

# Explore Frye Art Museum's intriguing new exhibit through these 5 works

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1 of 2 | A visitor to the Frye Art Museum views "winter in america\_no door\_âkamenimok," Duane Linklater's 2020 work created from digital print on... (Jonathan Vanderweit) [More](#) ▾

By [Brendan Kiley](#)

*Seattle Times features reporter*

## A&E Pick of the Week

**Editor's note:** Given the persistently high COVID-19 case count, COVID protocols and other details for events are subject to change. Please check your event's website for COVID requirements and the latest information, and heed local health authorities' safety recommendations as they're updated.

Some artists let you know exactly what they're up to. Locally, I'm thinking of [Anthony White](#) and his loud, bonkers, plasticky paintings of baubles, preening bodies, sunglasses, jewelry, drugs, junk-food wrappers and phones, phones, phones — it's a frenetic (but not shallow) [inquiry into image, consumption, distraction](#).

Other artists are more mysterious. I can only fumble through the mist of what, if anything, is encoded in the shapes and shades of geometricians like [Victoria Haven](#) — but that doesn't mean I don't love them.

The Ontario artist [Duane Linklater](#) (Omaskêko Cree) hovers somewhere between the obvious and the obscure. There are stories and ideas in "[mymothersside](#)," currently occupying several rooms at Frye Art Museum, but we only catch fragments and echoes, like we're overhearing something — or being permitted to overhear little bits of something that isn't ours to fully comprehend.

There is sorrow here, and loss: stained teepee covers hanging on walls and draped across the floor; white and weathered teepee poles, some bundled and stacked like bones in an ossuary; animal skins, some hanging by their eyeholes. But there's also hardness and defiance: a dyed-pink logo of the American Indian Movement (AIM); graffiti from AIM's occupation of Alcatraz Island reading "Custer had it coming"; video footage of Linklater, artist Brian Jungen (Dane-zaa) and Jungen's uncle hunting and butchering a moose; living houseplants that belonged to Linklater's mother; blueberry bushes he's planted in the Frye's courtyard.

Linklater's work seems to ask questions about what has been erased and ruined — and what remains. In fact, let's approach "mymothersside" in five objects, the first of which literally asks that question.

1. **"What Then Remainz":** The words are spelled in red on steel metal studs against a partially demolished wall on the Frye's eastern flank — stripped of its drywall, with the electrical system exposed. The quote comes from a rhetorical question asked by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor during *Dollar General Corp. v. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*, a 2016 case that became an argument about Native sovereignty. When "mymothersside" closes, Linklater and the Frye will leave the artwork, covering it in drywall, hiding it inside the museum.



Visitors to the Frye Art Museum view Duane Linklater's "What Then Remainz." (Jonathan Vanderweit)



That gesture echoes questions about the way non-Native institutions have been built on, and swallowed up, Native land and artworks, including natural history museums with extensive collections of Indigenous artworks in their vaults. It's also a counterpoint for the piece "A blueberry garden for Seattle" — bushes Linklater planted in the Frye's courtyard as something living, and highly visible, that will stay when he goes.

2. **"UMFA Installation"**: Speaking of Indigenous artworks in museums: In 2015, the Utah Museum of Fine Arts (UMFA) invited Linklater to make something new for an exhibition. He studied the museum's collections database, looking for relatively recent Indigenous pieces (1875-1978) without an individual artist's credit — the familiar "artist unknown." Linklater found some and made crude copies: He 3D-printed masks, pots and other sculptural objects (3D printing was far rougher back then) and photographed textiles, then printed the images at original scale. The result is a room full of hauntingly faded ghost objects, their stories and individual vibrancy eroded. A Navajo serape looks like you need reading glasses. The 3D-printed sculptures (a Kwakiutl raven mask, a Hopi kachina, more) are bleached, worn away and pixelated, like driftwood that has been tumbled and scoured in a digital ocean.

3. **"dislodgevanishskinground"**: This teepee, mounted sideways against the wall, started as a clever adaptation. In 2019, Linklater had wanted to install an 18-foot-tall teepee at Artists Space in New York — but the ceiling was too low, so he flipped it on its side and suspended it from the ceiling. But, of course, the dislocated, disoriented teepee (along with the work's title) is an ominous emblem of physical and cultural displacement.

4. **"foiled (vers 1)"**: Each film element of "mymothersside" is powerful in an understated way, particularly the quiet, almost gentle moose hunting and butchering sequences with a Dane-zaa elder in British Columbia. But the slow, frame-by-frame boxing video "foiled (vers. 1)" has a sharper poignancy. Two men — one in red and one in blue — duke it out, landing punches in slow motion. Is this an allegory for history itself? Who's winning? Who wins?

It's hard to tell in the video, but the backstory is astounding. In 2012, a then-junior politician named Justin Trudeau (the fighter in red) arranged to box, and beat, young Indigenous senator Patrick Brazeau (Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, and the fighter in blue) as a charity fundraiser/publicity stunt. In a [2017 Rolling Stone profile](#), Trudeau said: "I wanted someone who would be a good foil, and we stumbled upon the scrappy tough-guy senator from an indigenous community. He fit the bill ... I saw it as the right kind of narrative, the right story to tell." Understandably, the disclosure that Trudeau (who is white) used an Indigenous colleague as a literal political prop and thought beating him would be "the right story to tell" was [swiftly and heavily criticized](#).



Visitors to the Frye Art Museum view Duane Linklater's "action at a distance," created from painted teepee poles, nylon rope, plants, ceramics, sandbags, 12 framed digital prints and framed mirror. (Jonathan Vanderweit)

5. **“action at a distance”**: This collection of objects feels like the most intimate moment of “mymothersside”: 12 teepee poles leaning against the wall, nine living houseplants belonging to his late mother Pauline Linklater, eight yellow plastic bags of something (soil?), an octagonal mirror on the floor and 12 images in frames — details from Goya’s “Disasters of War” etchings, a still from Andy Warhol’s “Screen Test: Edie Sedgwick,” a still from avant-garde auteur Chantal Akerman, a photo of a living deer with an arrow stuck through its head, another photo of revered Ojibwe contemporary artist Norval Morrisseau. What does it all add up to? An impression of Duane Linklater — but, as in the rest of “mymothersside,” we know it’s only a fragment of the whole.

#### Duane Linklater: ‘mymothersside’

Through Jan. 16, 2022. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday; Frye Art Museum, 704 Terry Ave., Seattle; free; face coverings required for all visitors 3 and older, regardless of vaccination status; 206-622-9250, [fryemuseum.org](https://fryemuseum.org)

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# Practices of Learning

Suzanne Morrisette

I am learning about learning. This process of learning about learning has both shifted and clarified my focus. It began this way in 2016 when my research was profoundly changed when my uncle passed away. Unexpectedly, in the days that followed, I found myself thinking about how his life and the lives of others in my family had not only made space for me to do the work that I have undertaken, but that they have provided me with a foundation of knowledge upon which I now build today. I was moved in a new way by the work of Indigenous writers such as Margaret Kovach who have emphasized the importance of situating oneself within research as Indigenous researchers (2009), and I thought more deeply about my own position as one that is located within a lineage of thought that is rooted in the values and ideals of my family and community. At present, this is what knowledge looks like for me. I am increasingly and intimately interested in how knowledge gets performed, where it might be inherited, how it is sought, and where it can be found. In particular, I have been thinking about family and community as a site of knowledge production, of cultivation, and of sharing and I am drawn to look back at the work of artists who have engaged in similar practices of looking through and with family to investigate value from a space of personal and political consciousness.

