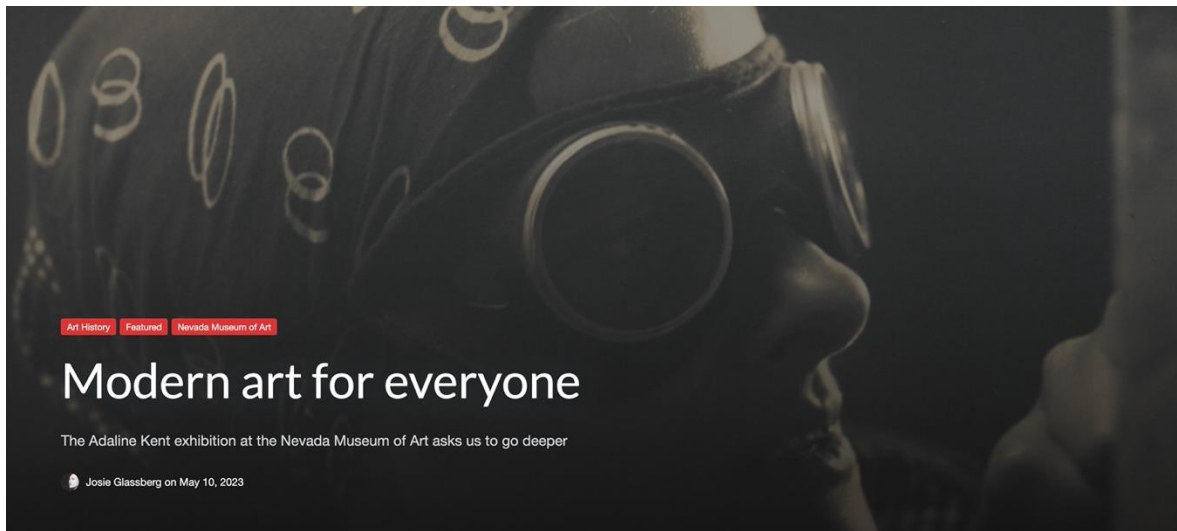


Double Scoop

ARTS IN NEVADA

Glassberg, Josie, “Modern art for everyone,” *Double Scoop*, May 10, 2023



Sometimes an exhibition is about what the museum says it's about and sometimes it's about how the artworld shows artwork. I have no problem criticizing the Nevada Museum of Art when they punt on the latter, but don't like to assume they will. Over the years, my remarks either stand up to scrutiny or they don't, but one thing I can always count on is that I will forever question which contexts are worth mentioning (and which are not) in an account of the work.



Adaline Kent in her studio, 1930

In the museum's latest retrospective on Adaline Kent— titled *Adaline Kent: The Click of Authenticity* — new NMA Senior Curator of Contemporary Art Apsara DiQuinzio displays an instinct for what is important in re-introducing an overlooked artist to a new audience. Here, DiQuinzio strikes a balance between artist and object by providing context for Kent's life and the midcentury era in which the work was made without overly interfering with the audience's direct experience of the paintings and sculptures. Notably, DiQuinzio avoids the temptation to inject an unnecessary presentism into a body of work that is best seen on its own terms.

This is not easy to do, but because Kent is largely controversy-free, the museum steers away from political discussion while still acknowledging that Kent came from money and married into Bay Area art royalty. While this no doubt contributed to the artist's success, it does not take away from the need to engage with Kent's work given its enduring interest or Kent's life given its “click of authenticity” — a phrase taken from one of Kent's poems.

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"Wellspring," 1945

This elevated sense of who Kent was as an artist is accomplished through all the usual tricks: loosely chronological sequencing of the work, old photographs, glass-case memorabilia, an exhibition monograph, and lots and lots of wall text.

Artworks that range from pen and ink drawings and hydrocal paintings to all scales of abstract sculpture attest to the stuff that Kent might be (poetically) made of: granite and plaster, Modernist sensibilities, and an infinite impulse to live on.

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"Lighthouse for Birds," 1956

Patterns emerge as Kent's sculptures and paintings depict the same sloping curves on different vessel- and figure-like shapes while fast, familiar lines swerve like acrobats before settling into near stillness. Symbols of infinity vibrate in two dimensions and open up like caverns of deep time in three. The artist's presence seems to multiply as you go further into the gallery.

Then, quietly, a reversal. Though most viewers who visit the exhibition are aware of Kent's tragic death (she died in a car accident in 1957 on the Pacific Highway at age 56), it takes the easy nostalgia of home videos to invert the artist's presence into a felt absence. Played on a loop in a dark side-gallery, the film footage taken by Kent and her husband (the artist Robert B. Howard) shows scenes from the couple's frequent visits to the High Sierras and California coast, zooming in on falling snow, close-ups of meadows, and tree roots creeping through granite rock. In one video, a sphinx moth visits a field of flowers. In another, Kent rides a horse down a mountain.

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"Figment," 1953

This sense of cut-short trajectory is never more pronounced than in the final gallery, where Kent's larger sculptures are given more breathing room, standing like monuments to strange truths and the naive idea that we can know them. With titles like "Finder," "Presence," and "Figment," Kent's mysterious forms belie a formalism that is no longer fashionable, but still fresh.

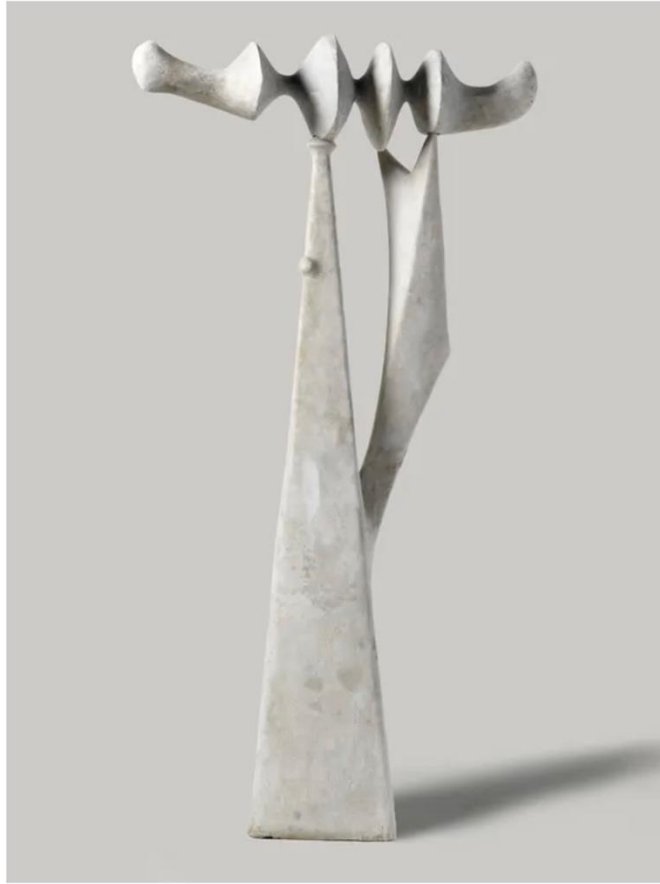
In "Figment" the viewer comes face-to-face with a five-foot-something bronze sculpture whose form and content fuse into an object that could be mistaken for a number of things (or Things as Kent would say) — a figure, a seedpod, a scepter — though none of these reductions really describe it. As its own form altogether, the surface and material of the object only hint at what it might contain. Metallic pulses of being, the terror-filled chimera of self, a bounded figure that stands alone.

