

New Inverness

The Legacy of Life on the Altamaha River
a series of artworks by Patricia Fabian

Introduction



New Inverness is a series of artworks that capture the haunting beauty and spirit of the hard-working community that embodies coastal Darien, Georgia.

Locals know Darien by its original name, “New Inverness,” the second largest colony established in 1736 by Scottish Highlanders. History hangs in the air like veils of Spanish moss that have lined the streets for centuries.

The artwork ranges from realistic to mythological, chronicling the magic above and below the sea.

Enjoy this timeless coastal journey that begins at nautical dawn and sets during the soothing twilight hours with a cool margarita at Blue Bay’s Mexican Grille.

*I had an inheritance from my father,
It was the moon and the sun.
And though I roam all over the world,
The spending of it's never done.*

— Ernest Hemingway

A Little Background

The “New World” brought “New” settlements to Georgia and when the Scottish Highlanders, at the request of General Oglethorpe, inhabited this area, they named it after their major city in Scotland – “Inverness,” which means “city built on the mouth of the river Ness.” Here, “New Inverness” was built on the banks of the Altamaha River.

The Altamaha River brought success in making New Inverness the major port of the southeast. It transported cotton, rice and sugar cane. Then it dominated with timber transportation until the railroads came and replaced the ports and took over lumber and transportation. New Inverness was behind the curve and had to start over.

Still, they didn’t give up. They changed direction and started to become a fishing industrial center, literally the center of the shrimp export business, which they held for centuries. They are still a major player today.

Also today, they are part of the progressive ecological studies programs and research of the coastal Georgia and Carolina’s marshlands.

This series chronicles my impressions of a time past that still lives true.

There is a pride here that echoes down the Altamaha River.



Altamaha River in Darien, GA

At 137 miles, the Altamaha River—the longest free-flowing river in Georgia—contains one of the state’s most undisturbed ecosystems. Also known as the “Little Amazon,” it’s home to a number of rare and endangered species, including sturgeons, bony-plated fish that can grow up to eight feet long and weigh more than 200 pounds. In the summers they launch high into the air (no one’s sure why) with such force they can injure or kill unlucky boaters.

— **River of Kings** by Taylor Brown



On a Personal Note

Just before Covid 19 hit, I took a day-trip to Darien with my daughter and her dog, Emma. We sat on a rainy deck overlooking the Altamaha River and watched the shrimp crew come in for beers after a day's work. I became intrigued with the area, and it was my last impression of life as we know it before the pandemic.

Confined to home, like we all were on lock-down, I dove into the history of Darien in my studio. I'd begin to paint and transpose myself to a working day on the coastal seaport. Lost in intrigue, I found that at the end of the day I wasn't even aware of the chaos of Covid 19 around me.

I had escaped into these so many ships of Darien. Each one was different. They came alive with their own unique personalities. The cotton fields would sway in my mind's eye and the Spanish moss covered the studio in my imagination like a canopy of creativity.

So while you enjoy the history and culture that I enjoyed, remember there is an undercurrent of the pandemic in the ever subtle background noise that seems to give more meaning and messages in the work that came out on its own.



Where It All Begins

I was inspired by the waves of time
that span the Altamaha River.



Inbhir Ness Acrylic on Canvas 36 X 48

The wide mouth of
the Altamaha River is
banked by marshlands.
At one time, barges and
platforms covered the
span of the river with
lumber being exported up
and down the east coast.



Times-A-Wastin' Acrylic on Canvas 36 X 36

"Times-a Wastin" is the name of the third boat in. The boats appear timeless in the March haze.

There is a lot of texture in the white water to reflect the sight breeze that passed by and ripple the light grey reflecting water of the clouds above.





Legacy Acrylic on Canvas 30 X 40

Timeless Journey Of a Family's Legacy

The family shrimp boat is passed down from one generation to the next. It is the family heritage and legacy. The boats have names and are treated like fine ladies of the sea.



