



Cecilia Henle was born the youngest of nine children in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her parents were active in Cub Scouting and Cecilia would often follow along for the field trips and craft projects, gaining knowledge and an avid interest in the indigenous tribes of the Great Lakes region. She developed an appreciation of Native American philosophy and culture, which has become a major focus in her life.



Cecilia paints on hand made bark paper which gives her artwork the quality of ancient cave paintings. Bark paper is believed to be the oldest paper making process in the Western Hemisphere and is still made today as it was in the 14th century. For hundreds of years the Otomi Indians have searched the countryside for bark from downed fig and mulberry trees. The bark is peeled from the tree, washed in the streams and boiled in limewater. The bark is pounded while damp, and the pliable fibers are laid out in the sun to dry. This beautiful primitive paper becomes the perfect medium for Cecilia Henle's pastels.

Her pastels and prints have been exhibited and collected across the United States and Europe for almost twenty years. They are known for their rich textures and stories depicting ancient rock and cave art from Europe to the Americas. The petroglyphs and pictographs, represented by Henle, are considered an endangered and disappearing ancient art form. Little is known about the purpose of these ancient rock paintings found throughout the world. Although an effort has been made to protect and preserve them, they continue to fade with time.

Her studies and artistic exploration of the styles and meanings of both European and Native American primitive art led to a deep respect and appreciation for man's ancient artistic beginnings. From primitive human cave paintings to American petroglyph and pictograph imagery, there is left a visual legacy of man's first attempts to explain the mysterious universe, to evoke and control the powers of nature, and record events. We certainly owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to our ancient ancestors for making these marks for the first time, it was the beginning of all art!

"Art is amazing. It opens one up to larger worlds, both real and imaginary. In my journey to understand the cultures and people that inspire me in my work, I have been reminded again and again of where it all started. The study of the first art ever created has helped me know art in a new way, that transcends all culture, all boundaries and all beliefs, bringing us together as one human species who have the incredible gift of creative expression. My work is intended to celebrate the inspiring in life, to evoke and awaken respect and understanding of the cultures surrounding us, and to honor the first artists of the world." Cecilia Henle



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Joan Cawley Gallery

7135 E. Main Street | Scottsdale, AZ 85251 | Tel: 480-947-3548 | jcg ltd.com/gallery