



Armory Artist Profile – Ralph Papa

Ralph Papa began teaching drawing and painting at the Armory Art Center in October of 2019. His philosophy is that a fine visual artist must first learn to see accurately, then be able to reproduce images accurately with minimum effort. With practice and understanding, artists can become one with their art, mastering the three major categories of visual art: color, perspective, and anatomy. Beyond that, he believes that artists have their best chance of success when they are true to who they are, creating artwork based on their personal experience and unique perspective on life.

Ralph has been fascinated with drawing since his early childhood. He has a vivid memory from about 6 years old of tearing blank pages from the family Encyclopedia set and drawing cowboys, Indians, and cartoon characters on them. Ralph also remembers being “The Class Artist” in 5th and 6th grades in New York City at Public School 168, where he painted murals with tempera paints on the side and back classroom blackboards.

Ralph was labeled as self-taught from early childhood as he had not taken any formal art classes until he attended the Art Student League of New York in his mid-20s. He realized that “self-taught” included learning at an early age from his father, a carpenter who was great at expressing himself in drawing and cartooning. He also learned from the legendary Jon Gnagy, who was the first media artist in the early days of television. He influenced Ralph and taught him the art of drawing through the television screen. He learned so much from them and from anatomy and drafting and engineering studies that it led to his passion for both studio painting and plein air painting. His first sales and commissions of his art came in his late teens. Ralph went on to study at Community College of New York Engineering School (Pre-Engineering and Architecture), the U.S. Navy (Aviation Electronics), Queens College (Art History), Suffolk Community College (AAS Degree – Art & Business Administration) and Art Students League of New York (Life Drawing and Painting).

Ralph’s favorite places to view art are at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Louvre in Paris, and the Vatican in Rome. His many heroes and influences in art include Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Hopper, and Picasso.

Ralph first fell in love with the process of painting en plein air in the 1980s when painting in the Long Island Hamptons and Hudson Valley and later in South Florida. What makes it so special to him is that he’s out in “Nature’s Big Studio” working from life and comes home with one or sometimes two finished works. Best of all, each painting created en plein air has a unique story and life of its own. He’s an organizer and co-founder of Plein Air Palm Beach which now has over 1,100 members and more than ninety ‘Contributing Artists’ who regularly paint at numerous scheduled paint-outs in and around Palm Beach County. They’ve had many plein air

exhibitions and events at locations such as the Cultural Council Gallery in Lake Worth, the Cornell Museum in Delray Beach, Lighthouse Art Center in Tequesta, and Boca Museum Art School. Painting in plein air is a growing movement that visually records our landmark sights and beautiful natural locations from today's culture for tomorrow's history.

Ralph loves the Armory Art Center building, grounds, and location in Palm Beach County. It's beautiful and historic neighborhood are great for painting outdoors en plein air. Ralph teaches drawing and painting and plein air workshops throughout Palm Beach County. He's an art activist, passionate about art, Co-Founder of Plein Air Palm Beach and a Signature Member and Past President of the Artists Guild of the Boca Raton Museum of Art. Ralph enjoys painting in France and Italy and was instrumental in The City of Boynton Beach becoming a "Sister City" of Farindola in the Abruzzo Region of Italy.

"As human beings we all have the potential to become artists able to express our ideas and feelings in a visual format. It's never too late to learn and master the skills to become a visual artist." ~ Ralph Papa

You can view and purchase Ralph Papa's work at Papagallery at 331 SE Mizner Blvd., Boca Raton, FL, or at www.papagallery.com, www.ralphpapa.com or www.carlylegalleries.net.

– Contributed by Denise Mariani
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