

# Duane Linklater

at 80 Washington Square East Galleries,  
through Feb. 18

80 Washington Square East



Duane Linklater, an artist from Moose Cree First Nation in Northern Ontario, has included objects made by himself, his twelve-year-old son, and his late grandmother in this evocative show that questions art world assumptions. In “From Our Hands, With Ethel Linklater (Trapped) and Tobias Linklater,” sections of walls were removed, leaving a brick layer exposed and replaced with an armature of metal studs, lending an air of impermanence to the venue. Throughout the galleries, elegant eight-foot columns composed of metal studs, powder-coated white and red, stand like monolithic Minimalist sculptures. Linklater turns commonplace construction materials into totemic art objects. But more remarkable is his inclusion of a magnificent group of beaded mitts, slippers, and booties made from fur and caribou hide by Ethel Linklater, his grandmother. The incongruous presentation on metal and concrete stands that evoke widespread practices in contemporary sculpture underscores the lack of critical attention and respect for objects made by indigenous women. Ethel was celebrated in her community and her works are on loan from the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, which specializes in work by First Nations artists; they were included in the exhibition “From Our Hands” (the namesake of the show at 80WSE), which toured Ontario in the 1980s. Linklater’s mix of genres and traditions calls into question how objects classified as crafts are suppressed in the Euro-American art system.

—Lindsay Pollock

Pictured: Duane Linklater: *Speculative apparatus 1 for the work of nohkompan* (detail), concrete, welded stainless steel, tape, 16 by 16 by 19 inches, with Ethel Linklater: *Beaded Slippers*, c. 1980, caribou leather, moose leather, beads, rabbit fur, 9 by 3½ inches. Courtesy 80 Washington Square East Gallery. Photo Mercer Union, Toronto.