Caravan Home

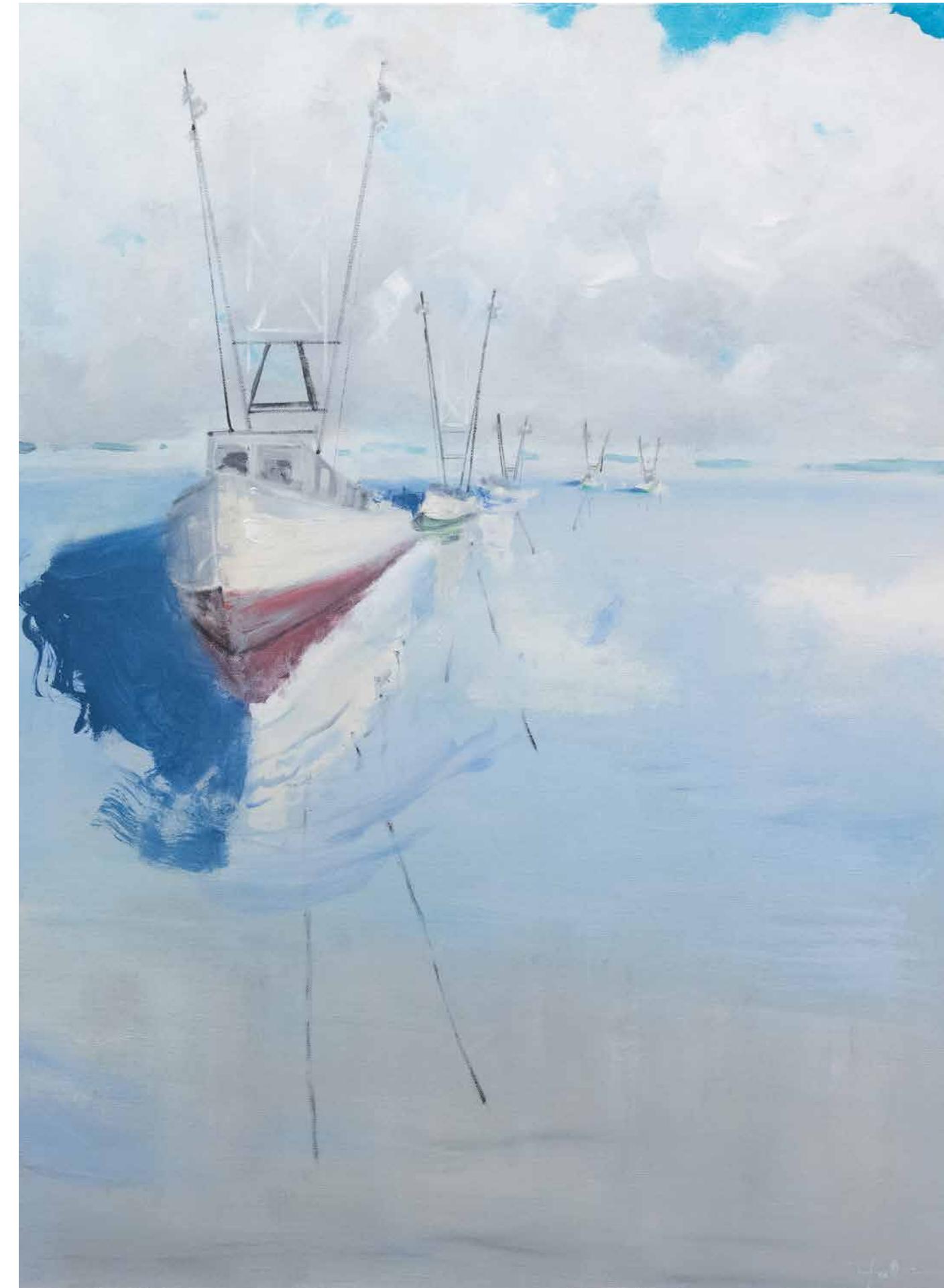
Shrimp Boats glide by as if on a parade route heading home with their catch ready for market.

The work of the hand and the sweat of the brow brought home a good day's pay in the 1800's, and it still does, today. Life is slower and closer to nature. Rubber boots slosh over the wooden docks as the fishermen bring in the sea's harvest.

Something sacred still rings true in the relationship of mankind and sea and what draws us out and what brings us home. Search for your soul and find it under a cloudy sky and a mirrored sea.

