

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
MARINE ARTISTS

Art We Love V: Sheri Farabaugh, ASMA
“Trap” by Mary Whyte



Since I started painting I have kept a Dropbox file of paintings by other artists. It has grown to over 5500 files in 83 folders. Favorite artists get their own folder. There is no particular style or subject matter tying this collection together. There is something in each painting that led me to save it for future reference: strong composition, distinctive use of color, a subject treated in a unique

way, or masterful technique. Some of them have served as inspiration for my paintings, but many of them are simply works I admire. The artists range from old masters to good friends. It was really difficult to narrow my choice down to one artist, much less one painting, but I chose ‘Trap’ by Mary Whyte.

Mary Whyte is a world renowned watercolorist who resides in Charles-

ton, SC. She has written seven books, two containing a series of paintings which document the people in the low country region of the south; ‘Alfreda’s World’ and ‘Working South’. I highly recommend both books. Trap is on the cover of ‘Working South’. The collection of paintings celebrates and preserves vanishing blue collar professions in the American South with respect

and reverence. The Working South collection was exhibited in at least four museums between 2011 and 2013 and currently resides in the collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, South Carolina.

Trap is a portrait of a crab trapper flanked by a stack of traps on the right and a dark interior on the left; perhaps a metaphor for the long history of crab trapping in the Pin Point, Georgia area and the uncertainty of its future. (The A.S. Varn and Sons blue crab factory was a major industry in the area until it closed in 1985 due to a decrease in the crab and oyster populations. The factory reopened as a heritage museum in 2011.) Most of the objects in this painting are arranged on angles; the only horizontal and vertical lines in

the painting are on the lower crab trap. The wall, fisherman, and other objects are all on a slant adding energy and a feeling of transition to the painting. This fisherman is most likely at the end of a long career.

I was attracted to the very simple, complimentary color scheme. The yellow/orange of his fishing overalls contrast with the blue shadows from the traps. Those are basically the only two colors in the painting other than black and white. A few remnants of yellow rope on the right side and blue shapes in the dark interior balance the color distribution. The black suspenders help to carry our eye from the dark on the left side of the painting away and toward the right. The suspenders and hat form somewhat of a frame around his face

The blue shadows cast by the traps fall on the wall and onto the fisherman's face and clothing uniting the scene and uniting him with his profession. At the risk of reading meaning into the painting that was not really intended, I noticed that both arms were barely suggested. Could it point to the crabber's helplessness in his own plight?

Most impressive is Mary's ability to portray each subject with 'sensitivity and warmth'. Their journey, however humble, has meant something and deserves to be remembered.

- Sheri Farabaugh, ASMA