

Beau Dick | Early Works

Beau Dick / Early Works brings together, in a photographic portfolio, fourteen works created by celebrated Kwakwaka'wakw artist and activist Chief Beau Dick, Walas Gwa'yam, between 1978 and 1980. He was at the time in his mid-twenties, and the works offer a unique glimpse into his artistic development. The works were purchased one by one, as he made them, by a single collector, and were exhibited together for the first time at Fazakas Gallery in Vancouver, BC, in the spring of 2019. As a collection, these artworks form a complex portrait of a young artist's attainment of a remarkably high level of virtuosity and stylistic diversity.

It is a rare privilege to view a coherent grouping of Beau's works. He did not adhere exclusively to the conventions of the art market, and often bypassed the commercial gallery system by selling directly to private collectors. For years contemporary art institutions overlooked his achievements, as they did those of other Indigenous artists. As a result, a surprising number of Beau's works have never received a public or discursive reception.

The brilliant youthful pieces included in *Early Works* have now been sold and dispersed. The desire to keep the memory of this important collection together, and to offer insight into the heart and mind of their maker, inspired this folio in *The Capilano Review*. The feature includes a conversation with LaTiesha Fazakas, founder and director of Fazakas Gallery, and interviews with Kwakwaka'wakw artists Alan Hunt and Cole Speck who apprenticed with Beau and who worked alongside him to prepare his exhibition for documenta 14 in 2017. It ends with Linnea Dick's personal reflection on mourning, in memory of her dad.

The Capilano Review is grateful to LaTiesha Fazakas and Fazakas Gallery for collaborating with us on this feature.

