

Michael Frank



P O R T F O L I O

portfolio

Michael Frank

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Photos courtesy
of Michael Frank

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Undersea Creatures V,
by Michael Frank. Acrylic
on canvas, 24x30 inches
(61x76cm)

Inspired by the magical ambience in the works of early American artists painting scenes with great attention to detail, color and dramatic light, Michael Frank works layer upon layer on canvas to produce brilliant underwater scenes echoing the sumptuous yet mysterious nature of marine life on reefs and in rivers and streams. *X-RAY MAG* interviewed the artist based in St. Louis, Missouri, to gain insight into his art and perspectives on the underwater realm.



Undersea Creatures II, by Michael Frank. Acrylic on canvas, 24x30 inches (61x76cm)

X-RAY MAG: Tell us about your background and how you developed your artistic process.

MF: I have been painting for over 35 years. I do not have a formal education in art. Some college and art workshops. I developed my artistic skills mainly from the study of an early American artist group of the mid-19th century known as the "Hudson River School".

X-RAY MAG: What is your artistic mission or vision?

MF: My artistic vision is to use my imagination to its fullest extent.

X-RAY MAG: What is it about the underwater world and its creatures that inspire you?

MF: My inspiration comes from the vast colorful variations of plant and coral

formations and the enormous variety of undersea creatures that many of us have little knowledge of—their beauty and life dramas.

X-RAY MAG: Tell us about your experience in the underwater world, scuba diving or snorkeling. How and why did you start diving/snorkeling?

MF: I have been to the Caymans, Belize, Virgin Islands, Oahu, the

Undersea Creatures II by Michael Frank. Acrylic on canvas, 24x30 inches (61x76cm)





Undersea Creatures IV,
by Michael Frank. Acrylic
on canvas, 24x30 inches
(61x76cm)

Undersea Creatures VI,
by Michael Frank. Acrylic
on canvas, 24x30 inches
(61x76cm)

Undersea Creatures III,
by Michael Frank. Acrylic
on canvas, 24x30 inches
(61x76cm)



Mexican coast of Yucatan and Cozumel. I have not had the courage to scuba dive, but I do snorkel whenever I visit these places. My interest in the underwater world was stirred over the years by TV's *Sea Hunt* and movies like *The Deep*.

X-RAY MAG: What are your favorite dive sites, underwater subjects, locations?

MF: My favorites are the beaches of Barbados and Cozumel. I also like the areas around Mexico's Cancun and Tulum where you can see a wide variety

of fresh and saltwater fish.

