

# Judith Linhares

## Honey in the Rock

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**MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to announce *Honey in the Rock*, Judith Linhares's first exhibition with the gallery, presenting a new series of work exploring the still life genre through psychedelic and colour-loaded natural sceneries.**

The phrase "honey in the rock" has its roots in the Bible, yet the artist intends no religious reference. Rather, these words resonate with the promise of sudden delight found in the most unexpected of places, like a bee's nectar hidden deep within a stone.

Drawing on the vivid recollections of her formative years in California during the 1960s and 1970s, Linhares discovered a sense of purpose and structure within the realm of painting. Hailing from Pasadena, the artist is a product of the vibrant counterculture community that shaped the Western coast, empowering her to explore the connection between the mythic and the metaphysical, the conscious and the unconscious, the ancestral and the trivial.

In a state of artistic liberation, improvisation served as the wellspring for the narratives, characters, and kaleidoscopic compositions that pulsate with an electric intensity of colour, bursting forth from her canvases. Her artistic practice is imbued with a sense of freedom, a celebration of the unbridled spirit that defined the era she came to age in.

Though her artistic roots are in abstraction, Linhares turned to narrative painting, honing her observation skills to create layered compositions that display talismanic animals, psychedelic vanitas and long-limbed nude women in a state of exuberant bliss.

*Honey in the Rock* presents a new series of works, which imbue the domestic setting of the gallery with a warm atmosphere. While depicting everyday objects and human figures in mystical environments, the artist appears less concerned with accurate representation and more interested in the act of painting itself and the metaphors it can convey.

As Linhares eloquently states, "for me it is never totally about the thing, figure, tree, bucket etc. It is about the placement, the weight, and where the thing is in/on the rectangle." This approach allows the artist to explore figuration through an abstract language,

where the arrangement of elements and their relationship to each other takes centre stage.

The abstract nature of Judith Linhares' work is also evident in her use of colour. Her palette is not limited by the constraints of realism but rather exudes emotions and illuminates scenarios. Linhares views colour in terms of lighting, evoking the warmth of the sun or the coolness of the moon on her subjects. In her paintings, the body is addressed through scale, and the light is evoked through colour, creating a viewing experience that engages the viewer's senses.

For Linhares, the audience plays a vital role as the artist seeks to connect her work with the viewer's shared experiences. The everyday objects she portrays, such as rugs and printed tablecloths, are gateways to collective memories infused with the warmth of home and familiarity. Her figures are not solitary beings but rather members of communal scenes, often depicted gathering around shared activities.

Linhares' artistic process invites the viewer into the moment of creation, conveying the tactile sensations of paint as it collides with the canvas. In *Honey in the Rock*, the artist invites the viewer to partake in a visceral experience that transcends the boundaries of mere representation.

**Judith Linhares** was born in Pasadena, CA, in 1940. She now lives and works in New York.

Rooted in the California Bay Area counterculture of the 60s and 70s, Judith Linhares (b. 1940) composes figurative paintings from confident, abstract brushwork, utilising broad strokes and brilliant fields of colour to gradually develop her subjects. Quoting Dennis Kardon, the formal complexity to Linhares' strange vignettes is executed with energetic but measured brushstrokes which conjure ecstatic uneasiness pervading a slightly seedy Arcadia. In Linhares, there is an awareness of how the whole painting is assembled in a way that is not planned but is, nevertheless, spontaneously deliberate. As much as she uses light to create a coherent image, she also fractures attention through the awareness of how abstractly everything is put together one stroke at a time.

Linhares earned her BFA and MFA degrees from California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, CA. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; the de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia, PA, among others.

In 2022, *Judith Linhares: The Artist as Curator*, an exhibition featuring five decades of work, was organised at the Sarasota Art Museum, FL. The exhibition included a curated presentation of works by Bill Adams, Ellen Berkenblit, Karin Davie, Dona Nelson, and Mary Jo Vath, highlighting the longstanding influence of dialogue between artists.