This was the first painting in the series.

Homeward Bound was inspired by Kim's Sea King at port. I was intrigued by the name and wondered if indeed this wasn't the King that safely led the others home.



Homeward Bound Acrylic on Canvas 40 X 30



Incoming Tide Acrylic on Board 24 X 48

The Georgia coastal shoreline brings a gentle yet swift incoming tide.



Working together, the ships hit the open sea like a united caravan. There is a harmony and a dance as the nets like veils dip into the surf and the boats sway in the wind.

Here, playing out the story on my canvas, were fishermen who understand the value of working together to bring home their harvest.

Boats look out and protect each other. There is a respect here that comes with cooperation.



A Day's Work Acrylic on Canvas 48 X 60



A Good Catch Acrylic on Canvas 60 X 48



This painting tells the story of a late morning routine on the docks. Workers package the shrimp and clear the decks. Today the catch was good and there is an air of fulfillment on the docks.

The sea has been said to be in us all. We yearn for the rhythm of the waves coming to shore... it settles our soul. We connect to the eternal sea with its lunar-based tides and changes of temperament from calm to turbulent. We call for its reach in all facets of our lives. The sea touches us and heals us with its eternal whisper of timelessness.

This was the last painting of the "New Inverness" series and it seems to be the final answer of what it all meant. The sea has brought the waters to the rivers and the rivers to the sea. The flow, the life, the journey... all connected and timeless.



Ocean Reach Acrylic on Canvas 66 X 66



Blue Velvet Ink and Acrylic on Paper 11 X 14

Imaginary Fish are the magic
under the sea.

Ink lends itself to this under-
the-sea environment
because, like water, it finds
its way mysteriously on a
page.

Who doesn't want the
softness of blue velvet or a
burgundy rich angel by your
side as constant companions.



Angel Ink and Acrylic on Paper 18 X 24



What's a Mermaid without some Friends?
Playful fish appear in ink.
Personalities abound.

