

ART & DESIGN

# What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

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## DUANE LINKLATER

*Through Feb. 18. 80WSE Gallery, 80 Washington Square East, Manhattan; 212-998-5747, [steinhardt.nyu.edu/8owse](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/8owse).*

As part of his 2012 graduate project at Bard College's Center for Curatorial Studies, Duane Linklater, a Cree artist from Northern Ontario, did a beautiful thing: He planted blueberry bushes on the center's wide lawn. It was a gesture of both possession and sharing. The garden was on land rightfully owned by indigenous people, as every inch of American soil is, but its bounty was beyond owning, there for everyone to sample.

Mr. Linklater's solo show at 80WSE Gallery, "From Our Hands," is also a multilayered take on the telling of history and who has access to what. Three walls of the galleries have been stripped of drywall and studs, exposing their original brickwork, and new studs have been added spelling out "WHAT THEN REMAINS." The front gallery is filled by upright beams of plywood and steel, with materials thrown over them — animal hides, blankets, plastic sheets — that suggest associations with modern Native American urban labor. In two back galleries are low wood platforms arranged, museum style, or markey style, with objects, including traditional bead-embroidered moccasins and gloves, a short Claymation video playing on a flat screen and a bouquet of dried flowers.

The embroidered pieces were made by Mr. Linklater's grandmother Ethel Linklater (1932-2004) and appeared in a traveling museum show of Native American art called "From Our Hands." The stop-motion video is by Mr. Linklater's son Tobias, 12. Titled "Origin of the Hero," it's a Nintendo-derived quest narrative that may or may not incorporate elements of tribal stories. The words spelled out by the steel studs, which have been painted bright red, are from a 2015 statement by the Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor in a case involving indigenous sovereignty: Take it away completely, she asked, and what remains?

Native Americans now have rights in their originating lands only through United States law. Mr. Linklater has access to his grandmother's art, his family heritage, only through the institution that owns it. (Ethel Linklater's works are on loan from the Thunder Bay Art Gallery in Ontario.) What Tobias Linklater keeps and loses of his cultural heritage in a media-saturated world, only time will tell. The bouquet in the exhibition — organized by Georgina Jackson of Mercer Union, a Toronto art space, and Nicola Lees, director of 80WSE — may be taken as a memorial gesture to indigenous lives and powers lost. Yet the words written in the steel studs will remain in place behind new walls built after the show closes, unseen but remembered, into the indefinite future.

HOLLAND COTTER