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Christopher Clamp:

Christopher Clamp is Charlotte's newest secret revealed. Clamp paints quiet, moving tributes to remembered times and places and people. His vehicle for memory transport is a single object finely rendered in oil paint. Some of these objects hug the edges of my longest memories: fly paper peppered with dead flies, a toy tippy dipping bird from the 1950s, a honey jar with comb inside. Some of the objects could be found today -- milk in a soda shop glass, a Morton's salt box shaker, soap in a fluted dish. Each object sits on table edge and fronts a furtive and lush ground. The object is not the whole painting, but is what you see first.



Courtesy Jerald Melberg Gallery

MEMORY LANE: A sample of art from Christopher Clamp

The whole painting is an invitation into a shared or unshared memory. You can see the sticky flypaper, the color and consistency of motor oil, and remember your grandmothers kitchen, that dive restaurant at Nags Head, or the mechanics grubby office behind his garage.

Or perhaps you remember none of these things.

Like Rockwell, Clamp has the ability to evoke memories which were never there. Unlike Rockwell, Clamp has a talent, simultaneously comforting and disconcerting, for letting us own the memory by letting us construct the memory ourselves. Rockwell spells it out -- each frown and grimace and grin -- and we feel it vicarously; Clamp delivers us our own visited place through object and minimal tableau and open ground. His paintings allow enough room to let us in, to visit our own felt memories, either reconstructed or spun out of whole cloth.

Clamp's paintings are fine enough to convince us to stay a while, hold us there long enough to sell us our own sentiments.

Also unlike Rockwell, Clamp's paintings are actually available, through Jerald Melberg Gallery.

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– Scott Lucas