

Visual arts & books

Local artist doesn't shy away from the turbulent side of life

20-year retrospective demonstrates Ming C. Lowe's themes.

Ming C. Lowe is a self-described neo-expressionist. The definition of expressionism is closely associated with the last half of the 20th century, when artists wanted to touch emotions as an antidote to the numbing trauma of years of war that took place starting with World War II.

The Cathedral City Library, in conjunction with the Bob Silva Library Art Program, is presenting a 20-year retrospective of Lowe's powerful expressive paint-



ON
ART



SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN

'Falling Like Flies': Oil by Ming C. Lowe

The most confrontational and thought-provoking pieces in this show are in the "War Series." In 1984, local journalist Bob Van Eyken said, "The 'War Series' is most notable for its linkage of external themes, war and violence, with intense inner turmoil. There is form, but not the static representational form that characterizes so much of the art in this category. There is movement, but it is the kind that suggests psychological inquiry, giving the impression of some sort of expansive drug coursing through an agitated bloodstream."

Road maps

Lowe uses a palette of dark colors, mostly harsh dirty grays and white accented by splashes of yellow and other bright colors, on some of her canvases. For dramatic effect, she can punctuate a canvas with a small red cross that seems to bleed. Her use of jagged edges suggests violence and evil. This technique seems to be a parody of traditional symbols that tends to give the picture worldliness and depth.

Lowe's titles are a road map to her subject matter. "Falling Like Flies" depicts the distance between popular acceptance and the understanding of the nature of war and death. "Barbed Wire and Bullets" is self-explanatory.

Death seems to be a recurring theme in most of her work. The retrospective series includes Series

Jean
McKig

To see Lowe's work

Exhibition: Cathedral City Library, 33-520 Date Palm Dr., Cathedral City
Information: 328-4262

A, a group of pastels on paper done between 1978 and 1982; Series B, "The War Series," oils on linen executed between 1983 and 1985; Series C, oil on linen with titles like "Adam and Eve and Turtles"; and Series D, entitled "Death," covering the years 1988 to 1991.

Free spirit

Lowe is a free spirit who has traveled the world collecting impressions and ideas for her work. She has been a desert resident for more than 20 years and is deeply involved with the local art world. Self-taught, she has had many exhibits since her first group show with the Long Beach Artist League in 1978. She has honed her skills with classes at College of the Desert, La Jolla Art Center and a study through scholarship at The Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts with Francoise Gilot, a name often associated with Pablo Picasso. Her earlier works are part of the private collections of members of the Kingston Trio, the Grateful Dead, Big Brother and the Holding Company, the Animals and Velvet Underground.

McKig is a free-lance writer based in Pinyon Crest.