

# COMMUNIQUÉ

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For immediate release

## **FASHIONING EXPO 67** **MARCH 2017, AT THE McCORD MUSEUM** **Relive an historic moment in fashion**

Montreal, December 12, 2016 — Expo 67 marked a high point in the history of Montreal and Canada. Organized 50 years ago as part of Canada's Centennial, this Universal and International Exposition received over 50 million visits. During an era of freedom and audacity, the world discovered Montreal and the city opened up to the world. To commemorate Montreal's 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the McCord Museum will present the exhibition ***Fashioning Expo 67*** from March 17 to October 1, 2017. It is the first time that Expo 67 has been viewed through the prism of fashion, an original concept developed by the Museum. Embracing visual image, display, and spectacle to promote its optimistic and forward-looking world view, Expo was a watershed moment for Montreal. Its modern mix of art, architecture, technology and design conveyed a message of openness and creativity that resonated with the Canadian fashion milieu. Young designers and manufacturers alike seized the opportunity to participate in multiple projects and take advantage of this exceptional showcase to shine on a world stage.

The exhibition will feature over 60 outfits—hostess uniforms from various pavilions, branded clothing by Quebec designers—and products from every sector of Canadian fashion, including hats, gloves, umbrellas, purses, jewellery, and even fur. The different sections of the exhibition will also display drawings, photographs, archival footage, and documents. In addition, there will be videos of interviews that the Museum conducted with several designers from the era. The exhibition invites visitors to enter the world of Expo 67 and experience the effervescence of Montreal's fashion moment. It was designed and developed by the McCord Museum, under the direction of Suzanne Sauvage, the Museum's President and Chief Executive Officer, and Cynthia Cooper, its Head, Collections and Research, and Curator, Costume and Textiles, who also acted as curator.

"Expo 67 was a pivotal event in our history," notes Suzanne Sauvage. "It had a major impact on Montreal architecture, urban planning, culture and society that continues to this day, and the field of fashion also had its moment in the sun. However, though Expo 67 left an indelible legacy, its spotlight on fashion has been all but forgotten. Drawing from the Museum's vast Costume and Textiles collection and extensive research on Expo, the exhibition will illustrate the role of fashion during this period of history and the incredible boost it gave to Quebec designers."



View of the Canadian Pavilion  
1967  
© McCord Museum  
M2015.34.6



Three Expo 67 hostesses, Danièle Touchette, Jean Murin and Lyse Michaud, in front of the large inverted "Katimavik" pyramid of the Canada Pavilion  
1967  
Courtesy of Danièle Touchette

## Hostesses: The public face of Expo

For six months, from April to October 1967, Montreal was taken over by a euphoric, party-like atmosphere. Visitors came from all over the globe to explore the 90 thematic and national pavilions on the Expo 67 site, which consisted of an expanded St. Helen's Island and Notre Dame Island, an artificial island built for the occasion. Each pavilion provided a window onto the country or industry that it represented. Eager to show off their achievements and vision for the future, these pavilions relied on hostesses to help create the image they wished to reflect to visitors.

The public face of Expo 67, the numerous hostesses working on the site all wore distinct uniforms that either stood out as fashion-forward or borrowed from traditional dress. It was an incredible opportunity for both established and up-and-coming designers to become better known. Furthermore, in 1966, Quebec's Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce sponsored a European fashion tour for two young designers, Marielle Fleury and Michel Robichaud, who each created a travel wardrobe from Canadian fabrics accessorized with hats, shoes and jewellery by local designers. Visiting London, Paris, Brussels and Milan, they acted as ambassadors, using fashion to promote Expo 67 abroad. Three outfits from this wardrobe will be displayed in the exhibition, accompanied by several archival documents.

In addition to Marielle Fleury and Michel Robichaud, other well-known young Montreal designers from that time were Jacques de Montjoye, Serge & Réal and John Warden. Robichaud was hired to design the uniform for the general hostesses hired by the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition (CCWE), as well as those worn by hostesses at the Canada Pavilion, the Indians of Canada Pavilion, the Telephone Pavilion, and even the Federated Republic of Germany Pavilion. The Quebec Pavilion uniform, in shades of brown and blue, was designed by Serge & Réal, while the hostess uniforms for the Canadian Pulp and Paper Pavilion and the Canadian National Pavilion were created by designer John Warden.

The pavilions of foreign countries also featured elegant, modern uniforms, created by their top designers: Bill Blass (United States of America Pavilion), Roger Nelson (Britain), Sorelle Fontana (Italy), and Jean-Louis Scherrer (France). Africa Place was a showcase for 15 African countries whose hostesses wore outfits inspired by traditional dress. A number of these uniforms will be displayed in the exhibition and there will be photographs illustrating all of the various ensembles.