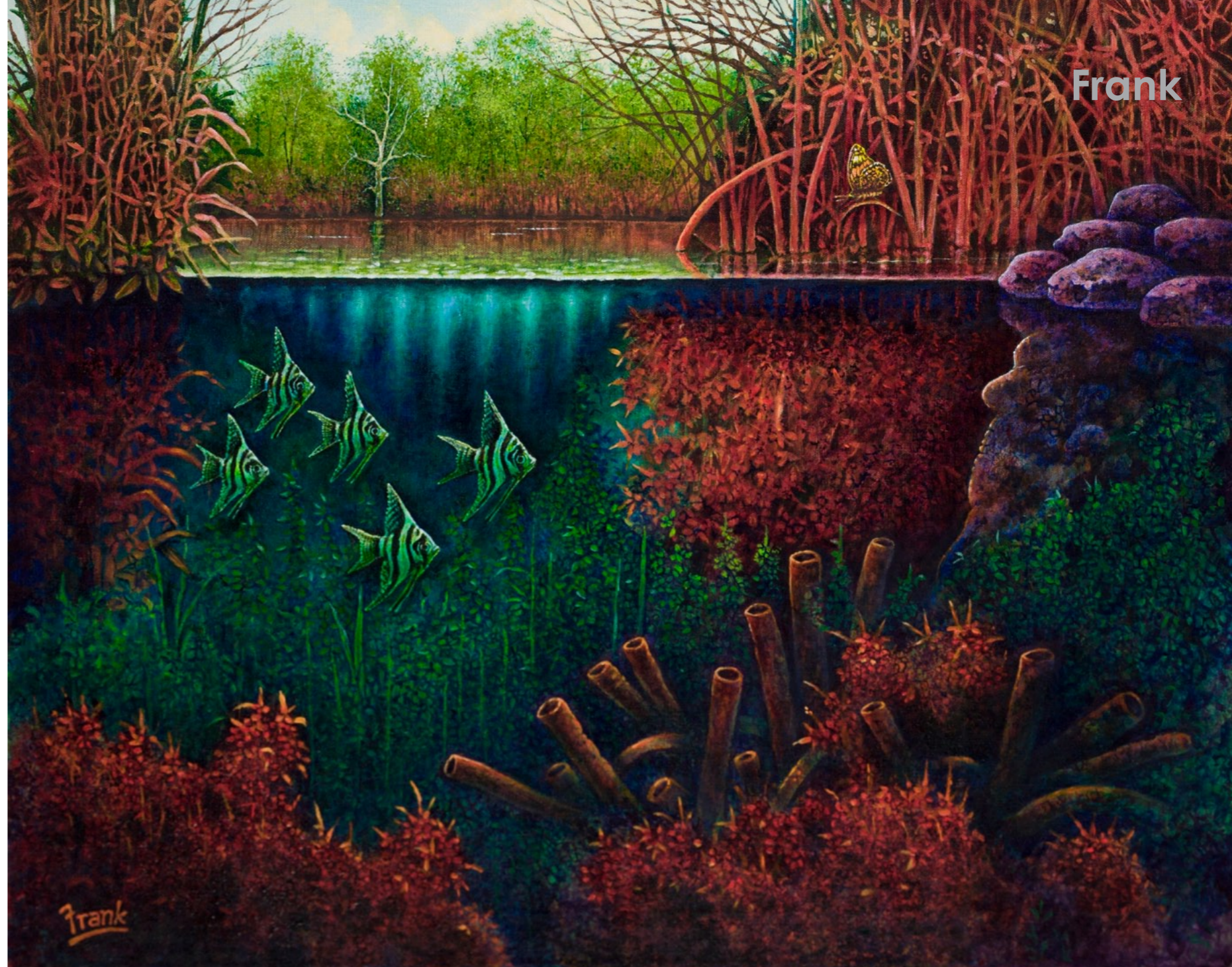
X-RAY MAG: Tell us about your paintings. How are they made? Please describe what is unique about your method or concept. How do you compile your underwater scenes? What informs your art?

MF: First I draw several composition sketches. Then I will start to paint with many layers of thin glazes of acrylic paint on canvas. Sometimes I will start with acrylic fluorescent paints to get the brilliant colors needed to portray fish and

coral dynamically, then tone them down with darker shades of the same color.

X-RAY MAG: Do you use underwater photography—your own or someone else's—and how is it incorporated in your art work? If it is your own underwater photography, what camera equipment do you use and why?

MF: My underwater photography is very low tech (disposable plastic encased cardboard cameras). I mainly rely on photos in magazines and the Internet (permission freely given) of individual



Amazon, by Michael Frank. Acrylic on canvas, 24x30 inches (61x76cm)

fish, underwater plant life and coral formations. I then take these many different pieces and arrange them to my liking. Then I add my own background to come up with my own composition with dynamic lighting for each painting.

X-RAY MAG: How does your art relate to conservation or environmental issues facing our oceans and reefs?

MF: I hope my paintings make people aware of the beauty and importance of undersea life—not just the popular large whales and sharks but the smaller less known delicate wildlife of the deep. Also I hope to inspire people to do what they can to preserve nature above and below the water surface.

