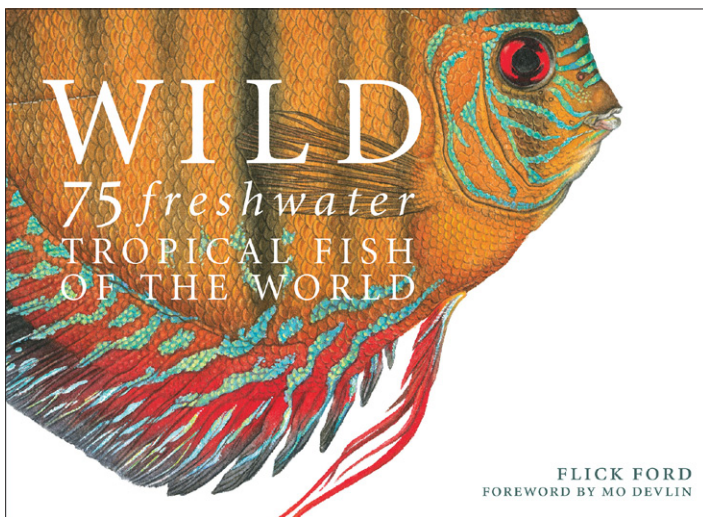




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The Art of Flick Ford



Tropical fish were one of my very first hobbies. I bought my first tank back in the late 1950's—not really a tank—a goldfish bowl, actually. But it was the start of a decades-long involvement in keeping and enjoying tropical fish. As I recall, there was only one very small fish store in my home town of College Point—run out of a guy's living room. He didn't really have much of a selection—just the usual generic Platy's, Guppies, and Sword-tails. So you had to make the trip into Flushing if you wanted to get some really interesting breeds. There was Aqua-Pet, on the corner of Northern Blvd. and Union Street, and there was the Gertz Dept. Store over on Roosevelt Avenue. And there were rare trips into Manhattan to the legendary Aquastock—the Mecca of Tropical and saltwater fish, and the largest store ever—I remember it taking up a whole city block. My involvement with the hobby reached its peak in the late '60's when I set up a very elaborate

(for its time) series of over a hundred half-gallon glass jars attached to a wall and fed by a home-made experimental pump and filtration system—all in the service of attempting to breed the mysterious and beautiful Siamese Fighting fish. My plan was to try and sell them to local pet stores and make some money. However, the counterculture of the late '60's “intervened” and I grew “distracted” (lol).

All of the youthful pursuits of my childhood also fell by the wayside as the decade came to a close.



All of this preambing brings me to the topic of my good friend and band-mate, Flick Ford, and his amazing new book of paintings:

Wild—75 freshwater Tropical Fish of the World. Ford's painting technique has to be seen to be believed: an attention to detail that borders on the microscopic and a verisimilitude that captures every single scale on the body of the fish in question, utilizing his own elaborate and painstaking method of washes, glazes, and under-painting.



Lest my description may suggest any hint of a boring or tedious academicism—let me assure you that this is not the case: these fish live! But this book is a lot more

than simply the paintings— he brings a vast and encyclopedic knowledge (and love) of all these aquatic species, as well as a keen awareness of our fragile environmental situation. And rest assured that all of this knowledge is succinctly laid out in this very well-designed and accessible book.

Enjoy this book!

~Brian Spaeth