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ART

by Jean Charlot



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Special Writer

The Hawaii Painters and Sculptors League presents its annual show—or in this case shows—at the Hawaiian Savings Gallery, downtown.

Unjuried, the entries will hang in two successive groups, through November and December. This review refers to the November show only.

We speak of art as timeless and, unlike languages, lacking in geographic barriers. True, in our century we have learned to live with art from many countries and epochs. Yet, could we state in good faith that our enjoyment of a Raphael comes as naturally to us as it did to an Italian of the 16th century?

Is our zest in collecting primitive art rooted as deeply as were the feelings and thoughts of the ancient kahuna as he placed offerings before a native wood carving?

SIMILAR nuances apply to contemporary art. An informed New Yorker appreciates the abstract expressionism of the present day New York School in more subtle and knowing ways than could a kamaaina, stranded in the big city between two jet flights.

Being the work of Hawaii residents, the present show albeit unconsciously, acquires its own special flavor, one we can fully appreciate.

Shedding one's shoes with more abandon than would a mainlander seems to have little to do with art or art-making. Or to dip, however gingerly, one's finger in poi, or relish the savor of seaweed.

AND YET those are our small secrets, shared alike in this show by artists and art lovers.

Attuned as we are to surf, and palms, and volcanoes, we may pick allusions to our brand of nature, be they visual or tactile, more quickly

and keenly than would an outsider.

And from our vantage point on this piece of earth poised between East and West, we tread our way effortlessly between the dishwasher and the TV set and, as well, between the yin and the yang.

JULIETTE May Fraser contributes "Misanthropic Moon," a memory of her stay in Corfu. Her decoration of a church on the island of Chios had been conceived as an austere exercise in Byzantine liturgical fresco. On return she relaxed by painting oils that blend wittily the three Greeces she knows, pagan, Christian, and modern.

A faun, leaning over a dubiously classical balustrade, watches a processional of carriages of 19th century vintage crisscross a far-away road close by the sea. The moon May paints is not an up-to-date moon, marred by man's footprints. It is a moon from the age of innocence, met with mostly in children's drawings. Its nose turns up and the corners of its mouth tile down, to show that it disapproves heartily of such earthly doings.

Nevertheless the benign planet bathes in blueness both the ghostly equipages and the pagan godling, and adds beauty to the meager landscape by forming shadows more imposing than the plaster architecture that casts them.

MAY'S MOON is childish and humanized. "Red Sun" by Halley Cox, is an austere orb, that refuses to bow to the anecdotal. Circular, it lords it over the single ruled line of the horizon.

Small in size but big in style, "Red Sun" is the mature fruit of a life-long evolution posed halfway between description and abstraction, that carries the artist towards ever increasing simplifications.

The moon of May, the sun of Cox, however dissimilar,

still hold to physical reality. But the circle that encompasses both their spheres would function in Eastern thought as a symbol, divested of matter, pregnant with metaphysical meaning.

JOAN GIMA'S "One" tackles the naked symbol. By Western standards it seems impertinent to slip over the border between the visible and the invisible in this art of painting whose concern, as stated by Pousin, should be the visible only. But Joan Gima does so successfully.

"One" is a delicate monochrome of green earth. Over a field that seems woven of innumerable blades of grass, the wheel of wisdom hovers low, like a fully circular rainbow. It coagulates the many into the one.

LOIS HORNE in "Identity," offers variations on the theme of self that are not in the least tainted with ego. From inside a set of cells not unlike those of a beehive, many tiny heads peek through. Some are stylized or partly abstracted. Others are delicately wrought portraits, portraits of mood perhaps more than of features.

Are those people many or one in many guises? The philosophical query is redeemed as art by refinements in the manipulation of paint that reassures us that this thinker is equally able as a craftsman.

JOHN KJARGAARD gives us in "Low Tide, Kuliouou" the same high standard of abstraction that we expect of him. In his show at the Academy of Arts he had veered in some of his designs to ar-morial flatness. Successful though those new experiments were, I sense Kjargaard's unique originality in his abstracts that are an intimation of landscapes. Such is "Kuliouou." He uses here, not obviously, atmospheric

perspective, and lays his color areas as a horizontal carpet, oriented to a horizon.

Believe it or not, the good old fashioned way of holding a mirror to nature is still valid. In Ilma Anderson's "Blue Hills," man and nature commune as one. Houses do not intrude on the sway of the hills, but rest in their folds as if in a hammock. The all pervasive blueness expresses a mood of calm.

In Honolulu where high-rise condominiums aggressively attempt to obliterate nature, such a landscape from a far-off land acquires the value of a parable.



IDENTITY — Lois Horne — variations on the theme of self.

the one.

Cautious though I am where metaphysics intrude upon painting, this vision is so convincingly simple as to suggest in the painter a familiar contact with the abstruse premise. Or perhaps the secret ~~of it~~ is that Joan--zen or no zen--remains a sensitive painter.

The symbolic circle is again at the heart of Betty Ecker's "Sound Barrier", done in her own dsui technique. But here the circle has been shattered into four parts.

When painting and title do not obviously coincide, it is licit that the viewer should attempt to relate both with mental constructions.

I was reminded of the chinese jade pi, in itself the perfect circle, that becomes a symbol of death when it is cut through so as to break its continuity.

Western-wise, the boom that signals the breaking of the sound barrier, with attendant shattering of window panes, would be the audible symbol of what obstacles man's mechanical ingenuity puts in the way of pure meditation.