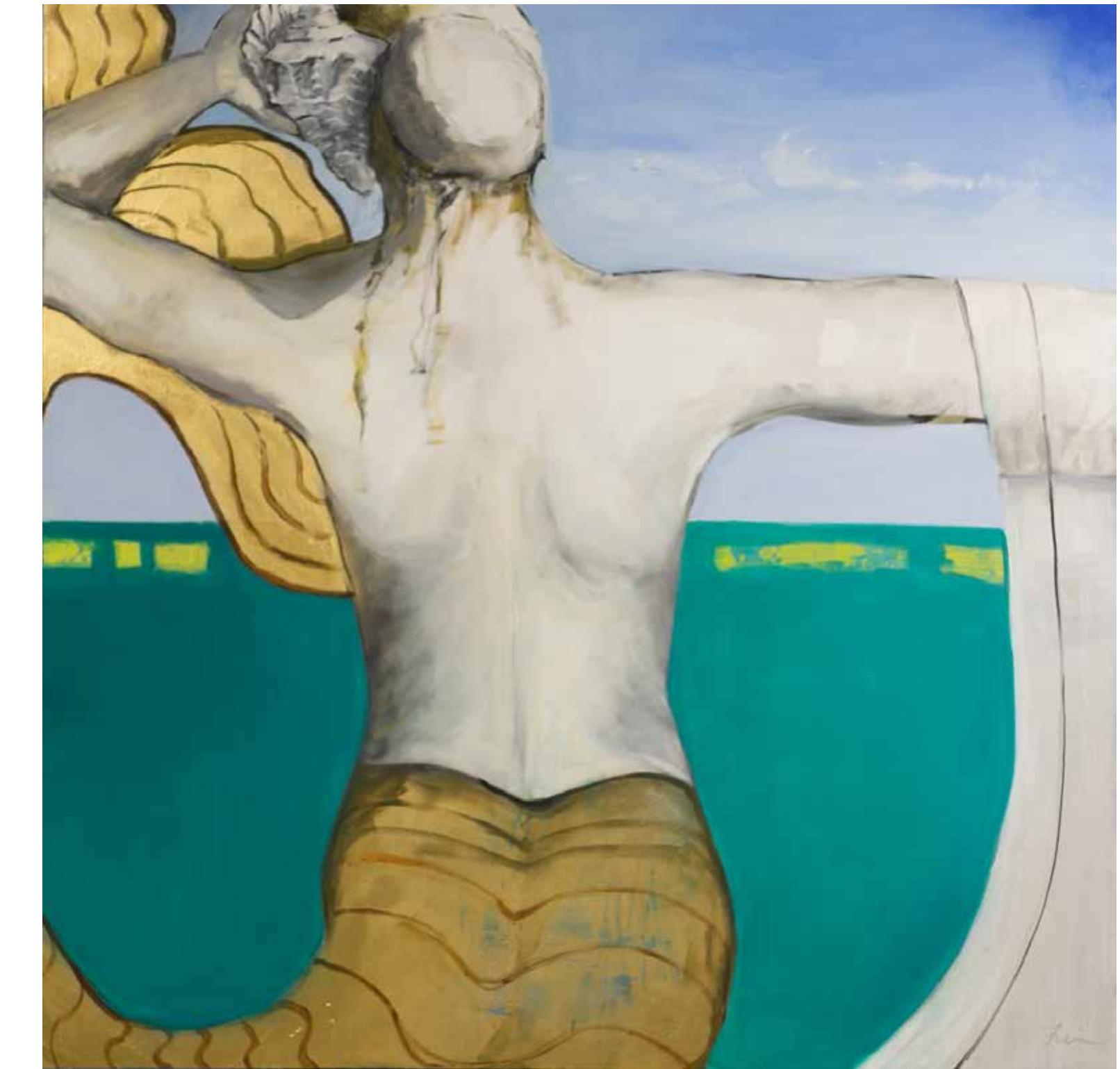


The Mermaid
by Lord Alfred Tennyson

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
"Who is it loves me? Who loves not me?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold.



Just Stripes Acrylic and Ink on Paper 18 X 20
Fins At Play Ink on Paper 16 X 20
Love on the Ocean Floor Ink on Paper 8 X 10
Shimmery Swim Ink and Acrylic on Paper 18 X 24



Sea Whispers Acrylic on Canvas 48 X 48

When you live in a coastal town, you respect mythology of the sea. It is an oral history that has been passed down through the ages to bring joy to the children and wonder to the adults who have thought they had long given up on such tomfoolery.
The mermaid watches over the small town vessels, captains and seafarers. She pauses to hear the whispers of the sea through her conch shell.



The Blue Bay restaurant is a happening place. Live music on the weekends outside and, I've been told, fabulous margaritas.

I originally painted it with no people during the shut down, but when the state opened, I decided to let the people and their "Best Friends" in.



