

Seemingly, born and bred to be an artist ~ father, mother, uncles, and cousins~ all artists!

Judy's parents were careful to cultivate an environment in which their children could flourish. They moved the family from Southern to Northern California "to get us away from the big city and into the country," and her dad's at-home studio was always open to the children. "We could just watch, or we might model for him, or if we wanted, he would give us art lessons. But what my father taught me, by example, was that the life of an artist could be very wonderful." The harmony of the natural world -- "how everything works so well together" -- is a source of inspiration to her, something precious and worth protecting... Throughout high school and college, Larson found every opportunity to indulge her passion, whether by taking classes, creating backdrops for school productions, or entering local art competitions--the county trucks in Napa Valley still sport the county seal she created as a contest participant during her college days.

Judy set out with her BS degree in commercial art, studied printing, typesetting, and design, and experimented with various paint media, especially watercolors. It was during this time that she



also created her first two scratchboards in black and white.

As one of the world's premier scratchboard artists, Judy inhabits an exclusive universe. Because relatively little has been written about this particularly demanding art form, scratchboard artists tend to go their own way, developing their own styles and techniques--for instance, some artists use scratchboards already inked in black; others, like Larson, start with white boards and ink them themselves. Some use special scratchboard nibs or engraving tools to create their lines; some go so far as to use dental picks and scalpels. To get the finest line she possibly can, Judy uses an X-Acto knife, changing to a fresh blade every few minutes. Also, Larson believes that she is the only artist who creates her wildlife figures on scratchboard and then fills in the rest of the picture with acrylics. But not until she added the camouflage element into her scratchboards did Larson find her own, unique direction. Judy notes, "With so much great work being done, it's imperative that one have one's own medium, one's own style, one's own distinctive mark."

The overwhelming success Larson has enjoyed, though, dictates that she sticks within these parameters. Collectors are attracted to a recognizable style, and they desire certain continuity. Rather than constraining her, however, the expectations of her fans have forced Judy's special genius into bloom. She became what she was destined to be ~ a storyteller.