



**Living History**  
2019, oil, 16 x 20 in.  
Private collection  
Plein air

## Leaning In to History

“I’ve been thinking a lot lately about leaning in to the historical aspects of what we do as plein air painters,” says Suzie Baker. “This past April, on the long drive from Houston to Atlanta for the Olmsted Plein Air Invitational, I had the idea to paint someone who had experienced the civil rights era in a significant way. While it was my fourth time participating in the event, I had not previously visited the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park and made a point to do so on this trip. After touring the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, I talked over my painting idea with park ranger Bruce Lee. He made a few phone calls, and it all came together. The next morning, I had the great honor of painting Reverend Dr. Albert Paul Brinson in front of Ebenezer Baptist Church, where he had served as an assistant minister with Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., and Jr.

“Dr. Brinson spent much of his boyhood in the home of ‘ML.’ In fact, he still meets with Dr. King’s sister Christine for dinner on Sundays. While I painted him, he related story after story of his youth,

being mentored by Dr. King, and his involvement with the civil rights movement. The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park is one of the few national parks where history still walks among us. Dr. Brinson is part of that living history.”



*Suzie Baker poses with Dr. Brinson and park ranger Bruce Lee.*  
[suziebaker.com](http://suziebaker.com)