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"Finder," 1953

"Finder" repeats the protruding shape, this time in white, bone-like magnesite and rotates it horizontally, offering up the figure on a pedestal that echoes Isaac's sacrifice on Mount Moriah. In this scenario, the beholder consummates the artwork by assuming the posture of Abraham, poised to kill his son. In this moment, the surface tension of what lies beneath the soft-looking plaster bubbles up a little – revealing the wide chasm between finite and infinite, daring us to take a leap of faith and place our hope in something beyond reason...a god, or a God, or the mystery beneath one of Kent's "unorthodox forms."

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"Presence," 1947

Next to "Finder" is "Presence," another slightly smaller, Noguchi-like magnesite sculpture whose similar jagged, pulsing shapes seem to smooth and fold back onto one another, closing the shocking chasm of the unbound object into a vessel-like structure that is rendered useless in its solidity, but useful as metaphor for infinity – which was arguably at the core of every piece Kent made, though hers was an infinity observed from somewhere – specifically – where the viewer stands.

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In one of her notebooks (posthumously published in her biography and reprinted in the exhibition monograph), Kent expanded on this qualitative and almost topographical understanding of time:

“Time to search out direction. Feel for currents. Not length of time but quality. You find it like shells or minerals, unheralded. The past changes with its offshoots to the present. Color and direction change relating to color and direction of Now. Old episodes take new accent as the strain/stripe emerges again in present context. As new understanding of motives (or lack of motives) comes to surface. Slow unmasking of truths of the Time.”



“Citadel,” 1955

Viewing Kent’s work now, each of us continues a line – an offshoot – begun by the artist, inserting ourselves into proximity with her objects, experiencing our own “click of authenticity.”

As postmodern as we all think we are, we are still just as good at regarding objects from a sensorial, personal perspective as humans were sixty, six hundred, six thousand years ago. This does not mean that each generation doesn’t have a new meta-understanding of the past or a need for new theories of power, we definitely do. It’s just that these tools can be present with artworks as they apply (and in addition to the sensibilities we’ve cultivated and faculties we’ve had forever).

It’s easy to take Kent seriously as a missing artist in the canon of Modernist sculptors. It’s harder to take her work at face value, simply because of our tendency to side-eye everything, including the idea of “being authentic” — which sounds more like a personal branding exercise than a state of being we can access without performing. But Kent’s authenticity is not unavailable to us, either. In fact, we might begin to approach it by standing next to her work for a few minutes, recasting the artist’s objects and closing our own loops. Wondering why there is still so much that is unresolved.

luxē

INTERIORS+DESIGN®

Olson, Kimberly, "Shelf Life: Adaline Kent: The Click of Authenticity," *Luxe Magazine*, February 13, 2023

SCENE

WRITTEN BY KIMBERLY OLSON



INSPIRING MIND

NATASHA BECKER



In 2020, the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco hired Natasha Becker as its first dedicated, full-time curator of African art. The South African native, who has spearheaded numerous exhibitions and international initiatives, brings to the role substantial knowledge of both art history and African history. *Luxe* sat down with Becker to learn more about her vision moving forward. famsf.org

interpretations to the historical while also responding to the current moment.

Is there a contemporary artist you're especially enthused about showcasing?

Lhola Amira [on exhibit at the de Young Museum through December] is a South African artist making an impact by showing that we are all connected historically—Africans, African Americans and descendants of Africans; Native American and Indigenous people; and descendants of European settlers. By drawing on all these cultural stands, they are inviting everyone into their work of cultural healing.

What excites you about your role? One of the biggest transformations in the past 15–20 years in the field is the growth of contemporary African art. Essentially, I was hired to deepen visitors' knowledge of and connection with the historical collection. But I proposed we bring contemporary artists into the mix. It was an exciting challenge to bring new critical

Why should someone explore African art? Africa is considered the birthplace of modern humanity. It is the site upon which all our ancestors first expressed abstract thoughts in visual terms. Because of the continent's extraordinary diversity and artistic heritage, it takes time to explore. Africa cannot be understood in one exhibition. Unpacking that will be exciting to someone who's not familiar with it.

SHELF LIFE

Adaline Kent: The Click of Authenticity

In one of her notebooks, sculptor Adaline Kent wrote of her artistic process, "I want to hear the click of authenticity," an idea that fueled her work. After studying under sculptor Ralph Stackpole in San Francisco and Antoine Bourdelle in Paris, Kent set up a studio in North Beach in 1929. Her abstract pieces were influenced by everything from her travels to the concept of infinity to the natural world. She became one of the midcentury's most innovative creators, her name linked to modernist artists like Ruth Asawa and Mark Rothko. Out January 31, *Adaline Kent: The Click of Authenticity* is the first major monograph of the artist to be published in 60 years and includes an extensive chronology of her work, text by scholars, and a selection of sculptures, photographs and rarely seen pieces. rizzoliusa.com



INSPIRING MIND PHOTOS: LEFT, COURTESY S/MAC GALLERY; LHOLA AMIRA, RIGHT FORBAME, COURTESY ELSABETH SWOLARZ; SHELF LIFE PHOTOS: COVER COURTESY RIZZOLI NEW YORK; ARTWORK, ADALINE KENT, 1947, COLLECTION OF JULIA HELGARD RITTER, PHOTO BY RON JONES.



Scott, Chadd, "Underappreciated Adaline Kent exhibit coming to Nevada" *See Great Art*, January 15, 2023

ART IN THE WEST FEMALE ARTISTS

Underappreciated Adaline Kent exhibit coming to Nevada



BY CHADD SCOTT · JANUARY 15, 2023 · 0 COMMENTS



Adaline Kent, *Wellspring*, 1945. University of Missouri-Columbia.

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The Nevada Museum of Art will host the first retrospective exhibition of one of midcentury America's most innovative and underrecognized artists to occur in nearly sixty years in "[Adaline Kent: The Click of Authenticity](#)." The exhibition features approximately 90 works that span Kent's entire career and will be on display at the Museum from January 28, 2023, through September 10, 2023. The exhibition will occupy the entire second floor, charting major thematic developments in the artist's work, which progressed from figuration to abstraction.

Encompassing a diverse range of media, the exhibition includes drawings, original pictures incised on Hydrocal (a plaster mixture), sculptures both large and small, and a collection of terracottas — many of which have not been seen by the public in over half a century.

Adaline Kent (1900-1957) often wrote down many of her ideas on art, filling notebooks with her thoughts. In one poetic note entitled "Classic Romantic Mystic," dated April 17, 1956, Kent mused, "I want to hear the click of authenticity." The title for the exhibition takes its inspiration from this quote, underscoring the drive that propelled her forward in her work and life: to create art that expressed a unique approach to timeless subjects.

