

MARY MONK

Chasing the Light Across Louisiana's Marshes

Painting outdoors at sunset, self-taught Louisiana pastel painter Mary Monk captures the fugitive beauty of those luminous but transient moments between day and night. Her paintings record impressions of the most challenging time of day for plein air painters.

By John R. Kemp

Mary Monk has spent the last two decades exploring the back roads, coastal marshes, bayous, and city streets of southeast Louisiana for those compelling intersections of light, mood, and place. For Monk, few places exist where those three elements come together so beautifully.

“Light is the most important aspect of my paintings,” explains Monk, a native New Orleanian who now resides and works north of the city in the rural village of Abita Springs.

“The second most important thing to me is the mood of a painting. The purpose is to capture that moment so well that viewers feel like they are there. I find it peaceful to be out in nature. I just forget everything else and concentrate.”

The Coastal Landscape

Like many Louisiana plein air and studio painters, Monk is drawn to the serene and natural beauty of the region's coastal marshes. “Sunsets do spectacular things to marsh grasses,” she says. “The



Mary Monk painting on location. Photo: John R. Kemp

Windy Day on the Lake

2016, pastel, 18 x 18 in.

Collection the artist

Plein air



ARTIST DATA

NAME: Mary Monk

BIRTH YEAR: 1969

LOCATION: Rural and coastal Southeast Louisiana and New Orleans

INFLUENCES: “Rembrandt, John Singer Sargent, Mary Cassatt, J.M.W. Turner, George Inness, and French Impressionists.”

WEBSITE: www.marymonk.com and www.lemieuxgalleries.com