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Tāpis: A love letter to our Dog Kin

Conceived by Nehiyaw and Michif knowledge keeper, Elder-in-training, and multi-disciplinary artist Adele Lᑊᒃᓱᐤᐃᑊᕝᕕᐤ Arseneau, *Tāpis: A love letter to our Dog Kin* exhibits nine intricately beaded dog blankets. Over the course of a 20-week online residency led by Adele, four Indigenous beaders whose communities traditionally used Tāpis, learned how to create this important piece of regalia to honour their Dog Kin. This exhibition seeks to share the history of Tāpis and recognize the significant responsibility these beaders have undertaken to rebuild chains of knowledge damaged by colonialism and the residential school system.

Originating from the Métis, Northern Cree, and Dene communities, 'li Tāpis' (small carpet) named by the French Michif and known as 'tuppies' by the English and Scottish Michif, are dog blanket regalia created to celebrate dogs. Tāpis are made from wool and embellished with intricate beadwork, silk embroidery, moose or caribou hair tufting, fringed with ribbon or yarn, and adorned with bells. Showing respect for sled dogs, Tāpis were draped over the backs of dogs.

During this residency, Adele guided four beadworkers through the labour-intensive process of creating their own bespoke Tāpis for their dogs. "It was my dream to share the knowledge gifted to me by my mentor Velma Olsen to create more Indigenous knowledge keepers. I will continue to resist colonial erasure and make this hard-earned knowledge accessible to the communities who had these traditions stolen from them." For each of the participants in this cohort, honouring their "more than human kin" by reclaiming the tradition of Tāpis is a powerful act of cultural resistance.

Exhibiting Artists: Adele Lᑊᒃᓱᐤᐃᑊᕝᕕᐤ Arseneau, Velma Olsen, Debbie Dillon, Jaimy Fischer, Vicki Fraser, and Carrie Moran McCleary

September 10 – November 2, 2024

Exhibition Reception: September 15, 2024 from 2 – 4 p.m.
Artist Talk with Adele Lᑊᒃᓱᐤᐃᑊᕝᕕᐤ Arseneau: October 27, 2024 at 2 p.m.

Image credit: Adele Lᑊᒃᓱᐤᐃᑊᕝᕕᐤ Arseneau,

For more information, please contact curator/director Vanessa Black at 604-924-1378 or curator@seymourartgallery.com The Seymour Art Gallery is a non-profit, public gallery located in the heart of Deep Cove, North Vancouver. 4360 Gallant Ave, North Vancouver BC, www.seymourartgallery.com, 604-924-1378 Tuesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., except holidays | free admission

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