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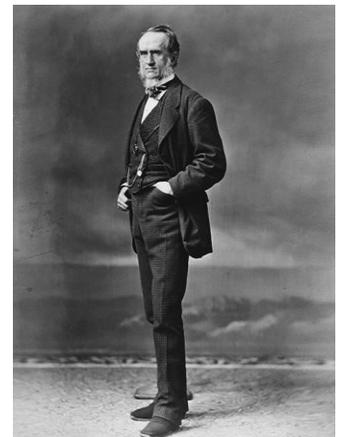


For immediate release

NOTMAN, A VISIONARY PHOTOGRAPHER

THE FIRST RETROSPECTIVE DEDICATED TO THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED 19TH CENTURY CANADIAN PHOTOGRAPHER

Montreal, November 1, 2016 – As part of the celebrations for Montreal’s 375th anniversary and the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, the McCord Museum presents, from November 4, 2016 to March 26, 2017, ***Notman, A Visionary Photographer***, a major exhibition on the life and work of this Montrealer who helped pioneer photography in Canada, and the first Canadian photographer to obtain an international recognition. His body of work, from his portraits to the landscapes that spanned the country from east to west, helped build the Canadian identity. The exhibition features some 300 photographs and objects drawn primarily from the McCord Museum collection. Offering a new perspective on the career of William Notman (1826-1891), the exhibition examines how the artist’s character contributed to his tremendous success. It also focuses on his contemporary approach to photography, founded on the principles of communication, management and innovation. While focusing on vintage prints, displays are supplemented by multimedia installations and interactive devices that provide dynamic information and help clarify nineteenth-century idea of modernity.



William Notman
Montreal, 1875
© McCord Museum

Notman, A Visionary Photographer is produced, planned and presented by the McCord Museum. Hélène Samson, Curator, Notman Photographic Archives at the McCord Museum, is curating the exhibition. Following its stay in Montreal, it will travel to the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau and the Glenbow Museum in Calgary.

“In 1956, the McCord Museum received the Notman Photographic Archives, now emblematic of our institution,” stated Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Museum. “Sixty years later, his work is more relevant than ever. From 1860 to 1900, this talented artist stood apart through his documentation of both the birth of Canada as a nation and the history of Montreal, which at the time was playing a pivotal role in the development of the country. Our goal is to pay fair tribute to him during this period of celebration by dedicating an exhibition to him and publishing a catalogue of his works.”



William Notman & Son/William Hagerty
*Stormy day, Sainte-Catherine Street
Montréal. 1901*
© McCord Museum

EXHIBITION THEMES

The exhibition is divided into four themes inspired by Notman's boldness as a businessman, his networking proficiency, as well as his qualities as an artist and builder.

A Scot by birth, William Notman left his home country for Canada in 1856 at the age of 30, the family's haberdashery business having fallen on hard times. Accompanied by his wife and children and confident of a brighter future, he arrived in Montreal, a dynamic and flourishing city. Notman quickly learned the importance of establishing a network of influential men and had soon connected with an elite group who would help propel his success. He went on to secure a commission to photograph the construction of the Victoria Bridge, an extraordinary engineering project and a structure that played a strategic role in the economic growth of Montreal. A selection of his photographs, in a maple box, was given to Albert Edward, Prince of Wales who inaugurated the bridge, in 1860. The phrase *Photographer to the Queen* then appeared in the firm's promotional material. Notman also produced an album offered by the City of Montreal to Paris in 1878 as diplomatic gesture, and visitors to the exhibition will be invited to peruse a virtual copy of this work.

An artist at heart – he would found, along with a group of businessmen, the Art Association of Montreal - Notman saw photography as an art form, not a widely held view at the time. The artistic value of photography would not be acknowledged until the 20th century. He broke down the barriers between photography and painting with his painted photographs, composites and studied stagings. His approach opened the door to the creative manipulation of photographic images, preparing the ground for the ideas and uses that would. For Notman, photography was a new way to express one's individual and collective identity, and he actively contributed to democratizing the portrait, photographing everyday people along with celebrities, First Nations peoples, trappers and voyageurs.

