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Santa Barbara Plein Air Workshop www.welsey.com
April 25, 26 & 27, 2015

- Portable easel I like the Soltec easel and also the full Julian, both available online. One of the reasons I like these easels is because they have a large “drawer-desk” upon which to place my 12 x 16 or 9 x 12 palette while I work.
- Canvases—Bring three supports that are 11 x 14 or so for a warm up exercise. If you are working in acrylic, this could be canvas, canvas board or gessoed watercolor paper for quick studies each day. Also bring one or two larger canvases (12 x 16, 16 x 20, or bigger) for each day. I like 16 x 20 for some scenes, and for the botanical gardens I work bigger, such as 20 x 24 and 24 x 30 Winsor Newton stretched canvas or linen. If traveling, consider canvas boards which pack together efficiently.
- Palette: For plein air, I prefer the largest Masterson sta-wet palette (12 1/2” x 16 1/2”), Masterson palette paper and matching sponge especially for outdoors. If you don’t like the sponge idea, you can still use the Masterson palette with lid, and instead insert a pad of oil painters’ palette paper the exact size of the 12 x 16 palette. If you are traveling light, consider the Atelier Airtight, peel-off-paint palette. It is compact, easy to open and easy to hold in my hand while I paint. It has a 5” x 9” mixing area so I use the palette’s lid as another place to mix my colors. I love the Winsor Newton acrylics, which are creamy and full of pigment. Be sure to have a spray bottle and some retarder. And, if possible, paint in the shade.
- Brushes: 3 - 4 “brights” (long-handled with short squared off stiff bristles) size about 1” across, 3/4”, 1/2”, 1/4”. I would use the 3 larger sizes above if I were painting 16 x 20 canvas. If you choose bigger canvases, get the bigger brushes. If you chose 16 x 20 canvases or smaller you could use the smaller 3 brushes above. Buy good brushes if you can afford it (not student grade). My favorite brushes this year (2014) is from Jerry’s Artarama “Silver Bristlon.” I purchased four brights #12, 8, 6 and 4. I wanted five or six of these, but some were out of stock, so this is what I ended up getting.

I also like Isabey 6562 Isacryl brushes for acrylic paint. I get most of my supplies at the local art store, especially brushes if they stock my brand, because I like the touch-feel-hold-in-my-hand idea before buying.

- Sketchpad—9 x 12 or whatever size you like & pencil for notes, value studies, thumbnails and journaling
- Cotton rag for acrylic, (like an old white t-shirt). I have discovered very absorbent cotton rags at Santa Barbara harbor marine shop.
- Old shirt or apron
- Water bucket—large yogurt container works
- Small spray bottle for water. I never spray my painting with water, just the paint on the palette.
- Golden retarder (slow dry medium) in squeeze bottle to slow down the fast drying acrylic paints especially for plein air.
- Paints: I like Winsor Newton Artists’ acrylic (a professional grade) best for acrylic painting. I use two-ounce high-viscosity tubes of Winsor Newton Artists’ Acrylic or Golden for certain colors. Winsor Newton is my favorite. It is thick, buttery, and their pigments dry as you see them wet. They don’t dry flat like some acrylic paints.

Acrylic Paints – I like Winsor Newton (WN) best for its pigments and viscosity and slow drying.

WN Titanium white
WN Lemon Yellow
WN Yellow Ochre or Yellow Iron Oxide
WN Azo Yellow Deep Golden Cad Yellow dark
WN Cad Red Medium or Golden Naphthol Red medium
WN Permanent Alizarin Crimson or WN Permanent Rose
WN Ultramarine Blue
WN Cobalt or Cerulean Blue
Golden Prussian Blue or WN Indanthrene Blue
Golden Green Gold

A few more colors will be useful if you can splurge: Golden Quinacridone Magenta (a great pink for the flowers) Winsor Newton Light Red (adobe color) and Golden Dioxazine Purple (or WN ultramarine purple). I will probably use all of these colors.

Oil Paints – I suggest a basic palette of seven colors. Colors below are Winsor Newton unless otherwise specified.

Titanium White— large tube
Gamlin Cadmium Yellow Light or Winsor Cadmium Lemon
Cadmium Yellow Deep
French Ultramarine
Cobalt Blue or Cerulean Blue
Alizarin Crimson
Gamlin Cadmium Red Light

Walnut Oil –not the cooking type. I like this medium especially when painting indoors.

Optional colors to add are same as above in acrylic list. If you can bring a few more colors, a purple, green-gold, sienna and a rose or magenta will be useful.