



“Environmental Impact,” a traveling exhibit, will be on display at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute now through July 6.

RTPI Exhibit: Making An Impact

BY ROBERT W.
PLYLER

IN REVIEW

Through July 6, the walls of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute are hung with an art show, bringing some of the most eloquent works by dozens of different nature artists, combined in a travelling exhibition titled, “Environmental Impact.”

As the title suggests, the paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, and other media all deal with the way the human race changes and influences the world in which we all live.

The large exhibit fills the ground-floor display spaces in the beautiful institute’s headquarters, also covers most of the second floor walls, as well. In addition, there are two smaller exhibits open, as well.

As a visitor enters the building, there is a small, central gallery directly in front of him. In that gallery, there is an exhibit dealing with Peterson’s life here in Jamestown, which bridges the work which he did here with the gradually changing work which he did in New York City.

On the second floor, just to the right of the head of the staircase, there is a small exhibit dealing with the passenger pigeon. That bird, which became extinct exactly 100 years ago, was once the most numerous species on our continent. Flocks of the birds flew at an estimated 60 mph, in their regular migrations. Eyewitness reports claim that the pigeons kept the sun virtually invisible for several days at a time, and when they had flown over a particular area, left droppings more than a foot deep. Despite their seemingly vast numbers, the birds became extinct within a period of 50 years.

Returning to the larger exhibit, each of the 55 works of art portrays a message about humanity’s needlessly wasteful and destructive impact on the world of nature.

In some cases, the

message is loud, clear and unquestionable. “Apocalypse,” by Walter Ferguson, shows a view of the planet, as seen from space, nearly blotted out by what seems like an endless landscape filled with smoking industrial chimneys, nuclear reactors, stacks of old tires, and other such demonstrations of human neglect.

Others are more subtle in their message. “Untitled #3,” by Diana Sanchez, is a black-and-white photograph of an elephant in a circus. An attractive young woman waves from the elephant’s neck. Large bracelets surround the animal’s front legs, as it rears up, for the entertainment of the crowd. The photo is labeled “part of the ‘Guilty Pleasure’ series.”

Probably the best-known artist whose work appears in the exhibit is Canadian wildlife artist Robert Bateman, who has four large works in the show.

Artist Cole Johnson, whose stark black and white drawing of a bird, hanging limply from wires, near a pole, where it has been electrocuted, is one of the first work one sees, as one enters the exhibit, is a resident of Deposit, N.Y., which is located along the Southern Tier Expressway. Johnson will be present in the gallery June 27, from 5-8 p.m. to greet the public and to speak about his drawing, and his artwork in general.

The show is only in town for a rather short stay, so I encourage you to see the exhibit at your first opportunity. RTPI is located at 311 Curtis St., near the campus of Jamestown Community College. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays. On Sundays, they’re open from 1-5 p.m. The art is both beautiful and educational, and well worth your attention.