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international artist

INSIDE THE STUDIOS OF THE
WORLD'S BEST ARTISTS

PAINTING THE WILD

Fur, feathers and scales

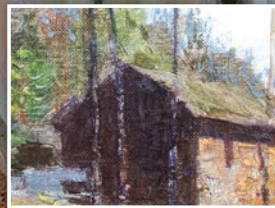
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PLUS EXPLORING ART MATERIALS with Zufar Bikbov





Lori Putnam

Indoors & Outdoors

Lori Putnam's artwork is informed by her experiences painting both in plein air and within her studio

Continued growth comes from both accurate observation and creative experiment. There is a great deal of learning from painting outdoors that informs my studio work, but the reverse is also true. For me, painting in plein air is not simply a one-

directional path leading to a larger studio painting of the same scene. As a painter of a wide range of subjects, I find that what nature shows me in the field can serve as prompts, often feeding more creativity indoors. The controlled environment of a studio

frees me to take on different challenges, experiment with materials, be spontaneous or make a concrete plan, push boundaries and explore totally new ideas. Often Mother Nature's database in my brain spills out in the most surprising of ways. When I return





Color at Cut Bank, oil on linen panel (plein air), 9 x 12" (22 x 30 cm). Private collection.



Safe Harbor, oil on linen panel, 30 x 40" (76 x 101 cm). Private collection.

to the challenges of plein air, tiny lessons from the studio come to my aid, completing the circle of knowledge.

Take a look at the true value structure of a European street scene in *Pause après-midi à Avignon*, all in shadow but bathed in warm reflected light as it bounces off stone walls and walkways. Apply that same idea to a high-key still life painting, oranges, lemons, glass and peonies, mostly in shadow, against a pale-colored cloth and illuminated by a cool light. Next, vision how chaotic tree trunks and limbs seem as you paint aspens, in backlight, surrounded by golden leaves and a deep blue sky. What can that teach me about painting a group of figures in a similar setting?

The painting *Color at Cut Bank* was painted on location in Glacier National Park. Pale

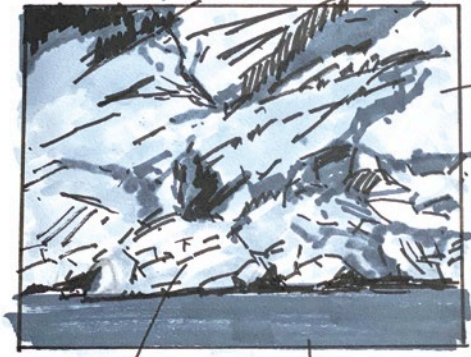


grasses, yellows, yellow greens, and blue greens are generally associated with this type of scene in early fall. There is so much to learn here, and this particular painting is the great ancestor of numerous descendants including the demonstration piece, *Peaceful Passage*. In the case of *Peaceful Passage*, other elements from the plein air painting were also beneficial, such as the shapes and use of line in the hillside and the values used for the shadows.

With *Abstracted Harbor*, I knew from the very beginning that I only wanted to suggest the busyness of the boats rather than to draw one or two specific boats. I decided to stick to an analogous color scheme, all no more than 20 percent color saturation, and all tones above a middle value. The only piece of information truly gleaned from the scene was a quick glimpse of reflected color that I spotted on one of the boat hulls. It became the cornerstone on which all other colors would be built. Without previous, controlled, exploration in the studio, I never would have thought to try this.

I have a horrible photo from a trip to Charleston in 2013. I do not really know why I took it, except to say that I knew instinctively that there was something there. One day for no apparent reason, an idea came to me. Why not marry that photo with the plein air experiment? I no longer had the small painting in my possession, only an image and memory of when I painted it. It took hours to locate the bad snap I had taken in Charleston. In the end, I chose to bring the values even closer and slightly darker and tighten the spans of analogous colors to suggest even later in the day. *Safe Harbor*, a studio piece from 2020, was the result of that union.

My Art in the Making Peaceful Passage



Grass and rocks
in light value 3 or 4

June 17, 2017
Waterton Lakes
A.M.

light, warm
rock face

Darken overall
water - few waves



REFERENCE PHOTO

Notice the soft light in the resource photo. That is the feeling I wanted to capture. I will refer to this for inspiration but not be bound to it.

