



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

January 2016 Plein Talk Q&As with Signature Member of the Month: Charlie Hunter

What is your #1 tip or advice for the beginning plein air painter?

Get a good-quality sketchbook and carry it with you, along with a couple of pencils (I like very hard mechanical pencils, 4 to 6 H) and an Art Gum eraser. Try to draw 20 minutes a day, not worrying about creating a finished masterpiece; just trying to see accurately.

What are your never-leave-home-without it "must have" palette colors?

Because I paint in near-monochrome using a modified Tonalist technique, my palette is extraordinarily simple. I can be quite happy with just one tube of COBRA Raw Umber, but my ideal simple palette is Raw Umber, Transparent Oxide Red, Permanent Green Deep, Ultramarine Blue and, for contingencies, Unbleached Titanium. Of course, a few pure chromatic colors are wonderful for punching highlights.

Why do you choose to paint in the wild plein air rather than in the controlled environment of the studio?

I like being outside. A good painter makes the viewer think, "Yeah, that's what it looks like." A *great* painter makes the viewer think, "Yeah, that's what it *feels* like." I find it easier to connect with how something feels when I'm painting outdoors, from life. Plus painting outside is really hard to do well, and I like the challenge.

What was your most hair-raising extreme plein air painting experience?

Alone. In a small town in Northern New Mexico that had a bad reputation for outsiders after sundown. Shadows lengthening as I struggle with a painting. Across the other side of the deserted plaza, a battered, black SUV with dark-tinted windows appears and drives slowly toward me, glas-pack mufflers burbling threateningly. The vehicle pulls alongside and power windows roll down. Glittering with malice in a cloud of marijuana smoke, six sets of youth-gang eyes appraise me from behind dark glasses. Finally the leader leans out and says..... "Niiiiiiiice, man! Oil or acrylic?"

Dead or living, what artist(s) has had the most impact on your artistic journey?

Holey-moley! Richard Schmid, Dennis Sheehan, Eric Aho, William Bailey, Ted Rose, Franz Kline, Tom Thomson, Edward Hopper and Joseph Stella would be an initial 1/10,000th of the list....

Closing comments....

I can't believe how lucky we are to get to do this! Gratitude changes your attitude and I'm grateful as hell.