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CHARLENE VICKERS
Doodem: Her Sacred Structures Hold Tight

November 14th - December 13th, 2025
Opening Friday, Nov 14th, 4-7pm

Macaulay + Co. is thrilled to present a solo exhibition of work by Vancouver-based Anishinaabe artist Charlene Vickers. *Doodem: Her Sacred Structures Hold Tight* continues Vickers' exploration of memory, and Indigenous experience within urban space. This new series of sewn assemblages act as material scrapbooks, mind maps, and memory catchers, in which bead poles echo the body and divine spirit energy, acting as smudge or medicine poles, flower poles, doodem*, and sacred body structures that "hold tight."

Working with synthetic, store bought materials such as shipping tubes, corrugated cardboard, yarn, beads and craft felt, Vickers explores how the natural world is often reimagined or replaced in contemporary urban life. This playful sense of materiality is also a nod in part to the artist's longtime reflections on cultural frameworks of beauty and value.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The vertical poles sewn assemblages contain materials that speak to my body and how I move through my urban spaces of lived personal experience. A material scrapbook. A mind map. A memory catcher. My flower healing. My scope sight's selective vision is articulated. As an object that performs itself to gain friends. To make a participation of longing and touch. At either end are Rabbit holes. Black holes. Escape holes. Warrens. Nests. Hidden passages. Childhood forts. Mind time melds. The works evoke nostalgia, memory, to unguard the guarded. Or to contain memory, blocked and locked. I imagine myself walking down the street, looking only through their porthole stove pipe bodies. Vision blockers. Seductive and selective memory.

Within these works are actions. The assemblages hold the energies of their making. Cuts, layers, beading, stitches, binding, stringing, etc. Protection of the spirit, body, mind, and emotions happens within them. There is protection of indigenous women's bodies woven within. The bead holds its strength as "little spirits inside." The bead poles are echoes of the body and divine spirit energy as smudge/medicine poles, bead poles, flower poles, existential

markers, totems, doodem*, spirit catchers, sewn assemblage, carriers, and sacred body structures.

Her sacred structures hold tight
Catch and carry me
On a cradle board
Through darkest morning
As leaves flutter by
Her back holds
My body upright
Her hips strong
Eyes bright and
Mouth and mind are sharp
Sacred knowledges are
Bound and wound into
Waxed paper layers
She will read them
To me, one day
When the snows return
And the stars envelope
The cold
In her, I can relate
And rely
Until my own words
Have taken their turn
In recollection
And recovery
Too little is never too late
Wrongdoings aside
The stealing and placement of the babes
The body in the board and cradle
Will never be broken
Will never be forgotten fully
Will strengthen in time
Beyond one's life span

A gathering of form and materials animates mundane shipping tubes, corrugated cardboard, accordion aluminum duct, yarn, and waxed twine with faux fur, oversized pony beads, dreamcatchers, craft felt/ foam flowers. They are not natural materials or gathered from the land, but are synthetic, store-bought, playful representations of the natural world. Faux Birch

bark wallpaper, fun fur, plastic fangs, fake sinew; speak of land as an idea, a feeling. A playful mix of visual joking, the sacred and mythic, handmade obsession, and childhood craft making. The materials are found and informed by everyday eyes that are seduced, structured, and evaluated in a kind of use-value fetishization. How durable, strong, malleable, portable, and touch-worthy can each thing be? Piecing, piercing, gluing, layering, scrunching, adorning, embedding, stuffing, or plunking it in, or meticulously beading and stitching the work's surfaces, becomes part of the work's meaning. My body has been moving through an urban landscape that is at times very intense, tight, narrow, and chaotic. I find solace in these materials, in the acts of gathering, beading, wrapping, and protecting as a process in which the hidden inner spaces of spirit and memory settle. It is my making sense of the world, enabling a sacred space to emerge/reside. The spaces and the seams that hold them in place keep balance and lend me mental strength. I can sense and feel resilience, power, fragility, and sacredness.

KEMOSABE*/gimoozaabi/to peak through in a secret manner.
The two cardboard flower tubes with dream catcher ends, and aluminum duct core, sparked a memory of past works/performance with collaborator Maria Hupfield. The beaded flower tubes are meant to be shared, held, and looked through by two people. The Dream Catchers at their opposite ends reveal an inner shiny aluminum air duct body spiraling out. When showing these works to friends in my studio, the flower tube really comes to life. Beautifully beaded flowers, dream catchers, and Home Depot duct, a bricolage of "Indigeneity." Picking up the work to look at the person at the other end, the shared experience of surprise and laughter is the thing. The open invitation to the fun part of art and performance. It totally reminded me of past "jam sessions" of making art with Maria Hupfield, where it seems the sole purpose was to stop, joke around, and tell stories as we worked. The making sessions often overshadowed the presentation and performance planning. I hope to embrace the energy of sharing company and joking. The art objects and the making of them can be hilarious, absurd, and ridiculous; the more serious intentions are put aside but not forgotten. Making and demonstrating the Dream Catcher Tubes reminds me of how to start work with a soft approach, observing the humorous and special moments of being with people, and the knowledge that those energies go into the experience and history of the work.
Charlene Vickers

NOTES

Doodem: Anishinaabemowin word that which totem is derived.
Kemosabe: a term of endearment from Tonto to the Lone Ranger from the 60s television series The Lone Ranger.
Gimoozaabi: Originating from the Ojibway Potawatomi word gimoozaabi, to peek through, he/she looks out secretly.