In 2013 I organized an exhibition for the Thunder Bay Art Gallery with artist Duane Linklater who is Omaskêko Cree from Moose Cree First Nation in Northern Ontario. While working on the show, *Something About Encounter*, which featured a series of short videos of different wildlife encounters within urban spaces that Duane<sup>1</sup> had taken on his phone, he had asked me about the collection of the gallery and if we could collaborate on selecting a few pieces

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1 It is a convention to refer to individuals referenced in texts such as this by their last names—a formality which, to me, denotes distance. I am wondering if I need to do this in all cases because I am looking at the experience of relatedness. I have decided to try something different. The individuals whose works I reference in this text are people who I have come to know in various ways, some better than others and some more recent than others and all in ways that I am grateful to have experienced. They are known to me and I am telling you a story about how I have come to know them.

to include. Intrigued at the possibilities for upturning convention, I entered into this collaboration in which we selected several works by Benjamin Chee Chee, an Ojibway artist from Temagami, Ontario who Duane was familiar with from a print that had once hung in his childhood home. The works we selected were abstract and geometric in form, which are unlike the artists' more well-known figurative drawings and paintings. Hanging these works within the exhibition brought an unanticipated element into the exhibition which I have long considered and yet have only here put into words. Through this act of curation and collaboration the exhibition turned into a space that could refer to the artists' formative years, inviting knowledge from that space into the new one formed within the gallery by the artist and their works.

This gesture can be understood more deeply in conversation with another exhibition that Duane had opened at Susan Hobbs Gallery in Toronto that same year called *Learning*. Among the items and images found in the room: a re-photographed likeness of Nirvana's frontman Kurt Cobain, another of a Mohawk warrior, Richard Nicholas, from the resistance at the Pines in 1990 (often referred to today as the "Oka Crisis"), and the print by Chee Chee, titled "Learning," which was the print that once hung in Duane's home. While seemingly disparate, these objects become linked under the framework provided by Chee Chee's title, calling them together as pedagogical forms through which new knowledge takes form, as we might consider all influences from popular culture and politics today. The trajectory of this and the previous exhibition positions Duane's 2016 show *From Our Hands*, which was first staged at Mercer Union in Toronto in 2016, as a site of knowledge production and exchange that comes from within the family. The show centres upon the work of Ethel Linklater, Duane's grandmother, whose leather and beadwork had been included in an exhibition—also called *From Our Hands*<sup>2</sup>—that had toured Ontario between 1983 and 1985. Individual pieces from this exhibition now reside within the permanent collection of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, where Linklater loaned the work of his grandmother for the show. Also included within the exhibition was a claymation video by Duane's son, Tobias Linklater. Duane's own sculptural forms supported and surrounded the objects, contextualizing them and pointing to the institutional processes, such as the loan agreement, which were now necessary in bringing their work together in this space. As such, *From Our*

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2 For more information see the exhibition catalogue for this show, *Michichiwi oshichikan: From Our Hands: an exhibition of native hand crafts*.



*Hands* cultivated a space in which the intergenerational connections between these works were highlighted, as were the structures which now characterize their encounters, speaking to at times incongruous forms of knowledge that ascribe value within or from outside of systems of relation. Like *Something About Encounter, From Our Hands* broke with conventions of display within solo exhibitions by opening up that space to make known the relational dialogue which enables and shapes each artist's works.

Due to longstanding traditions in Western European imaginings of Indigenous peoples, exhibition spaces have been historically inlaid with systemic practices of misrepresentation and omission, such that the museum itself has become another site in which such systems of knowledge are found to be in tension for Indigenous people. Historically speaking, the types of knowledge produced in these spaces have not been in the service of Indigenous lives. These frames of knowledge have been intended to erase Indigenous people—if not physically, then cognitively within the public imaginary. *Peter Morin's Museum*, a project of Tahltan artist Peter Morin, confronts these moments of tension directly while calling for a new type of space for knowledge-production to take place from an Indigenous perspective. His museum decidedly rejects Western conventions of display, with a manifesto that outlines the etiquette of the space. His museum, it states, is a space of laughter, of shared food and drink, it is a space for children, for community belonging, and for Indigenous knowledge, among many other things. The project granted agency to objects as teaching tools and as active participants in the transmission of knowledge: in *Peter Morin's Museum*, "[t]he objects are philosophy. The objects are the organized structures which support the transfer of Tahltan knowledge. You have to read the objects in order to understand Tahltan history." In his recent presentation for the speaker series *Expansive Approaches to Indigenous Art Histories* at OCAD University in Toronto, Peter discussed this project, explaining that at his mother's house the hallway is filled with photographs of the family, and that if she likes you, she will give you a tour and tell you about the photos (2018). To access these stories is to learn about the things that matter to her, from her perspective as a Tahltan person, as a mother, as a relative and friend to many—information which is prioritized and privileged in *Peter Morin's Museum*. From this I understand Peter's mother as a revered teacher, one whose tutelage must be earned in order to gain the particular knowledge of space and time which she offers as a mother, a partner, a relative, a friend. Perhaps this is something that many are familiar with from their families, where the setting of this knowledge transmission



remains contained within the space of the home and reserved for only those who are invited to enter. It might also be something that gets taken for granted. In *Peter Morin's Museum* this context is transgressed. Peter borrowed the photographs from his mother's home and invited her to provide a curator's tour of the photos in the exhibition. By privileging something which is commonly intended only for smaller, select audiences within the context of the home, Peter both invokes the space of the home in the gallery while elevating the knowledge that his mother has to offer as important and valuable source material for understanding Tahltan history and knowledge.

Peter has also worked with his mother in a more recent work and collaboration with artist Ayumi Goto, who is of Japanese ancestry, for the exhibition *how do you carry the land?* which was held at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2018. This exhibition, curated by Tarah Hogue, was imagined by Peter and Ayumi to answer a series of questions that they developed together: "How do I honour your ancestors? How do we make a space for our ancestors to meet and to work together? How do I honour your mother? How do we make a space for our mothers to meet and to visit together?" (Hogue 2018, 11). Hogue describes the imperative driving Peter's work as one invested in documenting and intervening "with his body in performance, laying claim to spaces and concepts that have sought to exclude, to [belittle] and to erase" (2018, 12). She writes about Ayumi's practice as "an effort to enact a non-possessive being-in-relation to land and to engender non-objectifying relationships of mutual learning with Indigenous artists" (2018, 13). Together, Peter and Ayumi's collaborative work can be said to acknowledge and tend to each other's ancestral histories and to their present realities, seeking new forms of understanding through acts of mutual and reciprocal knowledge-building. The artists' engagement with their mothers extended beyond their position as subjects of the work, to locate them as the primary audience as well: in conversation with Ayumi's partner Ashok, I learned about a tour that the artists had organized for their mothers and Tarah's mother during the exhibition run, a move which Ashok framed as altering the conventions of art spaces by prioritizing the mothers' visits and requiring all others to wait while this took place (Mathur 2018). Taking this time with those individuals who have inspired the work and whose labour and lives are honoured by the artists' guiding questions enacts a kind of accountability to this source of knowledge—one that both governs their practice and suggests new models for engaging family-based knowledge through artistic research.

