

Palette Talk

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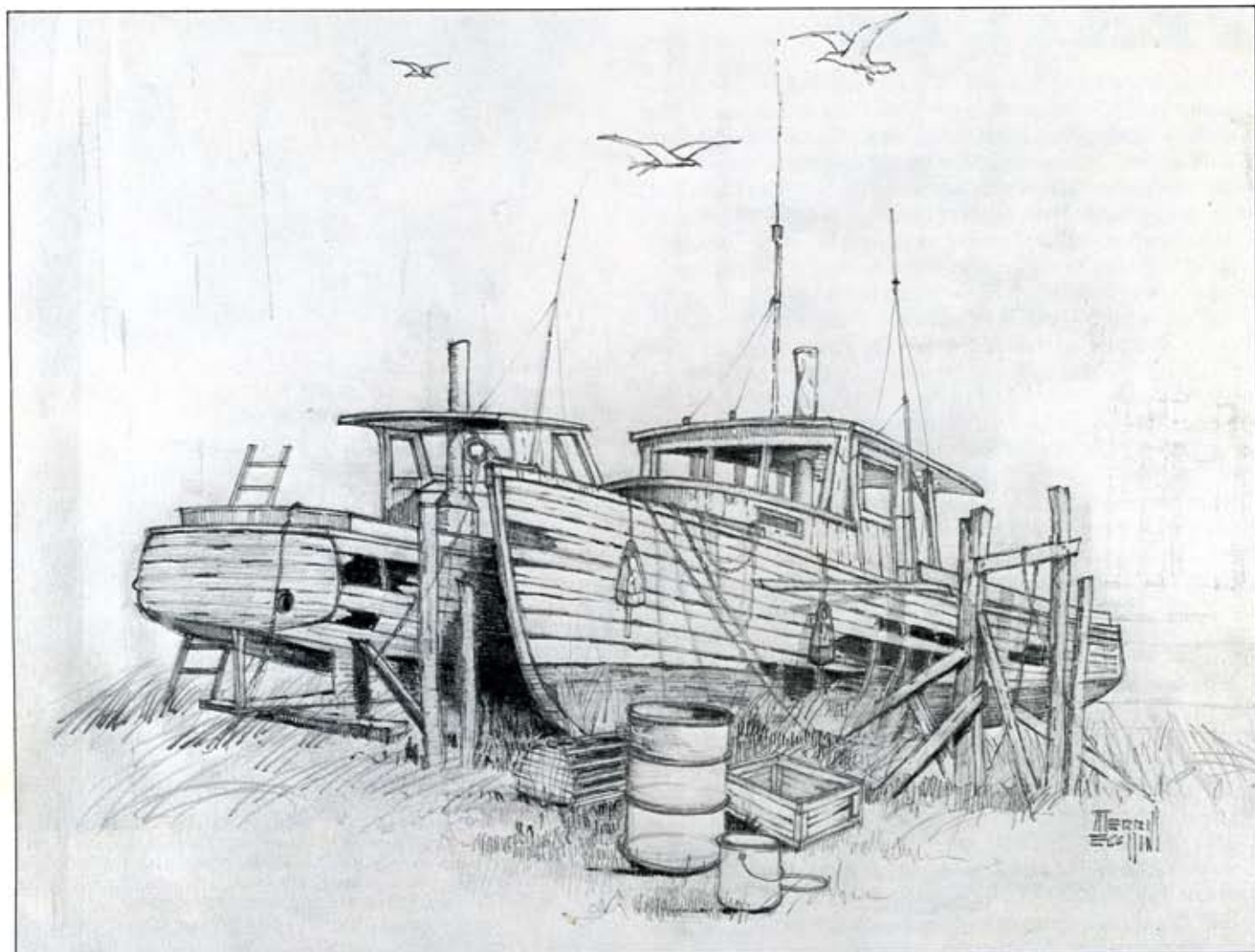
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BY MERRILL COFFIN

WHARFS AND FISHING BOATS

A PAINTER'S TREASURE TROVE



Detailed pencil sketch for painting "Beyond Repair."

A building is no better than the foundation it is built on. The same is true of successful painting. The foundation in this case is a basic knowledge of drawing, composition, perspective, value, color and a thorough familiarity with the subject you are to paint.

My favorite subjects are the wharfs, fishing boats, old barns and covered bridges of New England. Every side road, every turn in the road is a virtual treasure of subject material. My camera, which I have with me all the time, makes it possible for me to capture these marvelous scenes; it is up to me and my paints to make these scenes memorable.

My medium is acrylic paint which I use exclusively. These paints allow me



the latitude of detail and the opportunity to work without delays due to

drying time. I enjoy the versatility of acrylics: wash effects can be created and, in direct contrast, infinite detail can be achieved.

Here is how I painted "Beyond Repair," a derelict boat that intrigued me on one of my many trips to Cape Cod. I made a detailed, accurate pencil drawing of the main subject to create the mood of the painting. Then I prepared the cotton canvas with two coats of gesso, lightly sanding each coat once it had dried. I then covered the entire canvas in values of gray, mixing Hyslo® into my colors in order to keep this gray undercoating wet enough to paint into so that I could create the fog effect that I was after. My palette of colors for this preliminary underpainting



The finished painting. *Beyond Repair*, 18" x 24" (45.7 x 61.0cm), Hyplar® Acrylic Colors on Canvas.

consisted of Grumbacher Gray, Titanium White, Burnt Umber, Yellow Ochre Light and Thalo® Blue.

Once this first step had dried completely, I transferred the pencil drawing to the canvas and started to paint, after adding the following colors to the ones I already had: Mars Black, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium Red Light and Hooker's Green.

After establishing the dark areas, I struck the lightest of the highlights. From that point, the basic colors were applied, constantly checking my slide for accuracy. I have made it a practice to be as accurate as possible when establishing the general form of a painting. This care enables me to progress with a minimum of corrections.

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THE ARTIST

Merrill Coffin maintains a studio and gallery in Jamestown, N.Y. A one-time political cartoonist and art director, Mr. Coffin is now a full-time easel painter. A member of Chautauqua County Society of Artists and Access to the Arts, he has exhibited at Mystic Seaport Art Show, Arnot Art Museum in Elmira, N.Y. and the Bemus (N.Y.) Art Show where he won Best of Show two years in a row.

MATERIALS USED

HYPLAR® ACRYLIC COLORS

BRUSHES
4675F Hyplar® Nylon Flat, size 16, to cover entire canvas with prelimi-

nary tones of gray; size 6 to apply highlights.

4567B Hyplar® "Supreme" Nylon Bright, sizes 2 and 5, to mass in colors on boats.

3608B Sabeline Bright, size 8, to glaze color.

7708 Red Sable Script & liner, size 4, for final details.

MEDIUMS

525 Hyplar® Gesso to prepare the cotton canvas for painting.

529 Hyslo® to retard the drying time of the fast-drying acrylics.

547, 647 Hyplar® Gloss Varnish Spray for final varnish.

SUPPORT

625 Paint-Tested™ Stretched Cotton Canvas.

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The attention to details, such as rotted boards, ropes, lobster traps and buoys is time consuming but it is this element that makes a painting successful. Finally, to achieve the roughness of old paint, I scooped white from my palette and carefully dropped it on the canvas and then dragged it over the area. The drybrush effect created the illusion of old, weather-beaten, peeled paint.

I sealed the finished painting with a light coat of Hyplar® Varnish Spray. ■