

PRESENCE

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White House honors three-time champions

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On the cover
President Clinton congratulates Pho Tran, captain of the three-time defending national champion Wheelchair Movin' Mavs, as (from left) head coach Jim Hayes, Texas Sen. Mike Moncrief and U.S. Rep. Martin Frost look on.

Letters to the editor
Presence magazine welcomes any correspondence regarding its content. Please send your comments to Presence magazine, UTA Box 19137, Arlington, Texas, 76019. If you would like your comments published in Presence, please direct them to "Letters to the Editor." Include your name, address and, if you are a former student, the year(s) you attended or graduated from UTA and the degree you earned.

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Greenwald's artistic career headed down the right track

Artist and alumnus Warren Greenwald sees himself as the engineer directing his life's railroad. Passengers enter and exit the rail cars, but he determines where the train will go.

Over time, that train has made significant changes in direction and speed.

Greenwald, who graduated from UTA in May 1992 with a bachelor of fine arts degree, was 34 years old in November 1980 when a spinal cord blood vessel broke, leaving him paralyzed from the middle of his chest down.

For reasons unknown to his doctors, Greenwald retained full use of his right arm, a happy circumstance which eventually led him to art.

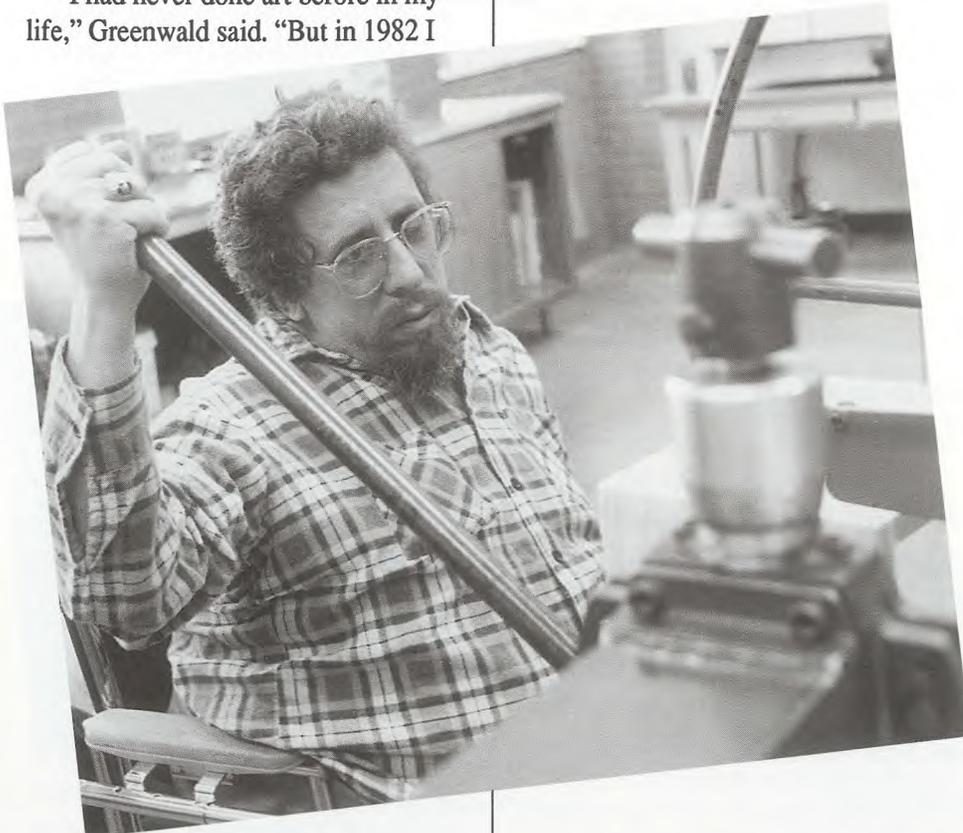
"I had never done art before in my life," Greenwald said. "But in 1982 I

was introduced to Roseland Sildegs, a registered art therapist. She encouraged me."

It had taken two years for Greenwald to work through the anger and frustration of being in the wheelchair.

