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In the galleries: Paper pushers: Artists stretch creative limits

Concepts of the medium are expanded, manipulated, recycled or otherwise transformed



Installation photo of "Joe Feddersen: Terrain: Speaking of Home"

By **Mark Jenkins**

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Joe Feddersen

Neither the materials nor the techniques of Joe Feddersen's multimedia art indicate his Native American heritage. That's revealed instead by the decorative motifs of the pieces on exhibit in "Terrain: Speaking of Home" at the National Academy of Sciences. Basic outlined images, inspired by Washington state landscapes and Amerindian petroglyphs, appear in lithographs, woven baskets and blown-glass vessels. The artist starkly depicts horses, people and boats, but not all his subjects are primeval: Among the glass vessels is one decorated with a rendering of a cellphone tower.

Retired as an art instructor from the Evergreen State College, Feddersen now lives in his hometown, Omak, on the Colville Reservation east of Seattle. Omak Lake is the inspiration for one print in this show, but the effect is not altogether bucolic, thanks



Cell Phone Tower, 2009, blown and etched glass, 22 x 8 x 8 inches

to a prominent area of hot-pink spray paint. Such touches acknowledge the modern world and urban environments.

In a conversation with a Colville Reservation elder, Feddersen learned that native youth on quests used to add to the local petroglyphs. “Therefore, they would extend the history, learning the past and adding parts of the present,” notes the artist’s statement. Feddersen does the same in his way, revisiting the landscape of his youth while lamenting its degradation with glass pieces such as “Clear Cut,” which depicts a field of tree stumps. Sometimes you can’t go all the way home again.

Joe Feddersen: Terrain: Speaking of Home Through Sept. 23
at the National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Ave. NW.