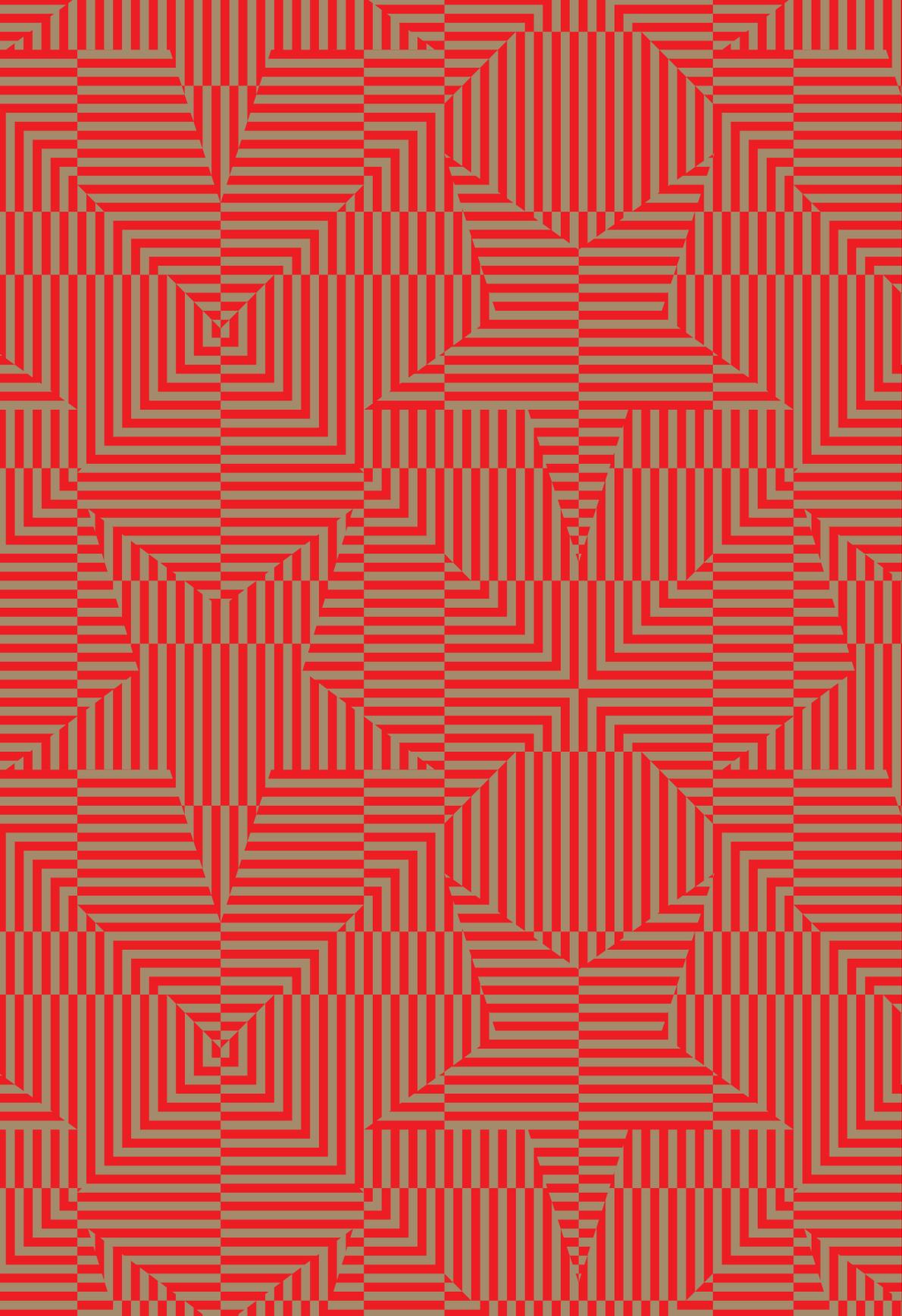


ILLUSIONS

THE ART OF MAGIC

*A Travelling exhibition produced
by the McCord Museum, Montréal*





A DAZZLING EXHIBITION

Illusions – The Art of Magic is the world’s most comprehensive exhibition of posters featuring the magic, personalities, and history of master magicians from the Golden Age of Magic (1880s–1930s) ever assembled for public display.

