



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

LPAPA Plein Talk Q&As with Lisa Mozzini-McDill February 2018 Signature Member of the Month

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

Don't get discouraged! Nobody starts out a master of any trade. Get a small sketchbook to carry with you and practice drawing during times when you can't paint. Draw a tree while waiting to pick up your kids, a plane while at the airport, people on a bus anything from life around you. Practice as much as you can.

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

Cad yellow, burnt sienna, alizarin crimson, ultramarine blue and titanium white. Those colors would give me two warm (cad yellow, burnt sienna) and two cool (ultramarine blue, alizarin crimson). Alizarin crimson is a cool red compared to cad red light which was the red I also considered. I usually have a cool and a warm version of my colors. I picked Alizarin because it mixes so well with ultramarine blue and white to make a nice purple. Cad red would make a duller purple, which I could easily get by adding a little burnt sienna.

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

I actually do both. However, my studio painting would not be what I'd like without painting en plein air. Painting outside involves all your senses and that really comes through in the paint. I love the immediacy of painting outside. It keeps me from getting hung up on too much detail and forces me to paint more the essential quality that drew me to the scene. A photograph is not the same, everything is given the same focus and detail unlike how a person sees. All the shadows are dead dark areas. If you are outside you can see all kinds of subtle colors in those shadows. I wanted to paint en plein air because I enjoyed life drawing so much in college. I noticed I get out of own way more when I have to work quickly from life.

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

No exciting encounters for me with wild life! Oh, I take that back. One time I was painting on the San Clemente pier at dusk with Rita Pacheco when a surfer approached me. He took me completely off guard when he came up and kissed me on the cheek then walked away with the stench of alcohol lingering behind him!

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

There are so many! The old masters, Millet, Turner, Sorolla,

Sargent, Edgar Payne, William Wendt and so many more. Current artist, Kevin Macpherson's book was a big help when I started plein air painting. I learned so much in workshops with Elizabeth Tolley and Ken Auster.

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

Values, values, values. Paint shapes not things. Divorce yourself from what you think a tree or an eye is supposed to look like and just see shapes. How light or dark is it? You are not painting things but how light falls on surfaces. This is how to make a 2d surface look like a window into your world.