



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

LPAPA Plein Talk Q&As with Michael Obermeyer April 2016 Signature Artist Member of the Month

What is your #1 tip or advice for the beginning plein air painter? Paint outdoors as much as you can. Paint small (6"x 8" or 8"x 10") studies everyday, if possible. Don't worry about completing the painting or trying to create a gallery piece - just learn to see and edit, and to work quickly. Try to capture the light and feel of your subject, and *your* emotional response to it - don't choose a subject just because you think it will be a pretty scene or painting.

What are your never-leave-home-without it "must have" palette colors? I use a limited palette of seven colors when I am painting outdoors - Ultramarine Blue, Alizarin Crimson, Cadmium Red Light, Cadmium Yellow Light, Thalo or Viridian Green, Burnt Sienna, and Titanium White. But if I had to narrow it way down, Ultramarine, Cad Red Light, and Cad Yellow Light (along with the White) have to be with me.

Why do you choose to paint in the wild plein air rather than in the controlled environment of the studio? I love being outside, in the wilderness, on the beach, anywhere under the sun, and I love the challenge of working quickly to capture a scene that is constantly changing. I also trust my color mixing outdoors, seeing true colors and values in everything that I paint. I can paint a larger piece in the studio from an outdoor study based on the colors from that study - colors that I would not see in a photograph.

What was your most hair-raising extreme plein air painting experience? I have had some memorable experiences in almost twenty years of plein air painting, none too extreme, but a couple come to mind. While painting in Carmel Valley, I noticed a rattlesnake passing behind my heels to cross the path - just the beginning of several more rattlesnakes crossing back and forth under my easel, seemingly oblivious to me. On another occasion, during the Carmel Art Festival, I banged my head on my open hatchback that almost knocked me out, opening a wound that would not stop bleeding. Because it was a competition, I held my paper towel roll against my bloody head to try to stop the bleeding and keep the blood out of my eyes and completed my painting. I painted one more piece after that with my face covered in dried blood and won an award for it!

Living or not, which artists have had the most impact on your artistic journey? Growing up, Neil Boyle, the wonderful illustrator/painter who was also a friend, had a big affect on me. I loved his drawing/painting ability and seeing his

works in progress in his studio. Also, Sebastian Capella, the Spanish painter who taught out of his studio in La Jolla, taught me everything about color and values, the great American illustrators (N.C. Wyeth, J.C. Leyendecker, Howard Chandler Christy), Hanson Puthoff, Sam Hyde Harris, and, for the last twenty years, the insightful and always truthful Ken Auster.

Closing comments...I have been drawing and painting since I was a child, blessed with a God-given talent that has given me a life of adventure, of traveling, of meeting wonderful people, of hopefully helping others through teaching and painting. Trying to re-create the beauty around me on canvas seems fruitless at times, but always exciting. I am always painting and drawing in my mind and, hopefully, learning and evolving as an artist. Painting can make you feel so high one day and bring you down and humble you the next...but if all goes wrong with a painting, nobody gets hurt, it's just an opportunity for improvement.