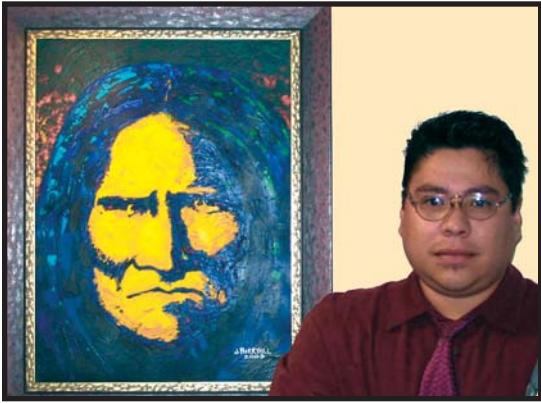


July, 2003

# Two Ways of Looking at a Canvas

Jason Berryhill — Graphic Designer

by James Burger



**Jason Berryhill with his portrait of Geronimo.** Photo: Angela Parker

**W**hat's it like to land a knockout punch or win first prize in an art exhibition? Just ask Jason Berryhill. He's done both.

A member of the Hidatsa/Arikara nation, Berryhill grew up on the Fort Berthold Reservation, in west central North Dakota. Interested in art since early childhood, upon graduating from high school he left home to study graphic design and visual arts in Salt Lake City, Utah. While there, he interned at Axiom Design, an advertising agency, where he became involved with animation, 3-D modeling, and packaging design for MGM Studios and Sony PlayStation games. He found the power of a computer as an artistic tool fascinating, much different from

painting or doing airbrushed work. "I knew that if I could translate my ideas onto the screen, the possibilities would be endless," he explains, adding that he's particularly interested in broadcast digital graphics.

Since 2001, Berryhill has been a Graphic Designer at Dartmouth's Design, Printing and Mailing Services (DPMS), where he and colleague Tina Nadeau design everything from publication layouts to posters, promotional materials, and logos. "It's a great job," he says, "and I have a lot of creative freedom." One of his favorite projects was working on the 2001 Tucker Foundation Annual Report. "It was difficult, but I enjoyed it very much. I had a lot of artistic control, the final result was great, and everyone was very pleased."

**"I'd like to be heavyweight champion of the world and the CEO of a digital media company!"**

Prominently displayed in his office is a large poster of Bearclan, a superhero that Berryhill has created and for whom he would like to produce a comic book series. "The inspiration for the character was a 1999 legal case involving the USDA. It was a class action lawsuit filed by Native American farmers and ranchers, addressing discrimination, denial of loans, and revoking of leases." The poster, in the form of a comic book cover, shows a defiant Bearclan, charging forward with a raised fist, and is emblazoned with attention-grabbing phrases such as "His Biggest Battle Yet...The USDA Lawsuit" and "Equal Justice...See Bearclan Defeat the USDA Over-Ruler!" It was awarded first prize at an art show in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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Yet, there is another side to this talented, quiet, and unassuming artist. Wearing a t-shirt autographed by Sugar Ray Leonard, Berryhill spoke with me about his other passion—boxing. For the past year and a half, he has been a member of the Dartmouth Boxing Club, competing in the super heavyweight division. Last winter, he scored a knockout in a championship-level Vermont Golden Gloves match, an impressive victory for someone new to the sport.

“Boxing’s a lot like art. In both fields, you always have to think ahead, plan your steps, and think outside the box.”



Photo: Hiroshi Onitsuka

**Jason Berryhill (left) in the first round match of the 2003 Vermont Golden Gloves Championships.**

How did he get into boxing? “Well, I’ve always been a fan, but I never had boxed anywhere before. I originally joined the club for the exercise, but then started doing well in competition, so I’m going to keep at it.” Berryhill trains at Dartmouth with Elvis Lowe, and he generally has up to eight matches a season.

“Boxing’s a lot like art,” says Berryhill. “In both fields, you always have to think ahead, plan your steps, and think outside the box. You learn whether you win or lose, and sometimes the unorthodox can work. One swing can change everything.”

When I asked him what his ultimate goals would be, Jason Berryhill didn’t hesitate for a second. He replied, with Bearclan-like determination, “I’d like to be heavyweight champion of the world and the CEO of a digital media company!”