

Catriona Jeffries

PRESS RELEASE

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In this solo presentation we are pleased to highlight the most recent work of Duane Linklater (b. 1976, Omaskêko Cree First Nation; Treaty 9 territory, Canada). His practice explores the current and historical conditions of Indigenous people and practices in relation to the physical and conceptual structures of the museum and art history. These explorations are articulated in a myriad of forms including sculpture, photography, video, installation and text works.

The works featured here simultaneously articulate and withhold knowledge. The dyed, painted and digital prints on linen formally engage recent Western painting and art history, yet their accrual of traditional Indigenous materials such as honey, yellow ochre, charcoal and cochineal dye, stake claim to another value system and language entirely. Literally drawing Cree syllabics (a visual Indigenous writing system) over the surface of the “paintings”, the text when translated refers to the materials in the work itself, while the titles of the works are rough translations of these words and speak to the multiple layers of translation and the knowledge lost and gained in these processes.

Also shown is a richly complex video sculpture containing a three channel film of the artist’s family engaging with a teepee structure/sculpture on their land in Northern Ontario, set to a soundtrack featuring his teenage son. This is also accompanied by a hanging wall textile sculpture—a handmade hooded sweatshirt traditionally dyed with crushed insect shells and screen printed with imagery from the first all-Indigenous cast film from 1920.

By upsetting the dominant boundaries and categories of identity through this network of personal and cross cultural referents, Linklater’s work articulates a position of refusal. The tension of information withheld in the work relates directly to Indigenous self-determination, and the autonomy and agency of creating spaces of potential in contrast to ongoing colonial ideologies.

Linklater earned a BFA in Fine Art and Native Studies from the University of Alberta in 2005 and an MFA in Film and Video from the Milton Avery Graduate School of Arts at Bard College in 2012. His solo exhibitions include the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University, Lansing (2017); 80 WSE Gallery, New York City, and Mercer Union, Toronto (2016); and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2015). Linklater’s work has been included in group exhibitions at Artists Space, New York City, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2019); the High Line, New York City (2018); the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal (2017); and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2015), among others. He was the 2016 recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award for Media Art and the 2013 Sobey Art Award winner.

Vancouver

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