

Julia Hensley

Painter and multi-media artist

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Bio

Julia Hensley is a painter and mixed-media artist based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, whose work balances on the edge of abstraction while exploring the tangible world. Through paintings and drawings that examine natural landscapes, built environments, and imagined universes, she invites viewers on a visual journey through space and time.

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Hensley's early exposure to ancient history, vast landscapes, and diverse wildlife profoundly influenced her artistic outlook, infusing her work with a sense of deep time and fascination with cosmic origins. After emigrating to the US as a teenager, she received classical training at Boston University's School of Visual Arts, graduating magna cum laude in Painting under distinguished professors including David Aronson and Morton Sacks, influenced by the legacies of Philip Guston, James Weeks and sculptor, John Wilson.

Hensley draws inspiration globally, from masters like Cézanne, Matisse and Mondrian to contemporaries such as Basquiat, Amy Sillman and Julie Mehretu, as well as pre-historic, African, Japanese and pre-Columbian art, graffiti, and the work of children.

Following her 2023 move to the Southwest desert, Hensley's work has become increasingly concerned with geological structures. Her recent Geographs explore crystal and rock-like forms, while her current Travelogue series combine these with graffiti-like musings on the universe. These works layer imagery – rocks, stars, desert plants, pyramids, equations, glyphs – in rich accumulations that echo nature's constant cycle of creation, destruction and transformation.

Hensley has exhibited extensively in solo and group shows at Foster White Gallery, Paul Thiebaud Gallery, and major art expositions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago.