



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

LPAPA Plein Talk with Cindy Wilbur October 2017 Artist Member of the Month

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

My advice to the beginning "Plein Air Painter" would be to NOT get discouraged! Painting outdoors has so many elements to deal with that are not present in the studio. Some of those elements are the changes in the weather and light, not to mention the bugs, critters and yes ...the people.

Some helpful tips for the weather might be to dress in layers, wear a hat and bring sunscreen. For the pesky critters bring bug spray or repellent, and don't forget to wear a smile for the people. For the changing light, I suggest getting your darks in first and any shadows present... the light will change sooner than you would like and the shadow will then be on the other side of your object! For your comfort and safety: bring some water and locate nearest restroom ahead of setting up, believe me on this one! And make sure your cell phone is charged, and on silent. It is a good idea to take some reference photos of your original scene and hopefully you will never need it for an emergency.

If you could only have 5 colors on your palette, what would they be?

(1) White, (2) Cad yellow light or medium, (3) Cad red med or light, (4) Ultramarine Blue and (5) might be viridian.

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

I love painting outdoors because not only can I really see the colors (especially in the shadows) but that is where all my senses come alive and become part of my painting; responding not just to sight but touch and sound as well. Another reason I love it, is the "Story" that unfolds around you as you spend several hours painting at one location. This all becomes part of the painting.

I love painting in my studio as well but usually ONLY after I have painted outdoors in the same location do I try to recreate it on a larger canvas. I have my plein air piece next to my easel along with a few reference photos. Looking at my outdoor piece I can't help but recall "The Story" of that day. I can hear the children's voices uncovering a treasure they found in the sand, music softly playing for a wedding nearby on the beach, or the waves crashing and friends laughing. All of these memories come alive again for me and it is my wish to

respond and convey those feelings onto the new studio piece.

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

One "Hair Raising" experience that comes to mind (I have many) was once when I was in a "Plein Air Competition". I had just finished my first painting for the event and was quite happy with it. In my excitement to get to the next location, I did not realize I had put my painting up on the roof of my car. I guess I wanted to get my gear in first as to not smash it, so I got my gear in and off I went!!!! I was just about to go under this long tunnel to my next spot when I noticed something fall off my roof. "OH NO", I remembered it was my painting! Getting back to that spot was not easy but when I did, I was relieved and happy to see it was still in one piece. However, in order to get right across from it I had to climb over a railing and be up on a raised ledge (no sidewalk). I held the railing with my arms outstretched behind me, looking at my painting and trying to figure how I could grab it. There was a blind corner so I could not see if cars were coming until right in front of me, so I knew I could not jump down. I thought if I had a huge pole or something? And just then, a big semi truck came along and smashed it to pieces. I guess it was better it than me! I later thought how I must have looked to people in the cars passing by me, a woman standing on ledge looking below as if I was a "Jumper"! I was kind of surprised no one called the cops.

Living or not, which artist(s) has had the most impact on your artistic journey?

I have so many living artists that I have been inspired by. I have been fortunate to have taken many classes and workshops, gone to many demos and lectures. I have subscribed to many different art magazines for many years and now with Facebook, with over a thousand artist friends, I see so many works each day that inspire me.

As far as the non-living artists, I can remember as a child looking at paintings and knowing then that I really loved the impressionists. They are my favorites still to this day. A few of my favorites are Sargent, Sorolla, Degas and Manet.

Any closing comments or advice you'd like to share?

I actually have 3 bits of advice and they all stem from my 3 favorite sayings, which are: (1) "Shoot for the moon and the worst that can happen would be to fall on a star" = FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS, (2) "The more you learn, the more you know, the more you know, the more you know you need to learn" = KEEP LEARNING, and (3) "Winners never quit and quitters never win" = NEVER GIVE UP.

So, follow your dream, keep leaning and never give up.