Lunch with Emma" Acrylic on Canvas 48 X 48





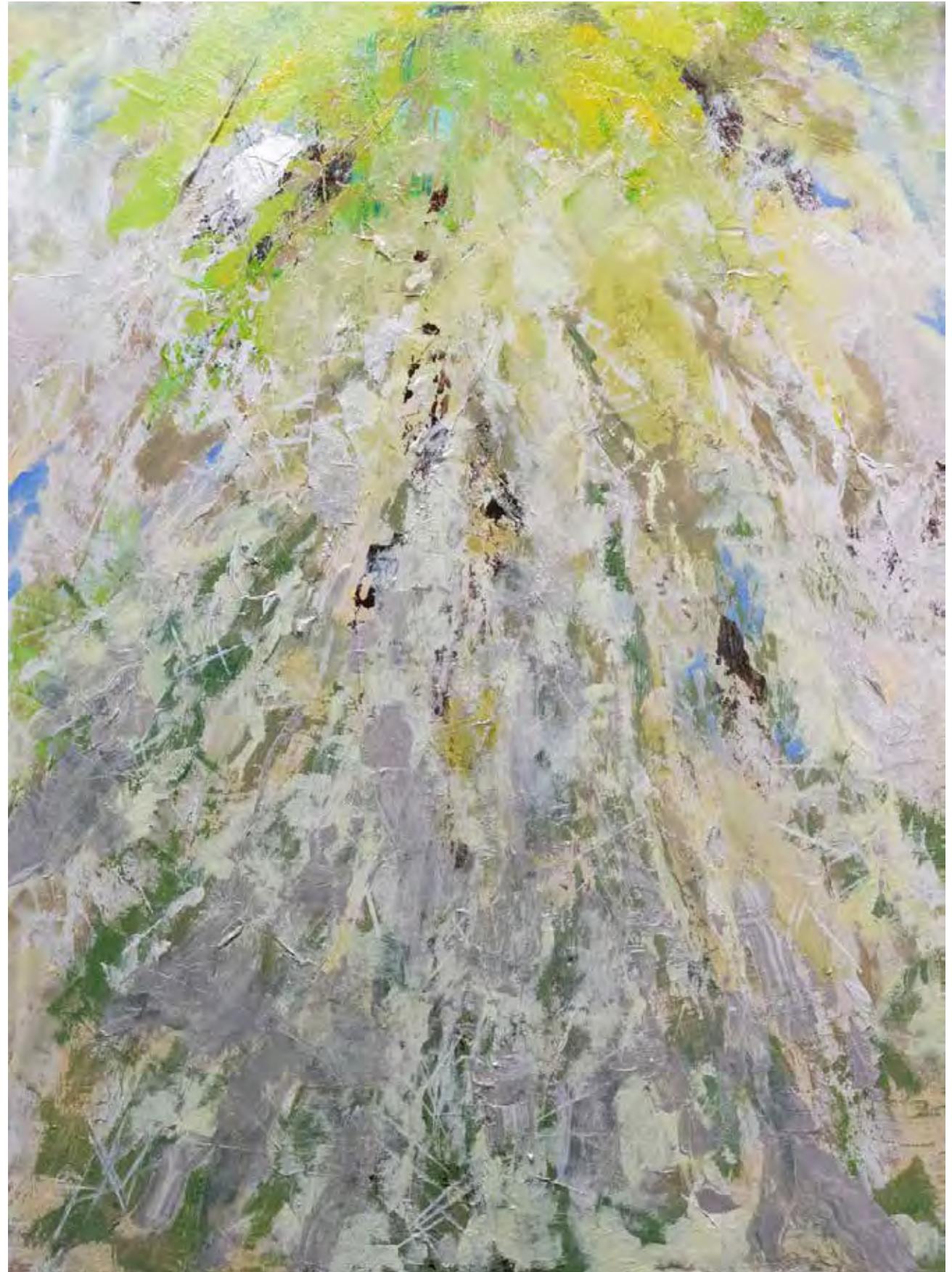
A sea of cotton splashes across the Georgia coastline. Clouds rest above.

Clouds on Cotton Acrylic on Canvas 36 X 48



Clouds on Cotton was painted in an abstract manner, building layers of color and forming shapes into the cotton puffs until it appeared like waves of cotton in the wind as it receded back to the horizon.

Look up and stand under the canopy of the cascading Spanish moss. It shimmers in the light and sways in the coastal breezes.



Cascading Spanish Moss 40 X 30 Acrylic on Canvas



Spanish Moss Symphony Acrylic on Canvas 22 X 28



Sassafras Serenade Acrylic on Canvas 22 X 28



Whimsical Water Oak Acrylic on Canvas 22 X 28

Environmental studies are huge in coastal Georgia and in Darien. Here are a few of the vegetations that bring a food source to the wildlife.

The live oaks on the top left is the number one food source for the red head woodpecker, the sassafras in the middle is the choice of deer, while the water oak tree is what sustains the wood duck.

Spanish moss is prevalent in Darien and although we all love the allure and romance it creates, it basically is a sign of transformation for the tree.

Spanish moss is prevalent in Darien and drapes the trees like veils of history.

I knew when I began this series that I was going to make this painting, *Blessing of the Fleet*, the cornerstone.

