



Museums Alaska - Art Acquisition Fund 2019 Round 1
Ketchikan Museums
Application #AAF2019R10017

Primary Contact: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Document Generated: Thursday, March 28th 2019, 11:17 am

Artwork To Be Purchased (Information)

Artist Information

Artist Name

Dorica Jackson

Artist Address

[REDACTED]

Artist Email Address

[REDACTED]

Artist Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Artwork Information

Title of Artwork

Diving Whale Chilkat Robe

Medium

Merino wool, cedar bark

Date Completed

(If only year is known, enter December 31.)

2018-9-30

Dimensions

63.5" wide x 57.5" long

Artwork to be Purchased From

Artist

Price of Artwork

\$50,000

Funding Request

(Provide the dollar amount of your request. You may apply for the full price of the artwork. If the full price of the artwork exceeds the allotted amount [\$35,000 per institution per year], you must provide a detailed fundraising plan and demonstrate that additional funds are secured or in reserves.)

\$35,000

You must click "Save Work" at the bottom of each page.



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Artwork To Be Purchased (Digital File)



Title: DIVING WHALE
CHILKAT ROBE
Artist 1: Dorica Jackson
Created: 2018
Description: This is a full-sized Chilkat robe. The diving whale design comes from George Emmon's The Basketry of the Tlingit and the Chilkat Blanket. Central to the design is a face above double eyes with ravens on the sides.
Dimensions: 57.5 x 63.5 x 2

Title: DIVING WHALE
CHILKAT ROBE
Artist 1: Dorica Jackson
Completed: 2018
Published: 0
Publisher:
[Image Use Authorization Jackson - Chilkat Robe.pdf](#)

[Diving Whale Chilkat Robe](#)



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Narrative

RATIONALE: Please describe how this particular artwork meets the collecting goals of the museum as shown in its collection policy and its collecting plan. Applicant should address such points as the significance of the artist, the quality of the work, the subject, the medium, and the style.

Please carefully review the current guidelines, including footnotes.

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Describe the artwork: What is it made of, how was it made, what story does it tell, when was it made, has it been shown, where will it be purchased? Clearly explain the artistic merit of the artwork.

(5000 characters max)

This full-sized Chilkat robe was created by master weaver, Dorica Jackson, who alongside Cheryl Samuel was vital in the revival of this treasured art form in a time when it was nearly lost. Chilkat weaving, a complex geometric textile weaving method which translates the curvature of formline design into warp and weft, was all but extinct by the early 1900s. Unique to the Northwest Coast, Chilkat robes remain rare and are considered highly valued property. Traditionally woven from yellow cedar bark and mountain goat wool, robes require at least one year of prepping materials and weaving.

Dorica Jackson began preparing materials for the Diving Whale Chilkat robe in 2002. Initially a commission from the Ethnographic Museum in Antwerp, that museum recently merged into another and Jackson's commission obligation dissolved. Jackson remained committed to finishing the robe but worked full-time as an office manager, leaving only limited time to weave. The robe was completed in September 2018 after several years of weaving at the Totem Heritage Center. Throughout her time at the Center, Jackson encouraged local weavers to examine her techniques in addition to demonstrating how to thigh spin the materials and explaining the dye process.

Jackson used commercially purchased merino wool and personally prepared yellow cedar bark for the warp. Merino yarn was used for the weft and dyed using traditional Native pigments and techniques for producing yellow and black. The blue-green was dyed during the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 2005 using scraps of Hudson Bay blankets that were dyed with indigo and then overdyed with wolf moss. Commercial wool was utilized instead of the traditional mountain goat wool as it is still soft and white but much easier to acquire. Mountain goat hunting season ends in December but the wool is not long enough until the end of winter towards March. Given hunting regulations, the only way to collect hair of the adequate length is to pick it off high elevation brush.

The diving whale design comes from George Emmon's *The Basketry of the Tlingit and the Chilkat Blanket*. Central to the design is a face above two distinctive double eyes. Ravens sit in the lateral sides. Jackson chose the Diving Whale design based on the request from the original commission for a whale design. She chose this particular design as it presented a "good weaving challenge" with proper balance and continuity in the formline and because it featured Raven, her husband's moiety. The original story behind the design remains unknown.

It is important to note that the diving whale does not represent a clan, alleviating issues of intellectual property. Museum staff brought the issue of cultural appropriation to our Totem Heritage Center Advisory Committee meeting of August 25, 2018. This committee is comprised of seven Native representatives of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian descent who act as a liaison to the Native community and provide input concerning the policies and direction of the Totem Heritage Center. The committee fully supported efforts to purchase the robe and felt that there was no issue of intellectual property or clan ownership. They also felt that keeping this rare and exceptional piece by a Ketchikan artist within the community illustrated our role in the history of Northwest Coast art traditions. Committee



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members expressed that as Chilkat weaving is an endangered art form, every effort should be made to keep the tradition alive.

