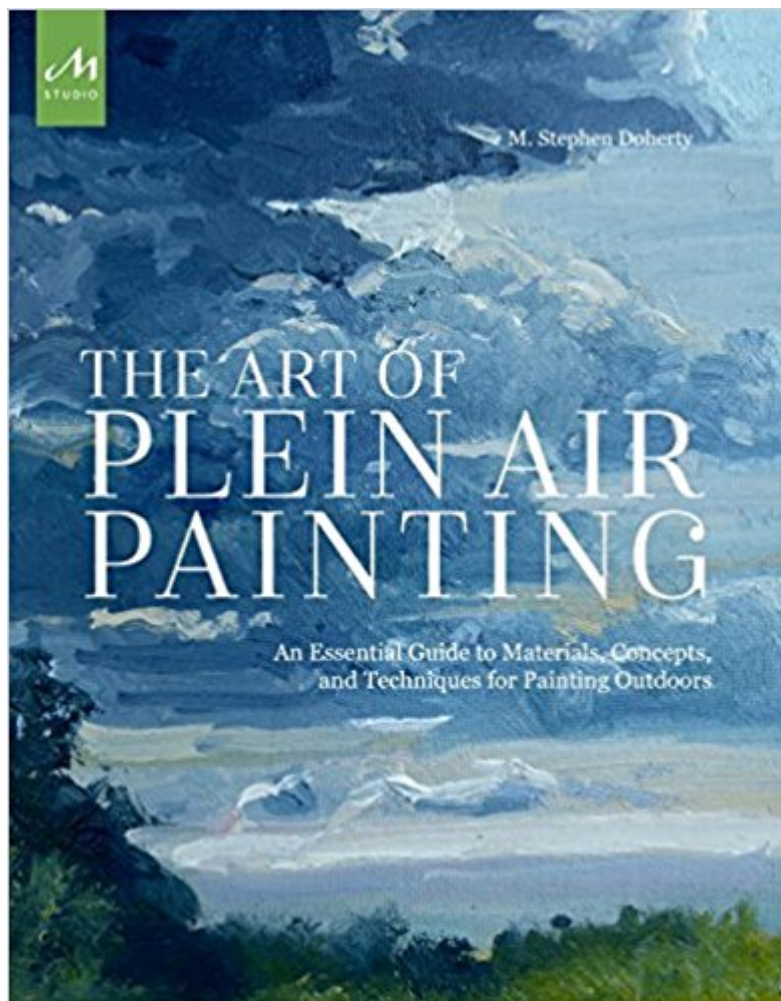




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The Art Of Plein Air Painting: An Essential Guide To Materials, Concepts, And Techniques For Painting Outdoors



Synopsis

Plein air painting, the art of painting outdoors, offers possibilities artists can't find inside the studio. When painters set up easels outside, they put themselves in direct contact with nature. Responsiveness to the landscape's changing light, forms, and colors yields work that's lively and spontaneous. However, plein air painting also poses a set of challenges not encountered in the studio. There are matters of choosing a location, rationing the number of supplies to bring, working within a time limit, adjusting to sudden changes in weather, and possibly even testing physical endurance when transporting equipment to a painting site. **The Art of Plein Air Painting** presents the full picture of what painting en plein air requires. Devoted plein air artist M. Stephen Doherty guides readers through how to choose the best spot, which materials and tools to bring, and the basics of mixing colors and preparing canvases and panels ahead of time. Sidebars and step-by-step demonstrations cover topics that range from sketching out a composition to starting a painting with washes or lines, toning a surface, and doing a cityscape. Doherty even teaches how to do a nocturne—a painting made after the sun has gone down. Works by famous plein air painters, such as Claude Monet and John Singer Sargent, are discussed, along with works by some of today's best plein air artists. Doherty interviews contemporary masters Mark Boedges, Clyde Aspevig, Kathryn Stats, Michael Godfrey, Joseph McGurl, and Clive C. Tyler to gain a deeper insight into the plein air process. Finally, the book contains information on plein air events—workshops, county festivals, and juried shows—now being held across North America, as well as advice on selling finished work.

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Customer Reviews

M.Ã Å Stephen Doherty earned a master of fine arts degree from Cornell University. He taught art in public schools, colleges, and workshops; worked for an art-materials manufacturer; and served as editor in chief of American Artist magazine for thirty-one years. He is now editor of PleinAir magazine (outdoorpainter.com). Doherty has exhibited his paintings in solo and group shows, served on advisory boards of art schools and artists' organizations, judged art exhibitions for museums and art societies, and has written a dozen art books and hundreds of magazine articles. Visit him online at stevedohertyart.com, or read his blog, pleinairstories.wordpress.com.

I'm a bit torn on this review. The book describes itself as a "guide to materials, concepts and techniques" so I expected a lot more detailed information about things like materials, concepts and techniques. In fact, the information is there but tends to be brief and/or only expanded upon in the numerous examples of various artists. While I enjoy the case study approach, this book was more of an expose of the artists themselves rather than the technique. It shows what they have done but not how - or at least minimally so. The book itself is oddly organized - historical context takes up the first 50 pages of so and then you get to things like materials. Woefully little is provided in terms of tips - and much of that is common sense such as dealing with insects or a brief overview of easel options. Subjects that could take an entire book of their own - like lighting or dealing with a constantly changing scene - are addressed but very briefly without much elucidation on the topic. Overall a nice book but misses the mark as a guide.

I have always wanted to try painting outdoors, but I never knew how to get myself together and actually do it. This book is so helpful in suggesting how to paint outdoors by suggesting what to take, the best places to set up, how to set up and the kind of views you want to paint. I had no idea there were so many valuable portable art items available. You really don't need an easel--particularly with watercolors--and there are so many portable kits for outdoor painting that all you need is a totebag or a backpack to put your art items into and take off into the wild!! I hadn't been farther afield than my backyard deck until I read this book, but I've now been to the Shenandoah Valley several times on painting trips and have loved every minute! This is a wonderful book for anyone who has been thinking about painting out of doors but hasn't had the courage or wherewithal to do so. Five stars!

The Art of Plein Air Painting contains more inspiration than practical techniques. While I was hoping

for more practical techniques, I really found the artists represented here to be quite fascinating. In addition, while practical advice is less prevalent what is there is quite good. If you are looking to get inspired to move from painting indoors to the outdoors I recommend this book to you. If you are looking for a book with practical how-to advice on plein air painting you might want to do an additional search on to compare and contrast other books.

What I like about this "how to..." book on plein air painting is the mix of discussions on oil, pastel and water color painting. What I like a bit less is the relatively modest amount of detail for each subject. In any event, author/editor Stephen Doherty, includes a good selection of well-illustrated art and artists to make his points about location, times of day, light, equipment, etc. Overall, a decent, basic introduction to taking on this challenging way of painting.

The Art of Plein Air Painting provides a great introduction to the methods and materials of painting outdoors. It provides advice and many examples from professional painters on how to set up your easel, mix paints, protection from the elements, selection of subjects, handling light conditions, and a whole lot more. Obviously, painting outside presents many challenges not found in the studio. That's where this book helps. It talks about the importance of planning ahead, capturing the essence of your subject, and responding to a landscape's changing light, forms, and colors so that you can produce high quality outdoor work. This is an excellent book for the novice painter.

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