STAGE 1

This is a thumbnail sketch made on location with notes written in the margin. These will help me to put my brain back in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada. This is the key to keeping studio paintings fresh.



STAGE 2

I do not always start paintings in the same way. The painting drives the process. Here I chose to lay in a roadmap using thin paint and only the thumbnail sketch as my guide.

WHAT THE ARTIST USED

Gamblin Artist Oils

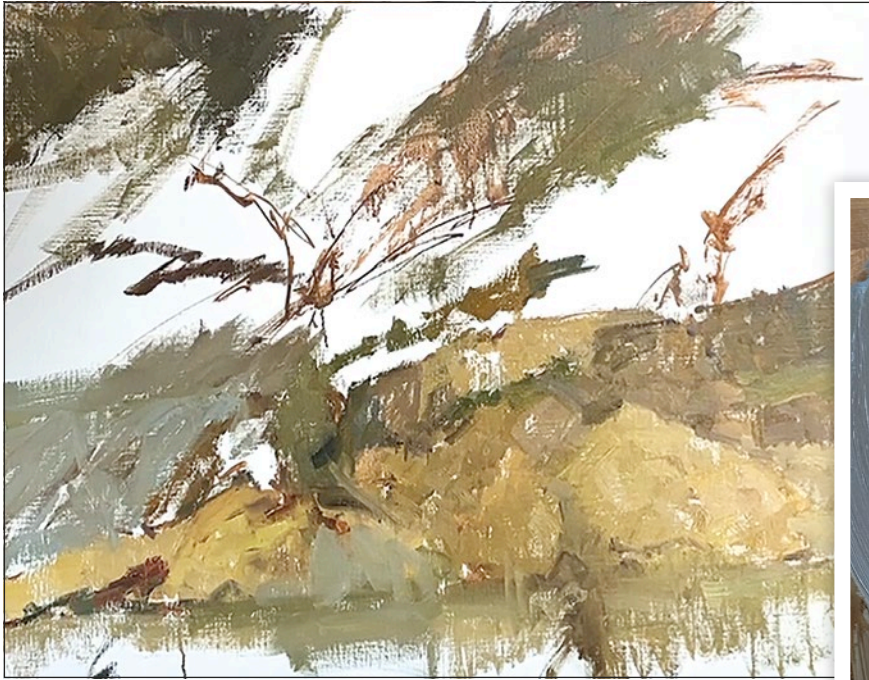
- » Cadmium Yellow Light
- » Cadmium Yellow Medium
- » Indian Yellow
- » Cadmium Orange Light
- » Brown Pink, Asphaltum
- » *Naphthol Red
- » Dioxazine Purple
- » *Ultramarine Blue
- » Payne's Grey
- » Radiant Turquoise
- » Phthalo Green
- » Permanent Green Light
- » Cadmium Green
- » *Titanium White
- » *Denotes primary palette Lori uses for plein air.

Brushes

- » Lori Putnam Brush Sets (Rosemary & Co Brushes):
- » Ivory and Evergreens Long Flats
- » Extra-Long Flats
- » Egberts in various sizes