These kinds of frameworks for understanding ourselves in relation to an idea of knowledge that comes from families, and from communities, is one which also



acknowledges forms of pedagogy which come from knowledge keepers within various communities. In Tanya Lukin Linklater's video *The treaty is in the body*, viewers are witness to a moment of teaching and learning in Tanya's living room between Omaskêko Cree knowledge keeper Jennifer Wabano and participants Ivanie Aubin-Malo, Gwen Iahtail, Sassa Linklater, Lauren Pizzale, Keisha Stone, Iris Sutherland, Lorraine Sutherland, and Tanya herself. The camera focuses on the faces and bodies of those in the room. While seated, their movements perform quiet acts of learning through small gestures: the direction of their gaze, their facial expressions, and other slight articulations which signify the act of listening. While the video plays silent, without the voices of those speaking made audible, the exchange and transmission of knowledge is made known in other ways through these moments. In the next scene Ivanie, a Maliseet choreographer, is seen dancing with the two girls, Sassa and Keisha, Tanya's daughter and cousin. Juxtaposed with the footage in the living room, this dance scene appears to reflect an act of embodied practice of that which was imparted and shared in the previous scene. Still silent, the video illustrates the translation of that knowledge into movement. This is an act of knowing that, like in the first scene, is understood only truly by Sassa and Keisha. As audiences we are not privy to the specifics of their interpretation and translation, knowing only that the continuity of knowledge is living through these girls in ways that they animate within their lived experiences and realities. Both this and the living room scene reflect an idea of knowledge which is not only related between bodies, but that is also embodied within individuals and made dynamic through individual interpretation and expression.

My encounters with the projects outlined on these pages is the thread which brings me to tell you about them here. It is by no means a comprehensive overview of works that engage with family as a source of knowledge production, cultivation, and sharing, and in assembling these works here I do not intend to occlude those examples. I recognize that there are other ways of thinking about all our relations beyond the idea of the immediate family, and that there are works of art which represent this much broader conceptualization of relatedness that have been, and will continue to be, a rich site of research.<sup>3</sup> Through the works which I have highlighted here I am looking at new ways of parsing the idea of learning as a practice, one which can be undertaken in a variety of different means—some of which have been more readily recognized within established

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3 For more on this subject see Lindsay Nixon, "Art is 2017: A View from Turtle Island," *Canadian Art*, December 28, 2017.

systems of education—in much the same way that practices of teaching have been examined through pedagogical studies. What these works show me is how others are looking to their relatives in order to assess and convey information to others, how the site of the family can operate as an important foundation upon which to source and grow knowledge, and how this is a place from which to speak about self, about community, and about learning from one another. At a recent conference organized by the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, a panel was convened on the subject of working within non-Indigenous institutions as Indigenous cultural workers. One of the panelists, Jaimie Issac, Curator of Indigenous Art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from Sagkeeng First Nation, spoke with eloquence about being in a meeting where she was asked a question by a colleague to which she answered that she would have to check with her Nana—with the sense that this somehow changed the usual processes of that space, which might have been used to working more quickly, to accommodate the knowledge that Jaimie felt was needed at that moment. To me this is a way of performing knowledge, one which signals that another way of doing things has arrived, and it brought company.

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# ART SEEN: Works reframe colonialism's influence on art, capitalism and Indigeneity

Kevin Griffin  
Nov 20, 2020



Exhibition image shows detail of *winter in america\_no door\_âkamenimok* on left, *anteclovis* in the middle ground and *latealex* in background, all by Duane Linklater. They're in primary use by Duane Linklater at Catriona Jeffries to Nov. 21. Photo: Kevin Griffin jpg

Just inside the gallery's big exhibition space, white teepee poles rise up to lead your eyes beyond to the white centre wall of the gallery. The poles are both frames and part of the work: they refer to the space of contemporary art and how it frames the art inside. Without traditional animal skins wrapped around them, the poles suggest but don't actually create an Indigenous domestic space. They create an art space.

Framing and reframing are part of not only *what grief conjures* but also of many of the other works in the exhibition *primary use* by Duane Linklater at Catriona Jeffries. Colour also plays multiple roles as signs and frames with historical and personal meanings.

The teepee poles frame a white statue wearing a pink hoodie which is perched on top of a dark green fridge. The hoodie hangs so loosely it's clear that there are no arms on the statue. That means it's likely a copy of the Venus de Milo, easily the most famous armless Greek statue in Western art.

The hoodie is huge. In fact, it's so big you could say it's not a good fit at all. The cowl of the hood makes the head look like a Madonna in a hip-hop Renaissance painting. The fabric of the hoodie hangs gently over the statue and bunches on the left knee which is bent like she's about to take a step forward.



what grief conjures by Duane Linklater is in primaryuse at Catriona Jeffries. Photo: Kevin Griffin  
jpg



The fridge is strapped to a furniture dolly on a wooden pallet. Like any capitalist consumer item, it's ready to move and be shipped anywhere. The teepee is also practical and portable. The Cree and other people of the Plains used them for that very reason: they're easily dismantled and moved to a new location.

When I saw the fridge, it immediately triggered a personal memory. It made me think of living in Kitsilano in a rented house and opening and closing the door of a very similar green-coloured fridge. There could be a personal, individual reason for choosing that particular shade of green, one of the popular colours for appliances in the 1970s and 1980s.

According to the exhibition's description of works, the colour of the pink hoodie comes from cochineal dye, a material intimately connected with colonialism. Cochineal was the product of Indigenous technology developed for the Aztec and Maya long before the arrival of the Spanish. But it didn't take long for Europeans to covet the deep, rich carmine produced by the dye which was brighter and more durable than any other red dye. By the 17th century, cochineal had become one of the world's first globalized products. The statue is wearing a garment soaked in Western colonial history.

White occurs in several works in the exhibition. Although often justified as the best colour against which to show work because of its supposed neutrality, too often white functions as one of the exclusionary mechanisms of contemporary art. Indirectly, it also refers to the sociological whiteness of art and its creation and continued domination primarily by people of European descent. White presents itself as trans-historical, as one writer has said, even though it's rooted in a history of Western chromophobia.

Linklater, who lives in North Bay, Ontario, is from Moose Cree First Nation on James Bay. His work reframes not only colour but also the history of western art from an Indigenous perspective. He's also reframing the traditional story of colonialism.