Consisting of 75 magnificent images and additional multimedia material, the exhibition illustrates the evolution of magic as a performing art at a time when names like Herrmann, Kellar, Thurston and, of course, Houdini were pillars of popular entertainment. It also examines little-discussed topics such as how magicians learn their secrets, the role of women in magic, and the appropriation of culture for advertising and performance under the guise of popular entertainment.

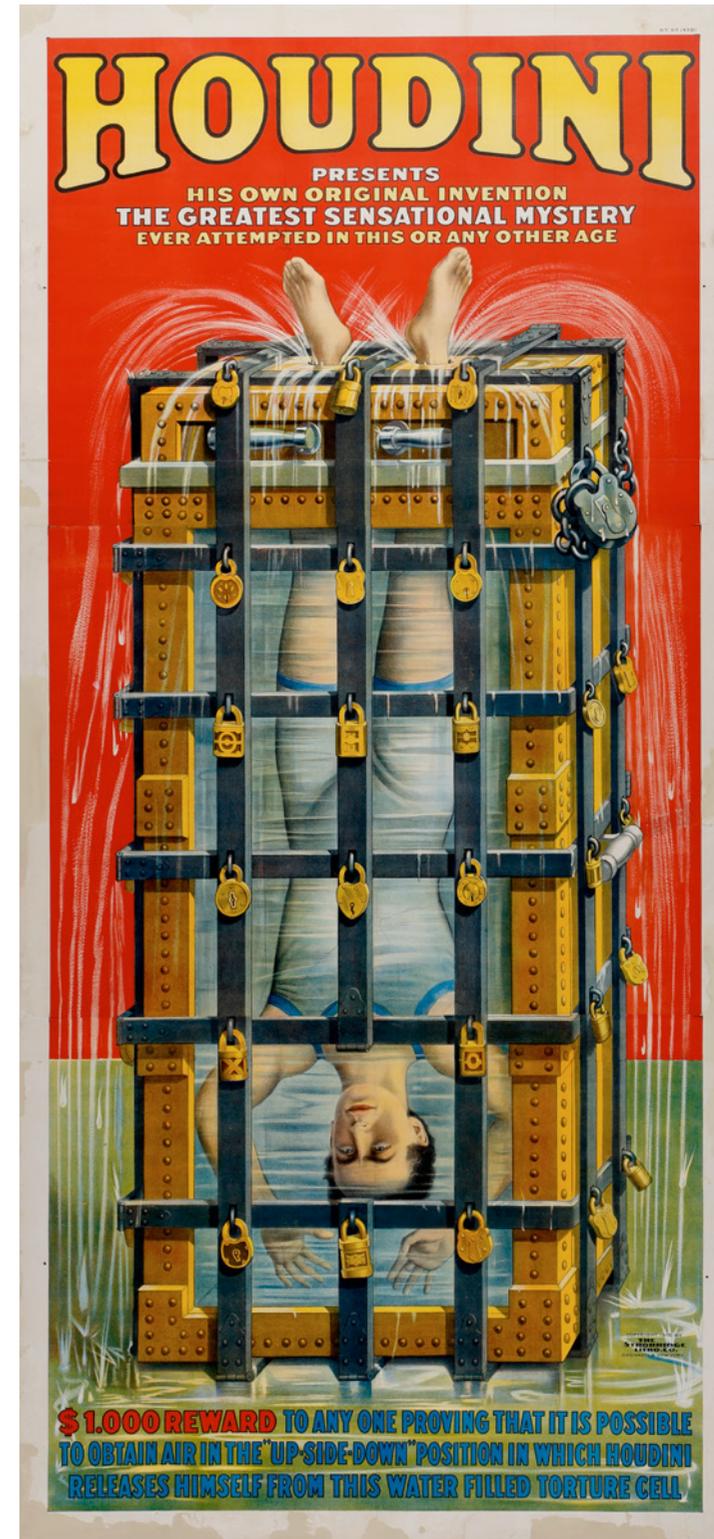
The Golden Age of Magic coincided with the Golden Age of chromolithography, and the posters on display reflect the evolution, innovation and artistry of that process before it was supplanted by new technology. These posters are magical in their own right, full of vibrant colours and thought-provoking imagery designed to ignite the public imagination and lure patrons to performances. Many of the posters are considered “Rare” (fewer than ten known copies) and some are even classified as “Unique.”

