Bau-Xi Gallery 555 HAMILTON ST., VANCOUVER 3, B.C. CANADA, 683-3437

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Joan Lowndes.

A strange mixture of Pop and Surrealism, ahghly personalized fantasy art drawing upon cartoons and evoking at times the Yellow Submarine, such is the world of Seattle painter Alden Mason, now exhibition at the Bau-Xi Gallery.

Although this is not his first appearance in the city, it should be recalled that he is a professor of art at the U. of Washington, liberally represented in the permanent collection of the Seattle Art Museum, and that he has taken part in group shows at the Kobe Municipal Museum and down the Pacific coast.

It is also not irrelevant, since his color is so vivid, to know that he has travelled extensively in South America.

His large one-man show consists of acrylics done in 1967 - a small preludial grouping - and two acrylics and a selection of smaller paintings executed in acrylic and crayon done in 1968-69.

The earlier work is more specifically Pop, subjects like the Blue Bun owing an obvious debt to Olden burg. The Royal Cigar, however, is triumphantly individaul in its blazing color, its bold decorativeness and its sardonic-phallic connotations. the cigar is raise to the status of an icon.

The later work tends to be more fluid, despite the constant technique of outlining every form in black, an emphasis which is heavier in the large paintings and which is seemingly derived from comic strips.

The main body of smaller paintings deals with limp, squishy, viscous, phallic shapes, the only straight lines being for illusionistic three-dimensional shading.

Often, despite the titles, one feels in an underwater world of greyness, where vegetation sways gently with the tides or erotic sea cucumbers poke through enigmatic structure.

Odd conceits abound, such as Smiling Landscape - an open mouth draped like the proscenium arch of a theatre, its interior unreal blue and mauve.

A recurring motif resembled spalyed grey hands pressing in from either side of the paint and causing the central form to bulge. Such is the effect in Blue Volcano, far superior to its modulated coloring to its bigger pure acrylic counter part, whose solid blues and reds become too hard.

The finest and also the largest work in the show is Soft Landscape. Here muted greys and pinks, blured sides of objects, ambiguous excrescenses that might be flowers, lips or Sexual organs combine in a Freudian dream imager.