

One of the
several complex
drawings by
Paul Lamantia
now showing
at Deson-Zaks
Gallery, 226 E.
Ontario.
(Daily News
Photos/
M. Leon Lopez)



Socko and subtle, Lamantia and Flood

By Dennis Adrian

PAUL LAMANTIA'S work is not as well known here as it ought to be. It is very deliberately produced, requiring considerable time for execution, so that it isn't often that enough work for a show is accumulated.

The Deson-Zaks Gallery, 226 E. Ontario, is showing a sizable group of his large and powerful drawings, and they display him at the top of his considerable form. These works are extremely demanding and forceful. Lamantia's images are invented figures, fantastic hybrids whose body parts loom out in appalling distortions of scale.

Though these personages might be found in some kind of domestic interior, a kitchen,

say, they wear expressions of great ferocity and concentration.

LAMANTIA'S WORK reflects an emotional world deep within the mind. The seething and churning is expressed perfectly in his drawings, but they are never permitted to become undisciplined.

Spontaneous lines unfold, the images sprout and bloom, and the large sheets become riotously covered with a frenzied network of jagged and serpentine lines.

In these colored drawings Lamantia uses ball-point pen, pastel, gouache, collage, colored pencils, felt-tip pens and crayons. Somehow, these diverse materials are worked to-

gether in a recognizable range that is very high and hot.

TO SOMEONE first looking at Lamantia's work, this wonderful color is perhaps the easiest thing to come to terms with. Once we have been beguiled, the incredible complexity and probing force of the imagery cannot be resisted.

With fluency and ease, Lamantia enters into hard-to-reach areas of the psyche. He is one of the virtuoso draftsmen working in Chicago, but never makes gratuitous display of this gift. Lamantia's hand is always at the service of a strongly focused, deep inner vision.