

explains. "I've read and studied a lot about technique. I paint what comes to me at the time I'm working, although I tend to paint with inspiration from trips I've taken with Gilbert and Wesley."

"I journal every day and I draw little sketches of things I see and how I'm inspired. When I get ready to paint, I review my journal for ideas."

Her painting career really started when she and Gilbert were living in their previous home, which Sarah says had too much void space for them at the time.

"I had blank spaces on the walls, so I bought some canvas and used house paint—very unromantic," she laughs. Many of her early paintings were beach scenes.

Shortly thereafter, the Griffiths had friends over for dinner and their guests offered to buy some of her work.

"From there it just happened more and more."

Sarah started with oils and studied oil technique with the guidance of a local instructor. She then went on an educational painting trip to Taos and Santa Fe, New Mexico, with other students under the direction of local impressionist Rhea Gary.

"We did *plein air* painting while we were in New Mexico," she recalls. (*Plein air* painting is described as a life-like impression of the open air in landscape portraits, and requires the painter to experience the outdoor scenery he or

she is painting.)

Sarah says her passion for color was fueled by her trips to the Southwest.

"There was lots of light, sky and form to paint, and I came back inspired to work with acrylics. I was always interested in lots of color."

"I take lots of pictures, and most all of my paintings have something to do with my life. After traveling to Taos and Santa Fe, we have loved traveling in the Southwest. That's the inspiration for many of my dominant colors, such as greens, turquoise and fiery red," she explains.

"Many of my paintings are reminiscent of the sunsets I've seen. I can almost remember seeing this one particular sunset outside Taos and thinking that God was dropping gold from the sky."

With a virtual wall of windows that spans the rear of their home, Sarah's husband Gilbert often comments on the changing effects of natural light on her many paintings. Of particular interest is the play of light on the gold leafing—Sarah's trademark feature. On the subject of inspiration for her works, Sarah says people often ask her why she doesn't paint Louisiana scenes. "I tell them I'm working on it," she says. "My husband and I are doing a lot of fishing in South Louisiana and I'm taking inspiration for future works."

used as a surface for painting). I use brushes, anything with a sharp edge, anything to change the play of paint on the canvas. Then I decide how I want to apply the gold leaf.

"The gold leaf gets boring if it's applied in a pattern that's too uniform, so I break pieces off to make them



*"Many of my paintings are reminiscent of the sunsets I've seen. I can almost remember seeing this one particular sunset outside Taos and thinking that God was dropping gold from the sky."*

—Sarah Griffith, local artist on subjects for her mixed-media works