

Duane Linklater

*dressing*

10 Nov – 21 Dec 2023

The Upstairs

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Bortolami Gallery is pleased to present its first solo exhibition with Duane Linklater, opening November 10th in the Upstairs. The exhibition centers on a new installation of five large scale paintings, while including a number of other news works.

Five 14-foot wood structures draped with painted textiles are at the core of Linklater's *dressing*. The suspended fabrics are painted, marked, and stained with organic materials such as cochineal dye and charcoal, as well as synthetic detergents such as bleach. These surfaces, energetically awash in warm cerise and deep blacks, are tethered to large industrial tarps with the use of a fluorescent and reflective tarp repair tape. The formal tenets of abstraction, from line and form to color, are rendered from sources gathered outside of art history's expected purview: gestural swaths of color are produced using traditional Indigenous dyes, and rectilinear lines and planes through appropriated shelter equipment, winking to a sense of impermanence.

Previous paintings by Linklater were borne from the artist separating teepee covers from their wooden structures, isolating and treating the semicircular canvases, and finally displaying the paintings draped like curing hides, or hung like sails on the wall. For *dressing*, a reverse gesture is activated, wherein paintings are rendered architectural as they are formally paired with immense lightweight wooden armatures from which they hang. The structures are based on the dimensions of the exhibition space which houses them, in particular the height of the gallery windows. As such, they oscillate referentially: they can be read as towers unto themselves, or decorative elements dressing the room which spurred their making.

Linklater has long addressed the twinned dynamic between the builderly and the decorative, simultaneously invoking industry's use of Indigenous labor and the deft craftsmanship of his family's matriarchs. *dressing* pays homage to the artist's late mother, with the heroic abstract paintings rising from a distilled memory of her tailoring curtains for their home. The modularity of the set of five paintings, which are at once sovereign entities and innately related as a group, is evocative of the dynamics of a family structure. Looming like giants and fluttering with natural sunlight, they are animated like spectral agents, a seeming chorus of subjects shaping and shaped by the artist's making.

Duane Linklater (b. 1976) is an Omaskêko Ininiwak artist from Moose Cree First Nation living and working in North Bay, Ontario. *Duane Linklater: mymothersside*, a major survey exhibition, is currently on view at Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, and travelled from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and the Frye, Art Museum, Seattle (2021).

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Other solo exhibitions of his work have been held at Art Gallery of Hamilton (2023); Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University (2017); Western Front, Vancouver (2017); 80 WSE Gallery, New York, and Mercer Union, Toronto (2016); Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City (2015); and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2015). Linklater has been featured in group exhibitions including at the 35th Bienal de São Paulo; The Drawing Center, New York (2023); the 2022 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Princeton University Museum of Art (2022); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2019); Artists Space, New York (2019); the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (2017); SeMa Biennale, Seoul, Korea (2016); Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2015); Vancouver Art Gallery (2015); and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, as part of dOCUMENTA (13) (2012).