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Local man sees image of Christ behind painting he did as a child

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Forty-five years ago Dan Sevenbergen painted a clown during his middle-school art class in Huron.

Years later in 1997, Sevenbergen saw the painting again and found Jesus.

He came across the artwork, which he painted as an 11-year-old, in his mother's garage after she passed away. It was the back of the painting that caught Sevenbergen's attention.

"I was just looking at this stuff in a box that had my name on it," he said. "I turned it over, and it just hit me. To me it looks like a vision almost highlighting Christ's face."

Over the years the oil had seeped through the canvas, creating a vague image of what looks like a halo, face, beard and flowing robe of Jesus Christ, he said.

Not wanting to be categorized with the people who see holy images in toast or chips, he put the painting away and forgot about it.

"I didn't want to be perceived as foolish, but it laid in the back of my mind that someday I should let people see this," he said.

Sevenbergen never intended to make money off the painting. But he wanted to see what other people thought about it, so about two years ago he listed it on eBay for \$1 million dollars.

This past summer, Sevenbergen had a Web site created to display the painting and encourage viewer feedback. He said he's curious to find out if people see the same image he does, but understands if people don't.

"It's OK if you don't see it. I'm not asking anyone to see it," he said. "It's a developing thing. Wherever it takes me is where it's going to lead. I'm not going to be disappointed if it's a flop."

Sevenbergen said he still isn't interested in selling the painting, but would consider using it to raise money.

"Down the road, if it reached a frenzy and people wanted prints or something, I would do it to raise money, but who knows," he said.