



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

Plein Talk Q&As with Carolyn Hesse-Low November 2016 Signature Artist Member of the Month

What is your #1 tip or advice for the beginning plein air painter? Always start your painting with a solid composition.

What are your never-leave-home-without it “must have” palette colors?
Ultramarine blue, Alizarin Crimson, Cadmium yellow, Titanium white

Why do you choose to paint in the wild plein air rather than in the controlled environment of the studio? A mix of both plein air and studio experience is best since each has its own benefits and each informs the other. With plein air work, however, you can simply see better and more clearly. You see how the light interacts with the forms, how planes articulate together, how objects are constructed. You see textures and colors as they exist in relation to the light. You can use elements from the surrounding area to place inside your scene. Most importantly, you connect in a more personal way with the scene you are painting. You study it as you paint it, so it becomes more known to you, more intimate. This helps you create the overall feeling you want to communicate with the painting, the feeling which will ultimately connect the painting with the viewer.

What was your most hair-raising extreme plein air painting experience?
Like everyone else, I've had my share of painting in the rain, the wind, a little snow, a lot of heat. I've kept company with plenty of fire ants and other assorted bugs. But most problematic for me has been contending with wildlife. It's surprising how many encounters you can have in places that are fairly close to civilization. I've been chased away by angry rattlesnakes, a cloud-like swarm of bees, packs of rummaging coyotes, stampeding deer, javelinas, bobcats, a mongoose, even river otters. The worst...a flock of menacing geese.

Living or not, which artist(s) have had the most impact on your artistic journey? Rembrandt van Rijn