

SUPER, NATURAL

By Robert L. Pincus, ART CRITIC

Looking bright

Hilary Baker persistently looks as if she's diagramming reality in her art. But this statement also requires a proviso. Diagram, as a format, may suggest dry data — and that is not the case with her new paintings.

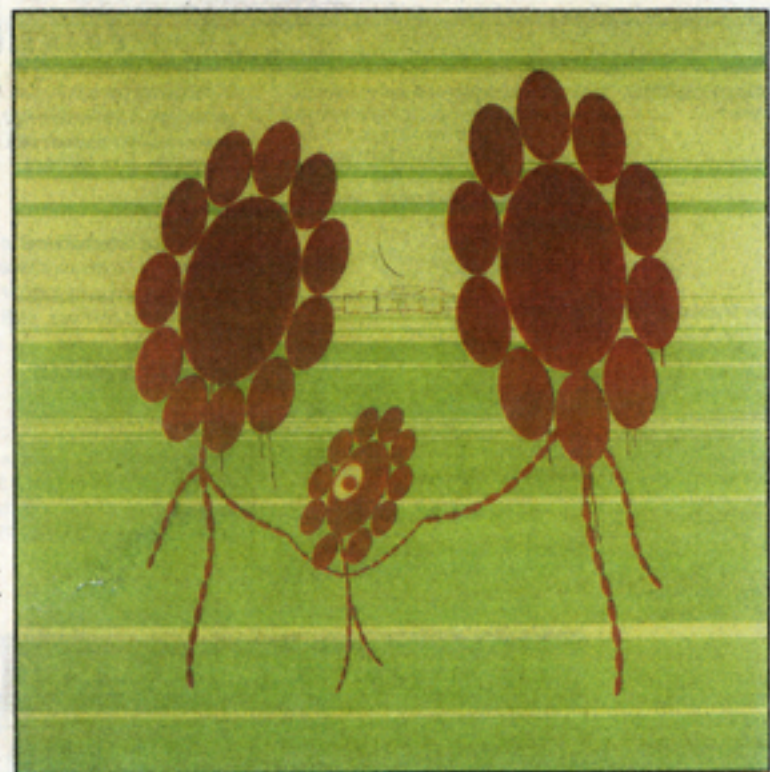
Colors pop and her imagery has a pleasing economical look. Baker reduces nature to a few simple shapes that connote flowers. There is no earth or sky, only striped patterns and an occasional nod to architecture.

Nothing is as simple as it first appears. That is surely why she calls this exhibition at the R.B. Stevenson Gallery "Look."

She uses the word as a gentle exhortation. Follow her implied advice and you'll start to see that flowers look vaguely human and some have eyes. Her palette may be upbeat, but Baker sets the cheerful color scheme quietly at odds with the imagery. Flowers gaze at each other warily.

Her written statement reinforces this impression. Each of the flora, she asserts, "represent parent and child ... and the potential for terror and anxiety inherent in that relationship."

You don't have to see it her way to find these paintings intriguing. Any expressions of anxiety are cloaked in compositions that aim to delight the eye first. They do so deftly. But seductive surfaces don't cancel the psychological dimension of Baker's art.



In Hilary Baker's brisk "Porterville," flowers fill in for people and a small house rests in a striped landscape