



## Linda Miller: Painter of Jewels

By John Meigs

Out in the middle of nowhere on U.S. 70 near San Patricio, there is a closed gate. Nearby, a flagpole of sorts topped with a copper weather vane marks an entry.

Beyond the flagpole and downhill sits a house, its roof barely showing through the trees, and a sweeping field is seen sliding down to a distant river. A hideout? A secret place? Really the home of Linda Miller, artist, animal and bird lover, a unique person with an outstanding ability.

For several decades Linda has created her own special world in which she produces painted gems of birds, animals and flowers. The birds and animals "pose" for her for extended periods of time, for she is a very slow worker, but the end result justifies her methods of work.

Admission to her world is by advance phone calls to set a time. She is a private person and her world is not easily invaded.

Once inside her compound you are greeted with a gracious hostess overflowing with a pent-up store of conversation and a rapid display of her works in progress for she has no stacks of paintings leaning against the wall. One or maybe two unfinished oils are on display and she explains the direction she is taking with each canvas.

No hasty dashed-off paintings here. Each one is the result of drawing and redrawing with tentative applications of color.

Privileged visitors and potential clients are rewarded by seeing the work in progress and negotiations on price for a finished painting.

The one thing one can be sure of is a "jewel" in the finished work and a wait for the final gem.

Miller, originally from Snyder, Texas, moved to the Hondo Valley years ago, acquired a piece of land and *built* her own house and studio over a period of years.

She is not one to follow the path of other artists. She does not have art galleries handling her work and she seldom shows in exhibitions. Her years of self-discipline have created a unique and classic style that is purely her own.

Currently, Linda is taken with the jewel-like small beaded bags of Indian origin from which she creates exquisite small paintings, each a unique creation.

One never knows what to expect on a visit to her studio, but be assured that it will be a delight. New concepts constantly spring to life, a new direction currently forming in her mind will include early Spanish santos and retablos of exquisitely embellished with her unique brand of handmade frames which are works of art in their own right, with silver leaf and bead work replicated on the frames.



A friend, Manuel Melendez, a Smithsonian museum executive and performing artist, proudly displays Linda's work in his Washington, D.C., office.

Superb color reproductions of her work in card form and enlarged reproductions are available at her studio.

Don't forget to call ahead!

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