

PRESS RELEASE

THE McCORD MUSEUM PRESENTS *WELCOME TO THE STUDIO*, BY CONTEMPORARY ARTIST KENT MONKMAN, AS PART OF ITS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Montreal, January 28, 2014 – From January 30 to June 1, 2014, the McCord Museum presents *Welcome to the Studio*, a work by Kent Monkman.

During his residency, this internationally renowned contemporary artist of Cree ancestry has focused his attention on the relationship between photography and painting. To this end, he turned to the McCord Museum's Notman Photographic Archives – which alone contain almost one million photos, including some 400,000 taken by photographer William Notman (1826-1891) – to create an original installation. "We are particularly pleased to welcome Kent Monkman, who, through his allegorical piece, breathes new life into photographs from our Notman Archives and invites us to reflect on the notion of the artist's mission. This result is a wonderful example of the dialogue between past and present, contemporary art and history," stated Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum.

An allegory

Monkman's new work, *Welcome to the Studio: An Allegory for Artistic Reflection and Transformation*, which measures 24 feet in length (731.28 cm), alludes to the celebrated work by Gustave Courbet, *The Artist's Studio. A real allegory summing up seven years of my artistic and moral life* (1855), viewed by many as a manifesto of the 19th century realism.

Like Courbet, Monkman portrays himself in an imaginary studio studying the artistic practice of painting. In rich allegorical terms, he personifies this reflection through a self-portrait that draws on both Courbet the painter and Notman the photographer.

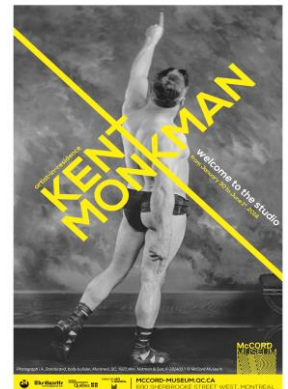
The figures that surround him, painted from more than 30 portraits in the Notman Photographic Archives, are assembled using the composite photography technique of Notman, while respecting the arrangement of figures in the work by Courbet. An integral component of the installation, the Notman photographic portraits that inspired Monkman's figures are displayed on a wall in the exhibition hall to enable visitors to discover them one by one.

To conclude their experience, visitors are invited to position themselves in the middle of the installation, where the reflection of their face will be superimposed over the artist's features.

Activity presented in conjunction with the exhibition

A discussion between Kent Monkman and Hélène Samson, Curator, Notman Photographic Archives, will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2014, at 6 p.m. and will focus on the Artist-in-Residence program. The talk will be presented in English and will be followed by a bilingual question period.

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Kent Monkman – *Welcome to the Studio*
Exhibition poster © McCord Museum



Kent Monkman © Chris Chapman



William Notman, Montreal, QC, 1868
Photograph
William Notman (1826-1891)
1868, 19th century
I-30283 © McCord Museum

A few words about the Artist-in-Residence program

Artist-in-Residence, a McCord Museum program, invites contemporary artists to explore and interact with the Museum's collections in order to create a work for display in a temporary solo exhibition. The program allows the Museum to present its collections from new perspectives by associating history with the fine arts and the past with the present.

A few words about Kent Monkman

Kent Monkman is a Canadian artist who works in a variety of media, including painting, film, video, performance and installation.

Monkman enjoys depicting various power relationships, which he reverses and often completely upends. At the heart of his artistic practice are the representation of identities, notably Aboriginal, and the construction of historical narratives. His use of irony and his many visual art history references create a new order where reality and fantasy merge.

The artist has been featured in many solo and group exhibitions in galleries and major museums in Canada and abroad. Kent Monkman lives and works in Toronto.

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 1,440,000 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. Interviews can be arranged with H el ene Samson, Curator, Notman Photographic Archives, and Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum.

Source and information:

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