In 2018, Jackson was invited to present at the Sealaska Heritage Foundation's Celebration, indicating that she is regarded as an accomplished artist and known for demonstrating the highest level of artistic merit in Chilkat weaving. She shared her story of becoming a weaver along with the then incomplete robe with Ravenstail and Chilkat weavers. This robe exemplifies an extraordinary artistic merit according to the Ketchikan weavers who have the knowledge and understanding of Chilkat techniques. The completed robe has yet to be shown publicly. The Chilkat robe will be purchased from the artist.

Describe the artist: Who made the piece, where were they trained and where do they work today, how does the artwork reflect the artist's personal history and body of work?

(5000 characters max)

Dorica Jackson has been finding time over many years to visit the Totem Heritage Center to weave her Diving Whale Chilkat robe, a project initiated in 2002. In September, Jackson, along with museum staff, celebrated the completed full-size robe being removed from the loom. This achievement and the robe itself embody an important continuing revival of an endangered art form. Jackson studied Chilkat weaving techniques when the knowledge was carried by only a few weavers, and by mastering the techniques and teaching others, she was instrumental in helping to preserve this art form. Jackson is credited with being one of the first weavers to complete a contemporary Chilkat robe, a 1975 National Park Service commission from then Director Ellen Lang. Jackson, along with other renowned weavers such as Cheryl Samuel, rediscovered the techniques of this striking weaving method. An adopted member of the Dakl'aweidí (Killer Whale) clan, Jackson majored in textile design at the University of Washington and became interested in Northwest Coast Native art while taking classes with Bill Holm. Jackson began her weaving career in 1972 by taking basketry classes from renowned Haida weaver Selina Peratrovich, which helped prepare her for Chilkat weaving. At the age of 22, Jackson started learning Chilkat weaving, then an endangered art form at the infancy of recovery and revival. Jackson's second full-sized robe was woven for her husband, Tlingit master carver Nathan Jackson, from 1996 to 2001. This full-sized Chilkat robe is her third. Most recently, renowned Haida weaver Holly Churchill apprenticed with Jackson. She also taught Chilkat weaving through the Totem Heritage Center's Native Arts Studies Program soon after the facility opened, and has returned to teaching classes in recent seasons. Jackson's Diving Whale Chilkat Robe is an extraordinary and meticulous piece of contemporary art that carries the weight of inspiring the continuation of this treasured cultural art form.

Describe the significance: How does this piece fit into the museum's collecting plans? Why is it important to the museum? Clearly state how the proposed purchase conforms to the mission of the institution.

(5000 characters max)

Our collection currently houses only two small historical Chilkat fragments in addition to one robe that is held as a loan from the Dog Salmon Clan of Klawock. The purchase of Jackson's Chilkat Robe would address this significant, identified gap in the collection. Exhibiting this exemplary local piece will provide public access to the robe in order to educate and engage visitors from across the globe, researchers and weaving students.

The proposed purchase clearly supports our mission to collect, preserve, interpret and creatively share the history and culture of our region to serve, educate, engage and enrich our community. The tradition of Chilkat weaving has been taught through our Native Arts Studies Program throughout the program's 40 year history, illustrating our commitment to preserving and sharing this art form due to its historical significance in Southeast Alaska. Weavers of Ketchikan played a vital role in ensuring Chilkat weaving has survived. Collecting, preserving and exhibiting a full-sized robe from Ketchikan represents this continuum of local weaving tradition and innovation.

Beyond its historical significance for Ketchikan and the Totem Heritage Center, the robe exemplifies the highest skill level in Chilkat weaving as noted above, another important consideration as a resource for education and inspiration for the next generation of Ketchikan's weavers.



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Describe the method of sharing: What is the museum's plan for sharing this work with the public? Discuss any plans for exhibition, loans, publications, online resources, newsletter, press release, etc. where the piece will be made available. Clearly state how the proposed purchase meets collection and exhibition goals of the institution.

(5000 characters max)

As a part of our collection, this Chilkat robe will be incorporated into upcoming exhibition updates at the Totem Heritage Center (see attached Exhibition Plan), thanks in part to Grant-in-Aid support from the Alaska State Museum. Exhibiting this contemporary robe honors this endangered weaving tradition, while beautifully illustrating the heart of the Totem Heritage Center's mission of perpetuating the living artistic traditions of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian peoples.

