

The joy of colour

Meir Ronnen

THE current shows at the Artists House (apart from Ofrat's "Anti-Lyricism" exhibit reported last week) are as varied in character as they are in quality. **Raya Talmor** of Kibbutz Ein Horesh, a sometime pupil of Fima, Stematsky and April and who has recently worked in Paris, is that rare bird, a painter with a superb understanding of colour and a feeling for subtle variations of surface. With the exception of an unattractive architectural piece and a stiff portrait, she paints hillsides and trees with discipline but freedom: in her best works she "hangs loose" (a phrase I have always loathed but which seems happily fitting here).

But her works are not just about landscape, even though she has a marvellous feeling for five o'clock light: they are all about colour achieved by overpainting and the use of tonal conformity achieved by mixing equal quantities of complementaries both on the palette and in the work; of using the resultant greys or touches of black in each and every colour applied; and ultimately of balancing areas of colours against other areas, their borders enlivened with rich little passages of impasto or revealed underpainting.

The best of her landscapes and

trees treat the subject matter as a simplified cypher, with all the painterly nuance taking place in purely gestural terms. Note the fine "Carmel Trees" (13) in which the right hand tree would have pleased Van Gogh.

Look too at the delightfully free but controlled painting of the cloud (2) and the rich, rich colour of (4). The *clil hahores* trees (15) have the unusual colour and breadth of a Marsden Hartley. A pity that (1) and (12) are inhibited by terrible frames.

Talmor isn't doing anything basically new but she does it so well, so lusciously, that one feels like throwing her a kiss (no, I don't know her and this isn't male condescension).

The oils, gouaches, watercolours, drawings and collages by **Margrit Eichelberg** are a lesson in mannerism, harking back to several different forms of post-orphist and post cubist abstraction. The ink drawings are interesting and effective, the oils smoothly meaningless, the watercolours too pretty. Several large collages in the Schwitters torn-magazine manner are effective. Her real talent emerges in several excellent gouaches, painterly abstractions which are loosely handled but convincing in composition, like (35). It's a pity the latter are so poorly framed; the cheap mounts detract from their impor-



Raya Talmor: "Clil Hahores," oils (Jerusalem Artists House).

tance and general effect.

The third show, by Bezalel graduate (66) **Liat Polotsky** is entitled *Drachim* (highways? roads?). Brightly painted wooden wall and floor pieces symbolize roads, movement and traffic lights and other patterns of urban imagery. Other tonal and hue graduations suggest the passing of time or the season.

Bright flat colours are employed; so are several clichés obviously lifted from Vasarely, but the finish, though not bad, lacks that impeccable precision this type of work demands. Unfortunately the show tells us nothing about design, colour, nor, indeed, traffic: the effects are largely decorative. (Jerusalem Artists House). Till Nov. 11. □