

Hiersoux' art belongs on hilltops to signal messages to the world

Art Show Review

Abstractions at Mills;

By Alfred Frankenstein

The Mills College Art Gallery contains a lot of space, but the paintings by Arne Hiersoux which are now on exhibition there are nevertheless too big for it. They would be uncomfortably sizable, I suspect, anywhere indoors. They belong on hilltops to signal their messages to the whole wide world.

Their messages, to be sure, are not such as one ordinarily reads on signboards. Hiersoux combines the abstract-organic with the abstract-geometrical, often setting his forms in three-dimensional space and sometimes aiding its dimensionality with arrows to lead the eye.

In his introduction to the catalogue, Paul Mills observes that "each painting is a state of tension, a moment of crisis," and while this may overstate the case a little, the boldness of the forms, the largeness of the conception, and the grandeur of the scale are most impressive.

It is worth adding that Hiersoux achieves this big effect with a remarkably mild palette. Only his reds and blacks are used at their highest intensity, and the reds by

no means invariably so. He goes in extensively for light blues, delicate violets, middling oranges, and a great deal of silver. The net result, strangely enough, is often rather shrill.