AN IMMERSION INTO THE WORLD OF MAGIC

The exhibition invites visitors to attend a veritable magic show starring renowned magicians of the Golden Age like the Hermann family, Kellar, Chung Ling Soo, Thurston and Houdini. Each zone showcases a different kind of illusion: appearance and disappearance, decapitation, levitation, escape and mentalism. At the same time, the exhibition helps visitors interpret these illusions via key themes such as Spiritualism, Orientalism, the transmission of knowledge and the presence of women in the world of magic.

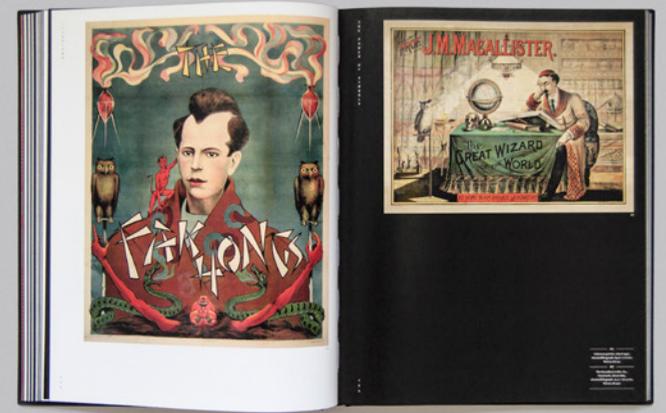
To make the intangible, tangible, short videos of magicians performing various illusions are projected in each zone using the legendary special effects technique known as Pepper's Ghost, which magicians often employ to create their illusions. Visitors are immersed in a world of sights, sounds and colours that evoke the world of magic and create a captivating, dynamic, spectacular and enchanting atmosphere. Like any great magic performance, everything is orchestrated to engage and delight the mind and cultivate, albeit for a brief moment, the idea that nothing is impossible.

