



LPAPA Plein Talk Interview with Ryan Jensen September 2021 Signature Artist Member of the Month

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

Number 1 tip... “ Hold the brush like a wand, not a pencil. Brushes are designed with a weighted tip like a bat for a reason. So swing them and be ok with missing now and then. You’ll get more at bats”.

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

5 colors... “Alizarin Crimson, ultramarine Blue, cad Yellow, cad orange, titanium white.

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

Direct observation of the subtle color harmonies, and taste of the breeze all come into play. I must be present with what I paint or at least have spent time with it in person to have a feel for what’s in front of me. To paint from a photo will yield a painting of a photo most of the time. To paint from life is the best way to connect to my subject.

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

One day years ago I was painting and a man approached me and was thrilled to see me there painting. Things got strange after about twenty minutes and he wouldn’t stop about his life story. I eventually worked up the nerve to ask him if I could go back to painting as I need my full concentration etc. He didn’t like that one bit and told me that he wouldn’t be leaving and he was going to stand there and talk to me all day until I finished my piece. Then he might follow me home, and talk with me more there too. After all air is free, he explained. I then picked him up and transported him to a new location a quarter mile down the bike path. Then went back to painting

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

My friend Jim McVicker has always been someone I can call when I need advice and a third eye. Painting can be extremely difficult at times and in many ways he’s served as a great mentor for me. I highly admire his work and his work ethic. He’s a great painter and an even better human being. Of course that’s saying a lot if you’ve ever seen his work.

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

Push through the struggle of the bad paintings. They will come. I know I’m getting better and growing as an artist when I can laugh at what I’ve done when it doesn’t go well. This is easier said than done. When you get stuck, remember to just listen to the music, find the rhythm and smile while you dance. Above all, don’t give up and go home.