

Born in Brawley, Calif., Clausen spent most of her childhood with her parents and siblings in Arizona. She spent her days as a budding artist, making her own jewelry and pottery and clothing, taking camping and nature trips throughout the desert and soaking in a southwestern, Bohemian life. She could imagine herself as an artist--free to express her life as a painter and illustrator.

In 1982, Clausen earned her bachelor's degree in visual communications from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. Following graduation, Cat worked in marketing, public relations and art direction for 10 years including a position with WVPT Public Television in Harrisonburg, Va.

Cat left her career in the fall of 1993 to become a stay-at-home mom and moved to Illinois with her husband and three-year-old son. Craving a creative outlet, Cat began to teach herself to paint in oils, an art medium she had not studied in college. She sold her first oils to members of her small community.

A second collection, "Ribbons of Color," began as a soul-searching mission and a way to purge difficult experiences of her past. From it, she developed a permanent style of illustrative lines and brushstrokes for her work. Known as pure power, Clausen's colorist 'ribbons of color' cascaded down canvases and transformed her new-found creative outlet into a full blown career.

As Clausen found resolution in her own personal story, she began to seek out the story of others. The "Icons" collection followed with portraits of political and educational leaders and musicians, as well as her beloved Abraham Lincoln. Treasured by many in his home state of Illinois, Clausen's Lincoln has gone on to grace the covers of magazines; a book; a mural in Springfield, IL; an original oil that hangs in the White House West Wing; as well as banners throughout the city of Chicago and Springfield, IL.

Even as her work brought her more acclaimed recognition with appearances on WGN news and a trip to Italy in honor of her Lincoln, a commission for Yoko Ono – a new vision came to her. She awoke one day with the images of two Indian chiefs in her mind. She knew they were leading her to her next works.

And so, the "Visions" collection was conceived. Months of researching, including trips to Chicago's Newberry Library and a two-week journey to the stomping grounds of her youth, led her back to the simplest of places. With a thought, a brush, some paint and a canvas, Clausen developed her "Visions," collection. It was simple and pure and moving.

As time passed, Cat reflected once again on her roots and from a window-filled front porch, on a quiet street, in an unassuming town, Cat's newest works of portraiture and seascapes come to life with a bold illustrative statement.