The expression of infinity emerges as an overarching theme in her work. In fact, Kent symbolically employed the looping symbol for infinity in many of her compositions. According to Apsara DiQuinzio, senior curator of contemporary art and organizer of the exhibition "...the infinity symbol, which she aligned with waterfalls and ski slopes, can be understood as a fusion of her interests in time, space, and nature. For Kent, the infinite was the wellspring of the growth and knowledge that led her to the discovery of her truth. It was what she experienced in the mountains, and it was what she hoped to express in her art."

Although Kent's work is not widely known today, she was featured in key 1940s and 1950s exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Bienal de São Paulo, and she exhibited with the [Betty Parsons Gallery in New York](#). She was a peer of artists such as Ruth Asawa, Isamu Noguchi, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still.

Adaline Kent was also a member of the San Francisco Bay Area's most productive mid-century artistic clan, which included Charles H. Howard, Madge Knight, John Langley Howard, Robert Boardman Howard, Henry Temple Howard, and Jane Berlandina. As a young Vassar graduate, she studied with Ralph Stackpole in San Francisco and with Emile-Antoine Bourdelle in Paris, where she lived for several years before finally settling in the Bay Area in 1929.

Bourdelle, who was known for his dynamic sculptures, would spark Kent's interest in movement and balance. This influence can be seen in the sculptures she made for the Court of Pacifica at the Golden Gate International Exposition in 1939-40, a moment in her development when Kent's distinct style began to emerge. Movement was something Kent appreciated in sculpture and realizing the rhythms of her own body in space was likewise an important dimension of her own artistic practice. She kept gymnastic rings hanging in her studio, and her family reports that she utilized them regularly and with skill.

Physical movement, whether skiing or hiking in the mountains, dancing, or practicing on her rings, was something she thought about in relation to her art.

"To me, skiers, dancers, trapeze artist provide pleasure comparable to that of sculpture — an idea of form in space, space in form," Adaline Kent said. "Control in space, free yet disciplined in composition. The feeling of space and movement seem to be of the essence of our time."

A Legacy of Advocacy and Art

Adaline Kent grew up in the shadow of Mount Tampais, and into a family devoted to public service and environmentalism. Her mother, Elizabeth Thacher Kent, was an outspoken Suffragette who advocated for [women's right to vote](#). In 1911, thanks in part to her activism, California passed the Suffrage Amendment.

William Kent, her father, was a member of the U.S. Congress and a champion of land conservation. When Kent was eight years old, her parents donated land they had purchased to the U.S. Government in order to protect redwood forests from the logging industry and worked with President Theodore Roosevelt to create [Muir Woods National Monument](#).

Kent grew up with a love for the natural world which she shared with her husband Robert B. Howard. They often spent their summers exploring the High Sierra. Kent and Howard also spent winters skiing in the Tahoe region, often staying with close friend and fellow artist Jeanne Reynal, who had a house at nearby Soda Springs. They were among the first investors of Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, and Kent's brother-in-law, Henry Temple Howard, would design the first chairlift in California.

Kent was a self-admitted "addict of the High Sierra," and the landscape infused her work as she translated her experience of time and space in the mountains into aesthetic form. This makes the Nevada Museum of Art and the surrounding region an ideal context to showcase Kent's work.

"The Museum is honored to host the first retrospective exhibition of Kent's work that demonstrates her unique contribution to figuration, abstraction and surrealism on the West Coast in the United States," David Walker, CEO of the Nevada Museum of Art, said. "Her work is a vital part of our regional history and has been overlooked for far too long. The exhibition and the catalog it inspired will be a remarkable contribution to the scholarship and recognition of this exceptional, mid-century artist."



Birmingham, Lucy, "Recognition, finally: The Nevada Museum of Art gives sculptor Adaline Kent (1900-1957) a long overdue retrospective exhibition," *Reno News & Review*, January 28, 2023

■ VISUAL ARTS

Recognition, finally: The Nevada Museum of Art gives sculptor Adaline Kent (1900-1957) a long overdue retrospective exhibition



by Lucy Birmingham January 28, 2023

Women artists are finally getting the recognition they deserve—even in death. Thanks to the Nevada Museum of Art, one such artist is Adaline Kent (1900-1957), considered one of America's most innovative and under-recognized midcentury artists.

Adaline Kent: The Click of Authenticity, which just opened at the NMA and will be on display through Sept. 10, is the first retrospective exhibition of her work in nearly 60 years. It includes about 120 sculptures, drawings and other works that span Kent's entire career. Some of the works have never been shown before.

Kent's passion for nature, the High Sierra and her time in the Tahoe region are just part of her remarkable story. She was one of seven children of women's rights activist Elizabeth Kent and U.S. Rep. William Kent; their family home was at the foot of Mount Tamalpais in what is now called Kentfield.

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Adaline Kent in her studio standing next to her sculpture "Night Club," 1930. Collection of the Adaline Kent family

“When you look at the old family home, it seems embedded into the mountain there,” said Apsara DiQuinzio, senior curator of contemporary art at the Nevada Museum of Art. “I think that’s an important context through which to understand her work. She was very much a part of the early environmentalist movement in the early 20th century.” Family friends included John Muir, a naturalist famously known for creating several national parks.

Kent married Robert Howard in 1930; they shared a love of nature and spent much time in the Sierra Nevada, including skiing trips in the Tahoe region.

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Kent's connection to the Nevada Museum of Art came about through a blessing in disguise. The COVID-19 pandemic led to cancellations at two institutions that were organizing an Adaline Kent show. But DiQuinzio—working at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive at the time—had one more feather in her cap.

“When I started talking to the Nevada Museum of Art, I brought up the idea of this exhibition, realizing that it might even be a better fit for the Nevada Museum of Art, given its context of the High Sierra,” she said. “The museum was really intrigued and supportive.”

Her efforts to galvanize the exhibition led the museum to produce an exhibition catalogue that is the first scholarly publication on the artist to date.

“This is the outcome of many years of researching and thinking about Adaline Kent's work,” DiQuinzio said. “We have great contributions by Prof. Alexander Nemerov of Stanford University, and Jeff Gunderson, who is an archivist and librarian at the Anne Bremer Memorial Library at the San Francisco Art Institute. Both Adaline Kent and Robert L. Howard were closely involved with that institution for a majority of their lives. (Also involved is) Elaine Yau, who is an associate curator at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, where I used to work.”

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The catalogue was designed by the Purtil Family Business in Los Angeles.

“We had a great rapport with the designer, Connie Purtil, who really responded to Adaline Kent’s work,” DiQuinzio said. “I think the design of the catalogue turned out beautifully.”

The exhibition title, though, is a bit curious: *The Click of Authenticity*.

“It comes from a kind of poetic note that she wrote down in her notebooks,” DiQuinzio said. “The ‘click of authenticity’ would be when she developed a work of art that she felt was unique. She was very interested in the idea of infinity, and how infinity was experienced on mountain tops and in nature. Her notion of authenticity is linked to that experience.”

