



she painted real people – would this ethereal quality carry through to their portraits?

Culver believes spirituality – the “Spirit” as she calls it – strongly influences her work. “I’d even go so far as to say spirituality *is* my work.” She applies the same process to each soul portrait she creates. First, she and the client meet in her Sausalito studio for three hours. They may chat during this time, but this is not an interview; she prefers to keep what they discuss on the surface. Rather, she is working to gather the “intuitive information” that will influence her painting. She determines what size the canvas will be, whether it will stand vertically or horizontally, and then begins to paint the client’s face. What position and size the client’s face take are all “intuitive hits.” Before the client leaves, Culver takes photographs of him or her to work from.

Left alone to complete the painting, Culver opens herself to the spiritual world. “I do a meditative process to help me get out of my own way and remove my ego and attachment to the outcome. I then ask Spirit to bring me the image that will be in my client’s best interest – for their healing, growth, or amusement.” After the portrait is finished, Culver calls her client back into the studio. She looks forward to the response each piece brings; she’s seen the full range of emotions – from tears to laughter to awe. Culver often spends hours helping the client interpret the image and its message. “The sources of these images is a mystery to me and I trust completely that the unique images revealed in my paintings are meant specifically for each client.”

Culver can’t fully explain where she finds the images that appear to her, but she trusts that what comes will be meaningful to her client. Sometimes she’ll envision her client dressed in an unusual costume or seated in a building she doesn’t recognize, and it isn’t until her client explains their relevance that she begins to understand. She says the common theme that underscores her work is the feeling her clients walk away with. “People see their bigness. They see their beauty and their strength and it helps them step into themselves more fully.”

*To sit for your own soul portrait or to learn more about her process, contact Jill Culver at 415.332.0615, [jill@jillculver.com](mailto:jill@jillculver.com) or visit her website, [jillculver.com](http://jillculver.com).*

# JILL CULVER

by amy malooof

## soul searcher

Jill Culver always knew she was a painter, but it wasn’t until getting laid off at the end of a long corporate career that she began to pursue her dream. Except for a few lessons in her youth, Culver had never received formal training. So she was surprised to discover that the skills she needed came naturally. She started experimenting with oil paints and after a prolific burst of activity, realized painting people was what she enjoyed most. After painting portraits of imaginary figures she noticed an emerging theme; the people were often in costume and carried with them a sense of “other-worldliness.” Culver wondered what would happen if