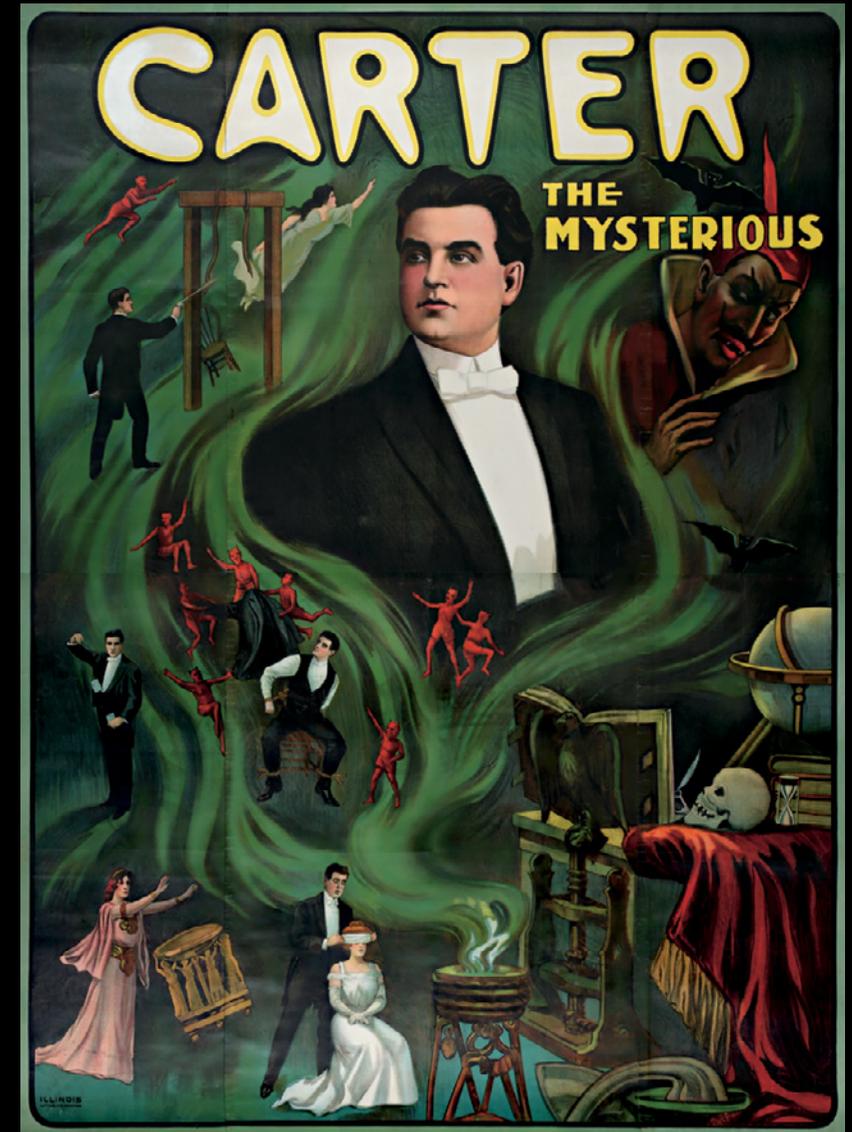
RIGHT
Houdini
The Water Filled Torture Cell
Strobridge Lithographing Co., 1916
M2014.128.223



JE SAIS
TOUT,
JE VOIS
TOUT
I KNOW
ALL,
I SEE
ALL







LEFT
Alexander
The Man Who Knows
Av Yaga Bombay, 1915
M2014.128.3

ABOVE
Carter
The Mysterious
Illinois Litho Co., 1905
M2014.128.86



LES APPARITIONS ET DISPARITIONS

Faire apparaître un objet, un animal ou une personne là où on ne s'attendait pas à le voir, n'est-ce pas là le pouvoir premier du magicien, celui qui fait apparaître le lapin du chapeau, ou de faire passer subitement les magiciens de l'âge d'or réalisateur de processus pour les plus étonnantes, dont celle du «portrait vivant», elle sort littéralement de tableaux sur lequel on a peints des illusions de disparition provoquent peut-être encore plus de surprise que l'apparition. Surgir du non-être, pourquoi pas? Ne sommes-nous pas tous des illusions de disparition à un moment ou à un autre de notre existence? Depuis des lustres à exécuter de petits objets à la main, les magiciens de l'âge d'or repoussent les limites: une fois le voile levé, on constate la disparition d'une femme, d'un éléphant...

Mon but est de vous mystifier et de vous divertir, j'aimerais vous bercer.

Howard Thurston (1869-1936)

APPPEARANCES AND DISAPPEARANCES

Isn't the very first requirement of a magician that he make an object, an animal, or even a person, appear out of thin air? The perennial rabbit out of a hat, or making flowers suddenly appear, were the staple of the Golden Age. Magicians of the Golden Age competed to create the most "living portrait," an illusion where a woman would lie on a table and disappear. The reverse, illusions in which a person or object would emerge from a solid surface, perhaps even more awe from the public: emerging from the ground, or appearing from nothing? Not vanishing with nothing, but appearing from nothing? Although magicians have long excelled at making small objects disappear, those from the Golden Age took the art to new heights: the white sheet was removed, stunned audiences would see a woman disappear, or an elephant, or even an entire act disappear.

My object is to mystify and entertain. I would like to lull you.