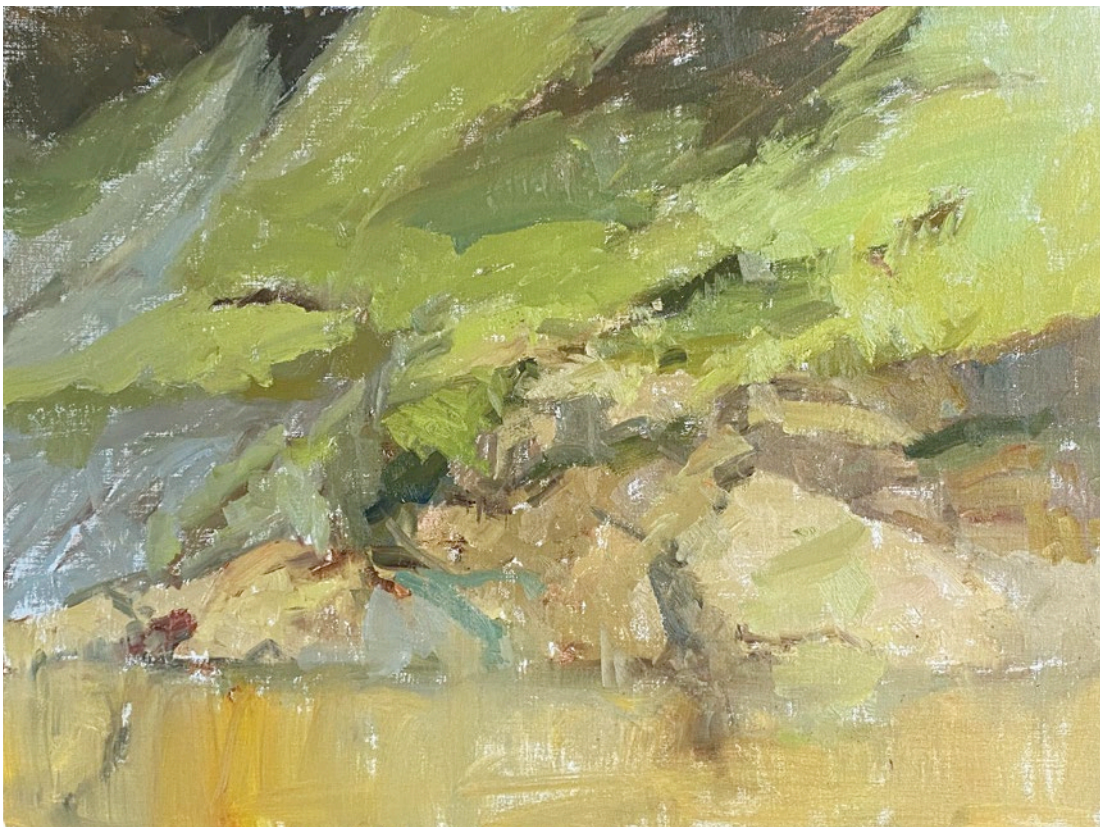
Materials

- » Wind River Arts, 30 x 40", #15 Claessens double-oil primed linen mounted on 1/2" Gatorfoam
- » Gamblin Gamsol mineral spirits
- » Screen printing brayer and squeegee
- » Soft paper towels



STAGE 3

In the studio I have the luxury of massing in the shapes with various hues, something I rarely do outdoors. Bending from one puddle of paint insures I stay in the proper value and saturation range. Using large extra-long flats, I make directional marks as if I'm carving the hillside out of clay.



STAGE 4

Once the entire canvas is painted in large value shapes, I often soften a few edges or scrape back paint that may be too thick to paint subsequent layers. If using a photo, I put it away and paint from my heart.



STAGE 5

I used a brayer to soften edges and displace paint on random parts of the painting. It has been pulled downward from the waterline, making it look quite transparent. Lightly pulling across a soft paper is used for the same purpose producing a slightly different effect.



STAGE 6

I am finally ready to add medium and small shapes using Egberts and extra-long flats of different sizes. The longer brush shape means I can super load them with a lot of paint. Some of the thinner under passages are left as they are, some get thicker paint and some marks are quite impasto.





STAGE 7

Final decisions regarding edges, value and transitions are made slowly and from a distance. The painting appears tightly rendered when I step back but should retain its abstracted quality up close.



STAGE 8 COMPLETED STUDIO PAINTING

Peaceful Passage, oil
on linen panel, 30 x
40" (76 x 101 cm)



Abstracted Harbor, oil on linen panel (plein air), 11 x 14" (27 x 35 cm). Private collection.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lori Putnam began painting professionally in her mid-30s while still learning from the nation's top artists. In 2008 to 2009, she and her husband sold their home and moved to Italy for the purpose of her uninterrupted concentration and self-teaching. Putnam's paintings have received awards from notable organizations including the Salmagundi Club NYC, Oil Painters of America, American Impressionist Society, California Art Club, the Portrait Society of America and from plein air events across the United States and

Europe. More than a dozen museums have recognized her work through awards, exhibitions, or acquisition. Putnam loves to travel, painting and teaching across the globe. Serving as vice president of Art Ambassador for a Colorful World, she also works with children in less advantaged areas of the world, bringing them joy in the midst of the most horrific of circumstances.

Contact at

www.loriputnam.com | www.loriputnam.online

