

CULTURE

Carving quite a name for himself

AT FIRST glance, Alexander Seton's exhibition of inflatable palm trees, a jumping castle and a deflated pool toy looks as though it belongs in The Reject Shop.

But his 85-kilogram, \$38,500 sculpture, *That Accursed White Whale*, made of Bianco marble, is no cheap item of kitsch.

Seton said the sculpture, an homage to *Moby-Dick* and centre-piece of his *Infinitely Near* show at sullivan + strumpf in Paddington, was "the ultimate literary reference to the romance of the chase".

"The current show is about that need and desire to build our own world and dream," he said.

The 33-year-old sculptor, a regular entrant in Sculpture by the Sea, has built quite the reputation with his marbled renderings of pop culture. His previous show, *Assembly*, consisted of T-shirts carved from stone, costing a monumental \$10,000.

"Weird and wonderful people" collect Seton's work – including actor David Wenham – while his *Princess and the Pea*, a carved pillow inspired



Marble marvel ... Alexander Seton with *Island in the Sun*. Photo: Simon Alekna

by the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale, was commissioned as a wedding present for Princess Mary.

Guests on opening night included actress Alice Parkinson, who was handing out price lists, and arts patron Cynthia Jackson, who snapped up one of his sketches on marble

Gallery co-owner Joanna Strumpf also spotted three "gallery gatecrashers" guzzling the free plonk without making a purchase. Oddly, two of the alleged interlopers were about to cross the road to attend Nadine Wagner's Liberal Party soiree at her gallery.