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EAST MEETS WEST SARGAM GRIFFIN AT JALAN-JALAN

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by **Beth Raebeck Hall**

Sargam Griffin believes art provokes the spirit. When called, the spirit aligns itself with intention, which then leads to the story. This artist feels an extraordinary commitment to each painting and considers each a power that moves out into the world. To create, she begins in silence, eliminat-

ing all internal chatter. It is only then that she touches a blank canvas or panel. Magically, like a genie escaping from the bottle, the work begins to speak, to take shape, to guide her. The end result is both captivating and ethereal.

"I cannot wait to see how they turn out and to share them with others," Griffin says.

Painting is essential to me. It's how I express myself in the world. There is a certain level of vulnerability that I'm willing to expose.

Titles are deliberate—their genesis lies in deep thought and emotion about powerful subjects. *The Fifth Element*, *The Economy*, and *Japan* demonstrate the fusion of inspiration, intention, and conversation with color and texture. All possess a relevant and luminous identity. These works create great conversation.

"Painting expands my sense of being," says Griffin. "My intention is to create truthful, real work with depth. It is vital they are compelling from a distance and up close. It all starts with an intention. It's important to capture these times of exponential change, as it's a substantial part of my creative process," she notes in her soft-spoken manner.

Griffin attained her global sensitivities early. Visits to Mt. Kilimanjaro, the Great Pyramids of Giza, and the North Sea made indelible impressions on her young artistic psyche. Later journeys to Africa, India, Switzerland, and Italy are deeply embedded in her remarkable talent.

I seek a certain clarity of light and will go to great lengths to find it.

A 2006 visit to Rome created a defining moment for her creative vision. "While visiting the Vatican, I wandered off. Suddenly I found myself surrounded by the Collection of Modern Art in the Apartment of Alexander VI," she notes. The vast rooms of magnificent modern art and sculptures deeply affected her. "It was a divine moment. I was truly speechless. I knew I had to spend the rest of my life doing this," she says with reverence. Soon after, she began painting large abstract paintings on canvas and museum-quality panels, listening ardently to the voices of paint, pigment, and canvas.

For Griffin, her role as an artist is to invigorate, inspire, and illuminate through her work. Illumination is accomplished through deep layering of the highest quality oils, alkyds, translucent French pigments, and varnishes or resins, all mixed by hand. Each work contains thirty to forty layers. Griffin says each layer guides the next, until the painting determines it is complete. "It's finished when it is independent of me," she says.

Griffin takes the art of revelation to an exact level with her new series. *ArtDoors*[™] are substantial works of fine art painted on functional doors. Some pivot, some slide, some are hinged. But, as with all work, she lets the piece guide the creative process.

"Wood tells you what it is going to be," she says. "I use museum-quality birch wood and stretchers, but the process is the same. The work is an honest representation of what I am guided to paint. These literally allow the viewer to see what is revealed through the images and colors and behind the door. Sometimes I am shocked at what comes through," she says with a smile.

Sargam Griffin's exhibit *East Meets West* is at Jalan-Jalan September 12 through December 15. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday. Jalan-Jalan is located at 2503 Winford Avenue, Nashville, TN.

sargamgriffin.com jalanjalanantiques.com

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