

**SPOTLIGHT: Maude Kerns**  
**Title of Piece: Composition #55**



El Presenter: Janice Jurisich

Date: February 17, 2009

Title of Piece: Composition #55, Oil on Canvas

Year created: 1947

Artist: Maude Kerns (1876-1965)

Five points of interest about this artist:

1. Maude Kerns was northwest artist, teacher, writer, poet. She influenced art in Eugene having traveled extensively to study the theory of modern art. Her style moved from realistic landscapes and portraits to abstract exploration of color and form.
2. This work is an example of her non-objective art. Influenced by Wassily Kandinsky. Art designed to affect the observer to move from the finite world to a deeper, more spiritual level. It was believed to require a creative act on the part of the observer to see the piece in a new way, to enter the spiritual.
3. Maude Kerns' work change to non-objective oil painting in 1941. This style consists of interrelated circles, triangles and rectangle floating in space. Her work was rich in color, dynamic

in composition not known on the West Coast at that time. Contrasting colors and forces are important in her work.

4. Kerns was influenced by Asian art as well as European modern art. Her last works were minimal calligraphic strokes in black and white. She traveled for several months in Asia with Gertrude Bass Warner. Both were Christian Science.
5. She used imaginative teaching techniques such as painting to music.

Possible questions to use when discussing this piece with museum visitors:

1. What do you notice about this painting?
2. How would you describe what you see?
3. What parts of this work first catch your eye? Why?
4. What meaning, if any, do you think the artist was trying to convey?
5. How does this painting make you feel?

Tour Type: Learning to Look

Additional Notes and Sources:

JSMA Collection:

<https://jsmacollection.uoregon.edu/mwebcgi/mweb?request=record;id=5293;type=101#>