

# Artists to Watch



BLUE VASE BY ERIC MERRELL

## Eric Merrell

Whether he is painting still lifes, landscapes, or figures, Southern California artist Eric Merrell's main artistic concern is light. "I am interested in how we react to it," Merrell says. "Light is how we as humans navigate the world."

Thus, Merrell is likely to paint not only landscapes in the open air, but also figures and still lifes—posing models and setting up vases, flowers, and other objects outdoors. Always on the hunt for new locations (and an avid hiker), the painter keeps detailed notes on patterns of light and shadow, cataloging the place and time of day where they were observed so he can later return to intriguing places with his painting gear. Or, once back in his studio, he may make a sketch of the location. His favorite spots range from those close to home, such as the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in the Los Angeles area, to the far-flung heights of the Sierra Nevadas in Northern California. ▶