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MEMORIAL EXHIBIT—"Dark Mountain" in plaster (left) and "Presence" in cast stone are included in the Memorial Exhibit of the work of sculptor Adaline Kent at the San Francisco Museum of Art (through April 6).

Magic and Power in Kent Sculpture at S.F. Museum

By MIRIAM DUNGAN CROSS
Tribune Art Editor

"I want the power of Stonehenge and the magic of the South Pacific in language of the Wide Present." Thus wrote San Francisco's distinguished sculptor, the late Adaline Kent.

At the entrance of her memorial exhibit at San Francisco Museum of Art stands a self-made monument to the accomplishment of her desires, a great white hand and skeletal forearm halting the traveler on the way to eternity. The outspread hand socketed to the arm bones, embedded with obsidian and ringed with grey stripes, is powerful as Stonehenge and magic as the South Pacific in the terms she had reached with the Wide Present. Death came suddenly to Adaline Kent. "The White Hand" now appears a forewarning.

Wondrous shape of bones, articulation of joints and their possibilities as abstract forms in space are explored, too, in the giant vertebrae of "Finder" and the space definitions of "Presence."

"Sculpture is the shape of thoughts," noted Adaline Kent.

Thoughts in the night of the primitive past and the urgent present shaped the mystic "Moon Dial," whorled the magnesite, studded it with pebbles and broken shells and evoked the rise and fall of the tides. Thoughts in the night shaped, too, the spiral ascension of the crescent-topped lead pillar, "Journey by Moon." A crescent is the shape for the head, "Visitor," screaming in the night like a frightened pre-historic man in a Tamayo painting. Dark thoughts on a moonless night shaped the ominous "Bird Woman."

Numerous small terra cotta pieces present a lighter but no less inventive aspect of the sculptor's thoughts. Ruminations on the early Japanese shaped a lantern, but Adaline Kent's sensitive imagination alone was responsible for "House for Spiders" (its material might have been spewed by mud wasps) and "Light-house for Birds" (a candle within would make notes of light of the musically spaced, wren-nest apertures).

The exhibit concentrates on

the large magnesite and small terra cotta pieces of the last few years but traces her development from a small, bronze realist figure (owned by the museum) through a Gauguin-like native girl in wood to an abstraction of the female torso, "Dark Mountains." The exhibit further includes large ink drawings exploring space, her sketch books and notes on sculpture. These illuminating notes are to be published in book form at the time of the Memorial Exhibit at the Betty Parsons Gallery in September. It is to be hoped that the Betty Parsons Gallery, which gave Adaline Kent one-man shows in 1949 and '53, will install the exhibit with the space and lighting it should have to come to full power.

The Adaline Kent Memorial Fund is to be used for the Sculpture Center at the California School of Fine Arts to encourage outstanding talent and to attract internationally significant personalities in the field of art. Contributions (tax deductible) should be made payable to the San Francisco Foundation for the Adaline Kent Memorial Fund (351 California, S.F.).