



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

LPAPA Plein Talk Q&As with Frank Eber February 2018 Artist Member of the Month

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

Instead of working big outside, do small post-card sized paintings. You are faced with the same problem solving but you can easily do 4 or more in a few hours. It's a better learning experience, you are less invested mentally in a small piece therefore you paint more freely! It's also better to come home with more than just one. Once you've gained painting confidence you can go bigger.

If you could only have 5 colors on your palette, what would they be? Ultramarine blue, cad red or carmine, yellow ochre, neutral tint (black) and white. Everything in nature is just primary colors.

Why do you choose to paint in the wild plein air rather than in the controlled environment of the studio? I actually do at least as much studio painting as I go outside. Painting from nature has the advantage of seeing colors and values better with our eyes than what a camera can capture. It also forces me to make quick decisions and hopefully makes me a better painter. Painting in the studio often leads to more thought out and elegant paintings. It's all about learning, trying to be a better artist. It never stops. That's all I am interested in.

What was your most hair-raising extreme plein air painting experience? Hair-raising experiences I really haven't had, more hackle-raising! Passersby who asked me things like 'do you think I can park here?' or 'do you know where such and such pub or restaurant is?' Or the one who likes to give you painting tips: "Aren't you gonna paint that pole there in your painting?" One time I painted cows in a meadow in France, when they decided to come over and check me out bringing with them an army of flies and a very pungent smell. They landed on my palette, in my face and on my painting. It was so bad I actually had to pack it in!

Living or not, which artist(s) has had the most impact on your artistic journey? I am mostly influenced by oil painters even though I am primarily known for watercolor. I adore Abbott Henderson Thayer and Anders Zorn. Love Andrew Wyeth. They are more than landscape painters, also did figurative work. Living artists, I admire Richard Schmid, Daniel Gerhartz, Scott

Christensen. There are many artists out there but few really stand out, in my opinion.

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

If you're serious about your art don't just paint in watercolor. It is mostly ignored in the western art world and painting in watercolor presents a constant uphill battle for recognition. However, the best artists in history (in my opinion) are the ones who have mastered both mediums.

Finally, don't ask your family or spouse for critiques and above all, stay humble!!

<https://papa.org/plein-talk-frank-eber/>

