



CONNIE PHILLIPS

Connie is an artist, mother, grandmother and teacher who lives with her husband on a small ranch in the mountains of southeast Oklahoma, in the heart of the Choctaw Nation. Their children are grown and gone, but they still have horses, a few head of cows, cats, chickens, ducks, a goose and too many Australian shepherds. She has four children who are now all raising families of their own, and their circle grows every year. Family is the most important thing in the world to her. She is a middle school art teacher and truly enjoys introducing the world of art to her students.

Only recently has Connie found the courage to put her work into public view; while she has painted all her life, until now, it was exclusively for family and friends. She has been blessed with an unexpected but wonderful response to her art and for this she is grateful. In November 2018, she had her first show at the Center for Arts and Education in Van Buren, Arkansas. It was a wonderful experience, and she hopes there are more in her future.

Connie's roots are steeped in the cowboy and western lifestyle as well as in her Choctaw heritage, and you'll find that both have a strong influence in her work. Women play an important role in her art and she tries to portray the strength and love which carried her grandmothers through their lives. She enjoys watching her work change and expand as she becomes more comfortable with how she expresses herself. She has explored many mediums, including ceramics, leather, watercolor and photography, but her favorites are acrylics and oil. She loves the look of oil and the dry time of acrylics. Oil teaches her patience while acrylics gives her more immediate gratification.

Most of Connie's work is heavily influenced by the culture and history of Native American people, most especially Native women. She finds herself drawn to what life must have been like for our grandmothers and how strong they had to be. "Ohoyo" is the Choctaw word for woman. Much of her art centers around women - their strength, their sorrow, their determination, their ability to survive, their beauty and – most of all – their love.