



Que Pasa photos/Patrick McCune

Being an artist means more than just painting; often it means sitting on a studio floor stretching a canvas

AWC artist-in-residence

Sharon Carol: New talent in Yuma

By **PATRICK McCUNE**

Que Pasa Editor

Sharon Carol is taking a one-year break from the big city rat-race. Last month, the Los Angeles artist began serving as Arizona Western College's artist-in-residence, which entails teaching four classes a week of acrylic and oil painting.

"I was in massive negotiations with building studios in Los Angeles when Nick Graves (of the AWC art department) called and asked if I wanted the job," Ms. Carol said. "I was into urban renewal and I thought it was the perfect time to get out. I'd been here before on a visit and I'd liked it."

For the next year she'll teach 12 hours a week and spend her "spare" time working in her north-end studio.

"So far I've had no days off. I'm working on a show I'm having in November at Gallery Michael in Los Angeles. I have to have 20 pieces ready."

Her most recent body of work is entitled "Inner Journey 1 and 2," a series of acrylic-on-canvas pieces which take on the three-dimensional form of fabric. The pieces

are housed in plexiglass boxes and covered with silk. They actually look like a piece of vivid print fabric attached to a canvas.

"No, that's not fabric," she explained, pointing to a small piece of art hanging on her studio wall. "That's really canvas that I painted to look like fabric. I am creating an atmosphere within the plexiglass box. The plexiglass box and the silk further the illusion and make the three-dimensional image look flat."

Ms. Carol's first serious body of work consisted of photo-illusionist paintings with latent images of fabric. This developed into a series of photo-realist paintings or two-dimensional paintings of fabric.

"In the news paintings, the form of the fabric took over," she said. "An artist works in a series because it takes time to figure out what you want to do. I'd like to accomplish one great painting from each body of work. I finally got the photo-realism painting — and I kept it, too."

She said that once you've learned everything you can from a body of work, you move on. "To quote H.W. Hansen, 'Art is a leap of the imagination.'"

Prior to becoming a painter, Ms. Carol

made her living doing large tapestries that employed the ancient process of applique. She was commissioned mainly by large corporations.

"I did quite well with the tapestry commissions," she said. "Commission work is quite different from gallery work. I had a commission from a bank and they said 'We want such-and-such size and such-and-such colors. Well, right there they'd already told me what to do. People will pay megabucks to tell you what to do.'"

Tiring of lack of challenge in the tapestry commissions, she gave it up for painting, although she occasionally still does one. She has been dealing with galleries for the past seven years.

"With a gallery, you take in what you do and they accept it or they don't. It's not easy going to galleries — because of the rejection."

Ms. Carol schooled at the College of Marin in Northern California. She worked for two years in the aerospace industry before deciding she didn't want to do that anymore. She moved to Los Angeles and went to UCLA where she studied painting technique.—QP