

Native Agents art show at Promega

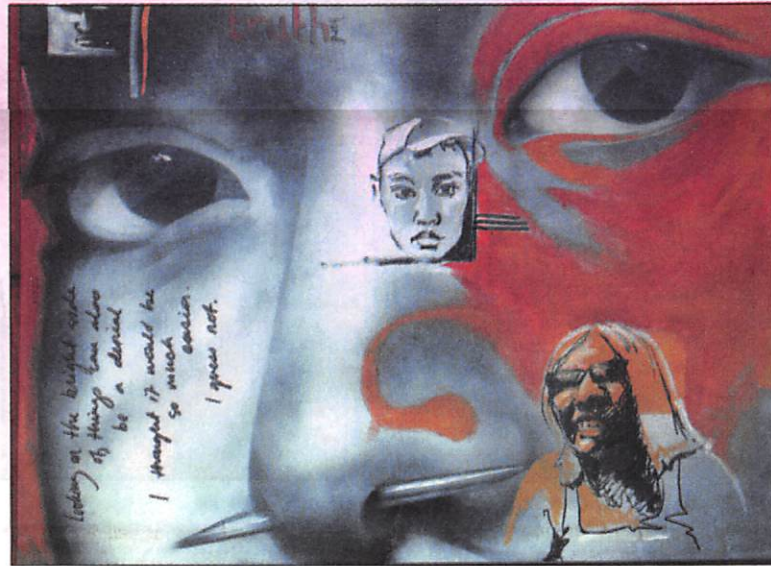
# Eclectic mix of expression

By Jonathan Gramling

It was almost like a 1960s "Happening" at Promega's BioPharmaceutical Technology Center on June 6. It was the opening for POP LIFE III, featuring the art of Native Agents, a Native American arts collective based on the Apache Nation in Arizona. Members of the group, along with youth from Madison, performed urban spoken word and read poetry. A DJ spun records in the background. Yatika Fields spray painted graffiti on paper. Skateboarders with Native American figures painted on

their boards performed for the small crowd that had gathered. People casually strolled through Promega's art gallery to look at contemporary Native art works in a variety of media.

"There's a certain kind of energy that links all of this together," said Douglas Miles Sr., the leader of the artists and owner of Apache Skateboards. "There's a certain vibrancy to it. There's a tribal aspect. I think the artwork is a little bit about survival. It's about being free and having fun with it. If there's anything that brings it together, it's the fact everyone's having fun with



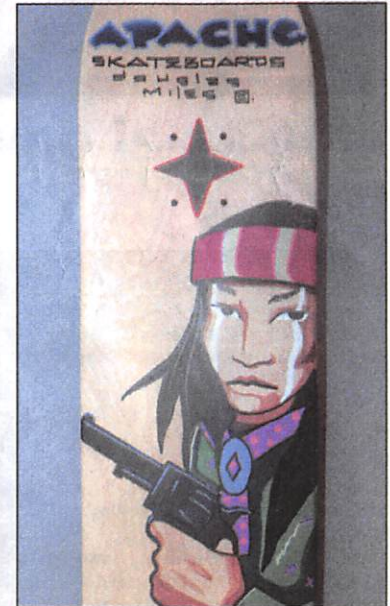
their art. It's fun to see my art being used by 10-12 year old kids. Maybe having fun is at the core of it."

Apache Skateboards is the first Native-owned skateboard company in the U.S. But it exists as much for the fun of it and the art, as much as it does to make money. Miles emphasizes that it is no competition for the large skateboard manufacturers.

The Native Agents came together through the Native Arts Leadership Initiative in Phoenix.. They have previously held the exhibition at the Institute

of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico at Princeton University. Next year, POP LIFE is slated to open in 2007 at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis.

POP LIFE III will be on exhibit at Promega, 5445 Cheryl Drive off of Fish Hatchery Road in Fitchburg, through September 6. The exhibit is free and open to the public. Viewing hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Large groups are by appointment only. For more information, call 277-2669.



Clockwise from top: Members of the Native Agents artists' collective; An Apache Skateboard, Douglas Miles Jr. exhibits his skateboarding prowess at the Lussier Teen Center; A Native Agents' painting on display at Promega.