

NORTHERN REACH

Showcase of the *Greater* Inland Northwest

Inland
Northwest
Garden
Variety

Plus:

Art of the Ironman
Priest Lake's Entree Gallery
Gentlemen on Horseback

SPRING 2010

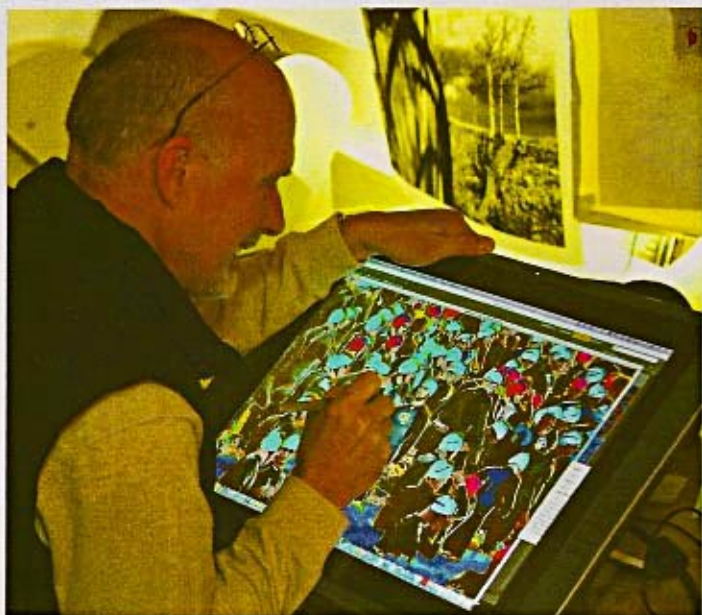
and More

Spring 2010

Art of the Ironman

Jeff Lewis Mixes the Media

by Katrina Boyer

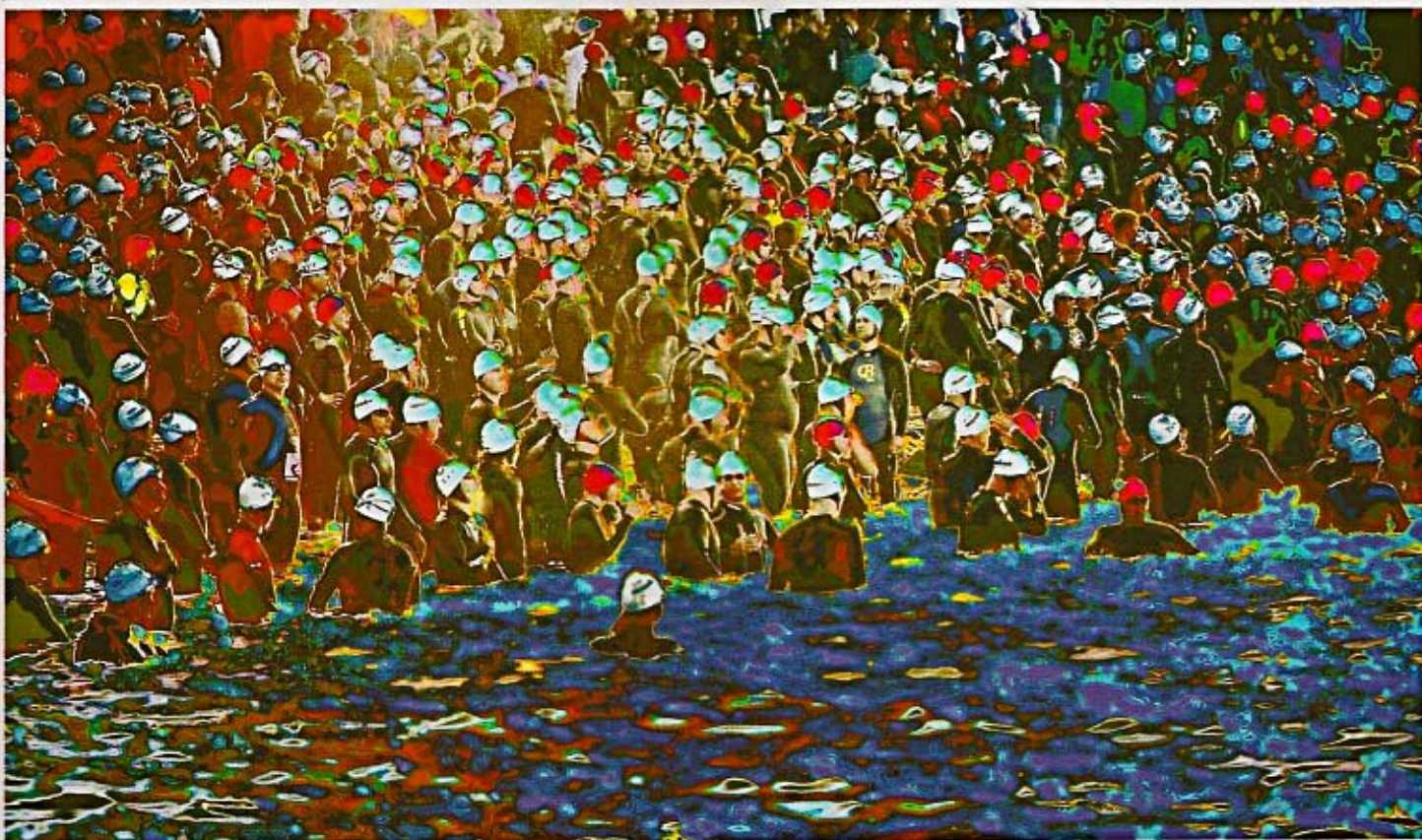


Artist Jeff Lewis at work (above)
The finished product (below)

Sunrise on the beach is generally a peaceful, serene scene. Yet, on the morning of the Ironman there is stillness in the air unlike any other, despite the hundreds of participants lining the Coeur d'Alene beach. The eerie calm belies the fury of energy waiting to be unleashed. The athletes have long trained for this one day. Each athlete knows that today is their day, each ready to take their best shot.

Meanwhile, artist Jeff Lewis sits across from the masses in a small boat waiting to take a couple of hundred shots with his 21-megapixel digital Canon. While the Ironman athletes have spent long hours preparing just for this moment, Lewis will put in his hours long after the sun goes down and the last participant crosses the finish line to take a simple photograph and transform it into a fine-art collectible. His pieces have the viewer pondering what motivates the athletes and looking for their own inner ironman.

A seasoned photographer, Jeff took his first pictures with a black and white camera he had received for his



Photos courtesy of Jeff Lewis

eighth birthday. Soon afterward, he bought his own developing kit and converted the family bathroom into a darkroom. As his passion for photography developed, so did his critical artist's eye. Jeff found that he could send the same negative to ten different developers and have ten different pictures return, none of them being quite what he envisioned.

