



Photo by James Fee

MING C. LOWE
... show opens Wednesday.

Ming Lowe works reflect era of war

By AUSTIN KILLIAN
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PALM DESERT — Anyone who talks with Ming C. Lowe or looks at her paintings soon feels a sense of urgency, a hurtling rush of comment relentlessly tumbling forth, as in the beat of rock or reggae sounds and their video images. Critics have caused gallery-goers to expect an artist who is frenetic, electric, and vibrant in her work and in person. This has been particularly true of a previous series of her paintings which provided insights into the rock and punk culture scene.

But in her new one-woman show opening Wednesday, Oct. 24, at the College of the Desert Art Building Gallery, a theme of war and connotations of war emerges in rolling deep-toned contrasts, and agonies of imminent disaster. This penetrating commentary on our contemporary wars will first be seen at a reception honoring the artist, from 5 to 7 p.m. on the opening day.

Still in her 30s, but matured by the hectic pace of our times, and her knack of riding triumphant and smiling on the crest of it all, she absorbs and interprets in this series rumors of war mixed with the terrifying close proximity of explosive devastation, a certain interpretation of the menace of the superpowers and the turmoil of the third world, plus implications for the other worlds as well.

The insights of Lowe's 10 paintings in the COD Art Building are coded in titles reeking with the callous outrage she senses from battle reports in the media, music, and emotional maelstrom of today's tense, stratified planet with its swarm of orbiting mechanisms reminiscent of angry hornets.

A war baby she is, born in Washington, D.C. in 1945's turmoil and aftermath, then shuttled to homes in Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, La Jolla, and her 18-year base in Palm Desert, a geographical look-alike of the planet Dune. This gifted, per-

ceptive woman rages with the primitive inherited anarchy of humanity. She is young, and she is armed with electronic arrows and computer-swift revelation, sent to warn us that it is almost too late.

The titles glimmer with potent: "Angel of Light," "Falling Like Flies (Beirut)," "War Brides Love to Tango," "Keeper of the Lite Factory," "Bondo, '84," "Barbed Wire and Bullets," "Goldfish after the Shark Attack," "Another Unknown Soldier," "S.O.S. Fun (Morse Code)," and "Triptik, (Sequence of Events). Over all stalks the purposeful, purposeless executioner.

This is Lowe's ninth exhibition since 1978; of the nine, six are one-woman shows. Her works are to be found in private collections stretching across the world on a line beginning in Spain, then to England, New York, Texas, Colorado, Utah, California, and Hawaii. Musicians and actors treasure individual works — members of the Kingston Trio, the Grateful Dead, Big Brother and the Holding Company, the Animals, Velvet Underground, etc.

One feels the aura of a self-taught, street smart genius, but she has experienced short terms, brief encounters, flurries of study in sculpture, lithography, drawing, and painting at the College of the Desert and University of Southern California, ISOMATA, Idyllwild.

The present exhibition will remain on view from Oct. 24, (United Nations Day), through Nov. 21, after which the COD Thanksgiving holiday begins. During the show one may celebrate All Saints Day, The First American Legion Convention, Nov. 18, 1919; the California Gold Rush, and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, not to mention Halloween and Theodore Roosevelt's Birthday.

Dr. Hovak Najarian, chairman of the art department, recommends this interval as a time for serious reflection, and recognition of the messages from Ming C. Lowe.

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