



Photo: Endi Farber for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

DOROTHY GRANT

RAVEN COMES FULL CIRCLE

Celebrating 40 years of Haida haute couture

HAIDA GWAII MUSEUM AT KAY LLNAGAAY

JULY 6 - DECEMBER 31, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



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AT KAY LLNAGAAY

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PRESS RELEASE

Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, July 3rd — The Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay is proud to present a retrospective of acclaimed Haida fashion designer, Dorothy Grant. Opening July 6th and running through December 21st, 2024, this landmark exhibition offers a rare opportunity to experience the breadth of Grant's 40-year career in art and fashion, from early seminal pieces to recent masterpieces.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Title: Dorothy Grant – Raven Comes Full Circle

Dates: July 6th – December 21, 2024

Location: Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay, Skidegate, Haida Gwaii

Opening Reception: 7:00 pm Saturday July 6, 2024. Opening ceremonies include words shared by artist Dorothy Grant and curator Nika Collison, and cultural sharing by Tluu Xaada Naay, a traditional Haida dance group.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



“Our people have been in fashion design for millennia.”

– *Skil Da 'Yuuwans Dorothy Grant*

Dorothy Grant belongs to the Yahgw Janáas clan of the Haida Nation. An internationally renowned fashion designer, she is celebrated for her unique design and critical role in bringing Indigenous fashion to a world stage. Grant's artistic journey began with ceremonial works in the early 1980s, when she began making button robes and learned spruce root weaving from master Haida weaver Florence Davidson. In the mid-1980s, rising to a challenge by celebrated Haida artist Bill Reid, Grant set her sights on bridging the world of Haida art and regalia with that of western fashion and haute couture. Pursuing a formal fashion education at the Helen Lefaux School of Fashion Design, she debuted her first label, Feastwear, in 1989 with a fashion show in Vancouver that featured 55 pieces, garnering great excitement. This event marked the beginning of Dorothy Grant's multi-decade career in fashion.

Grant's work has since graced countless international runways and prestigious art and fashion exhibitions. Her garments, imbued with the Haida philosophy of yahguudang (respect), are worn by many walks of life in a variety of settings, from Potlatches to the Oscars. Her creations are also part of global museum and gallery collections, including the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, the National Gallery of Canada, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, with Grant's Shark Button Robe currently showing at the MET in New York.

Throughout her career, Grant has received numerous accolades, including the Order of Canada in 2015 for her contributions to Canada's fashion industry as an artist, designer and mentor, and an honorary doctorate from Simon Fraser University. She continues to be celebrated for her lasting legacy in art, fashion, and business, and for her role in opening the door for future Indigenous fashion designers.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

This retrospective will showcase over 40 pieces, including:

Early Works: Explore the beginning of Grant's career from fine ceremonial regalia and spruce root weavings to her seminal inaugural line, Feastwear.

Mid-Career: Experience exquisite appliquéd leather garments and the Dorothy Grant Gold Label; highlights include Grant's *Raven Takes the World* wedding dress (cover photo) made in honour of her mother, Eleanor Morrison Grant Eikemo, on loan from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

Recent Innovations: Discover Grant's latest creations reflecting her ongoing evolution and experimentation in Haida haute couture, including elegant gala gowns, breezy scarf dresses, and the reinterpretation of early designs.

CURATOR'S STATEMENT

"We are beyond thrilled to bring together this extensive collection of Dorothy Grant's work," said Taa.uu 'Yuuwans Nika Collison, curator of the exhibition. "As a Haida fashion designer, Dorothy has continually pushed the boundaries of the fashion world so that we as Indigenous people have a place in it as much as we do in the Potlatch." Collison continues, "She is a trailblazer, and we are so honoured to present this important and critical exhibition, and I cannot wait for the book *Dorothy Grant: An Endless Thread* to come out in October."

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

New Book: In conjunction with the exhibition, Figure 1 Publishing and the Haida Gwaii Museum are publishing *Dorothy Grant: An Endless Thread*, the first monograph to celebrate her trailblazing career. Part look-book, part memoir and part history, this beautifully illustrated monument to a singular designer who helped inspire the growing Indigenous fashion movement is also a powerful demonstration of the enduring resonance and possibilities of Haida art. The book contains new photography of dozens of Grant's works spanning the past four decades, modeled in studio and natural settings in Vancouver and Haida Gwaii, alongside fashion sketches, ceremonial button robes and spruce root weavings, and personal stories and reflections from Grant herself.

Essays by Haida repatriation specialist and museologist Sdahl K'awaas Lucy Bell and curator India Rael Young place Grant in the long continuum of Haida fashion and trace the many innovations and accomplishments of her journey; and Haida curator and artist Kwiaahwah Jones, a longtime assistant to Grant, shares brilliant behind-the-scenes insights and memories. Book launch dates for Vancouver, Haida Gwaii and Alaska, and other events will be announced soon.

Travelling Exhibition: The Haida Gwaii Museum plans to travel the exhibition in the near future.



Model wears a Raven Cape with One Shoulder Dress (Feastwear, 2022) and fur-felt hat; Farah Nosh photo.

PRESS CONTACT

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Dorothy Grant – Raven Comes Full Circle is funded by Canada Council for the Arts with additional support from the BC Arts Council, North Coast Regional District, Gwaii Trust Society and Haida Gwaii Museum.

ABOUT THE HAIDA GWAII MUSEUM

Located on Skidegate Reserve #1 on Haida Gwaii, the Haida Gwaii Museum opened in 1976. In later years, the Museum partnered with Skidegate Band Council and Gwaii Haanas/Parks Canada to create the award winning Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay, which opened in 2007. The Museum's mandate is Haida Gwaii, its mission is to inspire understanding and respect for all that Haida Gwaii is. It cares for a world class collection of Haida art and cultural belongings, local Canadian art, and an expansive archive dedicated to the history of Haida Gwaii. The Museum continues to build an international reputation for its work in and dedication to Haida language, art and culture; repatriation and social justice; and the creative work of all-island artists.



Haida ladies modelling scarf dresses at North Beach, Haida Gwaii; Dorothy Grant Gold Label, 2023; Farah Nosh photo.

Following page >> Dorothy Grant models a Raven Creation Tunic (Feastwear, 1990) at Naay Kun (Rose Spit), Haida Gwaii, where Raven coaxed humans out of a clamshell; Farah Nosh photo.





The Hummingbird Copper
Dress at Grant's 1989
Feastwear show
in Vancouver.
photo: Robert Semeniuk



Autumn Orange Feather Dress
Dorothy Grant Gold Label, 2007
Farah Nosh photo