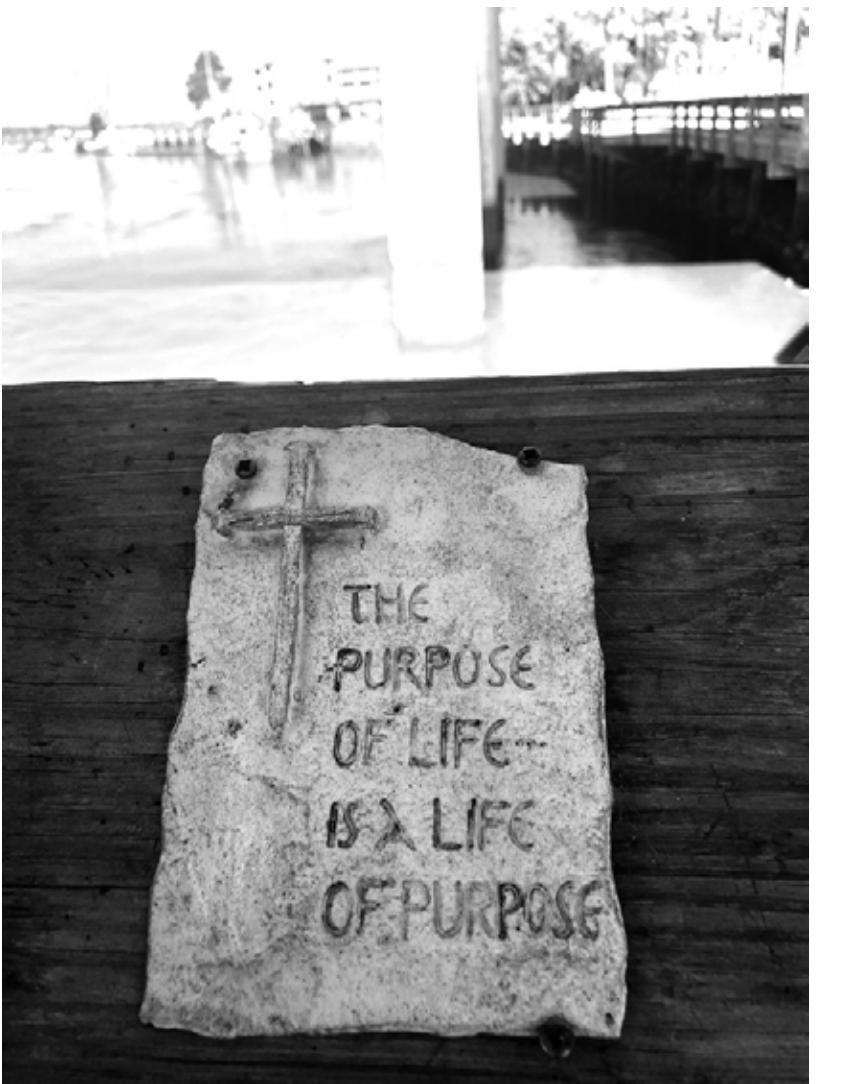
I was intrigued that each March the shrimp boats came together in parade style, dressed up with flags and balloons to be blessed as they pass under the bridge. It is a blessing for a safe voyage and bounty.

Because of Covid 19, it didn't happen in March of 2020 as social distancing was in place and all events were canceled, so I did my version of the "Blessing of the Fleet."

Here it is quiet as they go out to sea in 2020 to start the fishing season, but nonetheless, they are blessed.



Blessing of the Fleet Acrylic on Canvas 66 X 66



On the waterfront in Darien, this stone lies before you as you enter onto the docks.

It's the working men and women of the sea that wake before dawn to launch their vessels in "Nautical Twilight" when just the hint of the horizon can be seen.

Their life has purpose and with that, fulfillment as they live the legacy of their heritage.



Nautical Twilight Acrylic on Canvas 48 X 36

Kim's Sea King is a legend in Darien and sits with dignity in port. Proudly in the slot, it holds the space of royalty.

The "Sea King" was painted like a fine portrait, as if in a sitting for me to capture all her nuances. Sea King has seen years of work and has passed through generations. It is a proud vessel. It is King.



