



18 x 24

"Under the Umbrella"

The competition that artist John Swan seeks out doesn't require a panel of judges. Although he has won prestigious prizes such as the Ducks Unlimited International Artist of the Year award in 1987 and the Atlantic Salmon Federation Artist of the Year three times, Swan has entered his work in few judged exhibitions. He prefers contests on streams or sea as an avid fly fisherman. He then paints his experience with the passion of a true sportsman.

Widely considered one of America's foremost sporting and wildlife artists, Swan is equally adept in watercolor and oils. His paintings bring to life fishing and hunting trips to places as far afield as the bonefishing mecca of The Bahamas and Canada's Gaspé Peninsula, also a favorite sporting haunt of renowned impressionist Frank W. Benson (1862-1951). "I paint wherever I can fish," he admits. The result is spectacularly immediate works set in the world's premier sporting destinations.

Based on firsthand experience, and often created en plein air, Swan's paintings are imbued with freshness: the energy of a tarpon struggling against the line or the quietude of a hunter's early dawn preparations. Even while singularly expressive, his style is reminiscent of some of America's most beloved past masters. In the tradition of Benson, John Whorf and Winslow Homer, each of whom painted sporting scenes between the 1880s and 1940s, Swan's close observations of nature are executed with fluid brushwork and a palette of highly contrasting lights and darks. Like Homer, he employs a full spectrum of blues representing reflected and refracted light on horizontal planes.

Although much of his work is made on location, Swan is often at work in his hometown of Portland, Maine. His home and barn-studio are tucked away in a section of the city that he describes as a "colonial village at the edge of the sea."

Situated on a tidal river dense with lily pads or ice chunks each season, his shingled home was once owned by impressionist Walter Griffin (1861-1935). He bought the property in 1995 and filled it with Griffin's work. Amazingly, Swan's own ancestors lived in the house over two hundred years ago.

After studying art at the University of New Hampshire, Swan began his career painting his two sons and rural Down East landscapes. About twenty years ago, one of his fly fishing scenes landed on the cover of Gray's Sporting Journal, catapulting him to national recognition as a sporting artist. Since then, Swan's work has appeared regularly in publications such as Esquire Sportsman and Wildlife