For millions of years, mankind has gazed into the heavens, wide-eyed with wonder at the ghostly satellite we've come to know as the Moon. Artists, astronomers, poets, and plow-hands, all yearning to know what exactly it is that silently orbits just off our doorstep - that mysterious orb and first step to what truly is the final frontier. Yet throughout history only twelve men have set foot in a world other than our own. And of those twelve men only one has had the unique perspective of an artist: Alan Bean. Here---in time for the 40th anniversary of the Apollo landing on the Moon, July 20, 1969---is his eyewitness testimony. The book accompanies an exhibition of Alan Bean's paintings at the National Air and Space Museum, opening in July 2009.

My Personal Review:
..Van Gogh 'Starry Night' 1889
..Klee 'Moonrise' 1915
..Ernst 'Petrified City' 1935
..Pollack 'Moon Woman' 1942
.. Chagal 'Blue Circus' 1950
Many an artist has been inspired by the moon hanging silently overhead. But one artist has a unique perspective on this eternal muse. Alan Bean has walked on it's ghostly landscape. Felt it's pull below his feet. Closed his eyes and felt it's sweet caress. Looked up to see the Earth hanging silently 230,000 miles overhead.

Al Bean was different from most of the other astronauts. They lived for speed and adventure. They liked to hunt or fine tune their sports cars. Bean liked to paint. Never mind that Florida Gold corvette he had. A happy joking gentleman renowned for toasting the Apollo 12 camera. He accidentally pointed it directly at the sun. The camera's delicate receptor tube fried instantly. Ruining it for the rest of us stuck down here. Then later he spent some 54 days up in skylab.
But he really wanted to paint. So paint he did. Realistic and imaginary scenes from various moon missions. Mostly his own (Apollo 12): 'Helping Hands'. He and Conrad dismantle some core tube. 'Home Sweet Home' a sweeping moonscape of the Ocean of Storms with moonlander. A moon self portrait showing himself loping across a crater. 'Houston, We Have a Problem' debris streaming away from the blast. A beautiful 'In Flight' showing Shepard driving a golf ball on the moon. I don't think it went quite that high. But a wonderful moon scape with lander, flag, and craters galore.

And indeed Bean proves to be quite an accomplished artist. His works posses a great feel about them. Good technique, good light adaption. Great color balance (well only he would know that for sure!).

Bean has added an angle to most of his paintings. He has ground up some space suit material and has incorporated it into the paint. The premise being that there is moon dust in the suit and therefore in the painting. He has been known to use a moon pick as one would use a palette knife. And he even imprints his moon boot sole onto the canvas primer. His art does have alot of texture

What can you say. If Pollack could leave his cigarette butts. Then why not moondust.

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