

## Ancient styles fashioned anew

When European merchants traded for sea otter cloaks off the backs of Northwest coast chiefs and leaders, they received reciprocal requests for clothing. Bolts of fabric created before the industrial revolution were a rare European commodity afforded only by the rich. But for the lust of fur, yards of red and blue wool cloth were given in trade. The trade cloth was immediately refashioned into clan and ceremonial robes, adorned with shells, bird beaks and deer hooves in undulating patterns of formline. Later, buttons and trade beads were used to create a new fashion for ceremonial garb—the “button blanket.”

## Expanding horizons

Born out of perceived supernatural power, woven designs on leaders’ and chiefs’ garments displayed their communion with the natural and supernatural spirits of sea, sky and forest. Today, traditional designs and garments are adapted into new formats with modern fabrics and yarns. Stretching the boundaries between craft and art, Northwest textiles have pushed past the restrictions of traditional shapes, materials and purpose, yet the designs continue to be mnemonic pathways to the ancestors’ visions.

### *Dogfish Robe*

#### Button Blanket

**Dorothy Grant and Robert Davidson, Haida  
1985**

**Wool cloth, glass beads, shell buttons**

This robe is a collaborative effort between Haida artists Robert Davidson and Dorothy Grant. It was Dorothy’s personal robe, worn on many ceremonial occasions in the 1980’s and 90’s. The dogfish design appliquéd in the central panel is a crest of Grant’s Yahgu’laanaas Raven clan.

1999-23/1

Purchased with funds donated  
by Lawrence Christian & John A. Putnam

### *Raven Dance Apron*

**Donald Yeomans, Haida  
ca. 2000**

**Ultrasuede, wool cloth, deer hide**

2004-2/104

Gift of Arthur B. Steinman



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