



# WILD AT ART

TIM SOLLIDAY  
IS AT HOME IN  
THE 19TH-CENTURY  
WORLD OF FRANK  
TENNEY JOHNSON  
BY BONNIE  
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THERE ARE ARTISTS who are quiet and painfully shy. Then there is Tim Solliday—a regular talking tornado, a whirling dervish of a man whom some half-jokingly refer to as Southern California’s answer to Vincent van Gogh. Not that Solliday is ever likely to slice off his ear, but there is a certain untamed quality to his demeanor, coupled with a certain wild energy in his art. His signature eucalyptus trees vibrate with life and appear ready to dash off the canvas into nearby woods, a little like the kinetic man himself.

Now 50 years old, Solliday has seen his career continue on an upward spiral since *Southwest Art* last visited him in 1997. In the past few years he has won top awards at the annual Oil Painters of America and California Art Club Gold Medal shows, as well as the Laguna Beach Plein Air Painting Invitational. But the biggest change in his creative life these days is a

ABOVE: TIM SOLLIDAY IN HIS STUDIO. PHOTO BY MICHAEL GARLAND.

unique inspiration not many artists can boast. For the past five years Solliday has been working in a historic studio once inhabited by legendary western painter Frank Tenney Johnson [1874-1939]. “Every time I walk in here my spirits are lifted, and all of a sudden I am taken back in time,” Solliday says. “The architecture alone makes me feel more serious and solid about what I am doing.”

The 1,000-square-foot bungalow he inhabits is located in Alhambra, CA, on a secluded, wooded lot overlooking a wash. The structure is representative of the Arts and Crafts style popular in Southern California during the 1920s; the movement emphasized simplicity as well as good craftsmanship and design. For Solliday,