The white of the teepee poles connects to the white walls of the gallery and the white of the washing machine framed by another set of totem poles in *anteclovis*. 'Clovis culture' is part of a colonial theory from the 1950s based on limited archaeological evidence that claimed humans have been in North and South America for about 12,000 years. Many recent discoveries have pushed that back to 33,000 years and earlier. The title describes the theory as anthropological ante in a giant poker game. But with the washing machine on its side in a functionally useless position, it suggests this work is one of the ways the rules are being changed.



winter in america\_no door\_âkamenimok by Duane Linklater is at Catriona Jeffries to Nov. 21.  
Photo: Kevin Griffin jpg

Hanging on the gallery wall are hand-dyed brown linens with black gestural and digital marks. At the top, they're so well connected to the wall with nails that they're not going to let go easily. But they're not contained by the wall's whiteness either: most of the material hangs loosely like it's resisting the prison of containment. The work is called *winter in america\_no door\_âkamenimok*. In Cree, if ahkameynimok is a variant spelling, it means persevere and don't give up. If the past 500+ years of colonialism have been a winter in America for Indigenous people, then spring may be around the corner. This is no time, the work suggests, not to keep going.



In *action at a distance*, another set of teepee poles support digital prints that include a deer with an arrow through its head and art world figures such as Norval Morrisseau, the influential Anishinaabe artist, and Edie Sedgewick, part of the Andy Warhol's entourage. It resembles a memory wall of images or artistic influences.

In the smaller exhibition space is *primaryuse*. Three LED screens are mounted on sculptural black stands in deliberate contrast to the surrounding white walls. They play videos of people walking through teepee poles in a forested area somewhere in North Bay. The front of the LED screens are reframed by a rectangular pink frame in a colour that resembles cochineal. The videos, originally recorded in 8 mm film, made me think of home movies showing ghost-like figures in the landscape. The videos are accompanied by a haunting soundscape that leaks out into the rest of the gallery.

It's remarkable that an exhibition of this size and scope could be mounted during a pandemic. It looks like something you'd see in a contemporary art museum – which is probably where many of the works are destined. It's the first exhibition since the gallery moved into its new location where the architecture doesn't dominate work that is so strong, it holds its own quite nicely.

## Johanna Fateman

*Sally to the alley: the venerable gallery finds its new home.*



Image courtesy Artists Space.

Danica Barboza, Jason Hirata, Yuki Kimura, Duane Linklater, *Artists Space*, 11 Cortlandt Alley, New York City, through February 9, 2020

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For its latest Tribeca incarnation, in its sixth location since 1972, Artists Space decided against White Street for its main entrance. Rather than use the bank of double doors in the old General Tools & Instruments building's pillared façade (a choice that would have been in keeping with the post-industrial area's upscale retail and commercial-gallery aesthetics), architects Bade Stageberg Cox created an ingenious side inlet off Cortlandt Alley. Marked with graffiti, pull-down metal gates, rusted loading docks, and dark tangles of fire-escape ladders, the derelict passageway runs like a proud spider vein through three blocks of the retouched neighborhood. Visually, it powerfully recalls the early days of the beloved arts nonprofit, which was founded nearby in Soho, in the orbit of countless artists' lofts, and which has somehow hung on downtown even in their priced-out wake. The alley, it seems, provides a kind of historical frame for the institution's new iteration.

It also delivers visitors to the heart of the flexibly configured two-floor space. To enter, you step from it, through heavy doors, and find yourself at the midpoint of the narrow nineteenth-century warehouse, on an airy landing between levels. It's lovely.



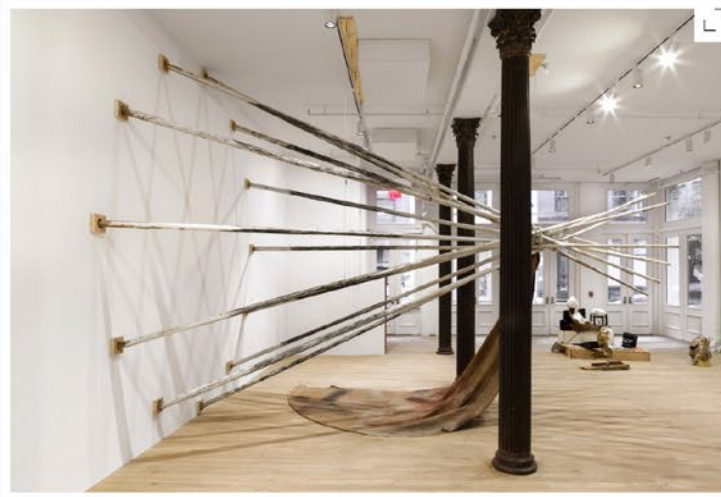


Duane Linklater, *landlesscolumnbundle*, 2019. Eight teepee poles, white paint, charcoal, rabbit fur coat, mink fur coat, rope. Image courtesy Artists Space. Photo: Daniel Pérez.

Duane Linklater, one of the four artists presenting new work in the untitled inaugural exhibition (or series of overlapping solo shows), takes advantage of the entrance, using it as a viewing balcony for a characteristically spare and affecting architectural intervention.

*Landlesscolumnbundle* (2019) is an austere pillar composed of eight teepee poles, lashed together with rope and fur coats. It rises from the basement-level floor, up through the sunlit stairwell, the lines of its tall wood lengths echoing the vertical fluting of the unfinished cast-iron columns throughout the space, left exposed in the renovation. As Bade Stageberg Cox explain in the press release, writing of this and other such design gestures of theirs, “the erasure of the visible history of the space is minimized.”

An Omaskêko Ininiwak from Moose Cree First Nation in Northern Ontario, who frequently uses Indigenous materials and forms in his work, Linklater shares the architects’ impulse and takes it further: he makes visible an erased history predating the structure itself. (Cortlandt Alley is just a block west of Broadway, which was, long before the Dutch came to Mannahatta, a Lenape trade route.)



Duane Linklater, *dislodgevanishskinground*, 2019 (installation view). 12 teepee poles, steel cable, white paint, charcoal, rope, with teepee cover: digital print on linen, black tea, blueberry extract, sumac, charcoal. Image courtesy Artists Space. Photo: Daniel Pérez.

His equally elegant *dislodgevanishskinground* (2019)—a teepee frame that, with the assistance of steel cables and wooden brackets, has been rotated 90 degrees to protrude horizontally from a wall—is the striking pyramidal focal point of the main ground-floor gallery space. It's less subtle than *landlesscolumnbundle* in its evocation of an unfathomably brutal chapter of local displacement (next to which recent decades of Soho-Tribeca gentrification amount to very little), but it's still a work of great nuance. After absorbing the initial impact of its skeletal, torqued presence, you realize that the cloth cover, which falls perpendicularly from the bare teepee's tip to trail on the floor, resembles the long cloak of an unseen figure.



Jason Hirata, *Why Not Lie?*, 2020. Plastic bottles, urine. Image courtesy Artists Space. Photo: Daniel Pérez.

Jason Hirata's *Why Not Lie?* (dated 2020, in anticipation of its future completion), is also a profound representation of absence, though a dispersed and antimonumental one. For it, beverage bottles of urine—



dispersed and antimonumental one. For it, beverage bottles of urine—collected from around the city, filled by people without homes, or by drivers and gig workers without access to toilets—are scattered like Easter eggs throughout the space as gently recriminating symbols of cultural exclusion and social invisibility. The specimens of dark amber liquid (many of them labeled “Poland Spring”) will be returned after the exhibition closes to the spots where Hirata found them.



