

Born and raised in Montana, I come from a family of artists. Pencils, paper, paints and crayons were always available. When I was 5, my Mom taught me how to draw faces. She used hard-boiled eggs, and showed me how faces are divided, no matter their shape. Those lessons and moments have stayed with me. Having been raised both on the prairie and in the mountains, the Montana landscape often informs my drawings and paintings. I knew I was lucky to live where I did and never took it for granted.

My main media are graphite pencil, colored pencil, watercolors and egg tempera and also, occasionally, crayon. My Mom, my Grandmother and I would often pack a lunch (in all seasons) and spend the day outside drawing and painting. The Montana landscapes I grew up with often appear in my paintings, even now. As an artist I feel driven to create the people and scenes that emerge on my paper, board or canvas. I paint for myself and no one else because I *have* to paint!

The Art Department at the University of Montana was where I studied ceramics and stone lithography, but my major emphasis was drawing and painting. Still, the other mediums helped to give me a new view of my artwork and enrich my life as an artist and human being. I graduated with a BFA specializing in drawing, watercolor and stone lithography. I met my husband, Reid, at the university where he attended graduate school in ceramics and sculpture. When we graduated, me with a BFA and Reid with MFA, we moved to the Chicago area where Reid was teaching college and I continued to draw and paint. I also worked as an illustrator for different publishing companies. I was often asked to illustrate very abstract ideas using people with my style of drawing (representational). One company wanted me to illustrate the concept of empathy, for example, in a representational style. There was always a deadline! But, when I wasn't working on illustrations, I was still working for one-person shows, and group shows. Reid and I also held shows together, my work 2-D with drawings and paintings, and his 3-D with sculpture and pottery. And even while working on my MEAS and PhD degrees (an extremely intensive time) I continued to draw and paint because I just had to.

While I enjoy drawing anything and everything, I especially enjoy using old tintypes, daguerreotypes and other old photos, especially at or before the turn of the 20th century as a starting point for my works. To me, they tell a story that you can often see in the faces of those folks in the photos. No one smiles in these photos, but when I draw and paint them, I can make them smile a bit if I choose. I often manipulate the images to look different than what they appear in the photos. I add swathes of color to faces and bodies and/or fine-lined tattoos mostly influenced by indigenous peoples. I enjoy thinking about the "what ifs" as stories

emerge for me from these images. I also enjoy drawing bugs, birds and bones that are left when life is gone. I do not try to make dead bugs look alive, but there is still an essence of life left just as there is with the people in those old photographs that interest and inspire me.