

She's Somebody to Watch

By Alfred Frankenstein

Judith Linhares is a lady of many moods. Last time we covered a show of hers in this newspaper it contained a "Self-Portrait as van Gogh," a horrifying, masochistic drawing showing her cutting off her own left ear. Today she smiles benignly, with a paintbrush in her hand, surrounded by a painted furry frame and flowers, in an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

All the paintings in the exhibition exploit the age-old eye-fooling device of meticulous draughtsmanship on a flat surface, often using papers, than which there is nothing flatter, as subject matter.

Her watercolor called "Love Letters" is in the great tradition of John Haberle, except that the love letters are all legible and all rather heartbreaking in their simplicity and pathos.

She delights in painting not only the flatness but the sheerness, lightness, and transparency of certain textiles, like net and chiffon, and she does it marvelously, in watercolor, yet. These textiles she associates with birds, feathers, eggs, insects, jewels, and photographs of classic sculpture, all in a series of tributes to femininity, or, to put it more in the mood of the day and the paintings, womaness.

Another painting, with knives, chili peppers, and a snakeskin, pays tribute to her Mexican background. Whatever the subject, the imagination, skill, and vividness of spirit wherein it is brought off are magnificent. Judith Linhares is somebody to watch.