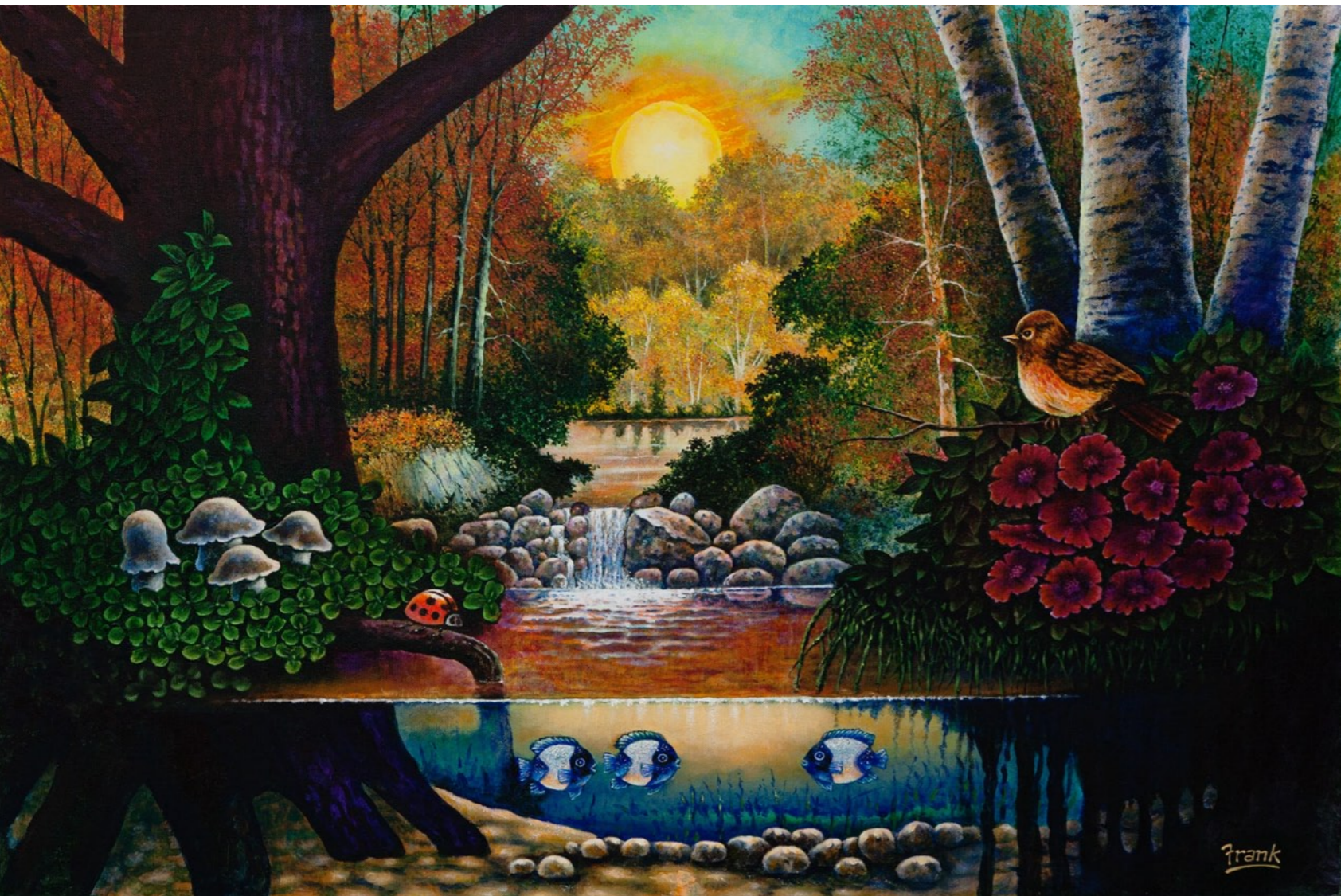
X-RAY MAG: Why art? Why is art important? What are the challenges and

benefits of being an artist today?

MF: There is a tremendous challenge to become a popular artist. The competition for recognition (among millions) is overwhelming. You must develop skills not only with your art but with self-promotion and unique ways to get your art in front of the viewer. The monetary rewards for an artist may be few. Art is important to me because it gives me

Kingfisher, by Michael Frank. Acrylic on canvas, 36x24 inches (91.5x61cm)





Sunset, by Michael Frank. Acrylic on canvas, 24x36 inches ((61x91.5cm))

the power to touch someone. To bring back fond memories. To make people aware of their beautiful surroundings. To alter a mood. To dramatize the quest for survival or happiness. I think each artist must decide for themselves whether to measure their success with money or how their artwork touches others. Many artists (including myself) measure with both.

X-RAY MAG: What's next? New? Upcoming?

MF: To continue to paint our world's creatures, both large and small, in their natural surroundings. To do my best to glorify them. To warm our hearts to them and be thankful for their creation.

I like to do paintings in series. I hope you not only view my *Undersea Creature* series but my

other series as well: *Little World*, *Forest Never Sleeps*, *Bird in Paradise*, *Jungle Harmony*, *Sunshine Traveler*, *Romantique* and my new upcoming series *Baby Love*. ■

For more information and to purchase originals and prints, visit the artist's website at: www.Michael-frank.artistwebsites.com. Or email: mfrank1026@aol.com.

Blueboy, by Michael Frank. Acrylic on canvas, 24x18 inches (61x46cm)

