

## Tanabe's New Form Of Landscape Painting

The Takao Tanabe exhibition of paintings at Galerie Agnes Lefort strengthens the prediction recently expressed on this page that the art of landscape painting will be reborn on our west coast.

Tanabe's landscapes are not just hinted at as Gordon Smith's were in his recent exhibition, they are stated strongly. Using the geometric form, he introduces, as Smith

but rather one of its essence: a paring away of complications which leaves what the painter finds essential, but demands from the viewer a reassessment of old attitudes. It is possible to link these paintings, in this way, to the earlier metaphysics of Lauren Harris, who migrated to the west coast many years ago and who still lives there.

In the use of symbol forms and in the elimination of what

By Irene Heywood

did, an escape from the tyranny of the two dimensional picture space which has been with us much longer than hard-edge.

Suggested space is created, natural form hinted at, symbols introduced to show visible as well as invisible elements of nature.

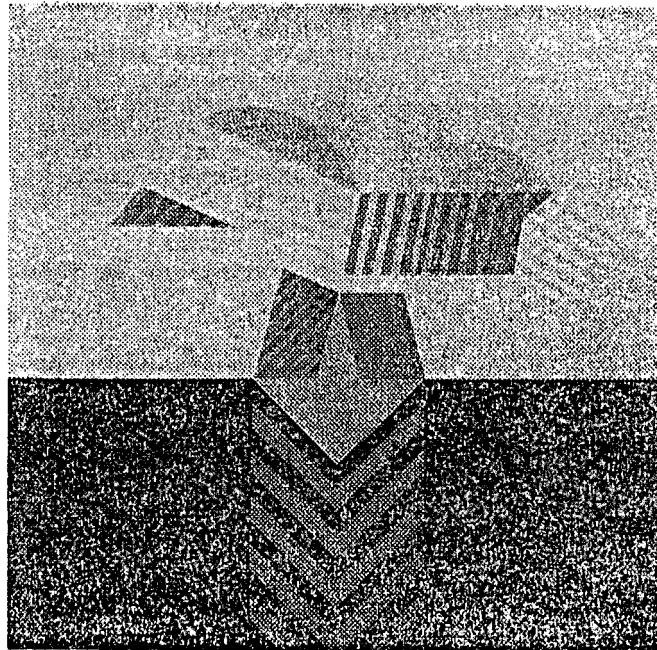
Strong color in sharply cut arabesques, designed with subtlety and force against neutral grounds, is what first meets the eye — a stimulating start to a longer look which proves that what seems to be non-objective painting is not so at all, but rather landscape in a new form.

We cannot find a neutral look to this new landscape art

is not needed, both painters can also be tied to the ancient landscape painters of Japan, Mr. Tanabe's heritage, whose influence has always been strongly felt, both physically and metaphysically, in this geographical section.

The one rounded and natural form Tanabe represents in symbol is the cloud and this is repeated often, pointing up its importance to the painter. The horizon line is also important, a natural separation of land and sky, which, with the cloud symbol, is most often expressed in neutral color.

The theme of the intangibles, the unshaped elements of sunlight, air, wind, season-



'Moving Into Autumn,' 1968, by Takao Tanabe.

al growth and changes, are both given shape and expressed in strong pure color and as a result force themselves to our attention.

In "Moving into Autumn" the strong sun color supports cloud forms, with the life rays of the growing season both sinking to earth and rising

again toward the sky.

Dull greens and blues enclose the sun rays which bear down upon the cloud form in "Summer cloud trapped."

"Hot August," changes its medium to what seems to be Japanese water color by its strong yet transparent color: the central hot summer or-

ange and yellow against the purple and green of shadow forms is left against a white paper sky. The few others of this medium, though smaller than the acrylics, are also excellent examples.

Sometimes these careful yet arbitrary shapes of faceted pure color on a landscape ground refer in their titles to human phenomena although no form can be seen to suggest it.

In "Sun Bathers," to give an example, we find in the greys of landscape background of sky, shore and sea the symbol of sun's rays in the air above a patterned patch which must represent the bather. Although these examples come off just as well pictorially as the pure landscapes, they cannot grip the imagination in the same way.

Our western coast is naturally suited to a rebirth of landscape painting since no one living there can escape the wonders of the out-of-doors. The form it takes will be a new one, of that we can be sure. Whether or not what is happening is being influenced by the coastal painters to the south of us is not too important. Such a development needs roots and we cannot supply them all.