

# CutBank

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## Two Prints

Jenny LaPier

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## About the Artist: Jenny LaPier

Born in Browning, Montana, in 1955, LaPier began drawing and painting in early childhood, when abstract and surrealist images first captured her imagination.

Although she received basic art instruction in public schools, LaPier recalls "frustrating years of knowing that I had to paint and not knowing what to do with it." Oil was her medium of choice, but she became as creative as the situation demanded. "I would use anything in my house. I had shelving paper with wax on one side, and I used that. I used my children's crayons, I used make-up and make-up brushes." Five years ago she began to study art technique, first on her own, and later in art classes at Flathead Valley Community College. The results were immediate. After completing two paintings a day for six months, LaPier found it was no longer possible to set her work aside. "It brought everything into focus. For the first time I could have an idea and come out at the end with that idea in front of me."

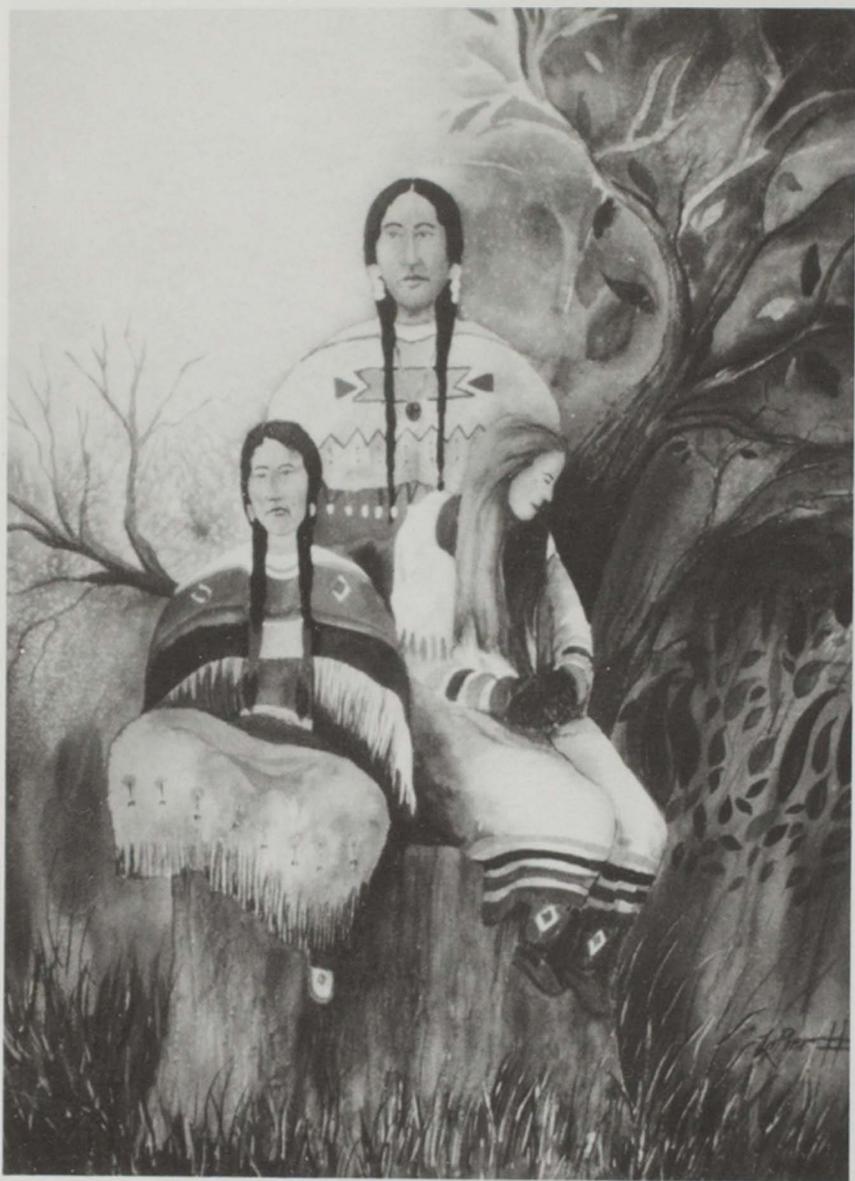
An enrolled member of the Blackfeet tribe, her work reflects that culture as well as her own spiritual and emotional growth within it. In paintings such as "Mother Blackfeet," LaPier addresses her own struggle to come to terms with a blended Blackfeet, Cree and French heritage: "I didn't want her, the French girl, to sit like she is; it seemed to happen unconsciously. But there she was, and I could see her shame, I could feel her shame.

"Being an artist has freed me up unbelievably. There's a place where strong old ideas from the white world are set in stone, and being able to move in that, to express the anger and frustration—that's a real powerful place for me to be."

LaPier maintains a working studio, Renegade Art, at 200 E. Center Street in Kalispell, Montana, where she displays her own work, as well as that of other Native American artists. She chairs the board of directors of the Northwest Inter-Tribal Center in Kalispell, and serves as docent at the Hockaday Center of the Arts. Her paintings were recently featured at the Native American Art Show in Great Falls, and the Native American Cultural Institute in Billings.



Jenny LaPier  
*Power of the Spider*  
watercolor, 30" x 22"  
1993



Jenny LaPier, *Mother Blackfeet*, watercolor, 30" x 22", 1992