

THE MARINE PAINTINGS OF SMITHEMAN

S. Francis Smitheman

The distinguished marine painter Francis Smitheman has spent some thirty years passionately depicting the Age of Sail, an age in which sailing ships have enabled man to move out from the coast, to trade, to defend his territory and to discover and chart new lands for the benefit of mankind.

In this stunning new book, Smitheman offers us an evocative visual survey of the sailing ship by focussing on certain aspects: Historical Vessels, Antarctica and the Arctic, London's River, Ports Harbours and Havens, Nelson's Ships, Adventures and Contemporary. This work has led him to paint many still existing vessels from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. He travels to them and consults with Captains, marine archaeologists and scholars in order to give his work authenticity. Often the setting is as important as the ship and adds much to the final work.

Almost all of the artist's paintings are of a large format, take several months to research and paint and are therefore highly detailed. For this reason enlarged details have been set alongside some of the complete images.

Virtually every work has a fascinating story behind it and this is recounted in the text. But the pictures also speak directly to the observer since they are about war and peace, calm and storm, disaster and triumph, thus showing us the sailing ship in all its aspects.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

The marine artist Smitheman has had works exhibited in London and the provinces, in France, Norway, Sweden and the USA. His lengthy studies as a painter included a scholarship to Paris. Later he took a second degree in the History of European Art at the Courtauld Institute of the University of London.

He has many works in private collections, on board ships and in museums. His career has also included lecturing at graduate level and a number of years designing for the theatre. In between, he has gained sailing experience in his own boats in UK waters and, more extensively, in the Mediterranean. Working with ships' trusts and museums he has re-created many of the world's great historic ships in their legendary settings and his work has now travelled world wide.

At a major exhibition in France, on his nomination as L'Artiste d'Honneur, the *Voix du Nord* stated: 'Like his predecessor Turner, Smitheman knows the sea and sailing perfectly which gives his work authenticity. One finds all the world of the sea in his works, the ports, the craft, the human activities on board, tempestuous seas and arctic wastes'.

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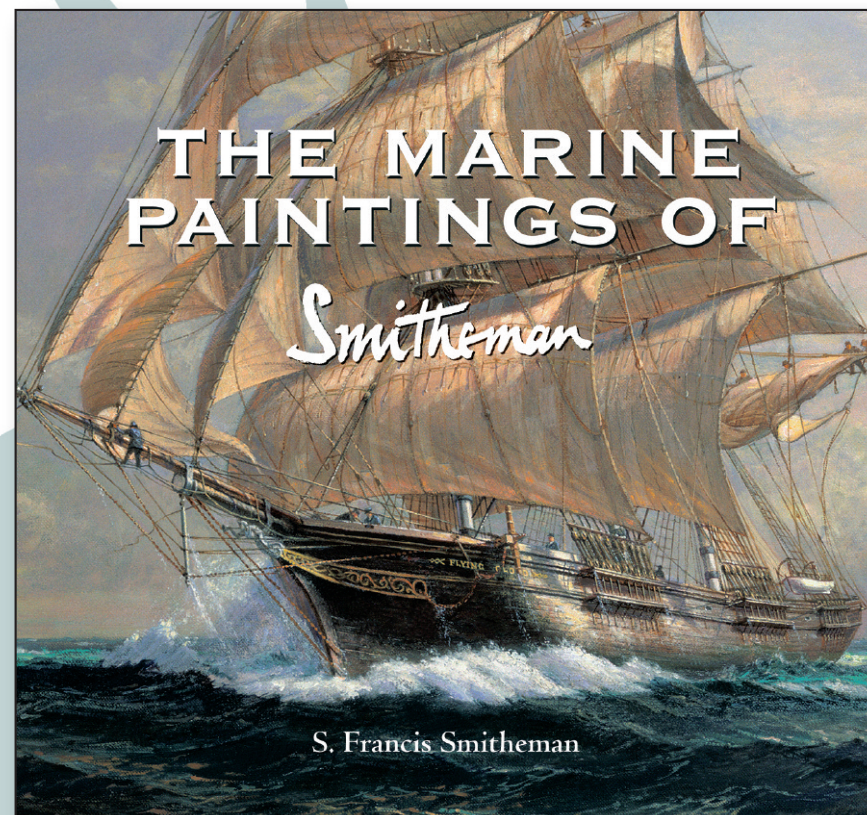
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