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Art & Culture, Artists



New York (January 1939) is one of the many works of artist Charles Green Shaw (1892 – 1974). It is oil on wood kind of painting. It appears that Shaw was inspired by the New York City's rhythms. The piece is a reflection of the fascination of the artist with contemporary skylines in addition to certain aspects of European Cubism. One can see bold and intangible configurations, which arouse the musical but quite low beauty of Manhattan. The sun above, slightly rust colored, is reflected in a dark disk at the bottom, resembling sort of a dark shadow against the mustard-yellow focal point. It depicts a sidewalk lighted by street lamps, providing a hint of comfort in the idea that nature is present in a dominant artificial surrounding.

After a careful study of this piece, I get the feeling of honest painting, paying no attention to the detail in representational merits or the lack of them. The painting seems to embrace certain apparent basics. There is composition, rhythm, design, spacious arrangement as well as color progressions to mention but a few of the numerous qualities in the aesthetic piece. Within the structural framework of the work of art there are overlying rectangular shapes, alluding to the various widths and heights of adjacent erections. Between them there appears to be some kind of compressed imagined space. 3-Dimensionality is brought about by the tonal variation of colors used in addition to the shrewd wheeler dealing of the rectangles. Agnes Pelton (1881 – 1961) also did artistic pieces inspired by her immediate surroundings. One of these was Challenge (1940). Pelton drew it drawing inspiration from the magnificent natural setting surrounding her Cathedral City studio in California. The images of this artist in particular are often perceived as somewhat equivalent to her expressive natural encounters. The

triangular-shaped arrows covered in cloudlike structures could be a representation of the local mountains along with their histrionic weather phenomena. The climbing, wavy forms all through the piece give a picture of ascension or escalation; this may be from earth to outer space or perhaps in the direction of spiritual rebirth even insight. After all, Pelton was one of Transcendental Painters of the late 1930s to the early 1940s, whose aim was to put across certain spiritual truths relating to abstract art.

The Challenge illustrates a combo of strikingly brilliant colored images that use, by contrast, lush and organic forms. This is without doubt a geometric piece done in marvelous simplicity. I see it as an evocation of panorama as well as memory, which brings about the opportunity to appreciate the fascinating manner in which this artist created a vision that was nature-inspired and at the same time, get a hold of the otherworldly beauty along with spirituality of life. It also suggests a meditative universe where East and West intersect and nature, vision along with spirit intersect.

Agnes Pelton, the modern-day Georgia O'Keefe, used most of her artwork as closed mediation. Her key focus was on celestial or metaphysical forms in nature as well as whatever could be perceived as the astrophysical realm. Charles Green Shaw on the other hand was a vital figure in abstract art in America. Besides his career in art, Shaw was also an illustrator, poet, and writer. He was also a founding member of the AAA (American Abstract Artists).