

THE ARTS

Group exhibition records beauty of Ho`omaluhia Garden setting

Aloha Ho`omaluhia V, a group exhibition: At Ho`omaluhia Botanic Garden at the end of Luluku Road in Kaneohe, through May 29. Hours: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily.

FOR most island artists, the theme of landscape is a matter of place. For the artists who have used Ho`omaluhia Botanic Garden in Kaneohe as a focal point for their work, it is also a matter of time.

The garden awaits the impeded but still impending progress of the building of H-3, and will be changed both physically and aesthetically by its construction.

The garden, tucked among extensive banana plantations at the foot of the Koolau Mountains, includes many cultivated garden areas as well as camping sites and trails for hiking and riding. The garden is enhanced, indeed made whole by its setting — by its placement against the incomparable mountain ridges which form a curtain of pleated stone. The highway, cutting through the mountain, would form a long concrete scar across its face.

The group of artists who for the fifth year are celebrating Ho`omaluhia have taken as their message Theodore Weiss' aphoristic query, "Does the map become a treasure as the land itself is lost?" It is possible that their work and that of others who take inspiration from the park will become the map of memory for this place. Whether it will cease to be, or become something else, remains uncertain.

For most of the artists in the group the issue of the politicization of the landscape is an implicit one; the more evident tone is one of celebration of the garden and the extravagant array of blossom and tree, air and light it offers.

Gretchen Aona, best known for her infrared photography, has used that same technology to create a luminous series of floral "portraits." More recent investigation of the medium of watercolor (and in particular the tri-hue system) has resulted in an analogous series of plant studies.



ART SCENE

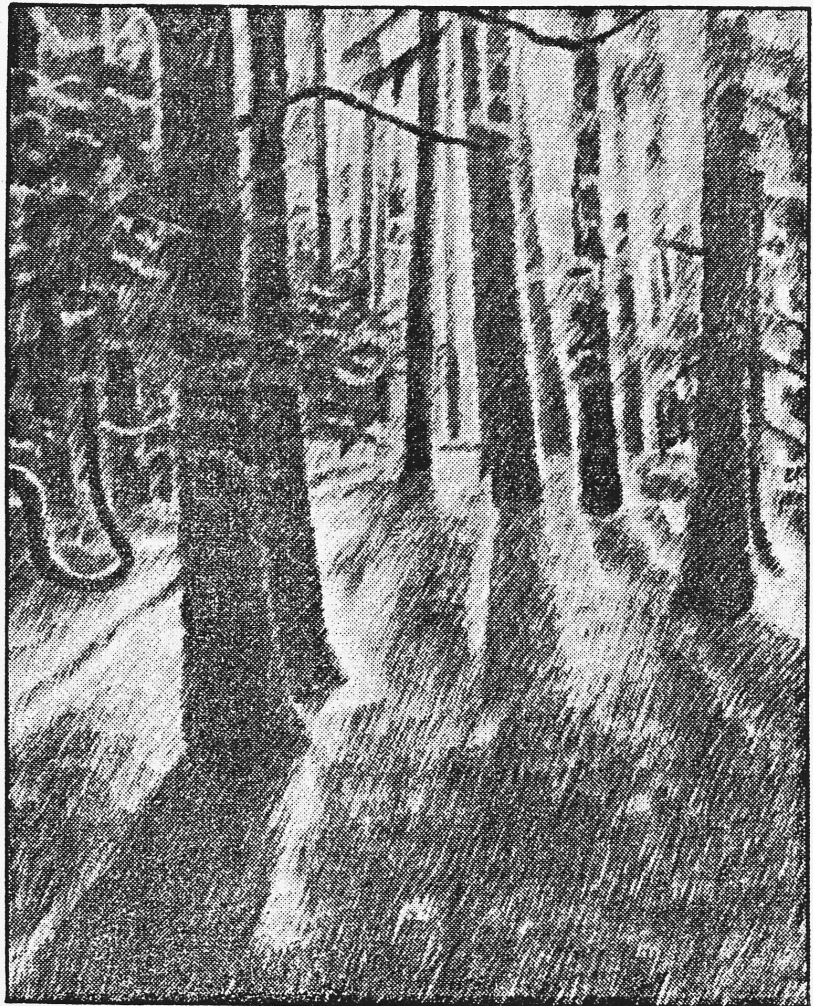
By Marcia Morse

Noreen Naughton shares a similar concern in her oil paintings of plant forms, a carry-over from earlier work, but it is her sky studies that are of particular note. Naughton conveys a sense of plein-air immediacy in her work, and the series of nine skies form a subtle record of mountain/sky interface with their changing colorations.

