

Fancy given free rein

The latest paintings to emerge in the University of East Anglia's Sainsbury Centre give incredible scope for the imagination.

These French expressionist works can lift the viewers' flights of fancy to the craters of the moon, to wild, gay furies of feathers, or to the very depths of hell.

"Lyrical Abstraction" is the very apt title of the exhibition, which is showing in the centre for almost a month.

It is especially important since it is another part of the Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury collection, works which were excluded when they gave their art collection to the University in 1973.

The French abstract works were felt to be so different from the rest of the collection... those still housed in the rest of the centre are largely figurative.

But now the important group of *Ecole de Paris* paintings can also be seen at the centre. Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury were among the guests who attended the opening.

The artists represented include Lanskov, Riopelle and Tumarkin, plus others whose reputation is still largely confined to France. These include Mubin, a Turkish painter living in France, whose works I found the most moving and dramatic of the collection.

A glaring canvas of a red furnace dominates... a vivid reconstruction of hell? His colours are strong, fascinating and full of shape and direction within what at first appears merely a muddle.

One of the few with a title — "Persecute," painted in 1973 — appears like a cell surrounded by a despair so thick it is tangible. Yet his watercolours retain an ethereal quality which shows Mubin as having great scope.

Some of the works by Genevieve Asse were, I felt, spoilt by reflections from the massive windows of the Sainsbury Centre, despite their clothing of blinds. These paintings are light and intriguing with subtle use of combinations like oil on wood, a great contrast to the works of Mubin.

DEPTH

Very different again is the weird metallic, almost sculpture like work of Tumarkin. His paintings have a depth that comes from his use of texture as well as the very darkest of brown colouring.

Then for a romantic feel turn to the butterfly wing watercolour by Riopelle or to Mubin's three paintings which conjure seasons of the year... russet for autumn, yellow and gold for summer, white, grey and blue for winter — all lightly flecked, as with feathers.

Also represented in the exhibition is Charles Maussion, some of whose current work is in the permanent Sainsbury collection in the centre. For me, he lacks Mubin's sense of form and rhythm. His paintings are full of life, but hectic.

Overall, the exhibition is wide ranging and exciting, showing the fullest of expression from the artists and allowing the greatest imaginative range from those who view them.

The exhibition continues until April 22nd.

C.H.



One of the seasons-of-the-year paintings by Turkish painter Mubins, whose work our critic found "the most moving and dramatic of the collection."