Jason Hirata, *Floaters*, 2020. Projectors. Image courtesy Artists Space. Photo: Daniel Pérez.

His installation *Floaters* (2020) also promises to vanish. It’s a video work that features not video, but a battalion of projectors powered on to illuminate the room with their default white rectangles and small, gray, accidentally poetic “no source found” text panels. With the equipment’s return to its lender (NYU’s 80WSE gallery, where the artist has a concurrent show), the piece will be designated complete.

In the meantime, *Floaters* is quite beautiful, ringing the smaller windowless gallery (opposite the glass-paneled doors looking out on White Street) with a bright border along the floor, like incandescent wainscoting or the beam of a spaceship at landing or lift off.



Danica Barboza, Jason Hirata, Yuki Kimura, Duane Linklater, installation view. Image courtesy Artists Space. Photo: Daniel Pérez.

The latter association is suggested by Yuki Kimura's nearby sculpture *The Circle* (2019), which rests without fanfare on the floor (like Hirata's projectors and bottles of pee). It's humbly constructed from twenty-one round stainless-steel trays of incrementally varied sizes, arranged in shining concentric circles, from enormous platter to tiny dish. This target-like accumulation of readymades is companion to the also innocuous but out-of-place cherry laminate units of her ongoing project *Wardrobe Extensions* (2016–ongoing). The three bland, inexpensive storage vessels have been excised, we learn, from her childhood bedroom. Spared the landfill, they have toured internationally as temporary geometric architectural details of galleries, now installed, for the fifth time, along the perimeter of Artists Space. One would never guess at their origin, or consider that they had personal meaning to the artist. So like placeholders are they—as imports, objects, or shapes—it's almost disturbing to know that they do.



Danica Barboza, Jason Hirata, Yuki Kimura, Duane Linklater, installation view. Image courtesy Artists Space. Photo: Daniel Pérez.

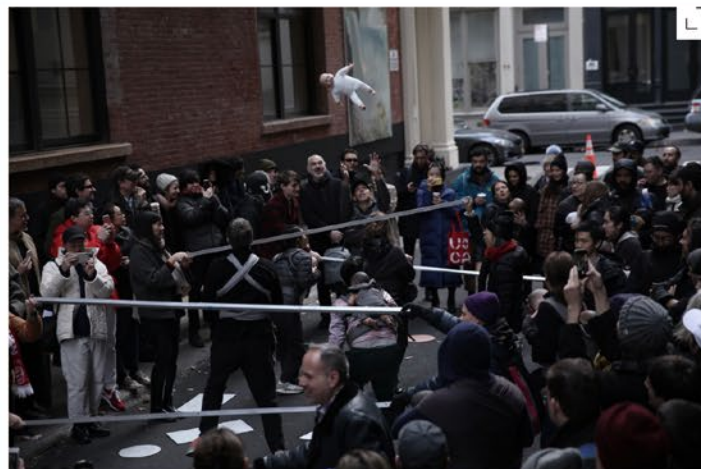
Danica Barboza is the most perplexing artist here, though. The inclusion of her mixed-media work—thick with irony, complex via a calculated messiness, and characterized by a satirical engagement with modernist assemblage and pastiche-y postmodernism alike—thwarts any unifying theory of a curatorial rationale for the grouping of the four artists. (That may be the point.) Materials as diverse as PVC piping, plastic or wooden crates, hand-modeled faces, an early Mac computer, rooibos tea bags, twine, and a silicone sex doll mingle in her anything-goes sculptures. Where the other three artists are earnest and economical (conceptually and otherwise), Barboza embraces faux expressionism, theatricality, and excess.





Danica Barboza, *Anima of a Relationship [The 'SV' Edition] (Section B)*, 2019 (detail). Hand-modeled clay, white acrylic paint, textured paint, paper, metal, newspaper, rooibos tea bags, gloss, wooden blocks, Mac computer. Image courtesy Artists Space. Photo: Daniel Pérez.

Her wild-card inclusion is surprisingly unproblematic; the playful, acerbic mood of her work doesn't undercut the concerns of Linklater, Hirata, and Kimura. The unthematic, simultaneous exhibitions most of all, and most importantly, succeed in demonstrating the possibilities of the hard-won new space. And the full, practical, and aesthetic significance of the side entrance became apparent opening weekend, during Ei Arakawa's flabbergasting and joyful group performance, staged partially in Cortlandt Alley and partially in Artists Space's lower level.



Ei Arakawa, *WEWORK BABIES* (11 Cortlandt Alley). Performance documentation. Photo: © 2019 Paula Court.



Ei Arakawa, *WEWORK BABIES* (11 Cortlandt Alley). Performance documentation. Photo: © 2019 Paula Court.

His *WEWORK BABIES*—an inspired meditation on queer parenting and creative multitasking, entwined with an absurdist exorcism of startup bro-culture’s real estate-gobbling charlatanism so aptly emblemized by the collapsing “flexible workspace” empire—was a perfect celebration of Artists Space’s against-the-odds, continued existence in one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the city. And after, as we lingered outside on the asphalt, where we’d earlier watched performers with baby dolls strapped to their backs and fronts jog in place and improvise large-scale sculptures, it became clear that it’s not just the cluttered anti-thoroughfare’s throwback appearance and its contrast with the hyper-gentrified surroundings that makes 11 Cortlandt Alley so dreamy. It’s also the way that the respite from through traffic and the natural spillover area it affords—for performing, watching, hanging out, and whatever else—symbolize the expansive, inclusive alternative space’s erosion of traditional bounds.

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*What Then Remainz*, 2016, *From Our Hands* installation views at Mercer Union, Toronto, 2016. Courtesy: Mercer Union, Toronto. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

# WHAT THEN REMAINZ?

DUANE LINKLATER IN CONVERSATION  
WITH KITTY SCOTT

Duane Linklater is deep in a questioning mode that complicates all the work he makes. His responses take diverse material forms and refuse easy resolutions. Schools, museums, and gallery walls, as well as hunting and fishing, have all figured in his studies.

**KITTY SCOTT**

What sorts of music are you listening to right now?

**DUANE LINKLATER**

That's a good question. I was listening to Frank Ocean this morning. I have a daily ritual: I drive the kids to school, get my coffee, and listen to music. Yesterday I was listening to Link Wray recordings made in the early 1970s and a beautiful Aretha Franklin record I bought in Oslo. It too was recorded in Los Angeles in the early 1970s. So, Aretha Franklin, Frank Ocean, and Link Wray all in the past twenty-four hours.

**KS**

What have these musicians been telling you?

**DL**

With Frank Ocean, I started wondering about the decisions he's been making. Particularly in the past four or five months, he has released new singles sporadically, using his radio station on Apple Music. I wonder why he does that. Of course, it's an interesting decision to work this way rather than releasing a conventional new album all at once. From what I've read, he's really interested in, for lack of a better term, creative control over what he does—his material, his content, his image. And I understand that desire to have control over how your material—what you've been working on, your labor—is articulated in the end. I think he's been quite successful about that in the past year. So I think a lot about those decisions, for better or for worse. Prince was probably an early advocate of having control over what you're doing, your music, being your own master. Prince's position has influenced a lot of people, including Frank Ocean.

