



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 4, 2025

**Northwest Coast Weaver Jaad Kuujus–Meghann O’Brien Makes
Solo Exhibition Debut in MOA World Premiere:
— Jaad Kuujus: Everyone Says I Look Like My Mother —**

***From hand-spun mountain goat wool to digital looms: exhibition of contemporary
weavings redefines the future of tradition.***

VANCOUVER, BC — The Museum of Anthropology at UBC (MOA) presents the world premiere of ***Jaad Kuujus: Everyone Says I Look Like My Mother***, on display from **December 4, 2025–March 29, 2026**. Co-curated by artist Jaad Kuujus–Meghann O’Brien (Haida, Kwakwaka’wakw, Irish), Kate Hennessy (Associate Professor, Simon Fraser University), and Hannah Turner (Associate Professor, University of British Columbia), the exhibition features a varied collection of naaxiin (Chilkat) weavings and their digital translations. From intricately handwoven ceremonial regalia to digitally rendered reproductions, the exhibition is a space of reflection on themes of repetition, regeneration, and return.

“This exhibition is an expression of respect and love towards my ancestors and their ways of making, while looking forward to how new technologies can be used to represent our stories,” says O’Brien. “My hope is that visitors to *Everyone Says I Look Like My Mother* will experience the strength of the lands and cultures these works are connected to, even in the contemporary iterations. I believe that how we see can change the world. I hope visitors form a deeper connection to the foundational thread of ancestry—whether that be the lineages represented in the exhibition or to their own.”

Jaad Kuujus: Everyone Says I Look Like My Mother will feature more than a dozen works spanning the artist's career. A consistent thread throughout the exhibition is the use of mountain goat wool, a material of great importance to many Northwest Coast communities. The artist was first introduced to thigh spinning by SGaan Jaad–Sherri Dick (Haida/Kootenay), and furthered her skills through Lieut. George T. Emmons’ 1907 book *The Chilkat Blanket*. The drafted yarn on display in *Clouds* (2010) references Haida oral tradition and is a snapshot of the steps involved in transforming raw shorn fleece into yarn, used in several works featured in the exhibition.

In *Everyone Says I Look Like My Mother* (2020), from which the exhibition draws its name, O’Brien brings together the handmade and the hyper-commercialized in the creation of a T-shirt made from mountain goat wool and yellow cedar bark. This weaving is at once an honouring of matrilineal strength, and commentary on the inherent tension in the use of a sacred material to create a garment associated with mass production.

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The same wool was also used in *The Burden of Being an Echo* (2025), a series of five digital-jacquard robes based on the artist's seminal work *Sky Blanket* and its digital surrogate, *Wrapped in the Cloud* (2018). Woven at the historic textile factory EE Labels in the Netherlands in collaboration with Simon Fraser University's Making Culture Lab, these hybrid weavings are finished with rows of two strand twining, connecting the works in the show materially and advancing the use of mountain goat wool as an ancestral material when used to bind the futuristic machine-woven robes.

Using the skills gained during her time as an apprentice under master Ts'msyen weaver, Tsamiianbaan–William White, she created *The Spirit of Shape* (2015–2018), an intricate recreation of an historical Chilkat apron and reclamation of the belonging's spirit. In 2023, O'Brien collaborated with the Vancouver Mural Festival and IM4 Media Lab to create an augmented reality experience titled *The Shape of Spirit*, reimagining the apron as a floorplan.

Kuugan Jaad I & III (2015) is a set of fine weavings inspired by a 19th century Haida bentwood dish on display in MOA's Multiversity Galleries. Used by friends and family in Haida and Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonies and celebrations, these pieces represent another empowering act of reclamation of belongings held in museums.

The works in the exhibition will be displayed against an installation of curving petal-pink textile softwalls, created by Todd MacAllen and Stephanie Forsythe of Vancouver-based design studio, molo. For O'Brien, "Placing my artworks in a circular shape encourages a relational rather than hierarchical understanding of the works. This space evokes the themes of repetition, regeneration, and return at the heart of the exhibition."

Jaad Kuujus–Meghann O'Brien is a weaver of Haida, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Irish descent. Born in Alert Bay, BC, and now based in Vancouver, her innovative approach to traditional weaving connects to the rhythms and patterns of both nature and machine, an ongoing dialogue in continuity with her ancestors.

MOA will celebrate *Jaad Kuujus: Everyone Says I Look Like My Mother's* opening night on Thursday, December 4, 2025, from 6pm to 9pm, with free museum admission for all. **To learn more about the exhibition, as well as ancillary events, visit moa.ubc.ca**

About MOA (moa.ubc.ca)

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) is world-renowned for its collections, research, teaching, public programs and community connections. Its mission is to inspire an understanding of and respect for world arts and cultures. Today, Canada's largest teaching museum is located in a spectacular Arthur Erickson-designed building overlooking mountains and sea. MOA's collections consist of more than 50,000 cultural objects and artworks created in Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe and the Americas — with a focus on the Pacific Northwest. MOA's Multiversity Galleries: Ways of Knowing provide public access to many of these works. The Audain Gallery and the O'Brian Gallery, MOA's feature exhibition spaces, showcase travelling exhibitions, as well as those developed in-house.

LISTING INFORMATION

MOA presents *Jaad Kuujus: Everyone Says I Look Like My Mother*

Dates:

December 4, 2025 to March 29, 2026

Address: Museum of Anthropology
University of British Columbia
6393 NW Marine Drive, Vancouver, BC

Website: moa.ubc.ca

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