Kent considered herself primarily a sculptor, and began sculpting in her early 20s. She studied with Ralph Stackpole, one of San Francisco’s leading artists in the 1920s and ’30s. She then went to Paris and took lessons with the influential French sculptor Emile-Antoine Bourdelle at the Académie de la Grande Chaumiere. She lived in Paris for several years before returning to the Bay Area.



“Never Fear” (1948).

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During the 1940s and 1950s, Kent's work was featured in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Bienal de Sao Paulo. She also became a member of the San Francisco Bay area's prolific mid-century artistic clan, with Charles H. Howard, Madge Knight, John Langley Howard, Robert Boardman Howard, Henry Temple Howard and Jane Berlandina.

However, the art world at the time was almost exclusively male-dominated.



"Figment" (1953).

"She was part of a whole group of women artists in the 20th century whose work was not recognized as being a significant contribution to art history," DiQuinzio said. "And so there is a kind of excavation that's happening now to re-explore and re-examine their contributions, because they play a significant role in shaping 20th century or modern art. ... We're looking beyond the Picassos and the Magrittes of art history and thinking about all the other artists who played an important role in helping give shape to what we now think of as modern art."

Kent's life was cut short just as her career was starting to take off: In 1957, she died in a car accident while driving on the Pacific Coast Highway in Marin County. She was only 56 years old. Left behind were her husband and their two

daughters, Ellen and Galen, both in their early 20s.

"There were a lot of people who her death impacted. The family still has boxes of condolence letters from people like Ansel Adams and Walt Disney," DiQuinzio said.

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Kent left \$10,000 in her will to create an annual award recognizing promising California artists. Long sponsored by the San Francisco Art Institute, the award was ultimately named the Adaline Kent Art Award. The Marin Conservation League also established a memorial fund in her honor that helped finance a redwood forest in Lagunitas called the Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

Kent's legacy is undeniable—but is the Nevada Museum of Art taking a risk in showing the work of a fairly unknown woman artist who passed away in 1957? DiQuinzio said that if so, it's a risk worth taking.

“I think there's a real hunger and desire to learn more about artists who are women and who have been overlooked by the historical canon,” she said. “I think it's necessary and very relevant to our moment.”

Adaline Kent: The Click of Authenticity will be on display through Sunday, Sept. 10, at the Nevada Museum of Art, 160 W. Liberty St., in Reno. For more information, call 775-329-3333, or visit nevadaart.org.

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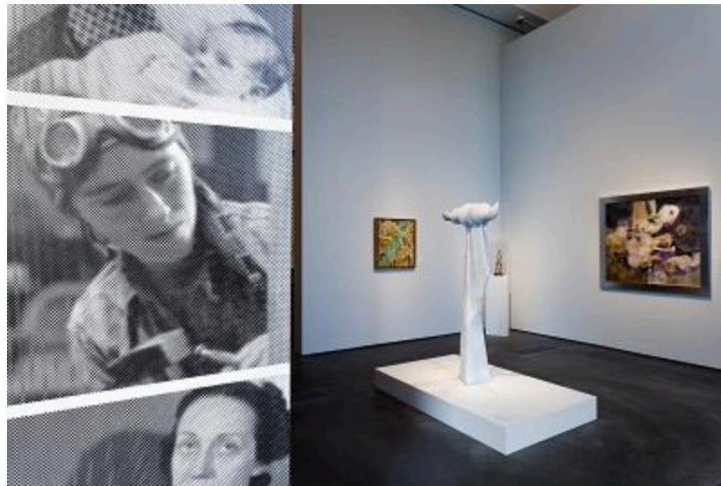
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LACMA

Steinberger, Staci, "Mid-century Wonderland: Sculptor Adaline Kent in LACMA's Exhibitions," *LACMA Unframed*, April 11, 2012



Mid-century Wonderland: Sculptor Adaline Kent in LACMA's Exhibitions

APRIL 11, 2012

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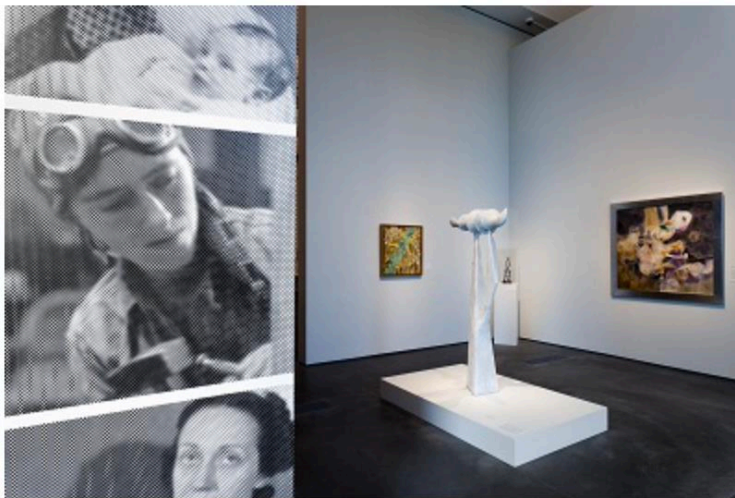
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When the Resnick Pavilion opened in 2010, we hoped that the pathways between exhibitions would facilitate conversations between works that might otherwise never appear in the same room. With the current pairing of two mid-twentieth-century exhibitions, *California Design, 1930–1965: “Living in a Modern Way”* in the center gallery and *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States* on the east side, the connections are more than intellectual musings—several of the designers and artists in these shows knew each other.



Install IW for blog 417

Installation view, *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, January 29-May 6, 2012, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

While *In Wonderland* doesn't focus solely on California, the prevailing sense of opportunity and freedom from convention that lured designers to the Golden State also provided an ideal climate for women experimental artists, creating concentrated groups in San Francisco and Los Angeles. In the mid-twentieth century, the avant-garde scenes in these cities remained relatively small, so it is no surprise that many of these artists and designers attended the same schools and exhibited in the same galleries. In some cases the connections were even closer: In the 1940s, artist Madge Knight worked for Walter Landor's influential San Francisco graphic design firm.

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Only one artist, however, has work appearing in both exhibitions. San Francisco sculptor Adaline Kent created abstract sculptures with forms inspired by the natural landscape.



