

urania christy tarbet

Painting Pastels and the World Around Her

by Kimberly Horg-Webb

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An El Dorado County resident of 25 years, Urania Christy Tarbet draws inspiration from her natural surroundings in our community. Painting floral designs and landscapes puts her mind at ease. Her goal in painting beautiful landscapes is to lift others' spirits amidst the daily grind of life.

Tarbet says music and art have always been her passion. As a young child, her famous cousin Howard Chandler Christy – a noted illustrator and portrait artist – influenced her. “As a young girl my mother and I visited his studio,” she says. “The wonderful smell of the paint, the finished and unfinished paintings, the model stand, and the general feeling of the whole art scene filled my young soul with joy. I knew then that I wanted to be an artist.”

Her art education began at Pasadena College in Southern California. She then attended Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles for a couple years before attending Sergei Bongart School of Art in Santa Monica. She has taken workshops with nationally

known artists including Joyce Pike, Albert Handell, Daniel Greene and Claude Ellington. After college, marriage and three children, she decided to go back to school to obtain her teaching credentials. Her teaching has taken her throughout the United States, Canada, Ireland, Italy, France and Mexico. Tarbet says that the French Impressionists have had the most influence on her work. And her dream came true last year when she actually painted inside Monet's Garden in Giverny, France.

“The excitement of painting in the quiet of Monet's Garden with only the birds and gardeners as company was glorious,” Tarbet recalls. “It was a dream of a life time,” she says. Tarbet was invited back again in June to teach and paint and she doesn't hesitate to offer the experience to others by saying that if there are any art students interested in making the journey with her to France, she suggests they visit her Web site to get more information.

Tarbet has received numerous awards

for her work including the Mary and Fred Trump Award, Flax Award Women Artists of the West, and the Pastel Award of Excellence, just to name a few. According to Tarbet, working in pastels gives her the excitement of creating vibrant works of art that glow from within. When she paints with oil, she likes the palette knife to create thick, bold, impasto strokes that grab and hold the light. “I consider myself a California Impressionist,” she says. “I love the light, high key and soft look of that period.”

In the future Tarbet wants to spend more time at the easel. She is on the advisory board of *The Pastel Journal*, is on the ASTM D501 sub-committee for helping to set health and safety standards for pastel paint, and is the editor of the *Pastel International Artist* magazine. She also writes articles profiling artists and hopes to continue that line of work in the future. •

For more information on Tarbet's work, visit uraniachristytarbet.com.