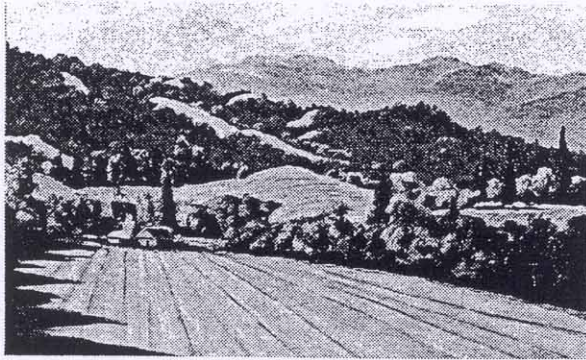


## FEATURED ARTIST

Zenaida Mott

*Plein air and wildlife artist, Zenaida Mott, has lived, painted and exhibited extensively in Africa, Asia, New England and California. She is a founding member of the BayWood Artists, and is an artist member of the California Art Club, the American Academy of Women Artists, American Impressionist Society, and Oil Painters of America.*



*Vine Patterns Zenaida Mott 12" x 16" oil*

As I was growing up, our house was full of European art that some distant relatives had collected, but there were also paintings commissioned by my grandfather of **William Keith**, **King**, and **Carl Rungius**, and I was always in awe of them. I think that they had more of an influence on me than I realized at the time.

When I was little, I sketched all the time but it wasn't until we lived in **East Africa** that I truly began to paint. At least that is where it really started for me, as I was lucky enough when we first arrived to fall into the hands of **Maria Sanchez**. I remember a woman at a cocktail party going from group to group asking something and then people shaking their heads. When she got to our group, she asked if anyone was an artist, and we all shook ours, too. But she asked me again, as I had hesitated, and I told her of my dream to someday have a classical art education. She moved

on to other groups, and that was the end of it, or so I thought. But a month or so later a huge box came from London - packed with canvas, stretcher bars, paints, easel, and everything imaginable in the way of art supplies.

*Zenaida's work can currently be seen at the California Heritage Gallery, William Lester Gallery and the California Collector's Gallery. See Now Showing.*

She came to my door a few days later, said it was all her gift to me and that she would take me in as her apprentice, giving me, in the 3 years we would both be there, an in-depth art education. In exchange, I was to accompany her on horseback into the bush, and we would paint together. And to sweeten the package, she had sewn me a waterproof satchel to carry supplies (and lunch) for swimming the horses across the nearby river. Refusing never entered my mind! This was pure joy, and that special light of Africa had me hooked. From then on, trying to capture the different light effects, particularly in late afternoon or during or right after a storm has interested me most. So for 3 years this top student of Mexico's **David Siquieros** gave me the beginnings of my art education.

My family took us for long camping and backpacking trips all over the west, but particularly into the **High Sierra**, and a deep and lasting love was planted. Probably, my most enduring passion, again planted by my family, has been the real sense that we each have a responsibility to help save these lands, the beautiful places on earth that are so rapidly disappearing.

When we returned from **Africa**, I wanted to start an artists' group whose purpose would be to help fund organizations committed to saving open space. I wanted to "give back" to the land at least a little of what I feel it has given me. It was frustrating, as I found at that time little interest.

However, when we moved back to California, there seemed to be an acute and broader awareness that these lands *are* incredibly unique and special, and are worth fighting for. Many of those people are now part of the **BayWood Artists**, a committed (and great fun) group of professional artists, which donates 50% of exhibit proceeds to help in various ways to either restore or preserve open space.

I paint a broad range of subject matter, but the subject matter isn't nearly as important as trying to capture the fleeting lighting effects. I usually paint plein air, but often finish up in the studio. My Dad was a wonderful photographer and taught me how to "see", to be more than just casually observant, to simplify what I saw, and to pick out the essence of a scene. For me there are always so many new problems and challenges in painting. I think that we as artists are the luckiest of people, as boredom is never an issue. I know I could never "learn it all", but I know that being able to learn like this for the rest of my life is a wonderful and great privilege.