

akâmi-
Duane Linklater
with Ethel (Trapper)
Linklater, Tobias Linklater
and Grey Plumes
3 July / 21 September

Duane Linklater with Ethel (Trapper) Linklater and Tobias Linklater, *Speculative apparatus for the work of nohkompan and nikosis*, 2016 (detail). Installation view, *From Our Hands*, Mercer Union, Toronto, 2016. Courtesy the artist and Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid



Camden Art Centre and New Curators are delighted to announce *akâmi-*, the first major UK institutional exhibition of Duane Linklater, an Omaskêko Ininiwak multimedia artist based in North Bay, Ontario, Canada. Curated by the second cohort of New Curators fellows, the exhibition interrogates power, individual and collective identity, absence, and memory within contemporary Indigenous life and institutional practices.

The exhibition features a new commission created with Sugpiaq artist and choreographer Tanya Lukin Linklater, under the collective name Grey Plumes, as well as an installation including objects made by Linklater's grandmother, Ethel (Trapper) Linklater and a video by his son, Tobias Linklater. A recent painting series and newly commissioned soundscape complete the exhibition.

akâmi- is Omaskêko Cree for "across", with multiple figurative and literal meanings that disrupt Western notions of temporality, confronting past, present and future simultaneously to create space for Indigenous presence in every moment. In different ways, the works engage with enduring legacies of colonialism, while also exploring new possibilities for museum structures, questioning distinctions between fine art and craft and the concept of the solo exhibition itself. By incorporating work from his family members in the exhibition, Linklater challenges the singularity of authorship and highlights the importance of community and intergenerational transmission of knowledge and creativity.

In Gallery One, Linklater's *they have piled the stone / as they promised / without syrup*, 2023, features nine abstracted paintings based on the gothic architecture of the Bishop Fauquier Memorial Chapel built in the 1880s on the grounds of the Shingwauk and Wawanosh Indian Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The work confronts the long-lasting trauma of residential schools, a system of boarding schools for Indigenous peoples operational in Canada from the 1800s until 1997, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada labelled cultural genocide. Created using natural pigments (including cochineal, sumac, tobacco and charcoal) and found materials on digitally printed linen, the series honours the Indigenous children whose labour contributed to the chapel's construction.

Gallery Two features *Speculative apparatus for the work of nohkompan and nikosis*, 2016, which includes mitts, slippers, and mukluks made by Ethel (Trapper) Linklater, a stop motion film by Tobias Linklater, and locally sourced cigarettes and flowers carefully arranged on and supported by armatures made from concrete and stainless steel on top of two large plinths. Linklater disrupts questions of authorship and ownership. The grouping of works and makers emphasises the importance

of kinship and intergenerational transmission of knowledge and identity. Since presenting this installation involves borrowing Linklater's grandmother's belongings from the Thunder Bay Art Gallery in Northern Ontario, any borrowing and lending institutions are also confronted with questions of ownership and the responsibilities that accompany it.

A new commission renews *Grey Plumes*, a collaborative practice between Duane Linklater and Tanya Lukin Linklater. Installed in the Reading Room, this installation features five clay vessels modelled after a Sugpiaq ceramic pot, excavated in 1962 by archaeologists from Lukin Linklater's homelands on Kodiak Island, Alaska. The refabricated vessels are modified to allow for activation through sound and performance that is insistently oppositional to settler-colonial systems of value, extractivism, and the fetishisation of the 'real' or 'authentic.' In doing so, they assert a futurity on their own terms. This collaboration highlights what Johannah Bird has describes as the 'ethical adjacency' of their practices – both deeply attuned to museum performativity and institutional behaviours, while often exploring ways to subvert and repurpose them. A new sound installation throughout the gallery serves as the connective thread, uniting all elements of the exhibition.

New Curators will publish a catalogue on the occasion of the exhibition, featuring contributions from each of the 2024–5 Fellows. The publication will be available for purchase at Camden Art Centre.

"We are proud to host New Curators second exhibition here at Camden Art Centre, an institution that has always been a place for new ideas, new thinking and new models of exhibition-making. Working with this year's cohort over the last 9 months has been an enriching and inspiring experience for the whole team, and we are delighted to be collaborating with them to present this ambitious and important project by Linklater, his first at this scale in the UK." Martin Clark, Director, Camden Art Centre

"Duane Linklater's practice embodies the spirit of New Curators – collaborative, inclusive and bold in re-imagining the role of institutions in contemporary art. With this exhibition, we invite audiences to engage critically and forge deeper connections with artistic practices that challenge conventions and open new dialogues." - Kerry Greenberg and Mark Godfrey, Directors, New Curators

akâmi is curated by the 2024–5 New Curators fellows: Nailah Reine Barnes (USA), Kaitlyn Carril (USA), Mayara Carvalho (Brazil), Danni Cheng (Taiwan/Turkey), Alisha O'Brien Coker (UK), Jasmine Lee (Bermuda), Issra Marie Martin (Philippines/Canada), Tam Nguyen (Vietnam), Jagoda Witkowska (Poland), Satyam Yadav (India) and Ugbad Yussuf (UK).

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Notes to Editors

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Camden Art Centre

Since 1965 Camden Art Centre has been a place for art and the people that make it. Rooted in our local community and internationally acclaimed, we foster a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship to art. We aim to push boundaries and connect people to their own creativity through our exhibitions, residencies, events and learning programmes. Originally built as a public library, the building now combines historic architecture with open, modern spaces and a secluded garden with free entry for all. Camden Art Centre has always led the way supporting artists and audiences to create and engage with the most vital and inspiring contemporary art and culture today.

Biography

Duane Linklater (Omaskêko Ininiwak, born 1976) lives and works in Nbisiing Anishinaabe Aki, or North Bay, Ontario. He attended the Milton Avery Graduate School of Arts at Bard College, completing his Master of Fine Arts in Film and Video. Linklater's practice is concerned with the exploration of the physical and theoretical structures of the museum in relation to the current and historical conditions of Indigenous peoples, their objects and forms. These explorations are articulated in a myriad of forms, including painting, sculpture, textiles, film, installation and text-based works. Collaboration is an essential component of his practice, having widely produced work with Tanya Lukin Linklater, Layli Long Soldier and many of his family members. In 2013, Linklater won the prestigious Sobey Art Award, Canada's most prominent prize for contemporary artists under 40. This will be the first time he has exhibited in the UK since his inclusion in the Liverpool Biennial in 2018. Following his exhibition at the Camden Art Centre, Linklater will have exhibitions at Dia Chelsea and The Vienna Secession.

New Curators

New Curators offers aspiring curators from lower socio-economic backgrounds a paid, year-long intensive curatorial training from its base at the South London Gallery. This unique programme is designed to equip the next generation of curators with the knowledge, practical skills, networks, and confidence needed to thrive in the contemporary art world and transform it from within. The programme comprises academic seminars, skills training sessions, extensive networking opportunities, coaching and mentorship, and practical experience working collaboratively on a major exhibition.
www.newcurators.org