by birthright.

In this show — which opened yesterday at the Royal Hawaiian Art Gallery — a set of oil paintings marks the transition between Buffet the child wonder and Buffet as a mature artist.

In the best of these oils, the artist sheds his carefree know-how and attempts deeper speculations.

Voit's article complet. J.C.

(Guy Buffet. Royal Hawaiian Art Gallery. Opens August 27.)

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Gone are the bustling crowds and prancing horses. The mood is timeless: a panorama of San Francisco with drifting fog, a New York where skyscrapers beckon menacingly.

Buffet's native land, tucked at the other side of the globe, already acquires the poignancy of memories. Impressive is his "Notre-Dame de Paris", squared plumb in the center of the canvas, and so are his "Toits de Paris", a panorama of slate slopes and chimney-pots that needs no Eiffel Tower to gather nostalgia.

In his pictures of Brittany Buffet reaches the maturity he sought. They feature

pointed Gothic steeples and crossroad calvaries, and Breton peasants, dressed in immemorial starched white linens and black velvets. A small upright panel, "Sortie de la Messe", sums it all. It is no more belabored than the others, not a wit less smart if looked at by people who look for sophistication. But the melancholy of things remembered gives it added depth and meaning.

Jean Charlot.

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