

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 6, 2018 | Toronto

**Textile Museum of Canada presents *Beads, they're sewn so tight*,  
an exhibition of contemporary beadworks by four Indigenous artists**

**October 10, 2018 – May 26, 2019**

ARTISTS: Bev Koski, Katie Longboat, Jean Marshall, Olivia Whetung

GUEST CURATOR: Lisa Myers

OPENING RECEPTION: Wednesday October 10 | 6:00 – 7:30pm

Artists will be present, all are welcome

The Textile Museum of Canada is pleased to present *Beads, they're sewn so tight*, a new exhibition of work by four contemporary artists who innovate in the field of beading and quillwork, guest curated by Lisa Myers.

In beadwork, threads create structure and hold beads together, creating a seemingly invisible scaffold. As metaphor and as material, they unite form, design, and meaning. *Beads, they're sewn so tight* examines social and political relations embedded in the visual language of pattern and surface design, including living traditions with an emphasis on family and community networks.

*Beads, they're sewn so tight* features over 40 beaded works by Bev Koski, Katie Longboat, Jean Marshall, and Olivia Whetung, many of which will be shown here for the first time. From weaving to loom-work and embroidery, their artwork threads together formal aspects of artmaking such as colour and composition with critical issues such as language retention, stereotypes, and social and environmental injustices for Indigenous people.

“I see these artists as not merely using beadwork in their art practices but building on the technique and knowledge of beading and quillwork,” said Myers. “They have each honed different beading techniques, working meticulously to convey meaning through work that’s conceptually driven.”

Bev Koski’s new beaded series consists of swatches of modernist abstract patterns found in day-to-day life, from product packaging to family photographs. Pattern is also a focus of Katie Longboat’s study of her Cree grandmother’s bead designs, which inform her experimentation with Cree floral design and Haudenosaunee raised beadwork. Jean Marshall’s floral beaded mittens and quill-adorned moccasins are arranged in a circle, suggesting the gathering of Treaty #9 leaders to contend with economic development and environmental degradation. Olivia Whetung’s loom works highlight both the presence and absence of beads, asserting a visual vocabulary of place.

“This exhibition comes at a moment when so much is happening. Indigenous artists and makers have an active and critical art scene here in Toronto. This is an opportunity to continue to create space for Indigenous artists and curators in a museum context,” said Myers.

*Beads, they're sewn so tight* is organized by the Textile Museum of Canada and is generously supported by the Ontario Arts Council and presenting sponsor BMO Financial Group.

### **About the Artists**

**Bev Koski** is an Anishnabekwe artist who lives in Vancouver. She is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and has a BFA from York University. Koski was involved for many years with 7<sup>th</sup> Generation Image Makers, an art and mural program for Indigenous youth, run by Native Child and Family Services of Toronto. She has shown her work at the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, Kamloops Art Gallery, Carleton Art Gallery, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Gallery 44 and Oakville Galleries. She is a constant beader.

**Katie Longboat** is both Mohawk and Cree from Six Nations of the Grand River and is currently living and working in Toronto. She began her beading journey at the age of 14, inspired by the beautiful beadwork worn by traditional and contemporary dancers at local powwows. Katie took an interest in other beading styles and began to merge traditional First Nations beadwork with contemporary practices. She enjoys creating intricate pieces that pull together traditional Cree florals, Iroquois raised beading and contemporary jewellery making techniques. Katie works full time as a Child and Youth Counsellor and teaches beading classes at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto and other community organizations.

**Jean Marshall** is of Anishinaabe/English descent, born and raised in Thunder Bay, Ontario. She comes from Kitchenuhmaykoosib, also known as Big Trout Lake. She currently lives along the shore of Lake Superior, on the lands of Animikii-Wajiw/Thunder Mountain also known as Fort William First Nation, Ontario. Marshall loves working with beads, fabric and porcupine quills and has learned her practice through observation, mentorship and by participating in residencies. She admires the creative thinkers Patricia Ningewance, Rebecca Belmore, Christian Chapman and the late Ahmoo Angecone. Her work focuses on land, identity, community and language. She was the recipient of the K.M Hunter Award in 2012 and the REVEAL, Indigenous Art Award in 2017.

**Olivia Whetung** is anishinaabekwe and a member of Curve Lake First Nation. She completed her BFA with a minor in anishinaabemowin at Algoma University in 2013, and her MFA at the University of British Columbia in 2016. Whetung works in various media including beadwork, printmaking, and digital media. Her work explores acts of/active native presence, as well as the challenges of working with/in/through Indigenous languages in an art world dominated by the English language. Her work is informed in part by her experiences as an anishinaabemowin learner. Whetung is from the area now called the Kawarthas, and presently resides on Chemong Lake, Ontario.

### **About the Curator**

**Lisa Myers** is an independent curator, artist and assistant lecturer in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. Her curatorial practice considers the varied values and functions of elements such as time, sound, and knowledge. Recent curatorial projects include three touring exhibitions, *Recast* (2014), *wnoondwaamin | we hear them* (2016) and *Carry Forward* (2017). This is the first exhibition she has curated at the Textile Museum of Canada. Myers has an MFA in Criticism and Curatorial practice from OCAD University. She is Toronto and Port Severn based and is a member of Beausoleil First Nation.

**About the Textile Museum of Canada**

Textile Museum of Canada has a 40-year history of exploring ideas and building cultural understanding through the universal medium of textiles. Connecting international textile traditions to contemporary art and design, this national museum is one of Canada's most engaging arts institutions welcoming thousands of visitors from across the country and around the world each year. The Museum's permanent collection spans 2,000 years and consists of over 14,000 artifacts from about 200 countries and regions, uniquely positioning the Museum to speak to global culture as well as our increasingly global communities. A leader in the digitization of collections and interactive environments, the TMC is recognized for its innovation in the development of landmark educational, research and creative initiatives.

**Media Inquiries**

Caitlin Donnelly, Communications Coordinator  
416-599-5321 x2239 or [cdonnelly@textilemuseum.ca](mailto:cdonnelly@textilemuseum.ca)

Zile Liepins, Communications & Design Coordinator  
416-599-5321 x2239 or [zliepins@textilemuseum.ca](mailto:zliepins@textilemuseum.ca)

High-resolution images: [textilemuseum.wordpress.com](http://textilemuseum.wordpress.com)