

Report on Podi Lawrence's demonstration of "En plein air painting" 9th June 2025

Podi Lawrence has been painting since childhood and enjoys 'en plein air' sketching, painting and recording by photographs. She always prefers to be outside, working from photos is a last resort. Basic equipment: watercolour block sketchpad, a very compact paint box of 12 colours and a neat set of Da Vinci fold away sable brushes and graphic pens.

She talked for the first half of the evening, a raconteur going on to talk of the residential courses she's run in Kalimnos, one week for ten artists. The time she has spent in Panama where lots of white painted houses generate phenomenal shadows. Podi uses Liquitex Acrylic inks, giving colourfast, very vibrant colours. Mostly using 100% cotton paper. However, her portraiture she often does in oils and works from life not photos.

In her youth she became the resident artist at the theatre and ballet, it pushed her work, she introduced pipettes into her style and often drew by torchlight in the darkness!

En plein air necessitates squinting to remove the detritus, intensifies the perception of colour, particularly shadows. You need to really, really look at shape and texture, sit and study first vision. Draw daily to get movement in your hands. Get into the open, be open to the elements, look at the colours in reflections, the construction of your painting's focal point, note the changing light during the day. Experiment with washes of watercolour, dancing the side of the brush over the paper, followed by highlighting details with graphic pens.



