

Bibiddy Bobiddy Boo

BY DEMETRIA DANIELS

Kenny Scharf's new show at the Tony Shafrazi gallery is filled with brightness and cheer and includes four new, wonderful sculptures and 30 paintings. You can only smile while being there and when you leave, walking out to Mercer Street, a huge grin just has to be on your face.

The gallery is filled with fun. The colorful creatures are those very playmates we knew as children and remember in our imaginations as adults. The bright colors and the comic characters will make any jaded New Yorker feel good. Color is primary in Kenny's work. He says, "I love bright things."

"Butter Blubber Blob Guy" is a cadmium yellow creature with a kelly green tongue and four extended eyes. It is made of polyurethane foam and elastomer skin and is over five feet; it greets you on the left as you walk in. The yellow is so yellow and cheerful.

Kenny is a "sunshine person" and enjoys being part of the daylight. Originally from California, and living most of the time in Brazil, sun, flowers and nature are important elements to him, and predominate in his art works. In fact, a giant bug sculpture entitled "Orange Bingle Berry Ball Bug" greets you as you walk downstairs. It has a lot of little legs and has a friendly and playful quality.

A number of children were at the opening. Kenny thinks "children are my biggest fans." A definite attraction for them was "Madgladman," an eight-foot double-sided creature representing comedy and tragedy, in lavender and wearing two red bow ties (until a child fan pulled one off). The dualism of good and evil are found together; the sculpture called "Kahunka Chunka Chomper Stomper" is a perfect example of the evil.

Kenny originally did some sculpture for an art show at Area, two of which still hang in his studio loft, and is glad to finally incorporate them in this

vailing opposite."

Being at the show is like being in playland. Kenny says: "entertainment is important." Was he influenced by Walt Disney? Bet your bottom dollar, he was. "I love Walt Disney" and "cartoon imagery is important in my work." Using a combination of spray paint, enamel, acrylic and oil, he creates 30 canvases for this show.

Just counting all the creatures is a big job. In "Jungle Jism," the red tropics of Brazil are filled with snakes, birds, butterflies and fruit trees and you can almost hear the samba beat of the carnival band, and its rhythm putting everything in motion, like animated characters, moving across the screen.

"Dawn in Paradise" is a tropical sunset with palm trees, the ocean and a visible friendly creature within the setting sun. An unusual night painting, "Cometa Festa D'Halley" combines Latin, Spanish and French in its title and shows a friendly ghost with the famous and timely comet stars, in the midnight sky. The surrounding frame is made of purple metallic zig-zagged sparkles—a glorious sight—and then encased within another frame. Great effort obviously went into the frame construction of the paintings; each one is different, hand-carved, hand-colored and is an art work by itself and the creations of Oliver Sanchez. A bamboo frame surrounds "Junguloony." Did the bamboo come from Brazil? Maybe.

A jolly green monster appears in "Ratfink Boner Thunk" and the television inspired creature appears in "Elroy Reruns." Where do these "pop-surrealism" creatures come from? Kenny admires the artists of the past. Michelangelo and Bosch and Giovanni Bellini are his favorites. And the modern-day artists Andy Warhol and Salvador Dali inspire him a great deal.

The technical execution and dream fantasies are consistent in "Splatimod," "Jade Pea God," "Glip Drip," "Cool Zhool," "Bootybuggers," and in the rest of the exhibit. The originality of the names and settings are certainly innovative, inventive, creative, and above all, fun.

Taking time out to prepare for the exhibit, Kenny did a collaborative mural with the outdoor painting specialist Stefano, on Lexington and East 58 Street. How did it turn out? No one looked up to see it. He would like to do a downtown mural if any willing landlord would lend him a wall and this time he would use electric scaffolding.

He will be "doing a ride" for a travelling amusement park starting in Vienna in June. It's been a long time since he would ride his bike from P.S. 1 to the East Village at 4 in the morning, spray painting on the outdoor walls. Kenny says "everyone needs fantasy—that is his viewpoint."

He feels his art both entertains and has a message. The show at Shafrazi puts a smile on your face and leaves you with hope, joy, play and

your face and leaves you with hope, joy, play and optimism, and a sense of love. Bring your children, bring your friends, follow the lavender footprints downtown, and treat them to a wonderful world of fantasy...bibiddy bobiddy boo...like being in playland!