

## 2 Islanders to lecture in Munich

Mrs. Betty Ecker, (Tseng Yu-ho), Island artist, has been awarded a Fulbright-Hays Act grant to lecture at the University of Munich, Germany, Senator Daniel K. Inouye, announced yesterday in Washington.

Professor Werner Levi of the University of Hawaii also received a grant to lecture on international relations at the same University.



"Triptych" by Brother James Roberts

# ART

By JEAN CHARLOT



## Religious art and church-building

This week, religious art is "in the air." Shown at the First Unitarian Church are paintings and prints by Marienist Brother James Roberts, most of them on religious themes.

Also in Honolulu, a conference on church architecture meets this weekend.

Brother Roberts' show emphasizes how strong are the winds that blow through the halls of our sacred buildings since the Vatican Council "opened the windows," an image coined by the late Pope John.

More than a wind, it proved to be a hurricane. It swept out of sight clusters of chubby pink angels sitting on cotton candy clouds. It shattered as well armies of polychrome plaster casts.

Gone are the dubious saints whose complexion suggested rouge, lipstick and mascara, and who sported their holiness as if it was a kind of social accomplishment.

## A wild gift from the Pope

What was thought of only yesterday as the one proper religious art is today a thing of the past. When Pope Paul visited the United Nations, his gift to the U.N. Secretary, U Thant, was a painting by George Roualt, reviled in his lifetime as a Fauve, or Wild Beast!

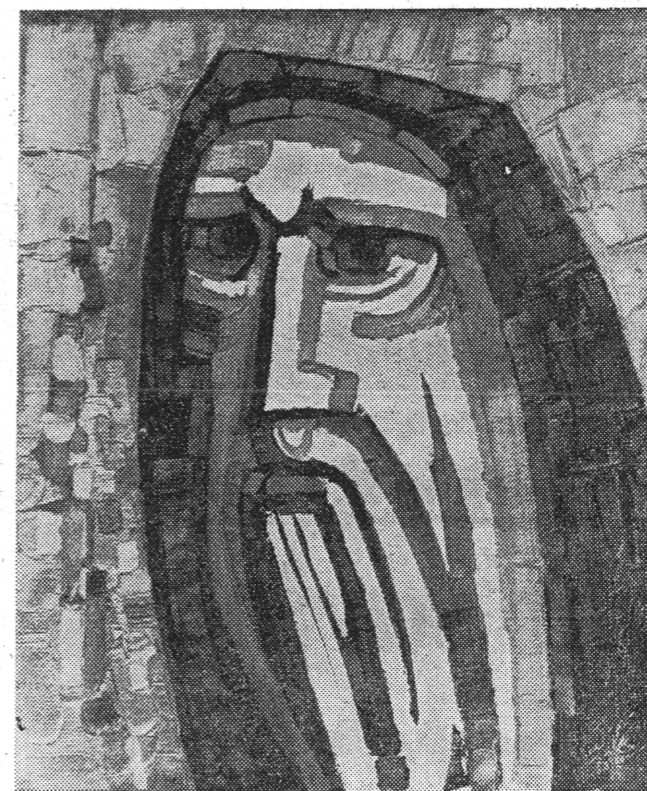
In his own way, both firm and gentle, Brother Roberts sweeps with unequalled vigor the maudlin and the genteel far out of sight.

Using line distortions and color discordances, his style embodies the new boldness.

Is this bold treatment of sacred themes new? Or is it rather a very ancient way rediscovered anew?

Truly an art of our century, Brother Roberts' paintings come close in style and feeling to the mosaic art of Byzantine basilicas and the frescoes of Roman catacombs.

How much his own,



Brother Roberts' "Jeremiah"

his art is intended for church or chapel rather than for the art lover or for the museum. His icons are meant to be functional, to incite to prayer.

Once the dialogue is started between the faithful and God, the aim of the painter is reached. Somewhat at odds with many of our modern artists, Brother Roberts assesses his personality as expendable.

Big or small, all his works have a strong mural quality, as if they were tied to an architecture. Indeed Brother Roberts is a seasoned fresco painter and we shall see him very soon at work on the scale where he feels most at ease.

He has been commissioned to decorate a wall, an area of 460 square feet, for the Holy Family Church. It is to be painted in true fresco on the theme of death and resurrection.

Scheduled for this weekend, the conference of

church architecture brings together local architects and churchmen, together with others come all the way from the Mainland. Those visitors should not return home without seeing the sights.

Among our local representatives, Alfred Preis is not only a thinker, but equally a doer. His First Methodist Church on Beretania Street, built in 1954, is a masterpiece of crisp intellectual beauty.

Strictly architectural in its approach to mysticism, it illustrates the formula that a church is "a machine to pray in." It is a variation on the theme that Le Corbusier made famous, that of a house that is "a machine to live in."

Certainly a visit to the First Methodist Church should be a must for our visiting architects and churchmen.

Also in Honolulu, another, a very different church is

abuilding, the chapel of Our Lady, Mystical Rose.

It will be the chapel of the Marianist community, whose scholasticate shares the same campus with both St. Louis High School and Chaminade College. The architect is Guy Rothwell.

Brother Roberts, whose exhibit is reviewed here, originally conceived and lovingly supervises the building of the chapel.

Following the image suggested by its title—Mystical Rose — its rounded overlapping forms suggest the organic beauty of petals and sepals.

This chapel is somewhat like a giant abstract sculpture, a sculpture to kneel in and to pray in, a formula subtly different from the functional approach of a Le Corbusier or an Alfred Preis.

## Three churches to be seen

Should the length of their stay allow it, our visitors should also see, on Kauai, three churches built in the 1950's: St. William at Hanalei, St. Sylvester at Kilauea, and St. Catherine at Kapaa-Kealia.

These three were built, literally on a shoestring, by parishioners working under the supervision of Father John H. McDonald. Each features a different basic geometric theme: Hanalei, the triangle; Kilauea, the polygon, and Kapaa, the diamond shape.

Our church-oriented visitors have a unique sight awaiting them on the Big Island in the painted churches of Honaunau and Kalapana.

These country chapels may be labeled as folk art, but folk art has become fashionable under a brand new label as pop art. Could modern churchmen, eager to emphasize the role of the layman, find a happier ground than "pop" to satisfy both the esthete and the non-esthete among the devout?

To this conference, no representatives of the allied crafts — sculpture, painting, ceramics, enamel, mosaic and stained glass—have been invited, not even in the minor role of observers.

And yet the polychrome aura of spirituality that emanates from ancient basilicas and cathedrals is in great part the work of such craftsmen.

Ardently to be wished for is a return to such a logical tie between arts and crafts.

In Honolulu, the Catholic Art Association has worked selflessly towards such a goal. The results of such labor can hardly be said to be in sight, and even less at hand. But the effort cannot forever remain fruitless.