

SYMPOSIUM

# Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood

Thursday, December 1, 2005 — in English

1:00 p.m. **Moira MCCAFFREY**, Director, Research & Exhibitions, McCord Museum  
**Catherine WILD**, Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University  
Opening remarks

*Session One* Moderator: **Johanne SLOAN**, Concordia University

1:10 p.m. **Kristina HUNEALT**, Concordia University  
*How Close to Me? Mothers and Babies in Canadian Art*

1:30 p.m. **Annmarie ADAMS**, McGill University  
*Constructing Girlhood*

1:50 p.m. **Martha LANGFORD**, Concordia University  
*The Assembled Self: A Photographic Memoir of Girlhood*

2:10 p.m. Q&A

*Pause*

*Session Two* Moderator: **Elaine CHEASLEY PATERSON**, Concordia University

2:50 p.m. **Charmaine NELSON**, McGill University  
*Racing Childhood: Representations of Black Girls in Canadian Art*

3:10 p.m. **Leah SHERMAN**, Concordia University  
*Anne Douglas Savage: The Artist as Teacher and the Teacher as Artist;  
Modernism in Canadian Art and Art Education*

3:30 p.m. **Loren LERNER**, Concordia University  
*Picturing Canada: Allegorical Images of the Canadian Girl and Family*

3:50 p.m. Q&A

*Pause*

4:30 p.m. Keynote address: **Anne HIGONNET**, Columbia University  
*The Image of Childhood Today*

What does childhood look like today? The last decade has produced an explosion of beautiful, theatrical, innovative, and sometimes troubling work on the subject of childhood. Where do the increasing number of ambitious young artists, both women and men find their inspiration? What are its limits? Is this the end of innocence – or is it being redefined?

*Reception to follow*

**Free Admission**

SYMPOSIUM

## Salut les filles ! La jeune fille en images

Le jeudi 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 2005 — en anglais

13 h 00 **Moira MCCAFFREY**, Directrice, Recherche et expositions, Musée McCord &  
**Catherine WILD**, Doyenne, Faculté des beaux-arts de l'Université Concordia  
Mot d'ouverture

*Première partie* Modératrice: **Johanne SLOAN**, Université Concordia

13 h 10 **Kristina HUNEAULT**, Université Concordia  
*How Close to Me? Mothers and Babies in Canadian Art*

13 h 30 **Annmarie ADAMS**, Université McGill  
*Constructing Girlhood*

13 h 50 **Martha LANGFORD**, Université Concordia  
*The Assembled Self: A Photographic Memoir of Girlhood*

14 h 10 Période de questions

*Pause*

*Deuxième partie* Modératrice: **Elaine CHEASLEY PATERSON**, Université Concordia

14 h 50 **Charmaine NELSON**, Université McGill  
*Racing Childhood: Representations of Black Girls in Canadian Art*

15 h 10 **Leah SHERMAN**, Université Concordia  
*Anne Douglas Savage: The Artist as Teacher and the Teacher as Artist;  
Modernism in Canadian Art and Art Education*

15 h 30 **Loren LERNER**, Université Concordia  
*Picturing Canada: Allegorical Images of the Canadian Girl and Family*

15 h 50 Période de questions

*Pause*

16 h 30 Conférence principale : **Anne HIGONNET**, Université Columbia  
*The Image of Childhood Today*

À quoi ressemble l'enfance aujourd'hui? La dernière décennie a engendré une explosion d'œuvres qui sont belles, théâtrales, innovatrices et parfois troublantes à propos de l'enfance. Où ce nombre grandissant de jeunes artistes, aussi bien des hommes que des femmes, trouvent-ils leur inspiration? Quelles en sont les limites? L'innocence est-elle terminée ou est-elle en train d'être redéfinie?

*Une réception suivra*

**Entrée libre**



## ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

### **Keynote address: Anne HIGONNET**

*The Image of Childhood Today*

What does childhood look like today? The last decade has produced an explosion of beautiful, theatrical, innovative, and sometimes troubling work on the subject of childhood by an increasing number of ambitious young artists, both women and men. Where does this work find its inspiration? What are its stakes? Is innocence over or is it being redefined?

Anne Higonnet is a Professor in the Art History department of Barnard College, Columbia University. She is the author of many articles or essays on nineteenth and twentieth century topics, and of three books: two on the Impressionist painter Berthe Morisot, and one on the image of childhood. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Getty post-doctoral fellowship, a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship, and Mellon Foundation New Directions grant. She is currently finishing a book about personal collection museums.



### **Annmarie ADAMS**

*Constructing Girlhood*

How did architecture contribute to burgeoning notions of modern girlhood in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Montreal? This paper explores the theme of separation and isolation in three architectural typologies represented in *Salut les filles*: houses, colleges, and hospitals. Compelling evidence from late nineteenth-century Quebec case studies, such as Henriette Dessaulles (1860-1946) and Clare Harrington (1880-1967), suggests that as family tensions mounted, girls gained more control of their domestic environments. While Dessaulles retreated to her bedroom to escape an unsympathetic stepmother, Harrington connected disparate spaces, geographies, and generations in her family's garden during her brother's prolonged illness.

