

## THE PLEIN AIR CONVENTION &amp; EXPO

# Special Programs on Watercolor, Pastel, Acrylic, and Oil Painting

Outstanding artists will share their expertise and professional experiences during programs at the Plein Air Convention & Expo. Among those presenters will be cover artist Marcia Burt, who will talk about her acrylic plein air painting, her support for conservation causes, and her gallery in Santa Barbara, California.

In an effort to meet the needs of plein air enthusiasts attending the 3rd Annual Plein Air Convention & Expo, set for April 7-11 in Monterey, California, we invited an entirely new faculty of speakers and demonstrators, and we added special programs on watercolor, pastel, and acrylic painting. We also responded to suggestions that we do more to celebrate the achievements of women who compete in festivals, teach workshops, write blogs, and produce DVDs.

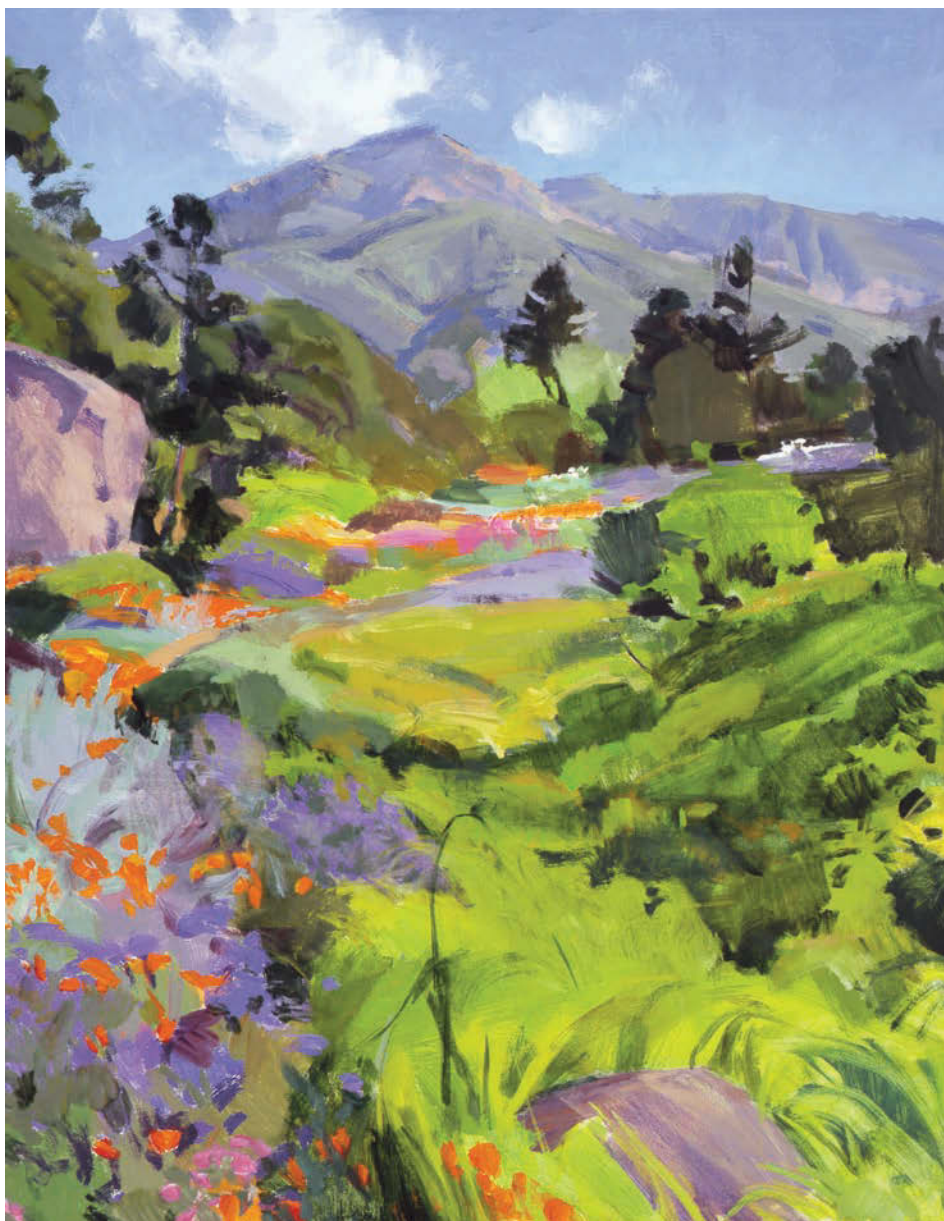
## Marcia Burt

One of the presenters who will speak to several of those professional and media-specific issues is Marcia Burt, a major plein air painter who works in acrylic, has supported conservation causes for more than 25 years, owns her own gallery, and shares her techniques in an instructional DVD.

