

ART IN REVIEW

Roy De Forest

George Adams Gallery

41 West 57th Street

Manhattan

Through Nov. 15

In wacky, candy-colored hybrids of painting and sculpture, the veteran California funkster Roy De Forest projects a world where childlike imagination and pantheistic mysticism rule.

In each of his works, a shield-shaped panel carries richly painted cartoon images of mountainous terrain where titanic heads emerge from the ground, totemic animals roam and a disheveled hermit wanders in an apparent state of amazement. A shelf attached to the top of each painting holds an accumulation of things made by hand from some kind of plastic foam — trophy-like human heads with big noses, hats and glass bead eyes; fanciful animals like “the mysterious hat-bird,” and vaguely tool or weapon-like implements. The works look like shrines fashioned by an unusually creative mountain man.

Mr. De Forest is not a mountain man; as his drawings prove, he is a canny draftsman whose jazzy play with cartoon vocabularies calls to mind the drawings of Saul Steinberg. Yet however knowing, he does seem genuinely in touch with some wild and crazy region of consciousness.

KEN JOHNSON