

# ***En Plein Air* at Mono Lake**

## **Beginning Oil Painting**



**July 15–17, 2022 • Penny Otwell**

**\$280 per person / \$265 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](http://pennyotwell.com).

## **ITINERARY**

**Friday, July 15, 3:30pm:** Meet at the Lee Vining Community Center (296 Mattly Avenue). Bring your painting gear (see the supply lists below). After class introductions, Penny will do a quick painting demonstration. The group will paint using exercises to learn basic brushwork, mix color, and understand "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 your goals for the class and what you expect to learn—bring questions and ideas to this meeting!

**Saturday, July 16, 9:00am:** We will meet again at the Lee Vining Community Center. Penny will do a 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 later in the beautiful evening light. We will work until 7:00pm or even later, when the light is best over Mono Lake. If you want to paint longer, bring a bag dinner.

**Sunday, July 17, 9:00am:** Meet at Lee Vining Community Center once again and from here 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.*

## **ACTIVITY LEVEL: EASY**

This seminar's activity level: *easy*. We will be walking from cars to painting sites in the field, no more than half a mile from the cars. Participants will need to carry all their art supplies from the cars to field locations and back. Some of the painting locations may be in the sun.

## WEATHER & ALTITUDE

Temperatures in summer will be hot during the day and drop to chilly at night, with possible windy conditions and afternoon thunderstorms. Average temperatures in July in Lee Vining are 84°F (max) and 53°F (min).

This seminar will take place at elevations ranging from about 6,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. It is a good idea to acclimate at the elevation of Lee Vining for at least 24 hours prior to the start of the seminar. Those with a history of heart, ear, or respiratory problems should consult their doctors before attending. Anyone restricted to lower elevations should not enroll. \*Note: If you have residual respiratory effects from having Covid-19, activities at altitude may be particularly difficult for you.

Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Begin drinking extra water as you drive to higher elevation in order to prevent dehydration and headaches. Also, the sun is intense at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat.

## 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. You may want to 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

- face mask (N95 or KN95 recommended)
- 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
- wear clothing and bring gear that you don't mind getting paint on**

## 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.
  - bring sizes of varying widths of ⅛", ¼", and ½" (most important is to have variety!)
  - Note: Penny recommends Trekell Professional Art Supplies brand for good quality brushes at reasonable pricing: [trekell.com](http://trekell.com)
- hard panels or stretched canvas sized from 8x6" to 16x20" (about 6–8 total)

- 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](http://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](http://jerrysartarama.com).
- 16-oz Gamsol odorless mineral spirits or Turpenoid for cleaning brushes (**absolutely no turpentine**)
- brush soap
- 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)

## **PAINT SUPPLY LIST**

Paint tips:

- buy good paints
  - Good brands/sources are Gamblin or Utrecht, from suppliers like Dick Blick ([dickblick.com](http://dickblick.com)) or Jerry's Artarama ([jerrysartarama.com](http://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

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](http://pennyotwell.com)
  - Facebook: Penny Otwell
  - Twitter: otwellpainter
  - Instagram: psoart
  - Questions? Email Penny at [penny@pennyotwell.com](mailto:penny@pennyotwell.com)
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## COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS FOR 2022

All participants and instructors must be fully vaccinated and boosted. Proof of vaccination will be required after you register for a seminar.

Please minimize your exposure to Covid in the time leading up to your seminar. We recommend obtaining a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.\* If your PCR test comes back positive for Covid, you must cancel your registration and stay home. If you begin to feel sick in the days leading up to your seminar, you must cancel your registration and stay home. You will receive a full refund in either case.

\*Depending on the regional Covid situation we may need to *require* a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.

During the seminars masks will be required indoors and in carpools/Mono Lake Committee van in accordance with Mono County requirements (N95 or KN95 masks offer the best protection). If Mono County has lifted the mask requirement, masks will not be required indoors and in vehicles during the seminars. (You may wear a mask at any time if you wish to.)

If you begin to feel ill with Covid symptoms at any time during the seminar, you must immediately notify the instructor or staff member accompanying the group and leave the seminar.

Please keep in mind that conditions may change at any time and we may have to change our procedures in order to provide the opportunity for everyone involved with the Field Seminars to safely participate. Depending on the Covid situation in the weeks leading up to your seminar, we may have to plan to hold the seminar completely outdoors. Mask requirements may change. There's a chance we may have to cancel seminars altogether. We will communicate with you about any of these changes, and you can always get in touch with us if you have questions or need more clarification about specific circumstances, by emailing [fieldseminars@monolake.org](mailto:fieldseminars@monolake.org) or by calling (760) 647-6595.

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## Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • [monolake.org/seminars](http://monolake.org/seminars)