Notman never hesitated to apply state-of-the-art photographic processes, a reflection of his ability to anticipate future developments in the field. Examples include stereography, which allowed photographs to be viewed in three dimensions, and composite, the precursor of Photoshop. He was constantly innovating, and in doing so he helped advance the birth of technologies that enabled images to be widely replicated and circulated. Through the publication of his works – he was a leader in publishing photography books – he shared his vision and promoted photography as a fine art. His tireless efforts in this area marked the beginning of the widespread dissemination of images and helped forge the modern-day bond between the print world and visual culture. He was a regular participant in international competitions and world's fairs, winning a number of awards over the course of his career.

Notman's advanced management methods and astute communication skills made his name known far and wide. A true entrepreneur, he managed his firm with a deft hand, operating, in 1872, 26 franchised studios in Canada and the United States. Upon his death, the Notman Studio, named Studio



Wm Notman & Son/William McFarlane Notman
Douglas fir trees, Vancouver, C.-B., 1887
© McCord Museum



William Notman
Lumber piles, Ottawa, ON, 1872
© McCord Museum



Wm. Notman & Son,
A. H. Buxton,
Montreal, 1887
© McCord Museum

Wm. Notman & Son in 1882, continued to do business under the management of his sons, William McFarlane Notman and Charles Frederick Notman, until 1935.

THE CATALOGUE *NOTMAN, A VISIONARY PHOTOGRAPHER*

A book on William Notman and his work, entitled *Notman, A Visionary Photographer*, has been produced for the exhibition, through the generous support of Power Corporation du Canada. A definitive study of the artist, this 240-page hard-covered publication, published under the direction of Suzanne Sauvage and H  l  ne Samson, contains 150 illustrations and seven essays by photographic historians and archivists who are Notman authorities. The book's graphics have been entrusted to Montreal agency Paprika. The work has been published by Hazan, Paris, in coedition with the McCord Museum, with separate editions in English (distribution: Yale University Press) and French (distribution: Hachette). It is sold (\$59.95) at the McCord Museum Boutique or, now, in line, as well as other products which can be personalised with images from the exhibition.

<https://www.boutiquemccord.com/>

ACTIVITIES

Films, lectures and conversations are offered, in relation with the exhibition. To follow the schedule: www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/activities/

A *NOTMAN* CONTEST

In conjunction with the exhibition, the McCord Museum will invite the public to enter the *Notman* contest at the Museum. The prize, valued at approximately \$6,000 and offered courtesy of Via Rail, will include a package to Vancouver for two people (*The Canadian*), departing from Montreal or Toronto, as well as the exhibition's book.

THE NOTMAN COLLECTION

The Notman Collection is one of the largest collections of its kind in Canada. It contains the archives of the Montreal studio, representing some 450,000 photographs, including 200,000 glass plate negatives, portraits, landscapes and stereoscopic shots, all of which carry enormous historical value. The Notman collection also comprises 188 photo registers and 43 client directories from the Montreal studio as well as 15 books published by William Notman, some 300 painted photos, composite photos, photographic material and a number of documents, including correspondence between Notman and family members in Scotland. The collection is also constantly enriched through donations from individuals, families and collectors. For researchers and historians, it is an inexhaustible source on the history of Montreal from 1859 to 1935.

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.



Wm Notman & Son/William McFarlane Notman
Glacier Asulkan, parc des Glaciers, C.-B., 1889
   Mus  e McCord



William Notman,
Kahnaw  ke lacrosse team, 1876
   McCord Museum



Wm Notman & Son
Anna et Louisa Spence, 1883
   McCord Museum

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/2nkH301V3Ap>

Interviews can be arranged with Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum, and H el ene Samson, Curator, Notman Photographic Archives.

Source and information:

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