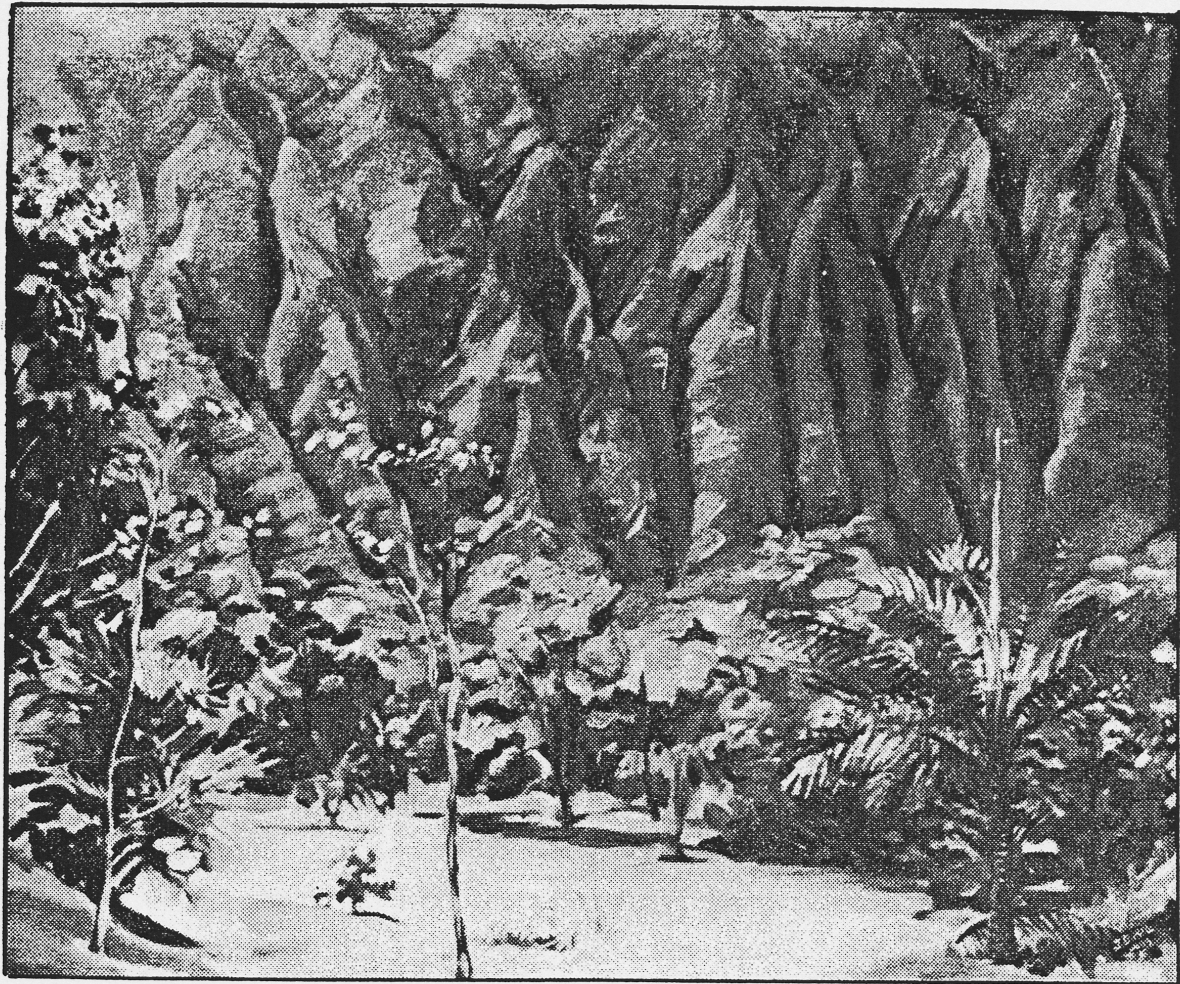
Toni Martin, whose works were seen earlier this year in a solo exhibition, also takes the mountains as theme, using the pastel medium to capture the fluidity of clouds and hills.

Both Martin and Jonathan Busse capture a sense of mountain panorama; Busse's work this year has a sense of finesse and understatement. He is not overtly polemic (as has been the case in the past) and has worked in smaller scale — giving a strong sense of painting on location — in both his oils and the india ink wash studies, which are among the freshest works in the exhibition.

Adella Islas has also used the somewhat ironic tone of monochrome painting (a canny juxtapo-



"Interior Light," a lithographic crayon drawing by Adella Islas, is part of an exhibition of work inspired by Ho`omaluhia Botanic Garden.



Jonathan Busse's oil painting, "The Hills Are Clothed with Gladness," depicts the mountain panorama that is the backdrop for Ho'omaluhia.

sition to the luxuriant color which fills the garden). The lithographic crayon study "Interior Light" is exceptional for its sense of forest ambience. Isles retains an analogous lightness of weight in her watercolors, particularly "Flowing" I and II.

George Woollard is also an acknowledged master of the medium of watercolor, using it with a sense of direct notation and freshness of perception, whether in the soft, wet colors of "A Cleft in the Mountain — Part 2" or the loose coherence of the drybrush "A View from the Park."

Photographers Francis Haar and Duane Preble record both microcosm and panorama within the garden setting, but it is the work of John Wisnosky which best captures the sense of drama and scale in the relationship between garden and surrounding mountains. Wisnosky's "Light. Falls." is

an essential distillation of the qualities of land, light, water and air that are associated with Ho'omaluhia and the windward landscape.

Michel Kaiser takes a distinctly different stance which examines the metaphorical and political implications of the environment in a more pointed way.

Kaiser, whose forte is trompe-l'oeil painting, uses illusionist techniques to develop the image of the mountains as a curtain or layer of fabric; in the "Ho'omuku" series this layer is cut through or torn. In "Ho'omuku III" and "He Pali Hiki A Ka Lani II" Kaiser represents the highway as a band lacing through the folds of mountain material. The irony is that the pretty precision with which these are painted tend to undermine the sense of outrage one might otherwise feel.