



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

LPAPA Plein Talk Q&As with Carole Gray-Weihman March 2017 Signature Artist of the Month

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

I have so many tips for beginning plein air painters, but I'd have to say that my #1 tip would have to be to leave your ego at the door and embrace the chaos, because what can go wrong, will go wrong. When painting outside, we are essentially flinging ourselves into an environment that throws us constant challenges with changing light, technical hurdles, equipment failures, criticizing spectators--plus we are at the mercy of the weather.

Before we can even begin to raise our personal comfort level and gain confidence with our outdoor painting abilities, we need to get out of our own way and just get outside and paint. Of course, we need to study, find mentors, draw as much as possible, etc. but in order for us to succeed at developing the skills it takes to be an accomplished outdoor painter, we first have to get out of our own heads and embrace the process with all of its hurdles.

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

Think American flag and yellow canary. Red, white, blue and yellow.

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

Painting outdoors is essential to me and is the basis of what I'm all about as a colorist trying to capture the light effect in nature. Even the best photographs can't capture what we are capable of seeing with our own eyes while out on location. But more than that, I enjoy truly experiencing a place in a kind of spiritual sense and I believe that energy and emotion shows up in my plein air work more so than my studio paintings. It's a wonderful challenge, though, to try to simulate that energy from the outdoors while in the studio.

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

Oh, there have been so many, but the funniest one? I was painting in the Carmel Valley during the Carmel Art Festival and it was the last day where I had to turn in all of my paintings, but I was trapped on the trail by a mother skunk stalking me while trying to protect her babies. There was only one way to go and she wouldn't let me pass. I thought it through for a few moments and decided I better

freeze in my tracks and not try to walk around her or I might end up delivering my paintings while reeking of skunk. So, I waited, completely motionless for a good 10 minutes until she left. I guess the story would have been funnier had I gotten skunked.

Living or not, which artists have had the most impact on your artistic journey?

The list is multitudinous.... It's almost easier to answer what artists HAVEN'T impacted me. I know I'll forget to list several, but let's start with living artists. Camille Przewodek was my first plein air teacher, so she impacted my work in a way that gave me my foundational roots. Joseph Mendez, Joannette and Cedric Egeli, John Ebersberger, Ray Roberts and Peggi Kroll Roberts I've spent a lot of time around and learning from. My good friend, Roos Schuring has inspired me in many ways. And others that have influenced me in a meaningful way: Bato Dugarzhapov, Daniel Volkhov, Pavel Shumov, Dan McCaw, Jan Vanderkooi, Len Chmiel, Mark Daniel Nelson, Quang Ho, Kevin McPherson, Yuri Konstantinov and William Wray. As for artists of our past, I'd have to say, Henry Hensche, Carl Oscar Borg, William Wendt, Robert Henri, Sergei Bongart, Anders Zorn, Edgar Payne, Arthur Mathews, Richard Diebenkorn, Hanson Puthoff, and Joaquin Sorolla. And these lists are in no way complete. The names change and evolve month to month, year to year. Twenty years ago, I would have supplied a long list of abstract expressionist painters that influenced and impacted me.

Closing comments....

I just want to thank LPAPA for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I feel truly honored and blessed to be a part of such a great organization.