Although many outdoor painters avoid using water-soluble acrylic paints, Burt finds them ideal for working quickly and for colors that can range from subtle grays to assertive primaries. While the common complaints about acrylics are that they dry too quickly and have a matte finish, Burt uses those characteristics to facilitate her process.

"I keep the colors in a fishing tackle box that keeps the paints wet when it is closed, and I constantly spray a mist of water over the paints to keep them moist," she explains. "I actually like the fact that the paints dry quickly on lots of different surfaces because that allows me to build up layers of color quickly, change the compositional arrangement of shapes or the relative value of each color, and vary the paint application from flowing strokes that look like transparent watercolor to thick impasto brushwork similar to what can be achieved with oils."

Burt is a member of the Oak Group, one of the first artist organizations in the country to support conservation causes by donating



### **Morning Meadow**

*Marcia Burt*

2007, acrylic, 22 x 28 in.

Collection Yvonne Pine

*Plein air*

a portion of the money from sales of paintings to local organizations working to preserve animal habitats, working farms, watershed acreage, and pristine landscapes. For nearly 30 years, Burt and the other members of the group have painted land that needs to be conserved, exhibited and sold their plein air paintings, and donated part of the proceeds to local groups working toward preservation or restoration.

It is fitting that the subject of Burt's painting reproduced on the cover of this issue is the Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens, a 75-year-old garden that fosters the conservation of California's native plants. The mission of the garden is to "envision a world where society understands the interdependency between people and plants, and acts to preserve the natural world."

### Kick-Off Program on Plein Air Basics

One of the most popular programs at last year's convention was a series of presentations aimed at helping less experienced plein air painters make significant strides in their work. Because that was a standing-room-only event, we will be offering another all-day session on Plein Air Basics. Gary Michael will kick off the program with a discussion of the rules of plein air painting events and a presentation on his award-winning techniques. That will be followed by a dynamic program by Kathleen Dunphy, an outstanding professional artist and successful workshop instructor. Anne Laddon will then show how pastels can be used successfully outdoors, and Lori McNee will talk about ways of connecting with other enthusiasts, making improvements in your creative process, and promoting your artwork.

### Watercolor & Pastel Painting Tracks

We heard from a number of artists who wanted more demonstrations of techniques for using watercolors and pastels in the 2014 convention program, so we added two separate tracks



Kathleen Dunphy



Aaron Schuerr



Clark Mitchell



Susan Lynn

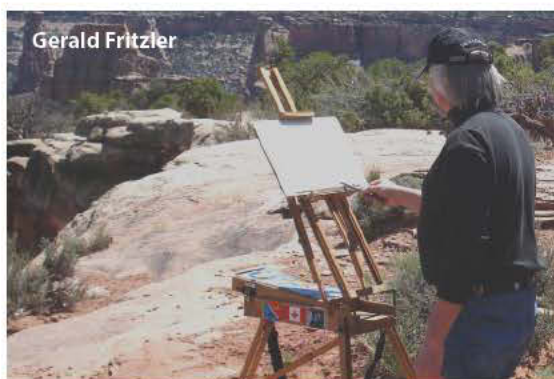


Andy Evansen

of presentations by top plein air artists who use those media. People attending the convention will be free to move between those rooms and the ballroom where the main program will be staged.


Richard McKinley, Jane McGraw-Teubner, Clark Mitchell, Urania Tarbet, Aaron Schuerr, Colleen Howe Bleinberger, and Lorenzo Chavez will be among the artists providing specific information about using pastels outdoors. They will address the challenges that often keep others from using pastels *en plein air*, including the need to radically reduce the number and variety of pastels compared to what one might have in a studio. "I have hundreds of sticks of pastel in my studio, but when I head out to paint a winter scene or travel cross-country to a plein air festival, I have to reduce that number," says Schuerr. "I also have to think carefully about the sizes and types of surfaces on which I will paint and the procedures I will use to capture the fleeting effects of light on the landscape."

Artists who want to know more about techniques for using watercolors for creating sketches or finished paintings on location can look forward



Gerald Fritzier

to hearing from Gerald Fritzier, Susan Lynn, Glen Knowles, Andy Evansen, Carolyn Lord, and Frank Costantino. And we are fortunate to be able to offer a watercolor painting demonstration by Alvaro Castagnet, an internationally known Uruguayan painter who lived in Australia for many years.

Visit the convention website, [www.pleinairconvention.com](http://www.pleinairconvention.com), and plan to join all these notable artists at the Monterey Conference Center from April 7-11, 2014, 

M. STEPHEN DOHERTY is editor-in-chief of *PleinAir* magazine.