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THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT  
MUSEUM, LONDON

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## PRESS RELEASE

### WORKS BY LEGENDARY PHOTOGRAPHER HORST AT THE McCORD MUSEUM IN MAY 2015

#### A NORTH AMERICAN EXCLUSIVE

Montreal, January 28, 2015 – Between May 14, and August 23, 2015, the McCord Museum will present, exclusive to North America, ***Horst: Photographer of Style***, the first major retrospective of the works of Horst P. Horst (1906-1999). This touring exhibition is produced by London's Victoria and Albert Museum. Legendary German-American artist Horst was one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most influential fashion and portrait photographers. The exhibition features more than 250 vintage shots that transcend time. In addition to the photographs, the retrospective will display sketchbooks, a short film, archival footage, contact sheets and magazines, as well as eight haute couture dresses from celebrated designers that include Chanel, Molyneux, Lanvin and Vionnet, all from the Victoria and Albert Museum collection.

Also included in the exhibition are a number of less well-known aspects of Horst's work: nude studies, travel shots from the Middle East, patterns created from natural forms, interiors and portraits. It chronicles his creative process and artistic influences, touching notably on his interest in ancient Classical art, particularly Greco-Roman sculpture, the Bauhaus ideals of modern design, and Surrealism in 1930s Paris. Visitors will discover in the exhibition the legacy of a master photographer. The four primary lenders are the Horst Estate; R. J. Horst; the Condé Nast Archive in New York; and the archive of Paris *Vogue*.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to present the works of an artist of Horst's stature, especially as this is the first major North American retrospective," stated Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum.



Muriel Maxwell  
Cover of American *Vogue*,  
July 1, 1939  
© Condé Nast / Horst Estate

“Photography and fashion are two key areas of focus for our institution, due to the very nature of our collections. The exhibition also provides us with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to work with the Victoria and Albert Museum, which, among its collections, houses the oldest museum photography collection in the world.”

In 1931, when Horst’s photographs were published in an issue of *Vogue* in France, an extraordinary 60-year career was launched. Horst was a master of light, form and composition, and his elegant and sophisticated photographs filled such prestigious magazines as *House and Garden*, *Life* and, of course, *Vogue*.

The exhibition documents and explores his collaborations with such renowned personalities as Coco Chanel, Elsa Schiaparelli, Diana Vreeland, Marlene Dietrich and Salvador Dalí, to name just a few.

The creative process behind some of his most famous photographs, such as the *Mainbocher Corset*, will be revealed through the inclusion of original contact sheets, sketches and cameras.

### **An exceptional career**

#### **- The 1930s: the first models and the celebrated couturiers**

Horst’s career straddled the opulence of pre-war Parisian haute couture and the rise of ready-to-wear in post-war New York. His style developed from lavish studio set-ups to a more austere approach in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition begins in the 1930s with Horst’s move to Paris and his early experiments in the *Vogue* studio. Among his first models and muses were Lisa Fonssagrives, Helen Bennett and Lyla Zelensky. Vintage black and white photographs from the archive of Paris *Vogue* will be displayed alongside garments in shades of black, white, silver and gold by such celebrated Parisian couturiers as Chanel, Lanvin, Molyneux and Vionnet.

#### **- The influence of Surrealism, Hollywood portraits**

The exhibition will then focus on Horst’s Surreal-inspired studies and collaborations with Salvador Dalí and Elsa Schiaparelli. Fashion photographs will be shown with trompe l’oeil portraits and haunting still lifes. Horst excelled at portraiture, and in the 1930s he captured some of Hollywood’s brightest stars: Rita Hayworth, Bette Davis, Vivien Leigh, Noël Coward, Ginger Rogers, Marlene Dietrich, Joan Crawford, and many others.



Detolle Corset for Mainbocher, 1939  
© Condé Nast / Horst Estate



Marlene Dietrich, New York, 1942  
© Condé Nast / Horst Estate

- **Travel in the 1940s and 1950s**

Horst travelled extensively throughout the 1940s and 1950s to Israel, Iran, Syria, Italy and Morocco. An escape from the world of fashion and city environs, his little-known travel photographs reveal a fascination for ancient cultures, landscapes and architecture. On display will be works taken in Iran such as the *Persepolis Bull*, Horst's powerful image of a vast sculpture head amidst the ruins of a once magnificent palace, and images documenting the annual migration of the nomadic Qashqai clan.

- **Studies of natural forms**

Detailed studies of natural forms such as flowers, minerals, shells and butterfly wings from the project *Patterns from Nature* will be shown alongside a series of kaleidoscopic collages made by arranging photographs in simple repeat. Horst's intention was that these dynamic patterns could be used as designs for textiles, wallpaper, carpets, plastics and glass.

- **Colour photography – an innovative approach**

Horst was admired for his dramatic lighting and became one of the first photographers to perfect the new colour techniques of the 1930s. A fascinating short film of him at work in the *Vogue* studios during the 1940s will be shown. The advent of colour enabled a fresh approach, and Horst went on to create numerous *Vogue* covers and countless pages in vivid colour. A selection of 25 large colour photographs, newly printed from the original transparencies from the Condé Nast Archive, will demonstrate Horst's exceptional skill as a colourist. These prints feature Horst's favourite models from the 1940s and 1950s, such as Carmen Dell'Orefice, Muriel Maxwell and Dorian Leigh, and will be shown together with preparatory sketches that have never previously been exhibited.

- **The 1950s: the nudes**

In the early 1950s, Horst created a series of male nudes for an exhibition in Paris for which the models were carefully posed and dramatically lit to accentuate their musculature. The series evokes the classical sculpture that Horst so admired throughout his career.

- **The 1960s and 1970s: the stately homes**

During the 1960s and 1970s, Horst photographed some of the world's most beautiful and luxurious homes for *House and Garden* and *Vogue* under the editorship of his friend Diana Vreeland. A three-sided projection and interactive screens will present these colourful studies. Among the most memorable are the Art Deco apartment of Karl Lagerfeld, the



Hattie Carnegie Dress, 1939  
© Condé Nast/ Horst Estate

three lavish dwellings of Yves Saint Laurent, and the Roman palazzo of artist Cy Twombly. Complementing these will be an interactive monitor enabling visitors to see a wider selection of these interior shots.

- **The final years**

In the latter years of Horst's life, his early aesthetic experienced a renaissance. The period also witnessed a flurry of new books, exhibitions, and television documentaries celebrating his work. Horst produced new, lavish prints in platinum-palladium for museums and the collector's market, selecting emblematic works from every decade of his career, which will be showcased as the finale to the exhibition.

**The Horst Estate**

Together with the bulk of Horst's original prints, the Horst Estate holds Horst's original negatives and transparencies as well as his notebooks, scrapbooks and other records.

**The Condé Nast Archive**

Condé Nast is a premier international media company renowned for producing high quality content for influential audiences across the world. The company's portfolio includes some of the most iconic titles in media: *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Glamour*, *Brides*, *GQ*, *The New Yorker*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Details*, *Architectural Digest*, *Wired*, *W* and *Teen Vogue*. The Condé Nast Archive, with locations in New York, Paris, London, and Milan, houses millions of original photographs, magazines, and ephemera dating back to 1892. Included among the collection are more than 5,000 Horst photographs taken during his six decades as a staff photographer.

**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.**

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.

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