In monumental buildings for education and healthcare, architects drew on domestic imagery to construct a safe and orderly realm for girls. Clear boundaries marked autonomous spaces in which young women were intended to thrive. This architecture of separation is legible at McGill University and its environs, for example in Bruce Price's Royal Victoria College (1899) or in Edward and W.S. Maxwell's nurses' residence at the Royal Victoria Hospital (1905). Connected to their larger institutions by proximity and architectural congruity, these gendered zones linked women's work outside the traditional home to domesticity.

Dr Adams is Professor and Director of the graduate option, "Domestic Environments," at the School of Architecture, McGill University. Her research areas include gender and space, material culture, vernacular architecture, and hospital design. Adams is the author of *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women, 1870-1900* (1996) and co-author with Peta Tancred of *Designing Women: Gender and the Architectural Profession* (2000). A new book manuscript, *Modernizing Hospitals: Architecture and Medicine, 1893-1943*, is currently under review.



**Elaine CHEASLEY PATERSON**

*Moderator*

Elaine Cheasley Paterson is Assistant Professor of Craft and Decorative Art History at Concordia University. Her current research concerns women's cultural philanthropy in early twentieth-century British, Irish and Canadian craft guilds of the home arts movement. Some of her publications include 'Crafting a National Identity' in *The Irish Revival Reappraised* (Four Courts Press, 2004); 'Decoration and Desire in the Watts Chapel' *Gender and History* 17:3 (2005); 'Gender and Canadian Ceramics' in *On the Table: 100 Years of Functional Ceramics in Canada* (Gardiner Museum, forthcoming 2006). She is co-curating the exhibition *Re-Crafting Tradition* at the *Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec* (September – December 2006).



**Kristina HUNEULT**

*How Close to Me? Mothers and Babies in Canadian Art*

This paper explores childhood from the perspective of most infants' first relationship — the maternal one. During the nineteenth century, as today, the maternal ideal was commonly figured as one of unity between mother and infant. Motherhood was understood to be women's principal calling in life, and one that demanded complete self-sacrifice and immersion in her child's needs. Yet at the same time, women were given practical advice that emphasized the need for distance from the newborn baby, who was to sleep in a separate room, feed according to a strict schedule, and not be picked up or played with too much. Other factors, too, mitigated against the model of connection. In Montreal and Toronto, infant mortality was as high as 20%. At the same time, women were beginning to explore new careers, and most of the professional women artists who painted babies at the turn of the century never had any of their own. This paper analyses images of women and infants by artists such as Helen McNicoll, Mary Bell Eastlake, Clara Hagarty and their contemporaries, in order to assess the patterns of attachment and differentiation that characterized mother-infant relations in turn-of-the-century Canada.

Dr. Huneault holds a Research Chair in Art History at Concordia University, where she is also Associate Professor. She is particularly interested in the role of imagery in the construction of subjectivity, and her current research examines historical Canadian women artists from the perspective of feminist theories of the subject. She is the author of *Difficult Subjects: Working Women and Visual Culture, Britain 1880-1914* (Ashgate, 2002) which considers the pictorial representation of women, and articles on Canadian women artists such as Helen McNicoll (2004), Frances Anne Hopkins (2005) and Lady Henrietta Hamilton (2005).



**Martha LANGFORD**

*The Assembled Self: A Photographic Memoir of Girlhood*

Personal photographic albums are normally encountered in the environment of their making. Within this “remembrance environment,” as Eviatar Zerubavel calls it, albums are told to us as much as shown to us, and their function as instruments of storytelling determines the contents of the pictures and their organization on the page. This paper results from an experiment to create a “remembrance environment” for a photographic album donated to the McCord Museum in 1999. What was deemed at first glance to be a family album, turned out to be the album of a young woman exiled from her community by illness. The album relates her life, from girlhood into womanhood, as an appeal to be restored to sight, whether as the object of a familial gaze or simply as a face in the crowd.

Martha Langford is assistant professor of Art History at Concordia University and research associate of the McCord Museum. Founding director/chief curator of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (1984-1994), Langford received her PhD from McGill University (1997), followed by fellowships held at the Institute for the Humanities of Simon Fraser University and the National Gallery of Canada. Her publications include *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (2001) and an edited collection, *Image & Imagination* (2005), both published by McGill-Queen’s University Press. Her forthcoming book is an interdisciplinary study of expressions of memory in contemporary Canadian photographic art.



