

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY

STEFFA REIS

February 2 - 18, 1976

THE ART OF STEFFA REIS

It is a pleasant experience to see painting in a bright colour scheme, orchestrated in many tones, not too ambitious, pulsating with the joy of life and based on solid and many-sided professional schooling.

Steffa Reis was born in Berlin in 1931, and educated in England. She studied art at the Harrow School of Art. Later, in Israel, she continued her studies with the well-known painters Marcel Janco and Yaakov Wexler. She is married and mother of three daughters, a permanent resident of Safed in Israel and a member of the Safed Artists' Colony as well as of the Society of Painters and Sculptors of Israel. She paints diligently, and it is particularly pleasant to stress the tasteful presentation of all her work. Since 1969, the artist has held eight one-woman shows in Israel, Canada and Switzerland. This is her first one-woman show in London, although she has participated in many mixed shows both in England and abroad.

Her style developed gradually from an agreeable realism to more sophisticated and more planned art, though the chief elements remained - a link with nature, love of colour as absolute value, and a spontaneous approach and more complex compositions. Always, even in works of moderately cubist style, the artist takes nature as her starting point - mountains and hills, fields, vegetation, townscapes. Her searchings bear witness to a constant intellectual curiosity. Some semi-cubist paintings are executed on white dazzling backgrounds. She has a sense of harmony and organisation of space, for logic and order, but this does not impede feeling and sensitivity. In some works there is a tendency to a moderate minimalism, and the horizontal landscape is essentially reduced to two chief pictorial spaces with flat colours - sea and sky, for instance. Most paintings, however, contain many elements, solidly organised, gay and agreeable to the eye. The artist works both in oils and acrylic colours, sometimes using also other means of expression.

Steffa Reis has painted a series of miniatures which have remained faithful to a realistic approach, or rather to poetic realism. These do not explore tendencies and styles like her larger works, but belong to a category of painting which is chiefly pleasant and gay, but highly professional and solidly linked to nature.

The artist has absorbed various influences and tried successfully to find a personal language suited to her ideas on art and to her character as a human being. Among others, her works are a mirror of Israel's landscape and colours, whether the stylization is strongly stressed or whether there is a reference to certain landscapes and to direct pictorialism. It can be assumed that her art will have an echo in London.

Miriam Tal  
Jerusalem