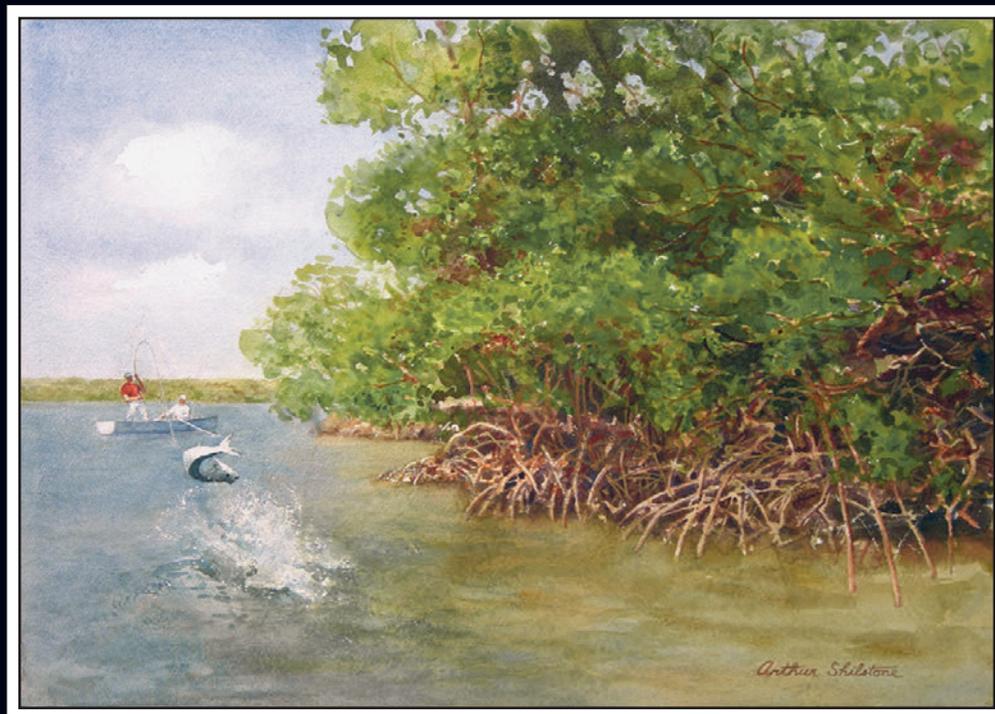


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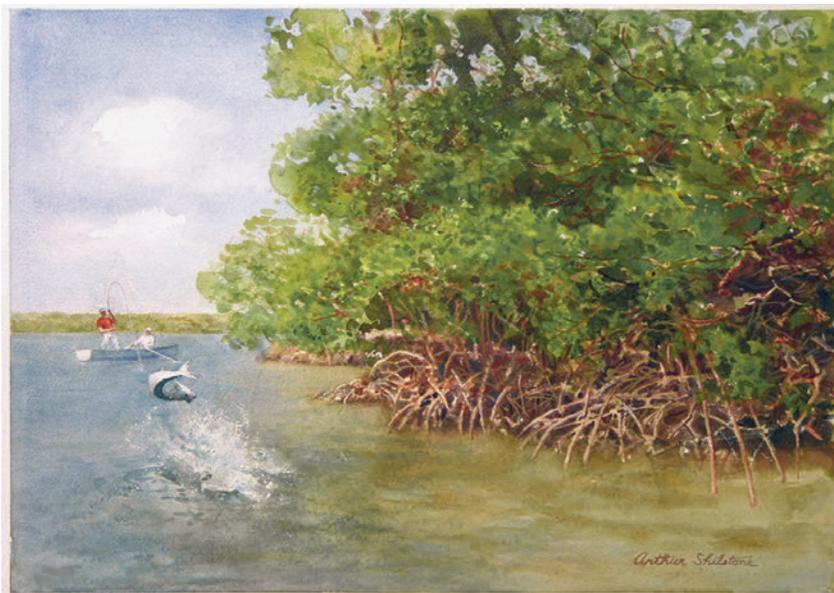
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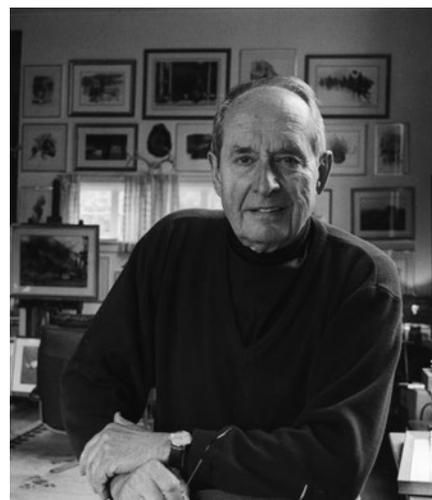
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Arthur Shilstone: From Secret Art to Sporting Landscapes



Strike Near the Mangroves, watercolor on paper (18" x 23").
From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.
Accession no. 2012.030.001. Image provided by Fred Polhemus.

Arthur Shilstone in his Connecticut studio. Image provided by Fred Polhemus.



ONLY A FEW American artists can truly identify the United States Army as the launching point of a successful career. Connecticut watercolorist Arthur Shilstone is one such artist.

Shilstone was born in 1922 and at a young age became an avid outdoorsman in New York State. Along with his family, he spent time hunting and fishing, and often sketched his surroundings. After high school, Shilstone enrolled at Pratt Institute (Brooklyn, New York) and spent a year as an art major, but in the advent of World War II, he was drafted by the U.S. Army.

Shilstone spent his service years as part of the 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion, a secretive section of the army stationed in Europe. As a member of this unit, Shilstone used his artistic skills and helped support the war effort by creating and staging fake battlefield scenes. This tactical technique was based on the success of a British unit that used visual and sound effects to deter the focus and attention of their opponent during, after, and before major battles. When documentary filmmaker Rick Beyer was researching this battalion, he interviewed Shilstone to learn about his work with the unit and these special army artists. *The Ghost Army* was released by PBS in early 2013, and the early artistic life of Shilstone was featured.

After World War II, Arthur Shilstone returned home to resume his art studies. He returned to the Pratt Institute, took some classes at the Brooklyn Museum Art School and the New School for Social Research, and completed his degree. He then began his career as an illustrator.

Many Americans became familiar with Shilstone's images during the ten years he worked as an illustrator for *Life* magazine. Throughout the years, he has been published in more than

thirty magazines, including *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Gourmet*. His work has been featured on the covers and inside numerous books, in advertisements, and in corporate collections. Shilstone has been commissioned by large corporations (such as AT&T, U.S. Steel, Exxon, and Western Electric) and U.S. government agencies (such as NASA, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Marine Corps) to help tell their histories through meticulously executed works of art.

After several decades as an illustrator, Shilstone began to focus his efforts on painting and has become one of today's premier sporting-art watercolorists. His early love and appreciation for hunting and fishing have continued throughout his life, and for the past twenty years, he has painted watercolors that celebrate these sports and their environments. Ed Gray, founding editor of *Gray's Sporting Journal*, hired Shilstone to create the works that illustrate his 1996 fly-fishing book, *Flashes in the River*. Shilstone has also been commissioned by anglers and hunters to document a moment or place in their lives, and his art is often featured in single-artist gallery exhibitions across the country.

A biography about Arthur Shilstone and his seventy-year career is planned for publication in mid-2014. At ninety-one, Shilstone is still following his passion: painting landscape sporting scenes. The American Museum of Fly Fishing—along with the National Air and Space Museum, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, and the National Museum of American Illustration—is fortunate to have a Shilstone work in its permanent collection.

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