

JUDITH LINHARES

Concord

THIS PAINTER is a contemporary storyteller in the deliberately ambiguous modernist style. The best of her recent pictures offer discreet glimpses of a strange mythical world populated by archetypal forms and expressions.

The artist has evolved a personal imagery in which certain conventions of archaic art, including stick figures, varying perspective and multiple scale are put to



Judith Linhares, *One Eye*, 1982, gouache on paper, 30 by 40 inches. Concord.

evocative use. Still, what gives Linhares' vision its eerie impact is the way she employs strong, expressive colors. *Persian Peacock* (1983), a large oil painting, sings out joyously. In it, a resplendent peacock with intense blue, yellow and red plumage displayed frontally against a yellow and red-orange atmospheric background is accompanied by the mysterious figure in profile of a black-bearded man carrying a skull. While this scene invokes the hieratic dignity and decorative beauty of ancient Near Eastern art, its possible symbolic meanings are left deliciously unclear. A similar thematic openness accounts for the appeal of the various treatments of two recurrent subjects here, sleep and love. In a work on paper, *One Eye* (1982), a splendid example of Linhares' painterly treatment of gouache, it is possible to read the emotional tumult of the pairs of lovers shown standing in a pavilion by the sea in a cascading, free-fall composition made up of a ship, an upside-down man, a seaweed structure and an octopus. Then again, there are the shining, sensual surfaces to appreciate. Finally, what Linhares gives us is a great deal to marvel at.

—Ronny Cohen