When digital imaging technology took off, so did Jeff's art. After a couple of different careers in real estate, aviation, and sales and marketing for an aerospace company, he left the traditional working world and turned his attention to his passion. With an eye for opportunity as much as for art, Jeff used his technological skills applied over the years to manipulate his photographs into a new form of art, digitally created, yet hand painted original works akin to a traditional oil on canvas. He found that technology had caught up to the point where he could take a picture and turn it into the art he envisioned it could be.

Beginning with a digital photograph, Jeff uses a stylus rather than a paintbrush to digitally paint directly onto his computer screen. "By using special software, and sometimes multiple images of the same shot, I can produce a more three dimensional image, achieving a high dynamic range that can normally only be seen by natural eye," Jeff explains.

Termed "mixed media," the combination of original photograph and digital hand painting are then printed with archival ink on canvas or other premium media by a computerized printing process resulting in what is called a giclee.

Giclee (je-clay), a fancy French word that means to spurt, is the term coined in 1991 by printmaker Jack Duganne, to represent any inkjet-based digital print used as fine art.

After hours, days, and sometimes even weeks painting over the initial image, Jeff is able to create an original piece of artwork. Much like the Ironman slogan, "anything is possible," this artist can see the possibilities that lie beyond the camera lens.

Jeff's Ironman images can be seen at The Painter's Chair Gallery on Sherman Avenue in downtown Coeur d'Alene. Additional works are on display at the Disney Resorts, the Carlsbad Sheraton, several galleries in Aspen, Colorado, and his own Southern California studio, appropriately named Optical Delusions. ■