Sea King Acrylic on Canvas 40 X 30



Nighean Doca Acrylic on Paper 16 X 20



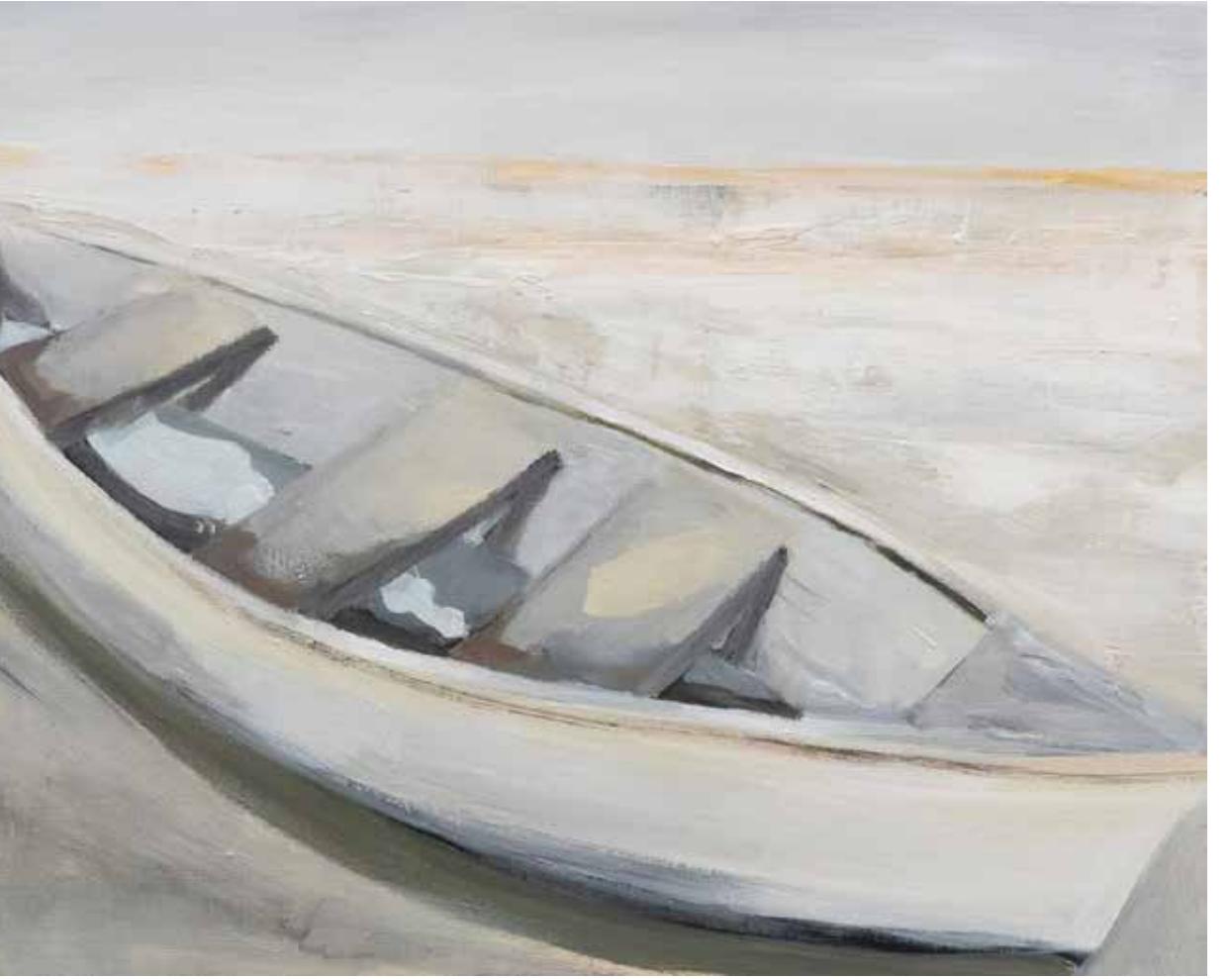
Dream Catcher Acrylic on Board 24 X 18

Two dock girls living in accordance of life
by the sea and dreaming of treasures and
magic thereof.



Come Ashore Acrylic on Canvas 20 X 16

"Come Ashore" is a welcoming phrase in nautical life.
Come ashore...all is well, all is safe, welcome.

