

Gluck, Marissa, Franklin Melendez and Elizabeth Varnell, "The Impressionist,"  
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Esther Kim Varet inside her Abbot Kinney gallery, Various Small Fires, with Diego Singh's painting, "&," 2012

#### THE INNOVATOR

### Modern Maverick

Advocate, collector and gallerist Esther Kim Varet is no rule follower. By her early 20s, the Dallas native had already worked for established Chelsea hubs including Friedrich Petzel and co-owned a gallery while working on a Ph.D. in art history at Columbia University. Varet, now 30, moved with her husband to Venice Beach in 2011, and shortly thereafter launched Various Small Fires, a gallery on Abbot Kinney. This year the space held shows and performances from up-and-comers like Kerstin Brätsch and Samara Golden; numerous charity events supporting the Uganda Project, Seathos and X-tra magazine; and a mural façade created by Alex Israel. Varet also had a booth at NADA Miami this year. Despite jam-packed schedules, Varet and her husband continue to collect cutting-edge work by emerging artists, and she remains a staunch supporter of LAXART and the Hammer Museum with an unwavering commitment to L.A.'s creative energy. "It might be a cliché to say so, but L.A. does feel like the Wild West," she says. "There is a pioneering spirit, a real pride in supporting the very strong pool of local talent."