

Roy Kady Exhibit Opening by Debra Greer

Song of the Male Spider April 2-22, 2010
Gallery Opening at Denver University Museum of Anthropology

Amidst the bustle of DU's lively urban campus, a new face was seen Friday April 2 in the University of Denver Museum of Anthropology, Sturm Hall. Roy Kady, of Teec Nos Pos, AZ, came to Denver to tell stories of his heritage and filled the gallery with unique hand woven blankets, rugs, horse tack, and the raw materials and tools of traditional Navajo weaving. Roy is a Navajo man who weaves. His tales of weaving and the cultural traditions of his people gave the audience an in-depth view into the life of a Navajo weaver.

Roy captivated the audience, packed to standing room only in a lecture hall across from the gallery, with his telling of the legend of Spider Man, who he says with a grin, taught Spider Woman to weave. Roy's joyful style of speaking, using gentle humor interspersed with song, history and tales of his heritage drew us magically into his fold. He paced as he spoke, treading softly across a magnificent hand woven rug centered in the space, flanked by ultra modern video screens showing photos of his beloved churro sheep, his family and grazing lands, even his pickup. The alchemy of tradition and technology was electrifying, his stories believable and human, with a touch of mystery and hints of the Sacred. The overall spirit of Roy's message conveyed the humanity of a people who are working to thrive in this modern world.

That alchemy carried over to the delicious food prepared by Chef Freddie Bitsoie that was shared afterwards. Bitsoie's creation of an upscale menu included traditional Navajo foods such as lamb, squash and corn meal prepared in delicate balance with savory seasonings and sweet agave nectar, stimulated the taste buds and tempted even the most reticent explorer. I personally could have made a most satisfying meal of this excellent fare and well that could have happened, for in typical Navajo style there was plenty for all. Move over Kneel Down Bread, there is more to blue corn than mush!

Again, in the gallery, tradition and technology complemented one another, weaving the life story of a shepherd, weaver and man who loves his people into a fabric that demonstrates his commitment to excellence on all levels. Featured in the gallery are a high tech video of his family's sheep herding lifestyle on one end, with the traditional plant and mineral dyestuff of the Navajo Weaver on the other end. In between, Roy's weaving altar is seen in a case, a display of his Mother's weaving tools spotlighted, a section of practical items such as braided horse tack and saddle blankets, and numerous examples of Roy's innovative design style combine to bring the many facets of Roy's life and talent into focus. Interspersed among the weavings are the raw materials of churro wool and looms containing rugs in progress, filling this space with a tangible presence of the complex relationships between the Navajo People, their sheep, land and spirituality.

The show and lecture were sponsored and expertly co-curated by grad student Teresa Montoya, as part of her master's thesis in Anthropology and Museum Curation. More of Roy's work can be viewed by visiting his website at <http://www.dinewoven.com/>

Dye Stuff
photo by

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