Howard Thurston (1869-1936)



LAST SPREAD

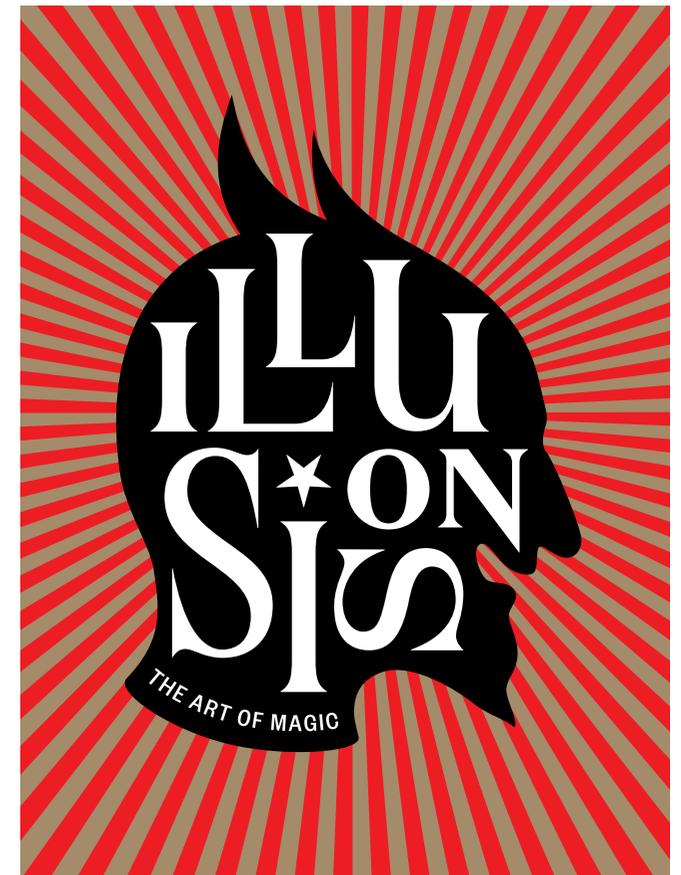
Le Roy, Talma, Bosco
World's Monarchs of Magic
 Adolph Friedländer, 1905
 M2014.128.318

ABOVE

Kellar
Toasting with the Devil
 Strobridge Lithographing Co., 1899
 M2014.128.299

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Developed by the McCord Museum and drawn from its Allan Slaight Collection, one of the world's largest collections of rare magic posters and Houdini material, the exhibition was curated by Christian Vachon, Curator, Paintings, Prints and Drawings, at the McCord Museum, in consultation with David Ben, a world-renowned master magician and magic specialist and collector. A book is available for sale in both French and English.



LOGISTICS

- 75 framed posters
- The McCord Museum will make the transportation arrangements for the incoming and outgoing shipments. Transport costs are the responsibility of the borrower.
- Exhibition texts in electronic format available in English and French.
- Audio-visual material available in electronic format. The borrower will be responsible for obtaining rights and will supply audio-visual equipment.
- McCord staff will be present for installation and dismantling. Travel costs are the responsibility of the borrower.
- Detailed requirements for display will be supplied.

ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL

- A richly illustrated and beautifully designed 250-page book, *Illusions - The Art of Magic*, published by 5 Continents will be available for the venue's boutique both in English and in French.
- A comprehensive media package in English and French will also be available in electronic format.

SIZE

- Requires around 4,000 to 6,000 square feet or 400 to 558 square meters.
- Seven of the posters presented in one section are 8 feet x 10 feet high with frame. The corresponding crates of approximately 11 ½ x 9 ½ x 3 feet will require a minimum passageway height of 12 feet. Their presentation is optional.

DURATION

- Minimum three months

AVAILABILITY

- Starting September 2018

HIRE FEES

- Upon request

EXHIBITION WEB SITE

- musee-mccord.qc.ca/illusions-travelling

EXHIBITION CONTACT

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genevieve.lafrance@mccord-stewart.ca

BELOW

Adelaide Herrmann
Hindoo Magic
The Metropolitan Print Co., about 1900
M2014.128.207

