

PRESS RELEASE

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HONOURING MEMORY – CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AN OUTDOOR EXHIBITION ON MCGILL COLLEGE AVENUE

Montreal, June 19, 2013 – From June 19 to October 20, 2013, the McCord Museum presents *Honouring Memory – Canada's Residential Schools*, the eighth edition of its outdoor exhibition on McGill College Avenue. Created in association with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC), this exhibition of archival photographs asks us to remember and consider the fate of thousands of Aboriginal children who grew up in residential schools intended to eradicate all traces of their culture.

Honouring Memory – Canada's Residential Schools coincides with the launch of the catalogue for the McCord Museum's new permanent exhibition *Wearing Our Identity – The First Peoples Collection*, which shows how First Peoples communicated various aspects of their identity through dress.

Photographs that challenge

The public will be able to see 24 large-format black and white photographs, 11 from the Notman Photographic Archives and 13 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The photographs show the students' day-to-day reality and give back these memories to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people while exposing this shameful attempt at assimilation. *"These remarkable photographs are an invitation to understand not only past wrongs, but to consider their devastating legacy. They invite all of us to a new era of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada,"* says Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner, Marie Wilson.

Presented on McGill College Avenue between De Maisonneuve Boulevard and President – Kennedy Avenue, this open-air exhibition looks at a dark moment in our country's history. *"By honouring these stories, the Museum is taking part in the process of healing and reconciliation initiated by the Commission,"* says Hélène Samson, Curator, Notman Photographic Archives.

The exhibition has been made possible through the support of BMO Financial Group, Rio Tinto Alcan, Arrondissement Ville-Marie, La Maison Simons, Busac and Buffalo David Bitton. The Museum also thanks COGIR management corporation s.e.n.c.

Canada's Residential Schools

For more than 150 years, thousands of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children from across Canada were sent to residential schools that were funded by the government and run by churches. Children as young as four were taken from their families and communities in order to be stripped of their language, cultural identity and traditions. Canada's attempt to stamp out Aboriginal cultures failed, but its devastating consequences remain.

Public Contest

As part of the exhibition, the Museum invites visitors to take part in a contest offering an authentic experience. The grand prize is a package for two at the *Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations* in Wendake (valued at \$720) including:

- two nights with breakfast;
- a four-course tasting menu inspired by First Nations cuisine at the renowned *La Traite* Restaurant;



"Richard" at St.Michael's Indian Residential School
Alert Bay, British Columbia, 1924
Alice Constance Dunn
© McCord Museum, M2010.81.9.4



Boy at Elkhorn Indian Residential School
Elkhorn, Manitoba, about 1926
Alice Constance Dunn
© McCord Museum, M2010.81.10.273

-two passes to discover the history and knowledge of the Wendat people and see the *Relics and Passages* exhibition by the Atikamekw artist Eruoma Awashish, at the Huron-Wendat Museum.

Two packages for two people (worth \$239 each), including one night and breakfast at the *Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations* of Wendake, passes for the Traditional Huron Site "Onhoüa Chetek8e" and a guided tour of the Huron-Wendat Museum are offered as second prizes. The public can participate online starting June 19 until October 20, 2013.

Wearing Our Identity – The First Peoples Collection: the launch of the exhibition's catalogue

Distributed by Éditions Gallimard, the exhibition's catalogue includes many colour photographs and texts written by 16 members of First Nations communities dealing with all aspects of identity, including dress. The catalogue was made possible through the generosity of the Peter Cundill Foundation.

About the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an independent commission established as a result of the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Its mandate is to inform all Canadians about what happened in the 150-year history of the residential schools, and to guide and inspire a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect.

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 on request. We will be pleased to arrange interviews with Guislaine Lemay, Curator, Ethnology and Archaeology, Anny Guindon, Project Manager, Exhibitions, and Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer, McCord Museum.

Source and information:

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The McCord Museum extends thanks to its partner, the *Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations* of Wendake.

The Museum is also grateful for the support of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec and the Conseil des arts de Montréal as well as its media partner, *Journal 24 heures*.