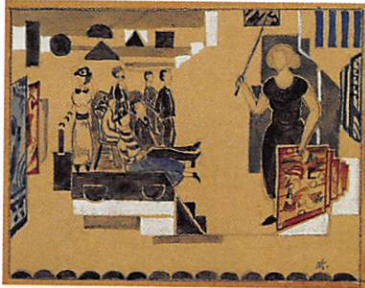


Setting a Scene

EMILIE ESTHER “Galka” Scheyer was a proponent of the art and artists she loved and a major force in bringing European Modernism to America. Born in Germany, Scheyer first saw Alexei Jawlensky’s paint-



ings in an “Exhibition of Contemporary Russian Artists” in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1915. Shortly thereafter, Scheyer met Jawlensky and became a promoter of his work. Scheyer also became closely associated with Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky

and Lyonel Feininger—the most prominent painters of the German Expressionist generation—whom she dubbed, along with Jawlensky, the “Blue Four.”

Scheyer moved to California in 1925, where she became a dealer, organizing lectures, exhibitions, and publications on the Blue Four and other European Modernists. Having first settled in San Francisco, she fell in with Imogen Cunningham, Edward Weston, Frida Kahlo, and Diego Rivera, and after moving to Los Angeles in 1930, she became acquainted with John Cage, Josef von Sternberg, and Peter Krasnow.

A new exhibition at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, Calif., “Maven of Modernism: Galka Scheyer in California,” puts several works by



the Blue Four on view, as well as pieces from Scheyer’s collection by artists such as Alexander Archipenko, László Moholy-Nagy, Emil Nolde, Pablo Picasso, and Diego Rivera, which were given to the Pasadena Art Institute in the 1950s. However, the exhibition strikes a balance between the artists Scheyer knew from Europe and the artists she met and subsequently collected in

California. As such, *Heavy Circles* (1927), a brooding yet celestial oil on canvas by Kandinsky, holds pride of place in the show, as does an elegant gelatin silver print of Weston’s *Two Shells* from the same year. Klee’s sprightly architectural scene *Plants in the Courtyard*, a 1932 oil and gouache on heavy wove paper mounted (not by the artist) on board, can be viewed, as can Krasnow’s *Recalling Happy Memories* (circa 1927), a scene from an art classroom.



Looking Sharp

AFICIONADOS of Western and specifically Taos School art will not want to miss the grand opening of the J. H. Sharp Studio in Taos, N.M., on June 9. The free-standing adobe studio, which the painter used from 1915 until his death in 1953, has been completely renovated and will include an installation of artworks and documents as well as Native American artifacts that Sharp collected and used as inspirations for his painting. Sharp, along with E. I. Couse, Oscar E. Berninghaus, W. Herbert Dutton, Ernest Blumenschein, and Bert Phillips, was one of the original six who “discovered” Taos in 1893 and founded the Taos Society of



Artists, one of the country’s most distinguished artists’ colonies. They and a group of like-minded other artists created a unique style that integrated

European traditional and modernist styles with Native American and Spanish-American influences. Couse and Sharp were close friends and neighbors whose studios

were right near each other; the Sharp Studio is located on the Couse-Sharp Historic Site.

Sharp, who was called the “spiritual father” of the Taos School, specialized in depicting the American Indian and also spent a good deal of time painting on the Crow Agency in Montana. As he put it, “[I try] to present the Indian as he is...mentally as well as physically; not as ephemeral fiction has delighted to picture him, but as a human being....” Visitors to the restored studio will



be able to experience the environment in which Sharp set out to realize these aims. On Friday, June 9 at 4 p.m. there will be a gala opening, and on the following day renowned Western art scholar Peter Hassrick will present a talk at the Harvard Museum of Art in Taos on Sharp’s various studios in Europe and other parts of the U.S., placing them in the context of artist ateliers of that time. At 5:30 p.m. on the 10th there will be a gala and art auction at the Couse Foundation.