

# The mystical art of Manwoman

*Pat Kemball's paintings are a symbolic, religious expression*

By BILL PASNAK

On April 3rd, Pat Kemball will open a show in the SUB gallery, containing some forty paintings, pastels, sculptures, and craft objects. This will be the only showing of a local artist in the gallery this year, and it should not be missed. It is bound to create a great deal of controversy and interest.

The controversy will come mostly from the artist himself. He has shed the conventionally acceptable image of Pat Kemball, and taken on the mystical identity of Manwoman. Manwoman is as symbolic as his paintings. The message he has should interest artists, poets, psychologists, theologians and the common man.

Manwoman's work, basically, is an expression of symbolic mysticism. It can best be described in relation to the Kundalini, which is taken from the Hindu religion.

## SEVEN LOTUSES

The Kundalini places seven lotus flowers on the spine, corresponding to seven areas of the body, and each having its own spiritual significance. At the base of the spine is a coiled snake. The second lotus is the genitals, which is the power of desire. The third is the navel, which holds the power of purification and cleansing. The fourth lotus is the heart, the power of love and sacrifice. The fifth lotus is the voice, the power of communication. The sixth is the third eye, and is the power of vision. The seventh is on the top of the head. It is the thousand-petalled lotus, symbolising the perfection of God. As the soul moves toward spiritual attainment, the snake uncoils, and moves up through each of the lotuses.

Manwoman's paintings express the upward movement of the soul. As it moves upward, all conflicts must be resolved. Perfect harmony must be created for the god-state. Hence the symbolic significance of the name 'Manwoman': the containment of two states in one.

The soul is initially portrayed as a bride, endowed with male and female qualities. These are not the twisted hermaphrodites of Beardley. They are more subtle, more sublime combinations. The bride then takes on a fiery aspect as she passes to the lotus of purification.

Slowly, the bride assumes the quality of a dragon. She is filled with a fierce protective, maternal love. Her love gives birth to a child which passes on up to the state of perfection. As the soul moves up toward the final state of perfection, it reaches a point where it separates from the ego force, and leaves it behind.

## TAKEN FROM DREAMS

The pastels in the exhibit are taken from Manwoman's dreams. They provide him with self knowledge, telling him what steps he must take next in his own personal journey of spiritual attainment.

The symbolism which Manwoman employs is of a universal kind. It involves color (red, for example, is the color of love), number, and form. Those who are acquainted with alchemical symbolism will recognize all of these symbols and most especially the theme of the golden dragon.

In fact, the symbolism employed does not limit itself to the Kundalini and alchemy. It has a universal character, uniting the major beliefs and allegories of all religions. It also contains references to Jun-

gian and depth psychology, and the collective subconscious.

Many people may be shocked or disconcerted by the sexual references in these works. Manwoman's explanation is that he is referring to an inner or spiritual sex, a sex which embodies the transcendental changes of the soul. He regards sex as a search for unity of God, not as a basal animal drive.

Many would feel the same about the symbol he wears about his neck. To most it will seem to be a beaded swastika, although it is reversed from the sign that Hitler used. To Manwoman, it signifies the angel of power, not worldly power, but inner spiritual power.

Although he lives in a world of symbolism, Manwoman cannot be accused of being an artist whose only virtue is his message. He studied under Kudjuznic in Nelson, B.C., and has attended both the school of architecture at UBC, and the Alberta College of Art in Calgary. Whatever he may be now, he was an artist first, and he has a good command of his craft.

## A PROPHET?

His colors, while they may be chosen for their symbolic meaning, are well handled. His designs are well balanced and effective. Some of his works suggest a blending of the surrealists and Blake.

It is the belief of Manwoman that his experiences will have some far reaching effect, although he does not know what this will be. His mystical journey is possible for every one. He claims no power except that which is within him as within all of us. He has never taken drugs, and feels no need to, he says that the only requisite is the desire, the will. The ideas he expresses are not new. They can be found in one form or another throughout history. They are venerable concepts, and it may be that he is right about their potential. If he is then they should have their first effect on this campus. But then, a prophet is not without honor.

The show runs from April 3rd to April 30th. It promises to be an intriguing exhibit.

photos by  
Henry Kwok



**THE TREE OF LIFE**—Kemball (above) derives inspiration for his work from the Kundalini. "Infant Bliss" (below) shows the fiery bride transforming into the dragon, culminating in the perfect infant, or godhead. The infant is surrounded by a mandala of "Holy, Holys". In "Birth Tree" (below centre) the initial power, represented by the sword, gives rise to the dragon, who in this case represents the savage aspect of maternal love (note the bones protruding from his nostrils). The perfect child is born into the internal void.

In "Love, the Angel Power" the bleeding bride gives unity to the combined opposites of man and woman. They are part of the Tree of Life, which in its form as dragon gives birth to the perfect child, crowned under the star of the angel of spiritual power. The swastika-like symbol (note that the arms are the reverse of the Nazi sign) is of great antiquity, and represents the spiritual power of God. This recurrent symbolism deals with the progress of the soul towards attainment. Kemball started painting these mystical themes at the level of the second lotus and has now progressed to the fifth.

