

# "Electronics" in Paint

IT IS NOT OFTEN in this day of painting that an artist attempts to further an idea, or an ideal, putting aside all considerations of self-advancement or even of sales or subsidies, in the pursuit of exemplifying a truth given unto him to believe.

Although the Argent Gallery in New York is not the place one would expect to find something entirely new and untried, it nevertheless houses this month astonishing paintings by just such a crusading artist, a Mrs. Pauline Peavy of California.

Mrs. Peavy has technical equipment equal to Dali. But instead of using her inherent ability (developed, certainly, in the cases of both by dint of long hard work) to give vicarious thrills of the unnatural and decadent, as Dali does, this artist tells a tale of the abstract forces of thought abroad in the world and attempts to give validity to the belief that the mind is real. She gives form to the "electronic structure," and these forms are no more unworldly than Dali's melting watches.

To do this, the artist devised a technique that defies analysis. She paints plasmas similarly to Matta's, uses church window colors of intense reds and blues, creates forms which are neither plant nor animal nor human. But they are not "non-objective." For many are built around the figures of Biblical characters and there is deep beauty in the faces of the subjects.

By caption, Mrs. Peavy has advanced her belief in the need for better balance of the parts played by men and women in the affairs of the world. There must be more balance of compassion, forgiveness, peace in thought (all maternal qualities) than we have now, if wars are to cease, she advances. Man uses his power for destruction. His beast instinct is stronger than his urge to contribute to the advancement of humanity. But woman, the giver of new life, has the power to build the temples not built by hands. One of the captions reads like this: "The 'mother' power of the earth has been as the moon—dimmed, as always in ages over-lorded by the male."

The keynote of the exhibition of 59 paintings, the work of the last seven years, is a 14-foot long panel of *The Last Supper*. In colors like Byzantine enamels, she has painted the figure of Christ as compassionate, of pure thought and absolute justice; and the disciples as representing various aspects of our character.

Mrs. Peavy is not an impractical mystic. She studied at Oregon State College, at Chouinard School of Fine Arts; taught art in high schools in California; and has done a text book on the elements of anatomy. She has two sons, one 19 and in the Navy, the other in high school. She believes that art is not painted for morons by morons but is done and understood by developed minds. That it should take long study and much writing and interpretation before any new form of art can add to the till of understanding, is only to be expected. The paintings in themselves might not penetrate without explanation, she says.—M. R.

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