Kent-Bio Photo

Kent-Bio Photo

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Adaline Kent



Kent-Dark Mountain-1944

Adaline Kent, Dark Mountain, 1944, San Francisco
Museum of Modern Art, purchase

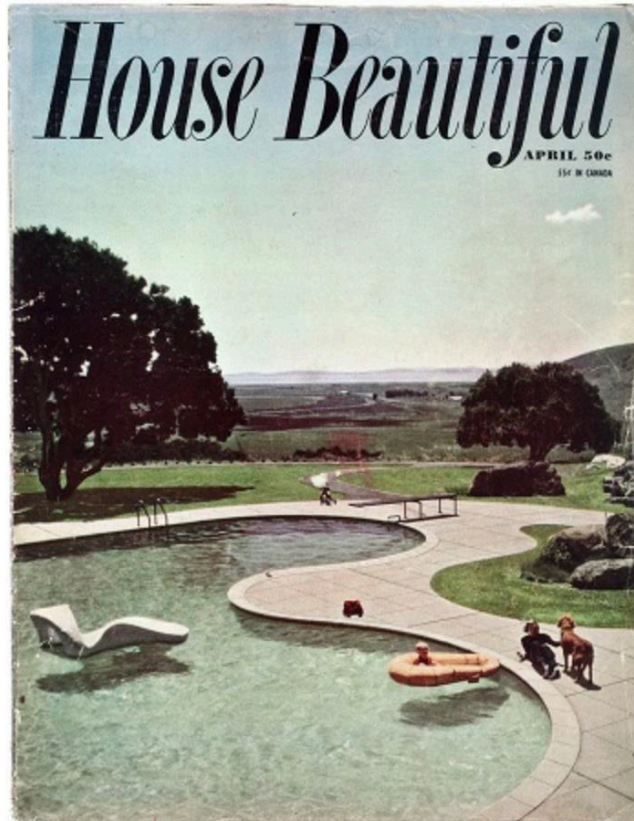
It would be hard to miss the beautiful works on view in *In Wonderland*, but eagle-eyed visitors may catch a glimpse of one of her most monumental pieces in *California Design*, on the cover of *House Beautiful*.

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House Beautiful April 1951 2 for blog

The cover depicts Thomas Dolliver Church's Donnell Ranch garden, a masterpiece of modern landscape design that famously featured the first kidney shaped pool. Kent's sculpture emerges from the center of the pool, creating a centerpiece for the garden's biomorphic composition (as well as providing attractive underwater passages for adventurous swimmers). While the sculpture seems spontaneous and organic, Kent created several versions before finding a form that complimented the undulating curves of the surrounding pool and pathways.

The buoyant optimism of *California Design* and the introspective visions of *In Wonderland* may seem worlds apart, but in reality, many of the artists and designers involved lived and worked only miles apart. The current line-up at LACMA brings them back into proximity, revealing that two different images of mid-century California could exist—then and now—side-by-side.

In Wonderland closes in the Resnick Pavilion on May 6, followed by the closing of *California Design* on June 3.

Staci Steinberger, Curatorial Assistant, Decorative Arts and Design

SFGATE

Baker, Kenneth, "‘Outdoors’ exhibition lacks depth," *SFGATE*, November 17, 2001

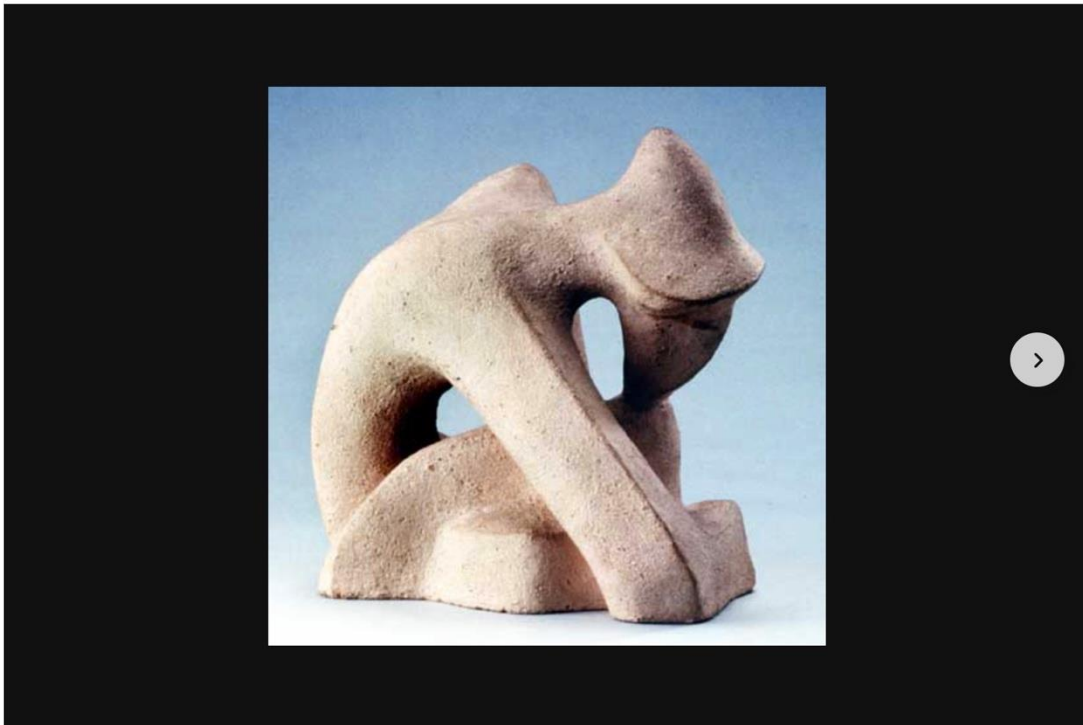
Entertainment

'Outdoors' exhibition lacks depth



Kenneth Baker

Nov. 17, 2001



1 of 3



Adaline Kent's "Scribe" (1944): Figure or abstraction?

ADALINE KENT AT 871

Most people now remember the name Adaline Kent (1900-1957) because of the annual award, named in her honor, given by the San Francisco Art Institute.

But Kent was a sculptor of some distinction, as anyone who sees the small retrospective at 871 Fine Arts will recognize.

Wealthy and well traveled, Kent found promptings everywhere for her mature surrealist carvings and casts: in the art of Isamu Noguchi, Henry Moore and Alberto Giacometti, in the weathering of stones and dead trees, in ancient Japanese Haniwa sculpture.

Her best pieces invite multiple readings as landscape and figure, or figure and architecture, or, as in "Scribe" (1944), figure and abstraction.

The 871 survey fills a gap in the public's awareness of mid-20th century art in Northern California.

ADALINE KENT: Sculpture and drawings. Through Dec. 22. 871 Fine Arts, 49 Geary St., San Francisco. (415) 543-5155.



Written By
Kenneth Baker

Kenneth Baker has been art critic for the San Francisco Chronicle since 1985. A native of the Boston area, he served as art critic for the Boston Phoenix between 1972 and 1985.

He has contributed on a freelance basis to art magazines internationally and was a contributing editor of Artforum from 1985 through 1992. He continues to review fiction and nonfiction books for The Chronicle, in addition to reporting on all aspects of the visual arts regionally and, on occasion, nationally and internationally.

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SFGATE

Bonetti, David, "SFMOMA names curator / Rosa to succeed Betsky in architecture post," *SFGATE*, October 2, 2001

ENTERTAINMENT

SFMOMA names curator / Rosa to succeed Betsky in architecture post

By David Bonetti

Oct 2, 2001



ADALINE KENT UNTITLED
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ADALINE KENT SOLO SHOW: Adaline Kent. The name is familiar because of the annual award named after her given to California artists by the [San Francisco Art Institute](#). But if you're not familiar with her own work, you're not alone. The last time Kent (1900–1957) had a solo show was a memorial exhibition in 1958 at the San Francisco Museum of Art (today's SFMOMA).

