

to Wabanaki artists will ultimately help each tribe continue their traditions and become more popular among the younger generation. Over centuries of exposure to other cultures, the Wabanaki tribes have suffered cultural deprivation and neglect. Tribal members practicing their culture is not as common as it once was. The development of contemporary baskets will appeal to today's youth and grasp their attention, which will lead to a wider interest in continuing cultural practices. This would hopefully inspire more involvement in community activities and ceremonies. And this would allow tradition to thrive, a goal of each Wabanaki tribe.

—Lydia Soctomah



Joe Allen (Fallon Paiute-Shoshone), *Duck Decoy*, tulle reed and tulle cordage.

Reno

Tule Duck Decoys and *Endangered*

Sheppard Galleries, University
of Nevada, Reno

THE TWO SOLO EXHIBITS of Joe Allen (Fallon Paiute-Shoshone), *Tule Duck Decoys*, and Emily Arthur (Eastern Cherokee descent), *Endangered*, at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), premiered as part of National Native American Heritage Month this past November.

Tule Duck Decoys, curated by Paul Baker Prindle, director of Sheppard Contemporary and University Galleries, features about a dozen of Joe Allen's duck decoys in various sizes, from miniature to actual size, displayed in Plexiglas cases throughout the gallery. All of the ducks are made from cattail, tule, and greasewood, and are intricately woven to resemble a typical Mallard or canvasback duck.

Tule duck decoys have been used by Native peoples of the Great Basin for hunting waterfowl in the high grass and marsh areas for thousands of years. In 1911, archaeologists found ancient tule duck decoys and other tule weavings in Lovelock Cave near Fallon, Nevada, after they were first discovered by miners collecting bat guano. Dating between 400 BCE and 100 CE, these are the oldest known duck decoys on the planet. Native peoples have seasonally inhabited Lovelock and surrounding caves for at

least 6,000 years. Tule, the bulrush reed that grows in the same environment as the cattails, has been used to weave baskets, shoes, hats, clothing, seasonal housing, boats, and duck decoys.

Joe Allen, 37, lives on the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Reservation near Fallon, Nevada, where he creates the decoys. He learned his craft from family members. He also apprenticed with his cousin Martin George (Fallon Paiute-Shoshone), who also studied under his Paiute relatives. Allen says he makes the ducks mostly for collectors from all parts of the world, but also for displays at regional museums and for hunters wanting to use the decoys in the customary fashion. He says it is great to see that something so ancient is still being used, in so many ways, over such a vast span of life and time of his culture.

The Numu (Paiute) people identify themselves by where they live in the Great Basin and by the food they eat. The Fallon Numu call themselves the Toi Ticutta, the Cattail Eaters. Cattails grow along the marsh range near the Fallon Reservation. Called Stillwater Marsh, it is an important waterfowl migration stop along the Pacific Flyway.

Today, the marshland near the Fallon reservation has been turned into the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, established in 1948, a once popular stop for birders and the like. The marshes have decreased significantly over the last century with local farming, water diversions, and drought. Artists like Joe Allen who work with native plants sometimes have to travel elsewhere to collect the

tule, cattails, and greasewood to create the decoys and other weavings.

Also on exhibit in the Sheppard Gallery at UNR is Emily Arthur's *Endangered*. Arthur is assistant professor of printmaking at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her ethereal serigraphs and etchings on paper stem from her environmental concern for animals and their loss of habitat. Informed by her recent residency at Moore Laboratory of Zoology at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, the imagery of gnatcatcher birds, deer, butterflies, and coastal sage are layered with fragile color tones, with pale data and base maps of the ecosystems telling a visual story of the landscape and its future.

As part of the exhibit's programming, Nancy Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache), associate professor of art history and visual arts at Occidental College, gave a talk titled "Global Indigenities in Art." Mithlo discussed the presence of Native artists at the Venice Biennale in Italy and *Re-Riding History: From the Southern Plains to the Matanzas Bay*.

Emily Arthur, together with Marwin Begaye (Navajo) and John Hitchcock (Comanche), co-curated *Re-Riding History*, a 72-artist traveling exhibit. This group show responds to the imprisonment of Indigenous Southern Plains peoples and their journey from Fort Sill to the military complexes in St. Augustine, Florida, from 1875 to 1878.

Emily Arthur's catalogue for *Endangered* can be found on the university's website. —Melissa Melero