

Juliette May Fraser: Artist, Ambassador

By JEAN CHARLOT

When in town, Juliette May Fraser is the Star-Bulletin's art critic. When she travels, she becomes our cultural ambassador at large.

Her gift of murals to the village of Valdivia, on the island of Chios, Greece,

made news and deserved it. The frescoes were painted in collaboration with another American, David Asherman.

It amazed the villagers that these two foreigners would give of their art to Greece, itself the mother of classical art. Besides art, Greece doubtless received in addition that elusive something, that sense of aloha that we take for granted in the kamaaina artist.

As a sequel to the Chios mural, May Fraser was invited to exhibit her easel work in Athens. Before the pictures are packed and sent, it is our privilege to see them, through August 25, at the Clare Loring Gallery, Royal Hawaiian Avenue.

The choice includes a variety of techniques, mural cartoons and a fresco, graphics and oil paintings.

"St. George and the Dragon" is a detail from the Valdivia mural. The Saint rides a white steed. Refusing to look at the Saint from the worm's eyeview that is customary, the dragon chooses instead to divebomb out of a storm cloud.

A portable fresco, "Holy Family," is a transposed detail from May's Kauai church mural. A selection from her portfolio of prints, "Anuenue," represents Hawaii, impressively so in the woodcut on the theme of ghost warriors.

Two paintings propose a forceful confrontation. St. Francis raises his arms crosswise in the midst of a dynamic turmoil of bird wings. A neighboring work describes Pele, cool as cool can be, nestling in her ruby-

red volcanic habitat.

For us, the novelty resides in themes connected with Greece. Outstanding is "Timeless City," a meditation over Athens. A modern schoolgirl riding a scooter bypasses a goddess whose chariot is pulled by prancing horses straight out of antique vase paintings.

Architecture adds to the incongruous. The Parthenon looms over modern apartment buildings, neither mindful nor resentful of the newcomers.

Doubtless, Greece gave

the artist something in exchange for her gift. A Byzantine aura of dignity glows in a small sketch for a potential mural. It is a Madonna unlike any Madonna I know. Its title is a quote from Matthew, "I came not into the world to bring peace but a sword." The Mother looks straight ahead, apparently unmindful of the presence of her Child. In turn, the Child seems more like a King than a babe in arms. With one hand he holds the globe of the world and with the other an up-

right sword. Surprisingly, color of a subtle tenderness ties the two figures more closely than would any endearing gesture.

To May Fraser on her way to Greece on another ambassadorial errand, aloha, adieu, and godspeed!

