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Child's painting may have been divinely guided

SANDUSKY, Ohio - An oil painting made by a child 44 years ago may possess special powers or a message, the artist believes. Dan Sevenbergen, a 56-year-old Huron, Ohio native presently working as a railroad electrician in Pittsburgh, Kan., said he discovered the framed painting of a clown in a box of his late mother's belongings. The oil that seeped through the canvas over the years has formed a Christ-like apparition on the back of the painting that immediately caught his attention.

Other mysterious images, he said, are visible on the front of the painting. Dan and his wife, Tina, said they can't explain how the images appeared. Dan admitted, however, that he doesn't know what the painting means.

"I wanted to do something so other people could view it and see what they think this is," he said.

So he created a Web site, at www.clown2crown.com, to allow viewers to inspect the painting and make their own interpretations.

The painting, according to a date on the back, was created during the 1962-1963 school year, when Dan was in sixth grade at a Huron elementary school. The forgotten artwork had been stored away in his mother's attic for 34 years. In 1997, after his mother passed away, Dan discovered it while going through a box of his mother's belongings.

"When I saw the clown I faintly remembered painting it," he said. "As soon as I turned it over I saw the apparition. It jumped right out at me. I thought it was strange that the oil would seep through the canvas that way to create that image. I thought there was something special about it, but there is so much religious hokey out there and I didn't want to get beat down, so I just put it away and didn't mention it to anybody."

That was until this year, when his curiosity grew stronger. Dan wasn't sure whether he was seeing something special, or whether it was his imagination. He brought the painting back out of storage and showed it to Tina.

"The painting is very special to Dan in that it was something he created and his mother saved," Tina said. "She apparently felt that it was intriguing. I agree that it is unique and I am curious about the feedback we will get from others once they see it."

On the back, Dan pointed out, the outline of a Christ-like figure appears, with a halo encircling the head. On the front, contrasting images of a skull and a white-bearded man appear in the clown's outstretched right and left hands.

"It's like the contrast of good and evil," Dan said. "It wasn't done intentionally. I was a kid who never painted anything before."

The painting itself, he said, remained in remarkably good condition for its age.

"This was the only thing that was left from my school days," he said. "After 34 years there was a little damage to the frame, but the actual canvas had hardly any damage at all. The painting seems to have a will to survive. I couldn't believe the condition it was in after all those years."

The purpose of the Web site is not only to generate an awareness of the painting, but also to solicit the opinions of viewers.

"We don't want to tell people what they are seeing or what they should think," Dan said. "We want them to see it for themselves and see if they come to the same conclusion that we did."

Visit the site at **www.clown2crown.com**.

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