



JULIE T. CHAPMAN

AN ARTIST IN NATURE

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BIO

Short summary: horse obsession as a child plus lack of an equine meant I drew them monomaniacally out of unrequited love. (I even grew up on a farm! the injustice of it all...). And now I'm an artist.

Long story: after drawing nothing but horses for years, I went to engineering school because the "starving" part of the artist equation didn't appeal to me (I enjoy eating). Once I was working for HP, voila! at long last I could take riding lessons, acquire my own steed, and even compete in dressage and eventing.

Several trips to South America opened my eyes to the notion that there were, in fact, other animals besides horses on the planet. This led to a seminal trip to Yellowstone, wherein I discovered some of the gorgeous megafauna of our continent (and began drawing those).

I was still an engineer, of course, but had fun with art by making portraits of friends' horses and whatnot. I don't recall now what possessed me to do so, but I entered Arts for the Parks in the late 1990s with an elk painting, and was juried into the Top 100. This was the first art competition I'd ever entered; I was completely clueless about the art world. Arts for the Parks kicked me into that world, as I started showing in galleries and actually painting things for people I didn't know, also known as "collectors".

Miracles do happen occasionally, and I won the Arts for the Parks Grand Prize in 2002; if this wasn't a kick in the butt to become a full-time artist, then nothing would be. So my husband and I left California (and HP) and moved to Montana, where I discovered the modern American West and small-town rodeos. This led me back to painting my beloved horses - in action! - as well as wildlife. My location in western Montana means that Yellowstone is just a few hours' drive away, the National Bison Range is practically in my backyard, and there are loads of summertime rodeos to attend...all of which means I get to spend plenty of time on fieldwork (ask me about being chased by bull elk or finding myself just a few feet from a wild grizzly bear).

A first visit to South Africa in 2011 has ignited another obsession for me; that continent's wildlife is varied, patterned, and spectacular...and I can't wait to return.

This reads as a story of obsessions, and I suspect most animal artists would affirm that the excitement of doing fieldwork, observing wildlife, and sharing that joy through our art is a deeply held passion. I'm lucky - and thankful - that I live my life's passion every day....and, so far, I'm still eating.