



**Corwin Clairmont
(Salish)**
*Indian Land Passage
Denied*, collograph
and chine colle,
2005; 15½ x 18”

Corwin Clairmont’s interest in art is intimately tied to his personal history of growing up in the Salish and Kootenai cultures. When he was 15 years old, he designed a tribal seal that won a reservation-wide competition; his logo remains the

official seal of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Nation. When he attended college in Montana and California, Clairmont met and was influenced by artists Rudy Autio, John Baldessari and Joseph Bueys. Afterwards, he established his career within the west coast avant-garde, taught at Otis Art Institute, co-directed PAC, a contemporary art gallery, and received fellowships from the Ford Foundation and the NEA.

Today, Clairmont is among an important group of Native American artists who use elements of their cultural background in combination with European artistic traditions to make political statements. Clairmont often uses elements of printmaking, photography and collage to create his artwork. These complex images give sharp attention to corporate and governmental injustices imposed on the Native American community and environment.

Though messages in his work are strong, their delivery is subtle, relying on ironic observations rather than overt accusations. Viewers must approach the work and examine the relationships of many visual and textual references in order to understand its full social and political commentary.

The print, *Indian Country Passage Denied*, presents viewers with the irony of the Bicentennial commemoration. History attests that the Expedition was directed from the United States government. The mission was one of exploration but also the demonstration of arrogant superiority that cemented territorial lines. Lewis and Clark did not proceed as guests in a foreign land, but as conquerors. Although lip service was paid to the independence of the Indian nations, Clairmont’s print asks: What if Lewis and Clark needed passports, and what if their passage had been denied?

Education

The University of Montana, Missoula, MT

Montana State University, Bozeman, MT
California State University, Los Angeles, CA

Selected Exhibitions

Native Perspectives on the Trail, Missoula Art Museum, 2005 (touring 2005-07)

Corwin Clairmont: Halfway Between Here & There, Missoula Art Museum, 2001

Indian Reality Today, Westfälisches Museum fuer Naturkunde, Muenster, West Germany,
1999

New Art of the West 5, Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, IN, 1996

Contemporary Indian Art, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, 1995

Submuloc Show/Columbus Woahs, ATLATL International tour, 1991-1995

Treaty Times: Past, Present and Future, Art Museum of Missoula, 1991