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ARTNEWS Review by Valery Gladstone 1990

LYDIA RUBIO at Gloria Luria Gallery, Bay Harbor. FL



oil on canvas, 44x 72 inches

She Painted Landscapes, one of eight remarkable works the Cuban-born artist Lydia Rubio exhibited here, shows a fascination with memory and illusion. On a long wooden table, draped with a lace cloth, stand three small palm trees and a book- her grandmother's- open to a picture of the sea. Between the trees and the book, also small scale, is a romantic mountain vista reminiscent of those of Frederic Church. An expanse of pale blue sky and ocean fills the background-the same scene, in fact, painted in the book. Past and present, the real and the imagined, are given equal immediacy.

With elegance, the artist combines two genres-still life and landscape- thereby animating them both. A table appears in almost all these new works, and in each one trees, mountains, books, and fabric are presented in unlikely scale and relationship to one another.

Rubio's use of trompe l'oeil forces consideration of every element. This is especially so in her, life-size wooden door, on which clouds and a trunk have been painted. Attached to it is a small postcard size drawing of fabric that was done by her grandmother. However, rather than being disturbing, these juxtapositions entice one to look longer in order to understand the transformations she has wrought. Moreover, subdued colors, a fine brush, and uncluttered environments give her work an unusual and appealing tranquility.

Rubio brings to painting a calligraphic skill that intensifies and delineates her every image. Buildings, landscape, and geometry are the channels through which she presents her kaleidoscopic and refreshingly iconoclastic view of the world.