En Plein Air at Mono Lake
Beginning Oil Painting

June 26–28, 2020 ● Penny Otwell

$192 per person / $177 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 12 participants

Painting outdoors allows a meaningful connection with a landscape, and oil paint has delightful juicy properties and a covering quality that allows students to portray their own unique feelings in their work. This field seminar is designed to be an introduction to the sometimes-intimidating subject of oil painting for students who may or may not have experience painting but who want to learn oil painting outdoors. The class will be both fun and instructive.

Oil paint can be manipulated into forms, depth, and varying textures. Subtle desert colors or bold color and design can result in your own unique visual language. With demonstrations, individual instruction, group discussions, and plenty of humor, the group will discover the tools, techniques,
and some of the challenges of the outdoor oil painter. Learn to transfer the feeling of where you are into what you want to say.

The group size is limited to offer individual attention. Students should have enough stamina to work outdoors in sun and wind most of the day. There will be some easy walking to locations. Essential gear is listed below.

Instructor Penny Otwell has painted in oil in the Sierra Nevada for over 20 years. She will share her thoughts on choosing a painting location, the design of a painting, color mixing, different kinds of brushwork, and using a palette knife. She will help students choose a subject within the expansive 360-degree view of the Mono Basin’s beauty. Penny’s work has been influenced by the work of Chiura Obata, Maynard Dixon, Edgar Payne, and Wayne Thiebaud. She is best known for her Yosemite work; however, she particularly loves painting the Eastern Sierra. Her distinctive style has evolved as a self-taught painter. You can see her work at pennyotwell.com.

**ITINERARY**

**Friday, June 26, 3:30pm:** Meet at the Lee Vining Community Center (296 Mattly Avenue). Bring your painting gear (see “art supply list” and “paint supply list” below). After class introductions Penny will do a painting demonstration and the group will paint using exercises to experience brushwork, mixing color, and understanding “value.”

**We will break for dinner at 5:30pm and re-group at 7:00pm at the Community Center.** Penny will present some samples of her work and inspire an introductory discussion about painting outdoors. We will talk about our goals for the class and what you expect to learn—bring questions and ideas to this meeting!

**Saturday, June 27, 9:00am:** We will meet again at the Lee Vining Community Center. Penny will do a short demonstration and focus on several basic composition and design concepts. The group will paint outdoors while Penny works with each student individually until we break for lunch at noon. The group will reconvene at 3:30pm at the Community Center to work with the beautiful evening light. We will work until 7:00pm or later—when the light is best over Mono Lake—as long as people wish as the light fades. If you want to paint longer, bring a bag dinner.

**Sunday, June 28, 9:00am:** Meet at Lee Vining Community Center once again and then we will carpool to an outdoor painting location determined the previous day. We will work until 2:00pm, then do a final group discussion and wrap-up. The seminar will end at about 3:00pm so that students can start the drive home. Bring a bag lunch and plenty of water.

*The itinerary may change due to weather or other conditions.*

**Altitude and Dehydration Caution:** Although this seminar does not require strenuous hiking, participants should be in reasonably good physical shape. Standing, concentrating, and the sun will all tire you out! Remember to bring (and drink) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. The sun is rather fierce at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat. Rain will bring us indoors so we can continue painting.
LODGING
The town of Lee Vining has several motels, all of which can be booked full well in advance. Please make your lodging reservations as soon as you register for this class; otherwise, you may not be able to reserve a room in town. For Lee Vining motels, visit leevining.com. Other accommodations are located in the town of June Lake, approximately 15 miles south of Lee Vining. Campsites may also available in nearby campgrounds.

MEALS
On Friday night we will break for dinner—students can either bring a bag dinner or visit one of the several restaurants and coffee shops in Lee Vining. Please bring a bag dinner to eat at the Lee Vining Community Center on Saturday night, and a lunch to eat in the field on Sunday. Make sure you have plenty of water and snacks each day.

OUTDOOR SUPPLIES
__ notebook and pen/pencil for sketching and notes during class
__ camera or phone camera
__ appropriate layered clothing: warm layers, rain jacket, etc.
__ hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent
__ snacks and drinking water
__ chair if you want to sit while painting

ART SUPPLY LIST
• portable easel (French easel, half easel, pochade box, or something appropriate for outdoor use—borrow one if you can)
• a jar with a leak-proof lid (nothing fancy) for Gamsol or a “brush washer”
• an extra jar of same size (like a peanut butter jar with lid)
• an assortment of 6 brushes: flats and/or filberts in sizes approx. #4, #6, #8 in either natural or synthetic bristle.
  o bring sizes of varying widths of ¼", ⅛", and ⅛" (most important is to have variety!)
  o Note: Penny recommends Trekell Professional Art Supplies brand for good quality brushes at reasonable pricing: trekell.com
• hard panels or stretched canvas sized from 8x6" to 16x20" (about 6–8 total)
  o Think about how you will transport wet paintings in your car. Bring shallow boxes, newspapers to lay wet paintings on, or consider purchasing panel carriers (raymar.com). Penny likes working on panels outdoors because they are lightweight.
• small palette knife for mixing and painting
• portable palette (12x16") with a lid to keep paint from drying out. Penny uses a Masterson brand box with lid, which is available at jerrysartarama.com.
• 16-oz Gamsol odorless mineral spirits or Turpenoid for cleaning brushes (absolutely no turpentine)
• paper towels and small trash bags for each day
• small pocket mirror
• tool box, or something to carry paint tubes and brushes (Penny’s is from Ace Hardware)
• brush soap
PAINT SUPPLY LIST

Paint tips:
- **buy good paints**
  - Good brands/sources are Gamblin or Utrecht, from suppliers like Dick Blick (dickblick.com) or Jerry’s Artarama (jerrysartarama.com).
- **buy paints in small, 40 ml tubes (exception: please bring a 150 ml tube of white)**
- **please DO NOT bring old dried paint**
- **wear clothing and bring gear that you don’t mind getting paint on**

Recommended colors:
- Cad Yellow Light
- Cad Orange
- Cadmium Red Light
- Alizarin Crimson
- Dioxazine Purple (or similar)
- Ultramarine Blue
- Cerulean Blue Hue
- Viridian
- Raw Umber
- Any specialty colors you like, like Payne’s Gray or Mars Black. If you prefer certain colors than those above, this is fine. Penny recommends a range of colors rather than a limited palette.
- Titanium White (**large, 150 ml tube**)

*Note from Penny:* These supplies will last a long time, which helps with the expense of starting to paint with oils. Most important—you need an easel for outdoor painting. You could borrow one. Bring a chair if you prefer to sit. We will park nearby painting sites so your car can hold some gear. Bring a generosity of spirit towards yourself and the others in the class. We are all at different stages in our work. I am looking forward to painting together! The class will be fun and informative.

RESOURCES
- website: pennyotwell.com
- Facebook: Penny Otwell
- Twitter: otwellpainter
- Instagram: psoart
- Questions? Email Penny at penny@pennyotwell.com

Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars
P.O. Box 29 ● Lee Vining, CA 93541 ● (760) 647-6595 ● monolake.org/seminars