

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
**MARINE ARTISTS**

Art We Love I: Lisa Egeli, F/ASMA

“The Pool, Medfield” by Dennis Miller Bunker



First of all, it is very hard to decide on a favorite work of art because I have many and of course they change as one discovers new works. This is a favorite. I've had the postcard on my bulletin board for a long time, long enough so that at one point I actually had to get a new one to replace my faded, old postcard. And there are other artists whose paintings I have done that with so

it's not particular to this one, but this one has always inspired me.

I was trying to remember where I first saw this painting and first got the postcard. It may have been at an exhibition at the Terra Museum of Art in Chicago, or maybe I saw it first in Boston. But I love that, as simple as it is, it just swims in light and color and movement and atmosphere. It reminds me of so many

places I've been, so many landscapes I've fallen in love with.

I love the pool, the water in the foreground. Because it feels so specific to that kind of water, running through a field--that deep blue violet. The depth, the color of it, the movement of it sweeping you into the painting.

The composition is in some ways really obvious, but in others beauti-

fully subtle--the way it sweeps you in and flies you back through the painting. I love everything about this painting. There is so much variety here, it's grasses, bushes, water, trees, and yet, you could almost pick out all the vegetation that's in there, without every leaf being painted. It's all there: I just love the little building in the background; the hole through the line of trees and the way those are handled; the way the distant trees sort of dissolve into the sky; the dark, dark shadow under the shrub in the mid-ground.

Some piece of this painting is in my head whenever I'm facing some kind of similar scene. I will be looking and think, "It's like that!" This has some of that flavor--how do I do that? I believe artists are sometimes drawn to something that's in a direction that we'd like to take our own work, or something that we admire about it is maybe something worth striving for. But the looseness of this, the immediacy of it has always drawn me in, and reflects a direction I'd like to go in my work.

Part of what's so interesting to me is that it doesn't really matter where Dennis Miller Bunker was. I'm there. It could be any number of

flooded fields or pastures or meadows. With many works, I'd rather just see through the artist's eyes than try to find their exact vantage point. I went to Cancale, where Sargent painted, and I thought, this is a neat town, it's pretty, it's beautiful and it's in France. But for me the paintings of it stand alone. And it's the same thing with this.

Like Sargent and others, Dennis Miller Bunker was not so interested in painting the big, famous scenes. [For him] it was more about finding something interesting or worth painting in a more commonplace location. Sargent would just paint any bramble of bushes in which he saw something. And that's something I love.

I believe the biggest obstacle about nature and beauty isn't that there isn't enough of it, or that there aren't enough of these beautiful places, it's that we don't notice what we have. But maybe that's the message in Dennis Miller Bunker's elegant painting, which is to find those little areas around us in any little corner of the world.

We're seeing a little of this in the Covid-19 world, where people are saying, in wonder, "there are birds

singing in my yard," or "I noticed a frog," or "I saw a bunny rabbit and there must more"--and it's really that people are finally observing the nature that's around them. Because normally we don't pay attention. And art makes us pay attention to something--whether it's something in nature, or in light, or in history, or ideas.

Dennis Miller Bunker was finding inspiration in what was around him. And this pool in Medfield, who knows what drew him there? It's an intimate, beautiful scene.

- Lisa Egeli, F/ASMA