



## LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

### LPAPA Plein Talks Q&As with Paige Oden December 2017 Artist Member of the Month

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

Just realize this is an entirely new way of painting and accept the fact that you are basically all starting over again, even if you have been painting for many years. Plein Air painting is difficult but it gets easier the more you do it and you get bolder which makes your work more exciting. Also, find artists whose work you admire and study their paintings carefully. Identify what is it that you love about that artist's work? Color? Imagery? Paint application? Whatever it is, make that a focus as you paint onsite. See if you can explore that sensibility further in your own work. And when first starting out, don't rely too much on Ultramarine Blue as your only blue, that's what I did. 😊

***If you could only have 5 colors on your palette, what would they be?*** Cobalt Blue, Quinacridone Rose, Yellow Ochre, Cad Yellow, Transparent Orange, Portland Grey Lights Warm or Cool. I know that is 6 but I like to use the greys as my white.

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

Painting outside is the ultimate artistic challenge. You have very limited time to capture the natural light and the shadow shapes and the overall mood of the scene at that moment in time. Basically the odds are against you because I think most of us paint for pleasure and to have to paint fast and process everything so quickly, that just goes against the easy-going relaxed "zen" of painting. But the more you do it, you see your own success and you get addicted to the challenge and the "rush" of a successful plein air painting. It is a true feeling of accomplishment. I always tell my students- Anyone can make an attractive and accurate image if they have infinite time. You could grid it, draw it, then redraw it and redraw it until you get it just right. Then you could work on the color and applications as long as you want. But to capture a changing scene in 3 hours is a huge challenge and it is a constant exercise for your artistic sensibilities.

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

I was painting on the San Clemente trails, on a low cliff near the train tracks, away from anyone. I carried everything on my back and when I unpacked my easel I was missing the tripod handle that tightens the Easy--L box onto the tripod and keeps it level. So I had to constantly hold the easel box in place, level on the tripod as I

painted. The interesting thing was I was basically forced to paint with only one hand and I think that made my painting more concise and fresh. In the end I got distracted by my phone ringing in my pocket and as I tried to get to it while simultaneously balancing the easel box, my painting fell face down in the dirt and my phone fell out of my pocket and down the cliff (about 6 ft down). In the end everything was fine and my painting won an honorable mention in that plein air event. And when I walked back to my car I found the tripod handle laying in the street next to my car.

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

I am so grateful for all of the teachers I have had and all of my painter friends who have also inspired me along the way. But these artists are my heroes- Dick Oden, my amazing dad who passed away over 20 years ago. John Lincoln, Ken Auster, a very dear friend. John Singer Sargent, Joaquin Sorolla, Kim English, Malcomb Liepke, Mark Kerckhoff, Randy Sexton and Nathan Olivera.

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

My advice is to just paint because you love to paint and because it balances out your life. And always strive to get better and be that life-long learner. Also find your favorite artists and look at their paintings as often as you can. With the Internet at our fingertips we can learn anywhere.