In addition to exhibiting the robe for our visitors, it will inform and inspire generations of students. Our Native Arts Studies Program, an annual series of classes teaching traditional and contemporary Native Arts, is in its 42nd season. Jackson has graciously returned to leading Chilkat weaving classes and has also shared her knowledge through apprenticing Holly Churchill at the Totem Heritage Center. This illustrates her commitment for keeping this endangered art form alive. She has shared her knowledge beyond Ketchikan by instructing classes and giving presentations throughout her weaving career, as well as demonstrating and teaching across Southeast Alaska and in museums across the globe.

The significance of Jackson's robe and its story will also be communicated via social media, our newsletter, media outreach and an artist presentation during our Museum Midday programming, all following the installation of the robe this summer.

Acquisition of this Chilkat robe meets the following collection and exhibition goals:

- To actively pursue appropriate collections and items for donation to or purchase by the City or Tongass Historical Society Incorporated

As noted above, this piece is an appropriate local item to collect as it was created in Ketchikan by a Ketchikan resident.

- To accept only those materials relevant to the Museum's purpose into the collections.

The robe is relevant because it was made by a local artist and honors local tradition and Native culture.

- To accept only those materials for which the Museum can responsibly care and adequately house. Ketchikan Museums has a 51 year history of proper collections care in addition to adequate exhibition and storage space for this large piece.

- To strive to attribute provenance or use or object in the collections to a specific person or group of individuals

This robe has a clear provenance from a local, respected, established artist.

- To maintain, make available, and continually upgrade a variety of research aids for public use.

This robe is an excellent teaching tool for our weaving students and Northwest Coast art researchers.

- To make effective use of all artifacts within the collections, including use for research and/or exhibit, for posterity, or selection for educational purposes.

Making this Chilkat robe available to the public through exhibition provides the opportunity to share weaving techniques and educate and engage all ages with a stunning local art piece while providing a vibrant cultural context.

- To engage our diverse audiences and foster our community identity by sharing and interpreting Ketchikan's unique stories

Dorica Jackson's role in revitalizing Chilkat weaving is a unique Ketchikan story to preserve and interpret for visitors and local residents. Exhibiting the robe provides a dynamic layer to the exhibit updates that are in progress at the Totem Heritage Center. It brings to life many explored concepts: clan property, the transition of traditional and modern materials and mentoring, formline design, social



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status and the active role of regalia in clan stories and identity.

Clearly explain how the price of the artwork was determined.

(5000 characters max)

Dorica Jackson surveyed the few active weavers of full Chilkat robes for recent commission prices. She found that \$50,000 was consistent with the cost of an art form requiring the dedication of one year on average to complete and a significant level of expertise that comes from years of study and practice. Numerous representatives of galleries and auction houses selling Native art were contacted for a list of recent Chilkat weaving sales, including smaller pieces, as well as historic and contemporary robes or fragments.

Is there anything else the review committee needs to know about your application?

(5000 characters max)

We understand our request of \$35,000 is substantial on the part of Ketchikan Museums. The City Manager's office acknowledges the immense value of having this piece in both our collection and our community and is in full support of acquiring Jackson's Chilkat robe. To this end, the City Manager approved a budget transfer of \$15,000 into a restricted grants account that is dedicated towards the Chilkat robe. These funds were approved by the City Council on December 20, 2018 and are encumbered through 2019, providing the remaining balance should our \$35,000 request be successful. Please note the attached statement verifying the secured City funds.

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Provenance

Please provide the provenance of the artwork, insofar as possible (including date of composition, places and dates of showings, awards and dates, and previous owners).

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Provenance

(15000 characters max)

Dorica Jackson began preparing materials for the Diving Whale Chilkat robe in 2002. Initially a commission from the Ethnographic Museum in Antwerp, that museum was recently merged into another and Jackson's commission obligation dissolved. Jackson remained committed to finishing the robe but worked full-time as a bookkeeper and office manager, leaving only limited time to weave. The robe was completed in September 2018 after several years of weaving at the Totem Heritage Center. Jackson used commercially purchased merino wool and personally prepared yellow cedar bark for the warp. Merino yarn was used for the weft and dyed using traditional Native pigments and techniques for producing yellow and black. The blue-green was dyed during the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 2005 using scraps of Hudson Bay blankets that were dyed with indigo and then overdyed with wolf moss. In 2018, Jackson was invited to present at the Sealaska Heritage Foundation's Celebration. She shared her story of becoming a weaver along with the then incomplete robe with Ravenstail and Chilkat weavers. The completed robe has yet to be shown publicly.

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Optional Attachments

You may attach up to six additional optional attachments.

If you are applying for funding for a commissioned work, you must contact the program administrator in advance of submitting your application, in order to discuss your application and receive information about required additional attachments for commissioned works.

If you need to attach more than six attachments, please contact the program administrator.

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Optional Attachment

[Chilkat Robe secured funding.pdf](#)

Optional Attachment

[Ketchikan Museums Exhibit Plan- Chilkat Robe.pdf](#)

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