

Patricia Melvin

As a plein air painter of New York City, I have been supporting myself by the sale of my paintings for the past 30 years. I mention this only to point out that painting by daylight is not obsolete but in fact it is still commercially viable. It is valued by those who appreciate fine art painting. In my studio I use full spectrum lighting in the winter afternoons and at night, but I cannot see the true color of any painting unless I hold it in front of my window in the daylight. The colors look substantially different.

I do not think that anything can take the place of daylight when it comes to perception of color and tone. To learn to paint in artificial light handicaps the students who are truly dedicated and is like teaching musicians to play on instruments which cannot be correctly tuned.

There are many other reasons to allow students the sensation of light and air in the classroom. For example, how air looks in different kinds of daylight is also crucial to the art of painting.

Another reason is that the subtleties of daylight, one of the most beautiful aspects of nature whether the light falls on a still life, human flesh, or a corner of the studio, provides inspiration to many students with artistic sensibilities. It certainly did to me when I first started painting.

Please also consider the damage that would be done to the quality and standing of the art school if painting students are forced to learn in artificial light which is by any standards inferior.