**Loren LERNER**

*Picturing Canada: Allegorical Images of the Canadian Girl and Family*

In April 1904, Canadian Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier received a letter from the executive of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts that proposed a scheme of mural paintings, *Canada Receiving the Homage of Her Children*, for the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. It was to be “a pageant of brilliant colour with a centre where a figure symbolical of Canada, supported by figures representing the Provinces, and pages bearing the coats of arms, receives with acclaim the homage of her children.” This paper examines the two preparatory murals created as a result of the proposal: *Ave Canada* (1907-1918) by George A. Reid and *Hail Dominion* (1906) by Gustav Hahn, both painted on the artists’ own initiative. It explores the reasons Reid and Hahn chose to idealize Canada by evoking a sense of girlhood and familial belonging and why the mural scheme failed, despite serious attempts to convince the government and Canadian public of the merits of expressing national spirit with the allegory of Canada as a harmonious family.

Loren Lerner is Professor of Art History at Concordia University in Montreal. She is editor and author of *Afterimage: Evocations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Canadian Arts and Literature/Rémanences: Evocations de l'Holocauste dans les arts et littérature canadiens contemporains* (Montreal: Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, 2002) and curator of *Memories and Testimonies/Mémoires et Témoignages* (Montreal: Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2002). Her current project is an exhibition on Sam Borenstein for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2005). She is guest curator of the McCord Museum exhibition *Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood/ Salut les filles! La jeune fille en images*.



**Charmaine NELSON**

*Racing Childhood: Representations of Black Girls in Canadian Art*

“I dread to see my children grow. I know not their fate. Where the white girl has one temptation, mine will have many. Where the white boy has every opportunity and protection, mine will have few opportunities and no protection. It does not matter how good or wise my children may be, they are colored. When I have said that, all is said.”

— from “The Race Problem: An Autobiography,” by “A Southern Colored Woman,” *The Independent* vol. 56, no. 2885 (March 17, 1904)

Many scholars concur that western notions of childhood, as an explicit stage of human development separate from adulthood, emerged within eighteenth-century discourses of the family. Although many scholars have noted how distinctions in class status provoke major shifts in the social status, position and life experience of children, fewer have investigated the implications of race. Early twentieth-century Canadian art (sculpture and painting), mainly produced by white artists, provides an interesting opportunity to explore the representation of black girls. These art works have often been taken at “face value,” their centrality in the active production of definitions of black childhood ignored. This paper will seek to problematize and open up definitions of western childhood and girlhood (as partially produced in visual culture), by examining racial identity in conjunction with gender, sex and class. It is my contention that some of the problems within white representations of black girls foreshadow the West’s prolific stereotypical representation of black women. The roots of this visible racial/sexual disparity can be traced to the exploitation of black children as slaves within Trans Atlantic Slavery and the continuing legacy of racism thereafter.

Charmaine Nelson is an Assistant Professor of Art History at McGill University. Her research includes the exhibition/catalogue *Through An-Other’s Eyes: White Canadian Artists — Black Female Subjects* (1998). She has published in *RACAR* XXVII, 1-2, 2000 and *Public* 30 (2005) and is co-editor/contributor to *Racism Eh?: A Critical Inter-Disciplinary Anthology of Race and Racism in Canada* (Captus Press, 2004). Her essay “Venus africaine: Race, Beauty and Africanness” is included in the exhibition catalogue *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art, 1800-1900* (UK, 2005-06). Her book *The Colour of Stone: Representing Black Female Subjects in Nineteenth-Century Neoclassical Sculpture* is forthcoming in 2006.



**Leah SHERMAN**

*Anne Douglas Savage: The Artist as Teacher and the Teacher as Artist  
Modernism in Canadian Art and Art Education*

Anne Douglas Savage (1896-1971) was a Canadian artist and teacher who made a significant impact on Canadian art and art education. As an artist she was part of the vital Canadian art movements of the 1930s and 40s and was closely linked to the Group of Seven. She shared their aesthetic concerns derived from Post Impressionism and Modernism: the emphasis on formal elements in painting, the elimination of tonal modeling, an expressive use of line and the subjective use of colour. In her teaching, she integrated these concerns with themes chosen from the everyday life experiences of her students. Savage taught at Baron Byng High School in Montreal from 1922 to 1948, where Leah Sherman was her student. The collection of pictures painted by the girls in her classes is housed in the Concordia University archives. She was associated



with Arthur Lismer in the introduction of creative art education in Canada. This presentation examines the symbiotic relationship between her painting and her teaching.

Leah Sherman is Professor Emerita in the Department of Art Education in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia University. A founding member of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Professor Sherman, with Alfred Pinsky, was responsible for the inauguration of Fine Arts at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia). She is a prominent researcher in the history of Canadian and Quebec Art Education. Former curator of the Anne Savage Archives, she is the acknowledged expert on Savage's life and work. She has recently written the texts for two websites about this Canadian artist/teacher: <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/savage> (on the life and work of Anne Savage) and <http://annesavage.ca> (on the Savage Collection of Student Art Works).



### **Johanne SLOAN**

*Moderator*

Johanne Sloan is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art History at Concordia University. Her research interests include landscape art and aesthetics, as well as questions of public art and urban culture. She has recently written about the alternative public art of SYN for the magazine CV Photo, and her article entitled "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left, and the Question of Political Art in Canada," is forthcoming in the *Journal of Canadian Art History*.

