

Basic Detail Report



[Untitled]

Date

1942-1945

Primary Maker

Okubo, Benji

Medium

oil, canvas

Description

Stretched and framed.;Unvarnished image of a mother figure who holds in her proper right hand what appears to be a yellow flower that is being grasped by a smaller figure who is falling in mid-air. The woman wears a gray robe belted with a lime green sash; her hair is greenish; her eyes are red and three-quarters view of the proper left side of her face is depicted. She stands barefoot upon a floating lotus blossom, drifting on the sea towards the shore; her proper left hand raised with palm facing outward. Dressed in crimson top and green pants and shoes, the smaller figure falls head first, with his arms and legs extended upwards. His skin is a blue-gray color and his hair is the same gray as the woman's robe. His face is shown in a three-quarter view of his proper right profile. The artist uses a combination of muted and bright complementary colors to bring a sense of color harmony to the canvas. The bright and muted colors balance each other and visually direct the

viewer's eyes to the areas of primary importance. The figures are placed centrally in the canvas. The viewer's eyes are directed throughout the canvas by following the diagonal thrust of the child's figure to the vertical green sash, up the diagonal placement of the woman's hand and arm, leading to her neck and head, leading to her neck and head, back to the yellow flower and then back to the child. The woman is standing upon a floating flower in the ocean and sea foam waves are depicted in stylized contour lines. The painting is reminiscent of Sandro Botticelli's "Venus" (both figures are standing upon the ocean and drifting to shore amidst the rippling of the waves and sea foam). The child and woman are softly modeled with loose brush strokes, and the details of their hair and hands are rendered with delicate linear strokes. The style of the painting is synchromism with its emphasis on a balance of form, rhythm and color harmony.;The painting shows the woman as a figure of dignity and strength. She is painted in calm and muted colors and her figure is towering. The child, on the other hand, is falling head first -- a precarious and vulnerable position. One interpretation of the painting may be the archetype of the mother versus figure symbolizing maternal strength to keep the child from falling into a figurative sea of moral confusion. The painting could also be a metaphor for the wartime experiences of the Japanese Americans. According to Buddhist tradition, the lotus flower is symbolic of enlightenment, supreme truth and purity emerging from impurity (it blooms unscathed from its muddy origin). This reading substantiates the view of the artist's mother as a blessed, even reverential archetype of motherhood.

Dimensions

H: 24 in, W: 18 in