

Media Information

HAWAII, EIGHTY YEARS AGO

Paintings and Drawings by

Ruth Patterson Hart

1910-2001

August 25 –October 21, 2010

Exhibition at

Kapi'olani Community College Library

4303 Diamond Head Rd Honolulu, HI

Opening Reception

Wednesday August 25, 2010

4pm-6pm

Viewing Hours

Monday - Thursday 7:30am - 7:00pm

Friday 7:30am - 4:00pm

Saturday - Sunday CLOSED

Curator David Behlke Associate Professor/Koa Gallery Director at KCC

Ruth Patterson Hart

1910-2001

Her great grandfather Robert Love Sr. founded Love's Biscuit and Bread Company in July, 1851 in Honolulu. He baked hard tack for the crews of the whaling ships that came into the Harbor for provisions and within ten years developed the Saloon Pilot cracker for which it remains famous today. Royalty helped fight fires at the bakery on Nuuanu – King Kamehameha IV and Prince Lot in 1860 and King Kalakua in 1884. But they rebuilt and the bakery prospered and was in the family until 1968.

Her mother's sister Alice rode to Punahou on her pony in 1880 when in her words there *were about 100 students at Punahou,; most of them were boarders. Old School Hall and Pauahi Hall were the only buildings on the campus besides the President's House and the boarding school up near the spring where the lily pond is today. We marched into the Old School Hall to the tune of a drum. The boys sat at the desks on one side of the room and the girls on the other.*"

There is family lore that suggests that her cousin John Cooke was one of the first to wear an Hawaiian shirt. Ruth's sister Martha who is 93, remembers going to a "little Japanese store that had shelves filled with different yukata patterns and then taking what we picked out to Linn's to make the shirts. This would have been in the early 1930's.

Her mother, Stella Love met her father Frederick J Patterson, while on a visit to Oregon, and Ruth was born and raised in Portland but spent many childhood summers on Oahu,

visiting with aunts and uncles and 31 first cousins as well as a year at Punahou when she was fourteen.

In 1928, eighteen year old Ruth left Portland, for New York City and the Art Students League where she studied with Boardman Robinson, a noted illustrator, political cartoonist and associate of John Reed. She spent a year in Florence learning etching. before returning to California to major in Art at Mills College. There she studied with printmaker Roi Partridge. Florence Minard and Alexander Archipenko. Hans Hoffman and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy

She was never without her sketchbook when she was visiting in Hawaii during this period. In 1934, she had a one woman show at the Honolulu Art Academy which included oil paintings, water colors, pen and ink sketches, etchings and sculpture according to the Honolulu Advertiser, November 4, 1934. Among the 18 watercolors were nine Hawaiian landscapes “in which she has placed her emphasis upon the form of the Hawaiian Mountains”. The drawings and paintings she did in Hawaii realistically depict the rugged terrain of the Hawaiian landscape; some emphasize the abstract forms, particularly those of the Koa Mountains, to heighten the sense of their drama. There are also many drawings of lei makers, fishermen, field laborers. She painted scenes depicting the social conditions of workers in the sugar fields, and won the Honolulu Academy Purchase Prize for a large painting of field workers surviving rugged conditions. Her subject matter and style emerged from studies with and about great painters of the era, and echoes the focus of much WPA work in the continental United States at this time.

Ruth Patterson turned her attention to her family when she married attorney Allan Hart II in 1944. While she volunteered at the Contemporary Craft Gallery and her children knew she had painted, they were surprised to find upon her death, that Ruth had stored over 1500 paintings, sketches and watercolors in the basement. Her daughters Sally Retecki and Martha Schulte brought the work to gallery directors and have had three critically received retrospectives of her work in Oregon in the past three years and are delighted to bring this show to Hawaii

Missing Painting

In 1935 she won the purchase prize at the Honolulu Art Academy Annual for a painting called Plantation Dawn, showing plantation workers gathered prior to the start of their day. This painting is missing but there is a study for it that will be exhibited at the beautiful retrospective show of her Hawaiian work at Kapiolani Community College. If you have seen this painting. please call 808-263-8202. We are keeping a spot for it at the exhibition just in case .