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Benoist '19 Earns Briggs Library Associates Art Award

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The studio art and psychology major from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe feels good knowing he will leave UMN Morris with a part of him and his Lakota heritage for others from his tribe to see.

Recipient: Bray Benoist

Year: Senior

Hometown: Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Majors: studio art and psychology

Piece: *The Last Hunt*

Bray Benoist '19, Eagle Butte, South Dakota, is the winner of a Briggs Library Associates Art Award for his piece *The Last Hunt*. The piece will be put on permanent display in the campus library.

About the Artist

The studio art and psychology major from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe says the honor came as an unexpected surprise.

"I'm astonished at being a recipient for this award," Benoist said. "When I first came here, I had trouble grounding myself. A lot of things were new to me. There was culture shock."

Benoist started at UMN Morris as an anthropology major, but quickly found himself attracted to the arts. Although many of his relatives are painters and sculptors, he didn't see art as his path at first.

Today Benoist says his favorite medium is oil paint, and he uses the process of creating art to relieve stress and achieve balance. This practice is so important to him that his senior seminar in psychology centers on that very theme.

After graduation Benoist will take part in a 10-week fellowship at the Minnesota Historical Society, where he will curate archival materials. He also plans to further his education. Whatever he does, Benoist feels good knowing he will leave UMN Morris with a part of him and his Lakota heritage for others from his tribe to see.

For now, Benoist says he's "really pushing the art stuff." And for good reason. He's already sold three of the five pieces he displayed at the senior show.

About The Piece

The Last Hunt depicts a Lakota warrior pursuing a buffalo off the canvas. Underneath this scene is faint text from the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie Treaty, a document that, in many ways, spelled the end of a traditional way of life for Native peoples in the region. The work is done on ledger paper.