

SELECTED COAST GUARD ART OF ROBERT SEMLER

May 30, 1942—Jan. 2, 2020

Salmagundi Club Exhibition, New York City

June 28—August 7, 2020

Coast Guard artist Robert Semler's interest in the maritime world started early. He grew up in New Jersey where his father worked for New York shipbuilding, and his in-laws were in the Navy and Merchant Marine. "I grew up in a maritime environment," he once said, "and it's always fascinated me. I have some salt water in my veins." Art too held enormous sway. For the artist, it was not only a profession; it was a way of life. Robert studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, where he majored in figure and portrait art. While the majority of his career was spent in the publishing and illustration fields, in 1992, he decided to devote more of his time to fine art. He then specialized in maritime and portrait art. He was an adjunct professor of art at Gloucester County College in Sewell, N.J., and an instructor with the Portrait Institute. He was a long-time signature member of the American Society of Marine Artists and served as its president for five years. He was also a member of the Society of Illustrators in New York and the Portrait Society of America. He was a member of the Coast Guard Art Program almost since its inception. The program's permanent collection now has some 16 works by the artist. In recognition of his remarkable talent, in 2008 he was chosen by the Service for artistic deployment to the National Strike Force in Charleston, W. Va. He was a four time award winner of the Coast Guard's prestigious George Gray award for Artistic Excellence. This is the program's best in show award. When asked how long it took him to complete his 2016 award winning painting, "Guardians of the Sea," he replied: "74 years plus six weeks." In seriousness he went on to say "All of the awards make a difference – they all mean something...I'm thrilled the Coast Guard is happy with my work." During his latter years, he worked from his Florida studio and resided with his wife Phyllis in Bradenton, Florida. Robert's art is held in collections around the country.



Robert Semler with his art in the background.

National Strike Force in training

Oil

20 x 28 inches

Members of the Atlantic Strike Team (AST) of the National Strike Force conduct training exercises underground in the National Response Tunnel in Charleston, W. Va. The AST is one of three teams that make up the National Strike Force. It is a vital national asset comprised of a highly trained cadre of Coast Guard professionals who maintain and rapidly deploy with specialized equipment and incident management skills any time to any place or hazard. Here members are training to respond to a generic subway disaster. A Coast Guard instructor on the right grades the team's performance.

Coast Guard Art Collection 200928





Final check before suiting up

Oil

18 x 24 inches

Members of the Atlantic Strike Team of the National Strike Force conduct training exercises underground in the National Response Tunnel in Charleston, W. Va. The National Strike Force is a highly trained cadre of Coast Guard professionals who maintain and rapidly deploy with specialized equipment and incident management skills any time to any place or hazard. Here a team member is being checked to ensure he is physically qualified to “suit up” for a mock hazmat—hazardous materials—exercise. A female service member is taking his blood pressure as the final check.

Coast Guard Art Collection 201030

**Law enforcement training at Station Cortez
George Gray Award Winning Work, 2011**

Oil

18 x 24 inches

Coast Guard Law Enforcement instructors visit Station Cortez, Fla., for the annual training on proper law enforcement procedures. Shown are members of Station Cortez being observed by instructors while others wait for their turn in the exercises. The station is in the center of an active fishing and boating community, just north of Sarasota, where law enforcement boardings and inspections are a top priority.

Coast Guard Art Collection 201123



Roger, safety check affirmative

Oil

15 x 22 inches

While on routine patrol, members of Station Curtis Bay, Md., perform small craft safety checks. Crew from the 41-foot utility boat boards a small fishing vessel to ensure that the proper credentials, licenses and safety equipment are aboard and conform to Coast Guard regulations. Ensuring the safety and proper handling of small craft vessels are important parts of the Coast Guard’s many local duties.

Coast Guard Art Collection 201321

Hull Safety Inspection

Oil
18 x 24 inches

The Coast Guard is responsible for the inspection of vessels that are registered in the United States and foreign ships that enter U.S. waters. Here a marine inspector discusses procedures with members from Sector St. Petersburg, Fla., during a safety inspection of a vessel in dry dock while a worker repairs the ship's propeller.

Coast Guard Art Collection 201519



Guardians of the Sea

George Gray Award Winning Work, 2016

Oil
24 x 18 inches

The crew of a 47-foot motor lifeboat (MLB) rescues a survivor of a ship disaster as a threatening storm approaches. A Dolphin HH-65 helicopter hovers overhead with air crew waiting to hoist the survivor aboard. In the distance, a second MLB approaches the scene to assist in rescue efforts.

Coast Guard Art Collection 201619

The work never ends

Oil
16 x 28 inches

Two Coast Guard members aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Joshua Appleby which is homeported in St. Petersburg, Fla., perform deck maintenance. This seemingly modest task is often unseen but vital in keeping the Service's fleet seaworthy and afloat.

Coast Guard Art Collection 201821