**KS**

Has it influenced your thinking?

**DL**

Yeah. I am influenced by Black music, though I do listen to a lot of Indigenous music. For the most part, however, I listen to Black music, made anywhere from the 1930s and 1940s to now. Black musicians and the creative decisions they made within whatever form it is they are working in have been a large part of the past twenty-five years, and have also been important for my own identity and how I think. And I've also been paying attention to Black contemporary artists for the past little while. Again, it's a position of observation, primarily of the decisions that they're making within their own forms. It's a beautiful thing.

**KS**

Do you think there are strong parallels between the Indigenous situation in Canada and Black struggles in America?

**DL**

I think there are some methodologies that might be useful. Ones that Black communities both in the United States and in Canada have been moving through over the past fifty, sixty, or a hundred years. Early in my time in university I took a class that was about the Harlem Renaissance and learned about people like

Langston Hughes and what was happening in Harlem in the early 1920s and 1930s. This was influential, and I wonder about those sorts of clusters of creative and political activity. Examining those clusters of activity might be useful for Indigenous artists and activists. I know there's been a lot of overlap and a lot of connections between the two groups over the years, and I'm becoming more and more interested in some of them. I think there's a lot of possibility of conversation between the Black community and the Indigenous community, whether about music or politics or poetry or art. From what I'm sensing, there is something terribly important and generative about that possibility.

**KS**

You have stated that hip-hop and powwow singing are important influences.

**DL**

I've been singing powwow music and dance music for twenty years, over which it's been a consistent, and influential, part of my life. I think a lot about what it means to be able to sing in that way and what it means to pass that along to my own children—not only the practicing and the act of singing but also the thinking that goes along with it. That's an important part of the singing, of how songs are transmitted, how language is transmitted, and how beat is transmitted. A lot of that is done through doing it and not reading or theorizing about it; the actual learning occurs within the doing of it. The singing and the symbol of the drum, as well, are part of my identity and are signifiers of Indigenous culture. Although it has seeped into my work here and there, I am hesitant about it. I do wonder about these kinds of divisions I've made within my practice; I wonder how generative or not generative imposing these divisions between these things is. I wonder about that.

**KS**

This music was prominent in the performance you made at the Banff Centre. You met a cellist and asked her to perform the music you had written for your daughter's jingle dress.

**DL**

That was an early work. It was 2010 at the Banff Centre; I saw a trio of cellists perform one evening, and I was captivated, entranced, by what was happening. I met one of them, whose name was Zoe Wallace, and asked to have a coffee and chat. I was curious about her and her instrument, and I started doing research on the cello as well. I discovered a video of Pablo Casals, who used to give public teaching performances, for lack of a better term. It was a wonderful-looking video of him sitting on one side of the stage and his student on the other side. He set up this really interesting situation, kind of an education to be performed in front of people, and I thought, that's a really interesting situation and condition to show; maybe I could make use of the methodology he is using. So, I met with Zoe, and I proposed an idea to her: I asked her to sit with me in front of a camera while I teach her a song that I've composed and, if it's possible, for her to play this song. She agreed, with a lot of hesitancy at first, but she was interested and, I think, as curious about me as I was about her. We sat in front of the camera for an hour and really challenged each other in terms of how this worked. We were both accustomed to transmitting particular songs or particular languages, so she asked me right away if I read sheet music and I said no, we don't really translate these songs in this particular way. We do translate songs through repetition, so I just kept singing the song over and over again. And we started there, and her ear is so finely attuned, and she used the whole system of her body, her mind, her ear, and her ability to play and make the cello sound so beautiful. She was able to catch on quickly, but she had to break down the song, which I was not accustomed to. And so I had to sing very, very small parts of the song, and there was this back and forth. We tried to receive sound from one to the other for an hour, and by the end of the hour, she was able to play the song.

The video, *It's Hard to Get in My System* (2010), takes its name from a phrase she kept using throughout that hour. I thought it was an interesting combination of words, so that became the title of the work. I didn't want the video audience to hear me sing. I wanted to refuse the audience the sound of my voice when I sing, but I allowed the sound of the cello, the sound of the song;



I was interested in this idea of refusal, specifically of Indigenous culture or components of Indigenous culture. In this case it brings up an interesting tension.

**KS** There is a similar tension in the *Reservation Dog* (2009) project, but one that plays out quite differently.



*Reservation Dog*, 2009. Courtesy: the artist and Cartrona Jeffries, Vancouver

**DL** I began *Reservation Dog* in a very open-ended way. I hired a camera crew to follow me to the Blood Reservation in southern Alberta, where we borrowed a reservation dog to take back to Calgary, so that this dog could experience urban life—experience some of the urban dog experiences, such as going to PetSmart, getting groomed, or going to some of these dog boutiques which sell very expensive dog clothing and treats and things like that. So, I brought Patchy to the city for a weekend, and the dog didn't really enjoy the experience at all. She told me that by not going to the bathroom for the entire weekend. She refused that to signal to me that this is not right or this is not something that I want to do. Perhaps even this signal of not going to the bathroom and shitting is a signal to tell me to fuck off, or perhaps even a signal of loss of agency—this is something the dog can withhold. This was the language of the dog in that experience.

That was in 2009, when I made a decision to be an artist and to fully take on and try to figure out what the role of being an artist and being Indigenous meant. It's been an eight- or nine-year investigation of what inhabiting that role means. I had some difficulties and some stresses, and in that way, I empathize with the dog. Being put into a precarious situation is difficult. In one way or another, Indigenous artists signal some of that precarity that they live in or that they find themselves in and articulate it somehow.

**KS** *Modest Livelihood* (2012) is a film that you made with the artist Brian Jungen. Very soon after meeting each other, you decided to work together on a film about moose hunting. What happened over the course of making that film?

**DL** So many things happened. One of the most important things that came out of making the film was the formation of the bond between Brian and me. Still to this day, he's a very good friend; we speak a lot, and I look to him for advice. It's always amazing to work with him and reciprocate. This was one of the important things that emerged or was generated out of that experience, and I think that's something hunting does within our culture. It generates those kinds of relationships. Not only between the people who are going and doing the hunting but also the relationships between the hunters and the land itself and the occupants of that land the animals, the grass, the birds. We hunted in Brian's home territory in Northern British Columbia—Treaty 8. The relationships, particularly between Brian and that space and its history, were strengthened by that experience. The role that Brian's uncle Jack has not only in that film but also in the community—this role between this older generation and the younger generation—is one that Indigenous folks are always looking to strengthen. And why is it that we want to strengthen those roles? Because those older generations of people have all of that knowledge; it's that kind of education, that kind of pedagogy, and those kinds of stories and experiences that I seek

out. That kind of land-based education and cultural education is so important for the younger generations. This kind of education that plays out within the course of the film was almost destroyed by the Canadian government's interventions in our lives, by things like residential schools. The government has been so imaginative about how they would like to destroy us, and how they would like to destroy our education—how we learn from each other, how we are living on and off the land. They want to dismantle all of those things. And this is why, for me, articulating all of those relationships as artists is an important thing to show and to talk about, because it involves something that is beyond myself and beyond my potential life span. There must be something that as an artist and as an Indigenous person I can leave behind, because I'm not going to be here forever; there must be something that I can leave behind me to help the ones that are coming after.

