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Exhibition of stained glass

ERICA KARAWINA has just given us a show of stained glass, the first one to be held in Honolulu. Before that, we could admire it, it is true, the two vivid Gothic fragments exhibited at the Academy of Art, dating from the age of the cathedrals, where the upsurge of faith infused the brittleness of glass with the timelessness of light. The prismatic splendor of Rheims or Chartres, the great gothic windows and circular 'roses', opened perspectives on supra-natural panoramas. Their ruby reds seemed saturated with the blood of martyrs; their blues were so intense that the earthy sky paled by comparison.

Art historians refer to stained-glass as a lost art, with its secrets buried since medieval times with the masters of the craft. With all humility and without fanfare, the tiny 'windows' that Karawina achieves—great cathedral windows in capsule as it were—tell us otherwise. The deep reds and blues one associates with Chartres are there, set against the same bold pattern of lead that holds together the fragile material. There also are to be seen the architectural dignity and passionate distortions of the ancient masterpieces. Leaning on her own rich experience, Karawina infuses the Occidental craft with an Oriental hue, and her Christ Child is a Chinese infant.

Perhaps the lost secret of the glass makers of old is not lost after all. People sought it in chemical formulas concerned with glass making, and in esoteric esthetic recipes. All the more impressive for being small in scale, Karawina's work suggests that the long lost and long sought secret ingredient may be rather true purity of heart and good will for all men.

JEAN CHARLOT

"Blessed are the meek"



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