



By JEAN CHARLOT

# ART

## A return to Greece

The kamaaina artist, Juliette May Fraser, left last Sunday on her way to her beloved Greece. Her arrival there should coincide with the completion of the stupendous art adventure that enriched the townlet of Vazilon, on the island of Chios, with one of the most delicately decorated buildings ever achieved.

Another American artist, David Asherman, had his share in the work, having previously left his mark on our Island—the Contemporary Arts Center on Kapiolani Boulevard is indeed his brainchild.

The small building that May frescoed is to be at last consecrated by a Greek Orthodox Bishop, and thus open to the cult.

A joint gift of May's and David's to the people of Chios, this work of love was planned from the beginning as a devotional shrine. Its art is geared to function.

## Approached with humility

In our day, when most artists preen themselves on pride, it is a healthy fact that these two approached their task in all humility.

Their art remains unfulfilled in a way until the accolade of the Church—in the form of an orthodox consecration—opens the building to the cult and transforms what would otherwise remain a small, if exquisite, museum, into a place of prayer.

There was indeed a time when art was understood as a means to an end. The sculptures of Gothic cathedrals, their stained glass windows, existed long before the concept of Fine Arts had been evolved.

## The artists were craftsmen

The Gothic artist thought of himself as a craftsman. The Gothic sculptor called himself a stonemason. The stained glass maker saw himself as a cutter and joiner of glass.

These men would have mixed feelings indeed to see their work as it exists today, fragmented and out of context, the prey of museums and interior decorators.

As these men did, May Fraser feels a need to put her art at the service of the community. Outstanding among her Hawaiian murals is her decoration of the building of the Board of Water Supply. Here she was on familiar ground, in Hawaii, her native land.

In contrast, Greece opened for her a whole new world, as grandiose as it was mysterious. For well over a thousand years, the Byzantine artists had evolved and refined religious images. May studied the ancient tra-



A new work by Juliette May Fraser: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." The quotation is from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

dition, grafting her own art on this ancient tree.

on two planes, the physical and the spiritual.

## A curious sense of humor

She managed to do this without losing an iota of her personality, without dampening even the curious sense of humor that suggested Hawaiian angels for her Greek church mural, complete with feather cloaks and feather helmets.

She gave much to Greece and Greece gave much to her. This includes worldly recognition. The paved street that leads to the chapel bears a new name.

Latinized from out of the Greek alphabet, it would read: ODOS MAIH PHRAIZERH, or in translation, May Fraser Street.

Deeper than worldly tokens, her active contact with Byzantine art is bearing fruits. Byzantine art shuns anecdote as unworthy. It raises endless rows of hieratic saints as so many columns built for eternity.

## The most valuable gift

Greek master painters, dead long ago, gave May the most valuable gift, added to her art another dimension. The Madonna illustrated on this page is an example of May's renewed style. Its title is a quote from Matthew, "I came not to send peace, but a sword."

The visualization is all May's, and yet it embodies the severe turn of mind of Byzantine Greece. The vertical of the sword slashes the composition in two. The relationship of Mother to Child, far from sentimental, suggests rather the chasm to be bridged between Creator and creature. Byzantium is here at its deepest and best.

Some buildings are built to offer only body shelter. Other buildings—a church most obviously—should function

rary patio, paintings by Winnifred Hudson and Barbara Hogg, through Monday. Joe Van Ramp, collages, opens Tuesday.

4—Work of the Hawaii Handweavers Hui with University of Hawaii weavers, Unitarian Church Gallery, 2500 Pali Highway, through March.

5—Benjamin Mendoza at Gim'a's Art Gallery, through March 26.

6—Faculty Show, Art Department of the University of Hawaii, George Hall Gallery, through March.

7—Watercolors by Charles Higa, Cherry Blossom Festival Art Exhibition, at Contemporary Arts Center, 605 Kapiolani Boulevard. Opens tomorrow.

8—"Fantasies from Hawaii," serendipity paintings by Irma Rosenau. At Royal Hawaiian Hotel Art Gallery. March 14 to 21.

News or questions on art are welcomed. Send letters to: Jean Charlot, Star-Bulletin, Box 3080, Honolulu, Hawaii 96802.

## And what about our new Capitol?

Less obviously than does a church, but no less certainly, a State Capitol has a spiritual function to perform. Ours, just emerging at this stage over ground level, will doubtless offer many body shelters, many offices, each with its desk and its phone, and carpeted from wall to wall.

Has the building's other function, less tangible and yet as essential, been equally considered? To give expression to the spirit of Hawaii is a complex affair.

I have no pipeline to inner sanctums and can only hope that, when it is finished, our colossal Capitol will be as successful as May's little chapel, that gave form and color to her host country, Greece.

## Calendar of events

1—Paintings and drawings by Raoul Dufy, at the Academy of Arts, until Sunday.

2—Honolulu Printmakers 38th annual show, Church of the Crossroads Gallery, 1212 University Avenue, to March 31.

3—In the Hawaii State Lib-