



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

LPAPA Plein Talk Q&As with Jacquelyn Blue February 2020 Artist Member of the Month

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

If you're a real beginner, it's a great idea to join a local art association and take some drawing classes offered through the Department of Parks or a local college. Start off with no stress and just have fun. Try to remember what it was like to do art as a kid. After you develop some skills, take a workshop with one of your favorite artists who works in your medium.

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

When I'm working en plein air, I love to work in pastels and have 100 delicious colors in my palette for immediate gratification. When I work in oil I use titanium white (of course), cadmium yellow, ultramarine blue, alizarin crimson, and a cad red.

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

For me, painting plein air is simply an excellent reason to be outside in a beautiful setting (my favorite choice for my entire life). There is really no question that it's mandatory for learning to paint landscapes and seascapes. I have hundreds of failed paintings, but I loved painting each and every one because I was outdoors and every now and then I paint an absolute winner and I'm ecstatic for weeks! Seriously, a better high than drugs or alcohol.

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

If there was a contest for a hair raising plein air experiences, I would win. I had my painting rig set up in the shade of an enormous oak tree in Cheesebro National Park along with several other artists. As I gazed up at the sloped hillside in front of me, a full grown mountain lion leaped from the tree and loped casually up that same hill, fortunately in the opposite direction. Whew! Our chatter was probably annoying his/her afternoon nap.

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

There is no doubt that Richard McKinley (who has won every award known in the pastel world), my mentor and friend, has had the most impact on my artistic journey. I have been studying with him for 10+ years in an advanced annual workshop in Santa Barbara and his poetic landscapes continue to inspire me. He is a wealth of knowledge in art history, technique, art supplies, etc. AND he's irreverent and very funny. He has always given me permission to search for my artistic expression and encouraged me to continue to be a mad scientist working in all kinds of medium, including watercolor, pastel, oil and more recently oil and cold wax.

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

I encourage all artists to be true to themselves, be brave and practice. Don't accept criticism or even praise from anyone unless you completely trust their ability to fairly critique your work and then, listen carefully. Don't be discouraged by rejection of any kind. Keep on plugging away and it will pay off BIG. Remember it's a journey...enjoy the journey....you'll never be finished.