## Fashioning civic pride in Montreal

Expo attracted many distinguished visitors and official guests, who were greeted by Mayor Jean Drapeau. For these social events, his wife, Marie-Claire Boucher Drapeau, wore her pride in Montreal and its local talent quite literally on her sleeve, donning cocktail dresses and evening gowns created for her by designer Michel Robichaud. Each dress was worn several times



Hostess uniform  
Quebec Pavilion  
1967  
Designers: Serge & Réal  
Gift of the Quebec Pavilion  
© McCord Museum  
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Hostess uniform  
Expo 67  
Designer: Michel Robichaud  
Gift of Sybilla J. Mansfeldt  
© McCord Museum  
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over the course of the summer, and four of them will be seen in the exhibition.

### The Great Canadian Fashion Caper

Quebec and Canadian fashion figured prominently at Expo 67. Every Thursday, *The Great Canadian Fashion Caper*, a fashion show set to live music with dancing and roller-skating models, presented 150 outfits aimed at young people, including children's clothing, sportswear and accessories of all types. Featuring 50 different models, the show in the outdoor theatre of the Canada Pavilion drew up to 1,000 spectators. To showcase the industry as a whole, the ready-to-wear manufacturers providing the clothes agreed to remain anonymous. Legendary producer Iona Monahan was the driving force behind the project. Selected garments from the Museum's collection will evoke the fresh, youthful clothes presented to the public at these fashion shows.

### Canadian couture

Iona Monahan also organized the Association of Canadian Couturiers fashion show of June 5, 1967, a one-time event for an audience of 1,000, including 22 foreign journalists. A Jacques de Montjoye dress featured in the exhibition recalls the scene he created that day with his concept-driven dresses referencing a distinct Québécois identity and the counter-culture concerns of civil rights and anti-war sentiment.

### Fur in the forefront

Fur, part of the lexicon of luxury goods, was a key Canadian fashion export and both industry and private businesses mobilized early to ensure its visibility at Expo. The Quebec Pavilion also featured fur as one of its natural resources. Montreal-based Grosvenor Furs even teamed up with SAGA, the Scandinavian industry association, to produce twice-daily fur fashion shows in the Scandinavia Pavilion.

### Exhibition design

The exhibition was designed by Christiane Michaud, working with La Bande à Paul. Their dynamic, lively decor incorporates motifs and colours from the era, an approach that is particularly noticeable in the section devoted to the *Great Canadian Fashion Caper*. A seating area will enable visitors to view interviews the McCord Museum conducted with designers Michel Robichaud, Serge & Réal and Jacques de Montjoye. The exhibition ends with a short NFB film about Expo 67.

In the run-up to the exhibition, *Fashioning Expo 67* will be the theme of *Nuit Blanche at the McCord* on March 4, 2017. On March 30, 2017, *Montréal Fashion Tech* is the name of a *McCord After Hours* presented by the National Bank and organized by the McCord Museum in partnership with the City of Montreal. This evening event will officially launch the 2017 edition of Montreal Digital Spring. With the contribution of Valérie Lamontagne/3electromode Wearables.



Madame Drapeau in a Michel Robichaud dress with Princess Grace of Monaco  
1967  
© Archives de la Ville de Montréal  
VM94-X35-115



Dress  
*Mon pays c'est l'hiver*  
Designer: Jacques de Montjoye  
Gift of Jacques de Montjoye  
© McCord Museum  
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A *Conversation about Fashioning Expo 67*, led by Cynthia Cooper, will take place April 12, 1017.

## **ABOUT THE MCCORD MUSEUM**

The McCord Museum is dedicated to the preservation, study and appreciation of Montreal's history, as recounted by its people, artists and communities living in the city's past and present. The McCord Museum is home to one of the largest historical collections in North America, consisting of First Peoples objects, costumes and textiles, photographs, decorative and visual artworks, and textual archives, totalling more than 1.4 million artefacts. The McCord Museum produces exciting exhibitions that engage visitors from Montreal, Canada, and beyond by offering them a contemporary look at the world. The McCord Museum also offers educational and cultural activities, as well as innovative projects on the Internet. ***McCord Museum: Our People, Our Stories.***

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Photographs available at <http://ow.ly/iibF301V3L0>

Interviews can be arranged with Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum, and Cynthia Cooper, Head, Collections and Research, and Curator, Costume and Textiles.

### **Source and information:**

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