

# Poynter paint out in Gibsons

PLEIN AIR PAINTING



Jan DeGrass Photo

Artist Jan Poynter readies her painting kit for Sept. 14 and 15's big plein air Paint Out.

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Painting in the great outdoors or plein air painting, as it is called, is more than just landscape art at picturesque locations. It's about capturing the immediacy of the moment, according to Grantham's Landing artist Jan Poynter.

"The light, the atmosphere, the mood will change as you paint. You must work quickly," she said.

Poynter is accustomed to working quickly; she packs a small panel either postcard or standard sized 11 by 14, her travelling kit and a folding chair and sometimes even a prefabricated frame, so the result can be sold on the spot.

On the Coast she can work in acrylics, as the paint does not dry quickly in our moist environment, but in dry Arizona, she works in oils. When she's finished she marks each painting with a date and time, recording "that day, that moment, that place."

There's another interesting element to plein air painting. The artists often have an audience of an interested public, giving it a sociable atmosphere.

Poynter is organizing a Paint Out in scenic Gibsons Landing on Sept. 14 and 15, and she invites all those interested to join her. There's no fee, no jury, no competition or prizes. In fact, the Saturday morning event is purely for enjoyment. You don't have to be an experienced artist for the 10 a.m. sketch crawl on Saturday, Sept. 14. Meet up at the visitor information centre with your sketchbook, pencil and stool. Wander and sketch together near Molly's Reach and the wharf.

On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, plein air artists are invited to work at various sites in Lower Gibsons. They can register any time after 9 a.m. at the Arts Building on South Fletcher, and paint on site until 2 p.m. for an hour or the whole day on one or both days.

The finished paintings will be on display and sale from 3 to 6 p.m. Sunday at the Arts Building, which will be open over the weekend to store gear and eat your bag lunch. There's no specific time to start because it's not a race, Poynter stresses.

She recently took part in a plein air race at Harmony Arts Festival in West Vancouver. The competition drew 18 artists from all parts of B.C., with panels at the ready and a quick draw on the brush.

It's not surprising that such events are popular — communities of painters host plein air sessions all over the world — France, Brazil, Japan among others — and list their sessions on an Internet website.

The Gibsons event will be part of the International Plein Air Painters worldwide Artists' Paint Out on that weekend.

The Town of Gibsons is supporting this event, and Poynter hopes it will draw visitors to paint or to watch. For a few hours, the artist and the public become part of the landscape and might end up in a painting themselves.

If you're not comfortable with strangers observing as you paint, Poynter suggests you deter questions by wearing headphones. She has painted at many outdoor locations in many countries and describes the cultural differences.

"While I was painting in China, people would come up close to me," she said, demonstrating how they would peer into the painting. "But Canadians stand well away and they whisper to each other."

The locations are the Arts Building, Winegarden Park, visitor centre area, and the wharf. During the first year of this annual event, Poynter painted with two others beside her. The second year she put up a canopy and gave out brochures, promoting it through networking. This third year the experience has been promoted to all the plein air groups with the suggestion to visit Gibsons. Poynter hopes it will grow to a larger annual event that will include demonstrations, workshops and artist gatherings.

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