



## LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

### LPAPA Plein Talk Q&As with Zufar Bikbov July 2019 Artist Member of the Month

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

I would like to talk about taking the right steps and setting the right goals. Skill comes after plenty of practice, after dozens, hundreds of studies. Work first on smaller and simpler ones. I like painting 5"x7". Work takes 1-1.5 hrs.

Once you see a view you feel worth to take home on canvas, stop for a moment. Think, what moves you in this view? Pick 3-4 objects/shapes as a combination. What will your focal point be? Then, I suggest you divide your work into two steps. Start with drawing. Remember, drawing is one of the essential skills. Want to be good outdoors artist? Then draw outdoor, in addition to drawing at home, in studio. Draw often. Have couple of soft pencils and handy sketch/drawing pad with you always. I suggest size near 6"x10". This is your image lab. On paper you can think and try shapes, composition, don't forget about shading - define values. Good time is 5-10 minutes. Once you finished with sketching that view with picked objects, define borders of your possible painting. Squint looking at your sketch and try to see your future painting behind this sketch.

Does the view still attract you and the sketch looks good? If NO, you can do another sketch, or conclude that this view is not what you want to paint. If YES, then pull out canvas panel, brushes and palette. Time for step 2, time to focus on colors and values. Working on study, remember, that colors and values are essential. It can be just block-in, but remember that colors, values and their balance need to be as close as possible to the real view you see out there. That is your main goal of outdoor painting process.

I teach a four-step approach working on larger paintings, but for beginners, these two steps are essential to get comfortable painting in outdoor environment, and growing skills.

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

Titanium White, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red Medium, Ultramarine Blue, Transparent Oxide (Red or Brown).

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

I am a landscape artist, so real scenery is a primary source of what I try to deliver. I paint the way I, as a human, feel it with all of my senses, not only with my eyes. I paint what one can experience being there. And people, who appreciate my art, want the same, human EXPERIENCE, not a camera's "feelings".

Being a painter, realist painter, means that on top of good composition I need to find and masterfully present the full range of colors and values I see being there. For instance, what does a camera show me when I take a picture of granite rock? 2-3 colors, 2-3 values. When I am en plein air, I see a dozens of color variants, which together make you feel granite, heavy and real. I

cannot retrieve this all from a photograph. En plein air painting also gives best idea how to handle texture of painted objects.

I am not against painting in studio. But painting landscape from photograph in studio is a compromise. And yes, painting/drawing in studio could be done for reason of learning, or working on idea. I just think that a Landscape Painter can grow into an Artist of higher level, if one learns a lot from direct landscape experience.

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

Actually I have no situations where I came close to big trouble painting outdoors. But I've had some strong positive impressions. During Plein Air Easton 2013, it was little over 100F outdoors, Thursday, last day of painting before artworks should be turned-in for competition exhibit. Exhausted, working on my last piece, I was painting at the corner of one of the downtown streets. During those 3.5 hours, I had been asked multiple times by local business folks if I wanted water. A lady passing by asked me if I had my lunch. I said that I had not had a chance yet. 10 minutes later she came back with lunch for me, saying that she was happy that the artists are here and such a great painting event is happening in their town every year. This experience was very touching.

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

Isaak Levitan, Vasily Polenov, Ilya Repin, Joaquin Sorolla, Willard Metcalf. Of course this list is not full.

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

Learning to paint is life long journey. It is like a never-ending evolution, driven by your curiosity and love of the world around you. I like what someone said, that working with professionalism without love is just a job, working with love without professionalism is a hobby, working with love and professionalism is ART. I wish we all work with love and professionalism. Both need to be carefully nourished and grown. Choosing right path and persistence can bring you desired fruits sooner. Find a good artist mentor that can teach well. Set clear goals together. Evaluate your progress. When you sell or give your artworks, make sure to take and keep photographs of your works. This can help you see your growth. Enjoy your journey.