**KS** Your discussion about your relationship with the land is very important. When you were doing your master's, you made these berry gardens on the grounds of Bard College, in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Are you continuing to grow these gardens?

**DL** Yes, I am. This was originally my thesis project. I had a very difficult time at Bard. I encountered racism, and it made it very, very difficult for me to be there. But regardless of that, I still wanted to articulate an Indigenous presence and a suggestion of Indigenous history in that space, and so I asked myself, how do I do that? I kept thinking about that particular space of the Hudson Valley, where Indigenous people are quite invisible. There are fragments of Indigenous presence there—like the name of the river that's nearby, the Esopus Creek—and there are a few murals, one in Red Hook, one on the Bard campus. It is a difficult history that's occurred in that area for the past four hundred years. I asked, when's the last time Indigenous people in this space picked berries? And this question became a project. I asked this question of myself, and of the Hudson Valley and of Bard. It's beautiful to go berry picking, and it is a significant and poetic act. I wanted that opportunity to happen again in this particular space for Indigenous people. At that time, at Bard College, there were only two Indigenous students in the MFA program, myself and Layli Long Soldier. And so, this question was really important: it generated this project but also addressed the difficulty I had in this educational space, with racism. Still I wanted to articulate an Indigenous presence and to give something to them regardless of the racism, regardless of how I was treated, regardless of the names that I was called in those spaces. I bought twelve blueberry bushes from Home Depot and, with the permission of the Hessel Museum, I planted a blueberry garden on their lawn. I've never gardenized in my life, but this was an important gesture to not only the Indigenous people who lived there but also to this complicated, difficult community that I found myself a part of for three summers in a row. There was something that I wanted to give to them. So what is it that I wanted to give to them besides a berry bush? The idea of the berry and berry picking is important in relation to some of these other things I am interested in, such as the politics of resource extraction and my implication as an artist and Indigenous person in that kind of a system. The berry is a resource, a physical resource that has the possibility to nourish, to give life, to whoever chooses to take it. The proposition of that is important, but it's also the proposition of an idea.

My Cree language also made its way into this project. In my language blueberries are considered to be inanimate, while raspberries are considered to be animate. That is how the Cree language organizes itself animacy and inanimacy, alive and not-alive. So the conceptual proposition is that these particular resources are alive. And rather than the berry being an "it," the berry itself is an agent, it is a he or a she or a they. It is urgent to talk about the extraction of these resources and its real implications connections to the larger system of nature and the world.

**KS** You keep coming back to the subject of resources and resource extraction. The title for *Modest Livelihood* is borrowed from a judge's ruling about a fisherman and the number of fish he is permitted to catch.





*It's Hard to Get in My System* (stills), 2012.  
Courtesy: the artist and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver



Brian Jungen and Duane Linklater, *Modest Livelihood* (stills), 2012.  
Courtesy: Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver





*Kiss (detail)*, 2014. Courtesy: Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver.  
Photo: SITE Photography

**DL** That's right. The language is structural language, from a Canadian Supreme Court judge's 1999 ruling. It has to do with the case of Donald Marshall, who was stopped for fishing in Pomquet Harbour in Antigonish County, Nova Scotia. From what I understand, he was catching eels to make a living. Donald Marshall is an Indigenous man, and he was arrested for this act of fishing for and selling eels. He challenged the arrest, because he believed he was well within his treaty rights to be doing this. His challenge made it all the way to the Supreme Court, where a set of judges sided with him, saying he was within the treaty right to fish for and to sell these eels. But what was interesting about this particular judgment was that the judge used these two words in relation to this case: Donald Marshall could only fish to make a "moderate livelihood." So my interpretation is that it imposes some kind of cap on how much wealth Donald Marshall could accrue through the act of taking resources, selling, and making a living. Of course, within capitalism and the system where we find ourselves right now, the accruing of wealth is theoretically unlimited. Corporations and individuals in the United States and Canada can accrue wealth indefinitely, but there is a definite ceiling on Indigenous people. Brian and I talked about those two words. We found them really interesting. Brian suggested the title *Moderate Livelihood*. He liked the two words but wasn't sure about the word "moderate." Eventually, he proposed "modest," deciding he wanted to change the condition of what livelihood could be. Of course, in adjusting those words, "modest livelihood" seemed to refer to us as agents within the film, and it suggests some poetry about the other participants and actors in the film Ed, Brian's dog, the birds, and the moose itself.

**KS** When looking at *But the sun is up and you're going?* (2014), I see you are working with wild animal pelts, photography, and clothes racks. It makes me think of the history of Canada, the early trade of animal furs between Indigenous people and settlers, fur as currency, and the history of settlers in relation to resource extraction.

**DL** There is a word for currency in my language, perhaps it is an archaic word, *āpihtawahtay*, which uses the word for beaver pelt within it. Pelts are understood as currency: they are an object or representation that was traded for something else. It was that word that began some of the thinking for the project. I live in North Bay, in a small town of fifty-two thousand. It has one of the last fur auction houses in North America, and they run an auction three times a year. Folks who are still trapping, who are still out on the land, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people bring their furs to the auction house—a large warehouse here in town. So three times a year they take all of these furs, and they auction them off. People fly in from all over the world to North Bay to purchase the furs en masse. Many of the buyers come from China. I was interested in this building and the activity generated by the auction. I visited this place many times and met some of the people who work there. They are non-Indigenous people, but they have an admiration and respect for Indigenous people who are still hunting and trapping. In fact, I learned that my grandparents used to bring their furs to this auction. About four years ago I discovered that some of my relatives still bring furs to this fur auction. They are still active in this economy. It was probably one of the primary economies in North America as settlers arrived looking for resources and wealth. Furs were identified by the early settlers as having value. It was about fashion; they wanted fur hats or something like this.

During my visits to the auction house, I was looking at how the furs were displayed within those spaces. It was of great interest to me. I saw how the pelts were laid out and taken care of. Some of them were inside out to protect the fur. Others were hung from handmade circular hangers. From this information I made these pieces.

I like how things are shown to you in the display culture of clothing and shoe boutiques, in this newer kind of economy. I am interested in the material of the displays. I thought it might be a nice proposition to bring some of these things together, to complicate this thinking.



A blueberry garden for Bard College, 2012.  
Courtesy: the artist and Catriona Jeffries,  
Vancouver. Photo: Erica Leone

**KS** Looking closely at these works, I have a sense that somehow the dead animal still maintains its dignity.

**DL** I would say spirit, and a residue of its agency. Even though its guts and insides have been evacuated and all that is left is skin and fur, there was something remaining that could articulate agency. There was something that the animals still could do, something they could perform.

**KS** Two foxes appear to embrace.

**DL** They kiss, hold, and embrace. They enact relationships. There are also separations and even some resentments and occasions of relationships that I was thinking of when I positioned them. There is still something left in those furs.

