



LAGUNA PLEIN AIR PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

LPAPA Plein Talk Interview with Jill Banks May 2021 Artist Member of the Month

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

There's a 100% chance that your painting will look like crap so instead of worrying about that, laugh, think how lucky you are to be standing in whatever special spot you're occupying and pat yourself on the back for starting this journey.

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

French Ultramarine blue, quinacridone red, viridian, cadmium yellow pale, cadmium red light plus Titanium Zinc white. (I always have a LOT more colors on my palette.)

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

Because all the cool things in life don't come to visit me in my studio. I simply thrive in the company of others, the challenge of change and movement, and the thrill that who I'm painting can stop by my easel for a visit.

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

Since I stay out of the woods, there aren't (fortunately) any creepy crawly creature stories. Phew! My most memorable experience was while painting on the market street of Rue Mouffetard in Paris. While you can read the expanded version of the story in Outdoorpainter.com about my Paris Plein Air Adventure (<https://www.outdoorpainter.com/paris-plein-air-adventure/>), the condensed excerpt is that one of my frequent easel visitors that day became increasingly unhappy, thanks to a growing blood alcohol level, with one of my two paintings – so much so that he dipped his pinky in the huge mound of cobalt blue on the palette and probably planned on showing me how to fix things. Past time to pack up?

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

Isn't it great that we have access to so many great painters to inspire us? My favorite artist is Joaquin Sorolla – love his soul that seeped through on each canvas. Rembrandt inspired me through his drawings – in which he captured a fleeting moment and expression without the use of photography. Made me think I could do something like that if I tried hard enough. My two main mentors at the beginning of my journey have certainly impacted it – Danni Dawson – who

pointed me down my colorist path and Robert Liberace – who ignited my passion for all things art.

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

Try not to fret over finding the perfect spot or view. The places I paint look dull while setting up my easel and for the first hour or two of painting (I'm not as speedy as some of my peers) but that gives me time to lay down the foundation so when the "good stuff" happens, there's a place for it to go. A subject wanders in to just the right spot and the light glimmers. You'll miss your chance to witness that magic if you keep wandering or driving around. Trust that it's happening everywhere ... and gradually hone in on where you're most likely to find the stuff that speaks to your individual soul.