Adrienne Fish has remedied that situation by mounting a solo show of Kent's sculpture and drawings (through Dec. 22 at 871 [Fine Arts](#), 49 Geary St.).

Kent's work belongs to the biomorphic school of surrealism that was popular internationally in the '40s and '50s, and the work in the show, although understandably dated in look, should appeal to those who want to fill in their knowledge of Bay Area art.

Fish reports that the work is selling well and that several major collectors and California museums have acquired work or have expressed interest in doing so.

Kent's biography alone might attract attention. She was born into a wealthy family -- Kentfield was named after its estate -- and she married into the Howard clan, which has been dubbed "the first family of Bay Area Modernism." Scion of the family was John Galen Howard (1864–1931), supervising architect of the [University of California at Berkeley](#) who designed the [Bancroft Library](#), Sather Tower, California Hall, the [Greek Theatre](#) and other familiar Cal landmarks.

Kent's husband, sculptor [Robert Boardman Howard](#), was one of three sons who became artists. His brothers Charles Howard and [John Langley Howard](#) were painters, but of entirely different stripes. Charles, who moved to Britain, was an abstract surrealist, and John Langley was a social realist best known for his Coit Tower murals.

ALTMAN SIEGEL

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“Adeline Kent exhibition at art center,” *Palo Alto Times*, May 26, 1958

Adeline Kent⁵⁸ exhibition at art center

SAN FRANCISCO — An Adeline Kent memorial exhibition is now being conducted by the San Francisco Museum of Art, War Memorial, Civic Center, San Francisco.

The artist, wife of Robert B. Howard, noted sculptor, was a native of Kentfield. She studied at Vassar, at the California School of Fine Arts, the Grande Chaumiere in Paris, and with sculptors Ralph Stackpole and Antoine Bourdelle. She was long a member of the San Francisco Art Association.

HER WORK HAS been widely exhibited in the United States and abroad. One-man exhibitions include those at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in 1955, the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York, 1949 and 1953, and at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in 1953.

Her work has been a part of exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Art, which retains several of her sculptures as part of its permanent collection.

The earliest piece in the present exhibition is a sensitively modeled small figure study, cast in bronze, which is dated 1936; it is one of the pieces owned by the museum.

The main emphasis of the memorial exhibition is on Adeline Kent's work of the last seven or eight years — chiefly sculpture, but including some paintings and drawings. Her more recent work is non objective, and is characteristically formed of hard, castable substances such as hydrocol and magnesite — materials well suited to her creative device of incorporating color as an integral part of the sculpture idea.

MISS KENT'S forms are described as subtle but strong, and often, by their open structure, involve empty space as well as solid matter in the total concept.

The Oakland Tribune

Cross, Miriam Dungan, "Magic and Power in Kent Sculpture at S.F. Museum," Oakland Tribune, March 30, 1958

3-C Oakland Tribune, Sunday, March 30, 1958



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.).

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Fried, Alexander, "Art," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 30, 1958

"CITADEL" (above) is a symbolic image in archaic, abstract form, in the memorial exhibit of the late Sculptor Adaline Kent at the San Francisco Museum of Art. "Standing Figure" (right) typifies the sensitive, more conservative work of Miss Kent's earlier career, 20 years ago.

IN MEMORY of the late Adaline Kent, the San Francisco Museum of Art has opened a wide ranging exhibit of her sculptures, drawings and paintings.

Her death in a car accident saddened the art community for she had fine, friendly qualities as a person, in addition to her artistic gifts and courage.

At the entrance to the exhibit stand several figure sculptures Miss Kent made 20 years ago. They show her sensitive talent in a lyrical, conservative form. At the

time, her work showed relation to such masters as Kolbe and Despiau.

The bulk of the show, however, studies her later insights and experiments, when she probed the realm of the subconscious for more mysterious, even grotesque sculptural forms and meanings.

"I want the power of Stonehenge and the magic of the South Pacific in the landscape of the wide present," she once said.

Truly enough, her sculptural fantasies — with their bulk, twist, curl and thrust of shape — often have a primitive tone. And their materials (terra cotta, magnesite, plaster — sometimes inlaid with pebbles or shells) retain an earthy, rather than polished look.

Symbolisms

To me, her symbolisms are most expressive in such works as her archaic, abstract "Citadel" or her small "Hermit" with its horizontal black stripes on a stark bodily shape.

Her drawings are often "idea studies" for three-dimensional work, though they also aim to be patterns of expression in themselves. Her earlier sketches — of figures, Mexicans, flowers and landscape — reveal her talent in a more obvious, traditional manner.

An affectionate whimsical touch is charming in several child figures (one doing a handstand) and her stylized sculpture of a long-beaked, long-necked pelican.

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San Francisco Chronicle

Frankenstein, Alfred., "Adaline Kent Show: A Feeling for Nature," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 26, 1958

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, Wednesday, Mar. 26, 1958

The Lively Arts



Adaline Kent Show: A Feeling for Nature

Alfred Frankenstein

THE LATE Adaline Kent, a memorial exhibition of whose work is now to be seen at the San Francisco Museum of Art, had a way of jotting observations of various kinds on the pages of her sketchbooks, and a collection of these is scheduled for publication in the fall. A few of them are posted on the wall of the gallery in which the exhibition may be found, and they serve as the best possible criticism of it.

"Sculpture is concerned with verbs: what water does, how fire moves, how rock shatters, how minerals crystallize, how an animal looks out."

"The virtue in realistic sculpture is the vision of the abstract. Why not drop the trappings?"

"I want the power of Stonehenge and the magic of the South Pacific in language of the wide present . . . To fuse the spiritual

with the animal instinct in forms coherent with nature . . . The mystery comes from the strength of form-and-space, not from amorphousness."

Abstraction in forms coherent with nature, strong in form, with a touch of the primitive and the mysterious—this is exactly what one sees at the Kent exhibition, at least in the later and more important works. One also sees a remarkable mastery of sculptor's materials, especially terra cotta and the hard composite stones known as hydrocal and magnesite. The latter Miss Kent handled in large, epical pieces, with powerful, organic rhythms and a big architectural thrust. She used terra cotta most often for small things, wayward and strange in design, with something gently wistful about them like Morris Graves' blind birds in the moonlight.

No one knew more about color in sculpture than Adaline Kent. Usually it is an integral color that comes from the earths and the firing in her terra cottas, and the range of hue in these pieces has much to do with their appeal. She also liked layered and striated effects, as if she were cooperating with geology, or geology with her, in the creation of these works, and her way of embedding them at times with pebbles and bits of shell underlines this relationship. For some time past a feeling for the drifts, tides, and forces of nature, translated into form rather than imitated from appearance, has been manifesting itself in the abstract art of the Bay Region and the country at large. Miss Kent was one of the first to reach out in that direction, and her work remains one of its most eloquent, subtle, and monumental expressions.