**KS** This idea finds an echo in the recent work you exhibited at Mercer Union, *What Then Remainz* (2016). It still resides in the building even though the exhibition is over. What inspired this work?

**DL** It relates to *Modest Livelihood*. With *Modest Livelihood* I mentioned the adjustment of the wording of the structural language of the judgment, presiding over Indigenous rights. *What Then Remainz* is similar in that way, in that the three words originate from structural language. In this case, they are the words of Justice Sotomayor in the United States, who presided over a case in the Supreme Court known as *Dollar General Corporation v. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians* (2016), where a sexual assault was committed on the Choctaw Reservation. The crime was committed by a non-Indigenous, non-citizen of the tribe. The tribe wanted to prosecute this person, but within their own system. It doesn't seem very complex, but within the American legal system it was. And again, this case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, where Justice Sotomayor presided and gave an assessment of this case that begins with her words, "What then remains of the sovereignty of the Indians." When I read this in 2013, I was following this case, trying to understand it and trying to understand Sotomayor and trying to understand these complexities that have stayed with me. I would think of it once in a while and begin to unpack why it is that I remembered this or why it is that I held on. Part of the reason is the poetry in the phrase. I was attracted to the words; they resonated with feeling. And of course there is the tension in reading a poetic statement coming from the words of a judge who is presiding over and determining the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. It is ironic, interesting, and complicated to hear this as an Indigenous person. But nonetheless, it stayed with me, and I thought, there has to be some opportunity to work with these words somehow.

At the same time, I was experimenting with these materials that are used in gallery exhibition spaces. I was working with the materiality of the walls, which are composed of steel studs, plywood, and drywall. I was thinking of these building materials as exemplary of resource extraction. It occurred to me that it might be interesting to request permission from the exhibition space, in this case, Mercer Union (and again later at 80WSE in New York), to destroy its walls and then rebuild them with this text embedded in the studs.





*But the sun is up and you're going?* installation view at Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, 2014.  
 Courtesy: Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver. Photo: SITE Photography



*Wood Land School: Kahatênhstón tsi na'tetiátère ne lotohrkó:wa tánon lotohrha/ Drawing a Line from January to December* installation view at SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art, Montreal, 2017. Courtesy: SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art, Montreal. Photo: Paul Litherland

**KS** What are these institutions, museums, and galleries made of? This is a question you have asked repeatedly.

**DL** Yes, it is a point of departure. Over the last eight years, I have been finding myself as an artist, landing in these complicated places to make these exhibitions. I ask myself, "How am I implicated?" when the galleries are located on contested lands, and the actual material that they are made of is extracted from the land. Wood, gypsum, and concrete lead me to ask that question of the museum and exhibition spaces more generally. It is an important question for me to ask because it generates all of this activity afterwards. Asking the question, "What is the museum made out of?"—in a very literal sense, in a very material sense—is important. This kind of thinking and questioning of the museum led to the excavation of the walls, as I wanted to show, and reveal, not only to myself, what the walls are built with, and what the museum, in turn, is made out of. It is up to anyone to decide the values embedded in these structures. The materials in the walls are extracted from the land. Often those materials are found in the peripheries of cities, out in the countryside, out in the bush. Indigenous peoples live in or around those spaces. This reality is visible in *Modest Livelihood*. Brian and I drive and walk along the very roads that the oil and gas industries use to access oil and gas, though we take them to find moose. This is where the resource extraction takes place, in the home where the moose and Indigenous people live. That system has to be removed, meaning the Indigenous people have to be removed in order for those resources to be extracted.

So when I come into the museum and ask these questions, I find myself in a very complicated, contradictory, precarious kind of situation. It is not easy to be there, when you start to think about where these materials come from and the long history of the land these museums are sitting on. As an artist, I am willing to deliberately place myself within these situations, but I do want to make sense of it, with all its contradictions.

**KS** Recently you've been active with the Wood Land School, a project that has overlapped with some of these other projects. What is the Wood Land School?

**DL** The school is a project with urgency. There are four of us that comprise the Wood Land School right now. We are myself, Tanya Lukin Linklater, cheyanne turions, and Walter Scott. We have decided to, through negotiation with the current team at SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art (SBC), to come into the gallery and rename it the Wood Land School. This is harsh language but it is what it is. We have taken control over the activities at SBC for a year, to determine its programming, artists, and exhibitions. It is all in the hands of Wood Land School and to negotiate this condition day by day—what it takes to make these exhibitions. We have called the project *Wood Land School: Drawing A Line From January to December*. The project is marked by three gestures. The First Gesture opened in early January, with the hanging of a drawing by the late Annie Pootoogook (1969–2016), and it was followed with a series of other artists. And we opened the Second Gesture last week, with a group of works by younger artists. Annie's drawing will remain there for the entire year, as will Brian Jungen's contributions. The Third Gesture will occur sometime in the fall.

Why do we have to be there? It is a good question. Of course we've made a decision to be there and to negotiate how it is we are there, and how it is we are functioning as the Wood Land School. It has been a vessel for an Indigenous pedagogy, and now it is this exhibition. In the past it has been a residency. It will be a book this year. It has been an exhibition, a film screening, and talks.

**KS** Why did you open with Annie Pootoogook? My understanding is that her drawing will remain on the wall for the duration of the project. Why did you feel the need to keep this drawing on display for such a long time?

**DL** I think that came out of discussions the four of us had. We have decided upon things that we care about collaboratively and that we thought were very pertinent and urgent to signal.

Reid Shier, from Vancouver, generously lent us the work for the entire year. We are hoping that this act articulates, with urgency, the care and love we feel for Annie with respect to her tragic passing last year. The way she is remembered and how this is discussed is so important. Her death and the racism it engendered affected us all as Indigenous artists and curators and thinkers.

**KS** What drawing did you choose?

**DL** *Coleman Stove with Robin Hood Flour and Tenderflake* (2004). It is a fantastic poem of a drawing. There is something very deliberate, funny, and beautiful about showing the ingredients for something, but we don't know what they are for. She is showing the process of cooking, she articulates a potential that is there, but the portable Coleman stove also suggests mobility of such things. That food can be prepared anywhere speaks to the Wood Land School project as a whole. It possesses the ability to move around and to decide what it wants to be. She could have drawn some bannock or bread, but there is something more abstract and open about showing what it takes to make something but not showing the thing itself.

**Duane Linklater** is Omaskêko Ininiwak from Moose Cree First Nation and was born in 1976. His practice is concerned in part with the exploration of the physical and theoretical structures of the museum in relation to the current and historical conditions of Indigenous people and their objects and forms. Linklater has exhibited his work at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto (2015), Vancouver Art Gallery (2015), 80 WSE Gallery in New York (2017), Institute of Contemporary Arts Philadelphia (2015), and DOCUMENTA (13) to name a few.

**Kitty Scott** is the Carol and Morton Rapp Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada. Previously she was Director of Visual Arts at The Banff Centre, Canada; Chief Curator at the Serpentine Gallery; and Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada. She was a core agent for Germany's dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012, and is the curator for Geoffrey Farmer's *A way out of the mirror*, Canada's participation in the 2017 Venice Biennale.