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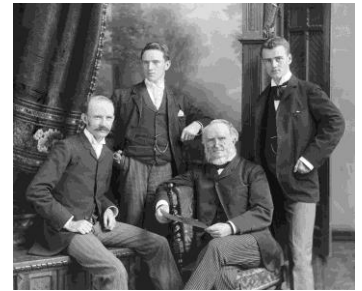
## **NOTMAN, A VISIONARY PHOTOGRAPHER**

### **THE FIRST RETROSPECTIVE DEDICATED TO THE MOST IMPORTANT CANADIAN PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AND A PIONEER OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN CANADA OPENING AUTUMN 2016 AT THE McCORD MUSEUM**

Montreal, July 28, 2016 – As part of the celebrations for Montreal’s 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canadian Confederation, from November 4, 2016 to March 26, 2017, the McCord Museum will present ***Notman, A Visionary Photographer***, a major exhibition on the life and work of this Montrealer who helped pioneer photography in Canada. Offering a new perspective on the career of William Notman (1826-1891), the exhibition will examine how the artist’s character contributed to his tremendous success. It will also focus on his contemporary approach to photography, founded on the principles of communication, management and innovation. While focusing on vintage prints, displays will be supplemented by multimedia installations and interactive devices that provide dynamic information and help clarify nineteenth-century idea of modernity. The exhibition will feature 285 photographs and objects drawn primarily from the McCord Museum collection. ***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.

The exhibition tour has been made possible by the Molson Foundation. The Standard Life – Notman Fund provides financing for the conservation and dissemination of the Notman Collection.

“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. “Yet 60 years later, despite ambitious dissemination efforts, Notman, who in his own lifetime gained international recognition, is little known in Canada and abroad. 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 and his sons, William McF., George and Charles  
Montreal, 1890  
© McCord Museum



Place d'Armes and Notre-Dame Church,  
Montreal, 1876  
William Notman  
© McCord Museum

## EXHIBITION THEMES

The exhibition will be divided into four themes inspired by Notman's boldness and 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, a structure that played a strategic role in the economic growth of Montreal. He 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.

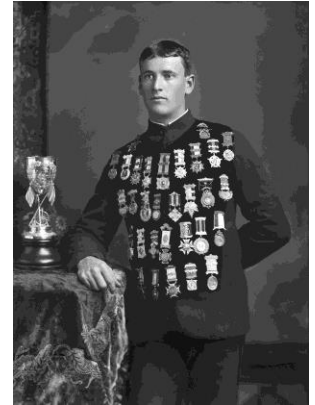
An artist at heart, Notman saw photography as an art form. He broke down the barriers between photography and painting with his painted photographs, composites and studied stagings. His approach opened the door to the creative manipulation of photographic images, preparing the ground for the ideas and uses that would follow in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 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*. 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. He was constantly innovating, and in doing so he helped advance the birth of technologies that enabled images to be widely replicated and circulated. Highly involved in the artistic community, he, along with a group of businessmen, founded the Art Association of Montreal, which would go on to become the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

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 studios in Canada and the United States. He was a regular participant in international competitions and world's fairs, winning a number of awards over the course of his career.

His body of work, from his portraits to the landscapes that spanned the country from east to west, helped build the Canadian identity. Upon his death, the Notman Studio continued to do business under the management of his sons until 1935.

## THE CATALOGUE *NOTMAN, A VISIONARY PHOTOGRAPHER*

A book on William Notman and his work, entitled *Notman, A Visionary Photographer*, will be produced for the exhibition. A definitive study of the artist, this 240-page catalogue, published under the direction of Hélène Samson, will contain 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 will be published



*William G. Ross, with his medals from the Montreal Bicycle Club, 1885*  
Wm Notman & Son  
© McCord Museum



*Young Niisitapikwan brave, near Calgary, Alta., 1889*  
Wm Notman & Son/William McFarlane Notman  
© McCord Museum



*Emerald Peak and cascade, B.C., 1904*  
Wm Notman & Son/William McFarlane Notman  
© McCord Museum

by the McCord Museum and edited by Hazan, Paris, with separate editions in English (distribution: Yale University Press) and French (distribution: Hachette). It will be sold at the McCord Museum Boutique, among other outlets. Production of the catalogue is made possible through the generous support of Power Corporation du Canada.

### 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.



*Red Cap Snow Shoe Club, Halifax, N.S., 1888*  
William Notman/Eugène L'Africain  
© McCord Museum

### 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 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.

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