San Francisco Chronicle

Hagen, R.H., "Tribute to a Sculptress --- Adaline Kent Howard," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 5, 1957

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, Friday, April 5, 1957

The Lively Arts



Tribute to a Sculptress ---Adaline Kent Howard

R. H. Hagen

ART is something one sees. The artist is something one seldom sees. The paint on the canvas and the carved stone always exist beyond the one who had the imagination and the technique that created them.

But the artist who painted the canvas or carved the stone also exists. And when that artist ceases to exist there occurs something, both in art and in life, that can be called a void.

No greater human void ever occurred in that special segment of the world made up of the people who create art and the people who like art in San Francisco, than when Adaline Kent Howard died in an auto accident on March 24.

Adaline Kent Howard was a sculptress; and, as such, her works will exist beyond her. But when she died so unexpectedly, the wonder was that nobody worried about her sculpture, which is perfectly capable of taking care of itself, but that everyone suddenly discovered the person who was Adaline Kent Howard,



Adaline Kent Howard

quite apart from the works which she had created—a person who looked at art and at life with a vivid and unblinking enthusiasm.

That recognition produced a remarkable response. And probably the greatest tribute to her was that the response was not concerned with the mere perpetuation of the name of Adaline Kent Howard, but in the perpetuation of the life and the art for which she stood.

One response was the establishment of a fund for the acquisition of a redwood forest area in Marin county.

Another was the establishment of a memorial fund to "perpetuate the lifetime interest of Adaline Kent Howard in artists and institutions of art in the Bay Area." The fund is to be used for art scholarships, awards and projects under the sponsorship of the San Francisco Art Association.

The beautiful, the typical, thing, of course, is that she beat all her memorializers to the punch. Ten thousand dollars has been bequeathed in her will for ten annual awards of \$1000 each to promising young California artists.

That philanthropy was but the last instance of how she had helped deserving artists throughout her whole career.

Hers was a special kind of help. It wasn't a hand-out. As one of her friends expressed it: "Addie never gave artists money; she bought their works!"

The New York Times

Katharine Sturgis' Water-Colors on View

WISDOM and sensibility are read in the tonal water-colors of Katharine Sturgis at the Emmerich Gallery, 18 East Seventy-seventh Street. In the elimination of petty detail, the wisdom of a true water-colorist emerges. Miss Sturgis, in her gray-to-white gradations, her economical brushing and her incisive and sparing use of line, has captured the spirit of landscape, much as the ancient Chinese did. It is obvious that long periods of contemplation precede each of these works, so just, so accurate are they. Her images of Maine landscapes, stone quarries, valleys and seas are filled with love—the kind of love which wisely refrains from dissection but sees the whole, broadly and clearly.

Adaline Kent in her modestly scaled sculptures brings both humor and poetry to the medium. In her exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery, 15 East Fifty-seventh Street, there are more than forty works, all rendered in a special plaster that has the look of terra-cotta and can be fired.

There are a number of pieces which, in their cone-like forms and small holes, remind one of pre-Columbian pipes. There are other pieces that resemble the tall pointed hats of medieval ladies and then in turn are reminiscent of castles. Others suggest effigies, palaces, votive offerings. Even landscape is rendered in "Arab Landscape," in which the artist succeeds in suggesting a poetic metaphor for the sand and sun-swept adobe of the

desert. Although many of these sculptures are thematic, their integrity as artistic objects with their own laws and essences is never disturbed.

Also on view at the Parsons Gallery are the quasi-geometric paintings of Jeanne Miles, in which squared forms, diagonals and sometimes snake-like forms are made into analogues for sun, sea and evening.

Four developing artists are showing at the new artists' cooperative, the Camino Gallery at 92 East Tenth Street. Sam Goodman is working with long, very broad strokes toward an abstract idiom of movement; Bart Perry, who seems to have studied Tomlin, uses interlocking, loosely defined forms to evoke spinning or calmly undulating movements; Florence Weinstein in several of her paintings explores the possibilities of high-keyed pastel colors against white grounds; and Stanton Kreider poses curvilinear but geometric forms on pale grounds, suggesting musical intervals.

An exhibition of contemporary Indonesian painting is on view at the Art Education Gallery of New York University, 80 Washington Square East. Some of these painters are young, sophisticated, with an experimental technique that brings in faint echoes of Rouault, Chagall and other expressionist painters. Others are more primitive, painting in the colorful tradition of book illuminators, only large scale.

D. A.

ART NEWS

"Adaline Kent," *ARTnews*, December 1953, Vol. 52, No. 8

and unexpected item is a witty Lautrec wash drawing of monkeys. The fashionable Parisian world of an earlier generation is delicately caricatured in Constantin Guys' *In Front of the Bourse*. Other offerings are an important Daumier, *Mother and Child*, his charcoal study for the Louvre painting; two evanescent Pissarro landscapes in crayon and ink; a sensitive Fantin-Latour study of nude figures; and works by Degas, Renoir, Bouoin and Maillol. \$300-\$3,000. H.L.F.

Sidney Lausman [Milch; Dec. 7-24], well-known Woodstock landscapist, has moved imperturbably, unhurriedly from a nostalgic, Corot-influenced French landscape to a manner which now finds him at the brink of abstraction. His most recent pictures are simplified to a few dynamic movements of trunk and branch, a few, carefully-placed, roughly-painted tans, greens and blues. It is an approach which is organic and direct, an expression of landscape yet not an expression of structure. Prices unquoted. L.C.

Louis Finkelstein [Roko; Dec. 14-Jan. 6], who is on the art faculty of Brooklyn College, is showing alone for the first time. He is a very good painter. All but one of his subjects are essentially landscapes. The one is a figure with a face without features, but with presence. They are painted in even areas in clear flat pastel colors combined with lines like skillful rapid writing with an old fashioned pen—something like Villon and something like Tworokov. There is characteristically a tip to his verticals and horizontal lines that imparts dash. He can use in one quarter or two thirds of the canvas large flat areas that stay in the picture, that without modeling have their intended place in the picture, and are in themselves interesting. Some of the paintings made in Maine rely very little on the skeleton of lines. Finkelstein is a Cubist-derived painter whose works are full of Impressionist fresh air. The persons in *Adoration of the Magi* are active and abstract and not completely separate from the background. The paintings seem held together by a consistency of speed. \$35-\$450. F.P.

Reuben Rubin [Borgenicht; Dec. 14-Jan. 21] left his native Rumania in 1912 for Palestine, where he has lived ever since. His drawings in colored ink washes mostly depict the Arab life that he became familiar with before the Westernization of the country by European and American Jews. He also shows the new Jewish immigrants from Afghanistan, who, of course, contribute nothing Western. His *Rest on the Flight* looks Biblical, and is titled to recall the New Testament, but it is made from present-day models and their present day-life. Prices unquoted. F.P.