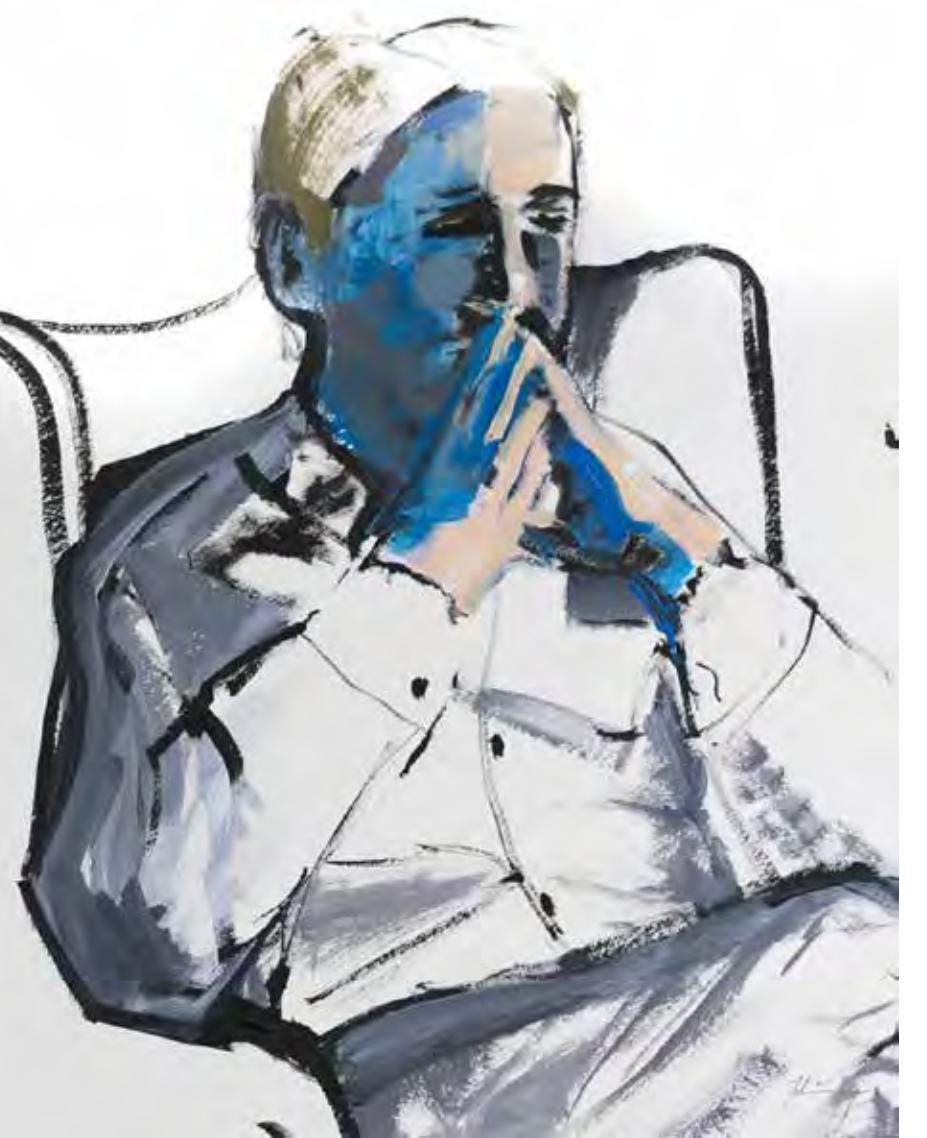


Washed Ashore Acrylic on Canvas 16 X 20

Coastal children have their dreams with a washed up rowboat on shore. Joy fills their hearts to have a boat of their own. It's cherished with all the broken wood and seeped in water. Friends come and tall take turns pulling the boat and riding in majesty within.

I painted this early on in the series from my own experience. I too was a child with a house off the river bank and I found nothing greater in my world than the day you walk onto the shore and see that washed up boat.

Epilogue



2020 Acrylic on Paper 20 X 16

It wouldn't be right not to add these two paintings as "reality checks" that I also did as an expression of my reaction to Covid 19 while not on the "mental docks" in Darien.

Finally, I too tested positive for Covid 19 and was hospitalized alone. I experienced self-isolation from my family and waited to see if those around me got it. Luckily, I was the only one. Now I am healthy again.

What a journey it has been.



Party of One Acrylic on Canvas 40 X 30



Let's get a Margarettta!