



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 14, 2026

MOA Presents Canadian Premiere and First North American Tour Stop of
Ayana V. Jackson's Afrofuturist Exhibition:
— From the Deep: In the Wake of Drexciya with Ayana V. Jackson —

*A feminist, Pan-African world inspired by a Detroit-based electronic music group
reimagines Atlantic Ocean as a realm of survival and possibility*

VANCOUVER, BC — The Museum of Anthropology at UBC (MOA) presents the Canadian premiere of *From the Deep: In the Wake of Drexciya with Ayana V. Jackson*, on display from **November 19, 2026–March 29, 2027**. In her first major institutional exhibition, American artist Ayana V. Jackson draws inspiration from the mythic underwater world imagined by Detroit techno duo, Drexciya, to create a feminist, Pan-African aquatopia inhabited by water spirits from African and Afro-Atlantic traditions. Premiered in 2023 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, the exhibition will make its first touring stop at MOA.

Informed by Afrofuturism, a cultural movement and aesthetic that combines science fiction, history, and fantasy with Black identity to envision alternative futures, Drexciya's 1990s music imagined a mythical country populated by the children of enslaved African women who were thrown overboard or jumped during the Middle Passage. Where Drexciya's world has often been characterized as masculine and militaristic, Jackson's iteration is decidedly feminine. Through an act of speculative fiction, the artist imagines African water spirits as midwives to survivors, helping to breathe life into a matriarchal, aquatic society. Through the convergence of myth, memory, and performative embodiment, the exhibition transforms the Atlantic from a site of trauma into one of ancestry and resilience. It offers viewers a space for reflection, remembrance, and repair.

"In *From the Deep*, I am asking the audience to consider what is possible when we look beyond the archive of the trauma and violence contained within the historical recordings of the Middle Passage. Through the world building power of mythology, we imagine an alternative reality, rooted in ingenuity, survival, and transformation," says Jackson. "Additionally, with this exhibition I welcome visitors to connect with African cosmologies that have been systematically erased or devalued in the Western context. I have chosen to build on the myth of Drexciya by imagining that African water spirits followed the enslaved pregnant women to midwife their babies, bringing them into an entirely new world, an aquatopia of survivors. Through scent, sound, animation, photography and video, I provide a multisensory experience that invites visitors to take their time, to experience its beauty and materiality, even as they grapple with the difficult histories at its core."

A multimedia exhibition, *From the Deep* transports visitors into an otherworldly environment featuring custom mannequins adorned in original garments by contemporary African designers. More than merely decorative, the colours and materials of the garments were chosen to signal histories of trade,

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labour, and ritual, and of cultural and commercial exchange between Africa, Europe, and the Americas. In addition, the exhibition showcases striking photography installations, layered soundscapes, and evocative projections. The project was developed in collaboration with designers, composers, artists, printers, and makers in five countries across three continents.

The exhibition arrives at a moment of renewed global reckoning with the legacy of the transatlantic trade of enslaved Africans, with the United Nations General Assembly adopting an official resolution recognizing the atrocity as “the gravest crime against humanity,” in March 2026.

“In *From the Deep*, Ayana V. Jackson alters society’s traditionally held understanding of the horrors of the trade of enslaved Africans to imagine a transformative narrative filled with hope and possibility,” says Nuno Porto, MOA’s curatorial liaison for *From the Deep* and Curator, Africa + South America. “In her sophisticated and compelling approach to the development of a richly imagined mythical realm, Jackson claims the many cultural traditions, narratives, and beliefs of African heritages as the central source to imagine a better future.”

After its presentation in Vancouver, *From the Deep* travels to the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit from April to August 2027, with additional cities to be added. The tour is organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

Ayana V. Jackson (b. 1977, East Orange, NJ) is an artist based in Brooklyn and Johannesburg. Her work critiques the colonial gaze and reimagines historical narratives of the Black diaspora. By restaging 19th- and early 20th-century portraiture, often casting herself in historical roles, she challenges photography’s role in shaping racial and gendered identities. Her work is held in major collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Studio Museum in Harlem; and the National Gallery of Victoria. A 2014 NYFA Fellow, 2018 Smithsonian Fellow, and most recently Pollock-Krasner Foundation award recipient, Jackson founded the STILL Art residency in Johannesburg in 2021.

MOA will celebrate the opening of *From the Deep* on Thursday, November 19, 2026, at 7pm. To learn more about the exhibition, 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’Brien Gallery, MOA’s feature exhibition spaces, showcase travelling exhibitions, as well as those developed in-house.

LISTING INFORMATION

MOA presents *From the Deep: In the Wake of Drexciya* with Ayana V. Jackson

Dates:

November 19, 2026 to March 29, 2027

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

Website: moa.ubc.ca

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