William Palmer [Midtown; Dec. 15-Jan. 21] exhibits his landscapes of upper New York around Utica, where he is the director of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute of Art. He sees the countryside through squares of light that radiate from the

square fields and houses, or fan triangularly from the thin branches of the trees. Dark rectangles are made by the groves of trees between the fields. His pictures are in pairs of colors: *Hovering Twilight* is in alternate rectangles of brown and violet; *Open Winter*, in blue-green slightly tipped rectangles in the sky; *Where the Willows Glow* is mostly an orange-yellow. The balance between abstract analysis and realism is upset somewhat by his concern with the character of the groves of trees. The paintings look as though the place would be immediately recognizable in all of them, and more so than if they had no abstract elements. \$300-\$1,500. F.P.

Rosemarie Beck [Peridot; to Dec. 12] lives in Woodstock. Her first show contains oils and gouaches. The paintings are Non-Objective, but they are materialistic. The oils in wavy stripes about as wide as a brick, and in brick reds, browns, blacks and whites, and ceramic blue-greens, with spaces between the stripes about as wide as the spaces occupied by mortar in a wall, look like walls; but more important than this resemblance is that her color has the opacity and "value" and weight of masonry. \$100-\$600. F.P.

Betty Lewis Isaacs [Hacker; Dec. 1-31] is a sculptor who prefers the hard materials and works direct. This is her New York debut. A few of the pieces are terra cotta; all the rest are stone, marble or wood. Her work falls into three categories (which are almost three distinct styles): representational figures or busts, all in a state of semi-repose; little-to-like animal sculptures which are humorous; and more abstract pieces mainly derived from animal forms. Mrs. Isaacs does not work from nature. She is more interested in her feelings about the forms she is inspired by than in anatomical investigations or technical explorations. \$50-\$500. F.O.

Adaline Kent [Parsons], who has exhibited in Europe as well as on the East Coast and in her native city, San Francisco, shows abstract sculptures which are dry and cool. Their surfaces are without light or color (though a few are tinted). They do not "breathe," and when they are interesting or moving (as the rather majestic *Figment* is) they have the simple organization-feeling of a fossil. But most of the sculptures are not, strictly speaking, unified by the act or the conception of the sculptor. *Middle Eye* is a large black napkin ring with horns attached. *White Hand* is like a starfish mounted on a vertical-standing rib, and the lower part of some other sculptures are also merely bases for getting the main idea up in the air. The black *Night Flyer*, one of the best pieces, is a speeding form barely brushing the earth with its wings; tips and this solution to the problem of somehow grounding the form, while not unusual, is satisfying. There were large drawings shown in which the sketches for some of the sculptures are surrounded by a textile-fabric environment of lines; these are not pleasing in themselves, but they point up the lack of en-



Louis Finkelstein's *Western Way, Cranberry Island*: "like skillful rapid writing"



André Roca's etching, *Wedding*: "an impression of passion"

vironment of the actual sculptures whose drawing is not sufficiently resourceful to create an atmosphere, a change in the air around them. \$50-\$750. F.O.

André Roca [Contemporaries; to Dec. 5]. New York painter, print-maker and poet, shows graphic work of the last two years along with poems written simultaneously. These etched and engraved plates are heavy in texture, somber in mood, and refer symbolically to a primitive interpretation of Christian mythology. The harsh linear ridges and handsome blacks of the prints give an impression of passion which is often sacrificed to the anecdotal style of presentation; and the drawing, in its rocky adherence to the literary emphasis of the line, sometimes seems to be stubbornly resisting the eloquence of the tonal composition. On the whole, however, the three books of plates and poems establish a context for their angels, beggars, mourners and apostles which is neither unconvincing nor obscure, though sometimes vague. \$75. F.O.

Larry Rivers [De Nagy; Dec. 8-Jan. 9] exhibits some very large oils and small sketches and drawings for them. There are two versions of a painting made for ARTnews (*Rivers paints a picture* will appear in the Jan. issue), two versions of a self-portrait, two landscapes and, largest of all, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*. These paintings and drawings are influenced by Rivers' deepening interest in sculpture. His drawings show a sculptor's knowledge of the

relative depths of projecting details, in other words the relative importance of parts to the whole. This peculiar sense of proportion is the essential element in the strong aesthetic reality which the drawings possess. Drawing dominates painting, sometimes at the cost of color, which in the large self-portrait is broken Cubistically in its own planes at a different level of depth from the charcoal drawing, giving the picture as a whole an ambiguous and glassy transparency. As a whole, this painting looks like an enormous page from a sketch book: there are different positions for the arms, and the head on the depicted painting is like another try at the head. In the landscapes, the ambiguities as to what shall be expressed in drawing and what in painting go together better. The paint is thin; almost like stucco. The colors are more precise and subtle and fewer in number than they used to be. The discipline of sculpture is making his painting deeper and simpler. At the time of the preview, *Washington Crossing the Delaware* was not finished. Though in many ways it gave promise of being better painted than anything else in the show, it looked small. The conception seems to call for a much larger scale. \$50-\$2,000. F.P.

Zao Wou-Ki [Cadby-Birch; Dec. 14-Jan. 23], who is Chinese, lives in France. Since his first exhibition here, last year, he has had a sensational popularity. His style seems to contain elements which are attractive to the public at large, now that they have got used to them through a

S. P., "Diversity of Shows," *The New York Times*, May 15 1949

DIVERSITY OF SHOWS

Expressionism, a Cubist,
A Haitian 'Primitive'

TWO artists at the Betty Parsons Gallery illustrate one of the paradoxes of modern art—that things are not what they seem. For the representational painter William Congdon sees by the light of his inner imaginative eye, while Adeline Kent, the abstract sculptor, creates her impersonal shapes from the world of visible organic forms.

Congdon paints in such a violently expressionistic manner that only the fact that his subjects, Italian and American city scenes, are perfectly recognizable keeps them from being hallucinatory and unreal. Indeed, these pictures succeed best as personal visions, soundings into the nervous life of a place, the Naples waterfront, New York at night, rather than as map-like delineations.

One night view of the Piazza in Venice is painted almost entirely in glistening wavelets of dark blue and black pigment. Out of the darkness surges an astonishing glow of color, scattering light like a pinwheel, that eventually resolves into the gaudy structure of San Marco. In another architectural view, a whole lacy Gothic facade is rendered in needlelike lines, scratched through a layer of dark paint. Light is capricious rather than logical.

What Congdon sees, in these Italian scenes, keeps the excitement under some control, but in the New York subjects the lid is off. A frenzied paint cookery succeeds the intensity of the earlier technique, and the real emotional temperature drops, despite feverish attempts to push it to higher levels. Perhaps the strange and the new are the best stimulants for such a subjective art, as they have been for other extreme manifestations of romanticism.

MIND'S EYE: Miss Kent is so concerned with the shapes that she is twisting, scooping, constructing, and with the paint and ornament that will adorn them that she chooses for her medium, hydrocal, a displeasing hard plaster whose only virtue lies in having no distracting separate character as a substance. Out of it she creates forms that have no direct link with the visible world, and yet succeed in suggesting emotions that they are unable to define. They seem to embody basic rhythms that only need being harnessed to natural appearances to become perfectly comprehensible. Primitive cult images are naturally recalled.