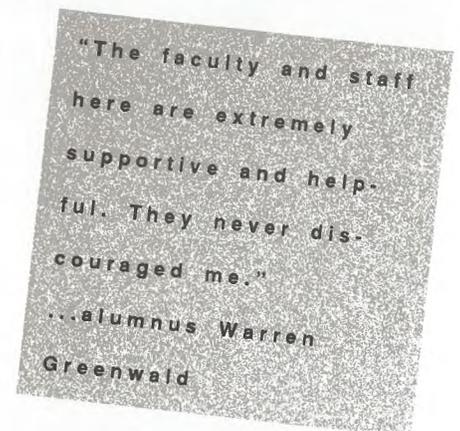
"My neurosurgeon said, 'You can bite the bullet and let us do whatever we can for you, or you can just lay here and feel sorry for yourself.'"

Greenwald bit the bullet and began his art career with basic courses at Tarrant County Junior College. He transferred to UTA in 1985. UTA art graduate Randy Souders, now a professional artist in Fort Worth and also in a wheelchair, provided more encouragement.



By Sherry Wodraska Neaves

"I told him 'I'm thinking about becoming an artist,'" Greenwald said. "And he said, 'Do it. Just do it.' So, I decided to build a career as a professional artist. I'm no more or less an artist than any other student."



Other encouragement for Greenwald's art career has come from UTA art faculty and staff.

Department senior secretary Helen Gosnell calls Greenwald an upbeat person always in a good mood. She points with pride to his work's acceptance at a juried art show in Beaumont and the sale of one piece to a buyer in New York City.

"The faculty and staff here are extremely supportive and helpful," Greenwald said. "They never discouraged me. They even adapted an easel for me to use."

Printmaking is one of the art genres at which alumnus Warren Greenwald excels.

Art Associate Professor Bill Stegall admires Greenwald's determination and his work.

"I just think the world of Warren," Stegall said. Greenwald's first efforts didn't make a big impression on the art faculty, he explained. "But I thought he'd come around. He had good judgment, good taste and he hung in there. Now he has really arrived, or is beginning to, in this area."

Because he has the use of only one hand, Greenwald confines his work to the two-dimensional realms of painting and printmaking.

"With two hands I could be doing sculpture or clay, but I'm limited," he said.

However, he does not limit his works in size or scope.

"I'm working with 3 feet by 8 feet — really big paintings — now," he said.

The artist recently began a painting of the crucifixion. The figure of Christ, already sketched in on the canvas, will be painted black and white in front of a gold, purple and red background.

Greenwald took his inspiration from a 16th century altar piece by Matthes Grunwald — possibly one of his ancestors.

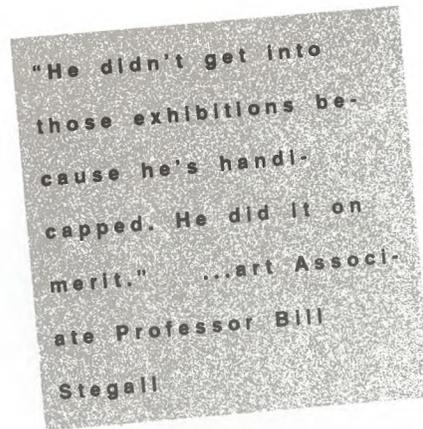
"I have a strong faith and I admire his work," Greenwald said.

The artist's portfolio also includes a growing set of prints, one of which was recently selected for the juried show in Beaumont.

"He's highly intelligent," Stegall said. "I think he'll do well as the type of artist who does it with the mind, maybe more than with just raw talent."

Greenwald sees his paintings and prints as the scenes along his railroad track.

"Passengers get on with their own baggage," he said. "I'm the engineer. It's my job to lead them along my track, but not to inhibit them in their



viewing. My job as an artist is to allow them to see. You can't control the biases people have toward art, but there is no right or wrong.

"You've got to put the stuff out there for criticism without manipulating the view."

Greenwald keeps putting his work out there. This winter his paintings and prints have been on display in UTA's University Center Gallery and at the Trompe L'Oeil Gallery in Dallas.

"He didn't get into those exhibitions because he's handicapped," Stegall said. "He did it on merit. And the Beaumont juried show? That's statewide. They don't make any allowances for you, because they don't know you're handicapped."

Greenwald continues to expand his artistic repertoire. He is currently back in classes, perfecting his printmaking technique and learning some alternative art processes.

"He has improved tremendously in the last year," Stegall said. "He has very good design sense. He's right in the mainstream of some things that are going on in art."

Greenwald deliberately seeks to provoke emotional responses with his work. And he's satisfied with any strong reaction, positive or negative.

"If people don't like it, that provokes an emotion too," he says. "The worst thing would be for someone to say, 'Oh, that's okay.'"

"Indifference is the worst thing."