

Joe Feddersen

Colville Confederated Tribes

I don't really remember becoming an artist. As a child I was always making things. I remember my uncle Tom, he carved animals like deer, horses or wolves out of wood. I remember my mom sitting at the kitchen table drawing horses in the morning light after Dad went to work and before we the kids got up.

My education came from working at H. H. Hall, a craft store in Omak, during high school and going on to college at Wenatchee Valley College, the University of Washington and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. I think there was an ongoing balance between my native heritage and the mainstream arts. In tandem, I participated in the native fine arts movement since the early eighties.

The clearest blending of influences occurred at the introduction of the Plateau series. It drew on my Plateau heritage basket making and celebrated processes inherent to printmaking. I thought I should learn to make baskets. Elizabeth Woody was learning then and showed me the basics. I learned the twining process to create Sally bags. I never wanted to mimic baskets so I created new designs—ones that spoke to the contemporary environment.

Living as an artist may not be directly saving the world, but perhaps we are saving ourselves and hopefully, in the process, making the world a better place.

High Voltage Tower, 2015

Waxed linen basket
9 x 6.5 x 6.5 inches

Cell Phone Tower, 2009

Hand blown glass vessel
22 x 8 x 8 inches