

Artist Paints the Majestic, the Minute

By JEAN CHARLOT

Marjorie Hee is showing her watercolors at the Library of Hawaii September 21.

They are done in the difficult wet wash technique and deep-rooted in Oriental culture.

Her subject-matter ranges from the majestic—a panoramic view of Punchbowl and one of Kaneohe Bay—to the minute—the dried squids, ginger jars, packets of herbs, observed through the windows of a Chinatown grocery store.

Midway between the very big and the very small she also is aware of humans, but in her pictures they hold a secondary role.

A fishwife hides out of focus behind a display of red snappers. People may be just dots that pepper a landscape or the gay squiggles that bounce out of the little

red school house to slide and scatter downhill.

In contrast, the artist packs non-human sights with meaning.

The slopes of Kapunahala crater are made of a red earth as red-hot as lava, in contrast with the green growth in its conical depth and the green fringe of trees on its outer rim.

"Only God can make . . ." defines a craggy antique tree trunk with its fresh crop of leaves and flowering lehuas, an ancestral subject that brings to mind the scroll of the Seven Juniper Trees shown at the Academy of Arts.

Her still-lives are both symbolical and observed. Ritual offerings are pictured in "Longevity."

On the borderline between realism and abstraction, "The Herb Store" ties object to object by the non-repre-

sentational rhythms of straight calligraphy.

Bold and most effective, "Picnic" piles purple mangoes on a varicolored fruit dish, set against the architecture of a square basket.

Marjorie Hee uses distortion as a means, but her hesitant distortions are poles apart from the brutal mani-

pulations one associates with expressionism.

She is a witty artist, whose wit does not hold a grain of pride in her own mastery of the difficult medium, or of condescension towards a world she loves.

In her own mild way, she extracts art from her memories of childhood, and tactile beauty from household chores.

