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PRESS RELEASE

ILLUSIONS – THE ART OF MAGIC
AN IMMERSION IN SHOWS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF MAGIC,
OPENING AT THE MCCORD MUSEUM IN MAY 2017

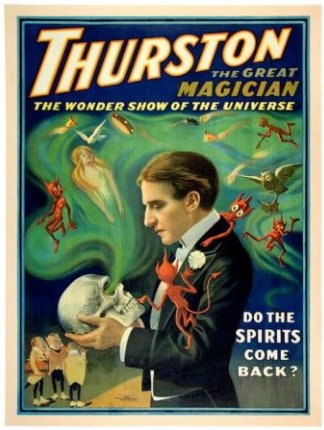
Montreal, February 15, 2017 - *Illusions – The Art of Magic*, the most comprehensive retrospective of posters from the Golden Age of Magic (1880s–1930s) ever assembled for public display, will run at the McCord Museum from May 26, 2017, to January 21, 2018. It will celebrate the illusions, history and lives of the famous magicians who marked this era. Consisting of 71 magnificent posters, several of which are very large format, and additional multimedia material, the exhibition will illustrate the performing art of magic at a time when the Herrmanns, Kellar, Chung Ling Soo, Thurston and, of course, Houdini were among the most popular entertainers. Developed by the McCord Museum, *Illusions – The Art of Magic* draws from its Allan Slaight Collection, acquired in 2015.



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

One of the world's top five private collections of magic-related posters and documents, **the Allan Slaight Collection** is under the responsibility of Christian Vachon, Curator, Paintings, Prints and Drawings, at the McCord Museum, who developed the exhibition concept with input from guest curator David Ben, a renowned magician and **leading authority on magic history.** The scenario and texts were written by Olivier Kemeid, while the exhibition design was conceived by Guillaume Lord, both of whom are well-known creators in the theatre community.

"We are very pleased to present this exhibition introducing visitors to these exceptional posters from the collection, the only one of its size in Canada. Its acquisition was made possible thanks to the generosity of La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso, a philanthropic foundation based in Toronto. We are particularly proud of the collection, as no other public institution has one in such remarkable condition. Many of the magicians featured in the exhibition performed in Montreal, including the legendary Houdini, who gave a series of performances in our city during his career," says **Suzanne Sauvage**, the Museum's President and Chief Executive Officer.



Thurston
Do the Spirits Come Back?
Strobridge Lithographing Co., 1915
M2014.128.421
© McCord Museum

Immersion in the world of magic
The exhibition will invite visitors to attend a veritable magic show starring the greatest magicians of the Golden Age. Each section will showcase a different kind of illusion: appearance and disappearance, decapitation, levitation, escape and mentalism. At the same time, the exhibition will help visitors interpret the posters using themes such as Spiritualism, Orientalism, the transmission of knowledge and the role of women in the world of magic. To make the intangible, tangible, short videos of magicians performing

various tricks will be projected in each section using the legendary special effects technique known as Pepper's Ghost, which is often employed by magicians. Visitors will be immersed in a dynamic sensory universe of sights, sounds and colours that will evoke the world of magic by creating a mysterious, spellbinding atmosphere.

The Golden Age of Magic
The Golden Age of Magic coincided with the Golden Age of Chromolithography, and the posters on display reflect the evolution, innovation and artistry of this process before it was supplanted by new technology, just as magic shows were displaced by talking motion pictures. These posters are magical in their own right, full of vibrant colours and phantasmagorical imagery designed to ignite the imagination and entice passers-by to buy a ticket for the show. Many of the posters are considered "Rare or extremely rare" and some are even classified as "Unique"; all are in mint condition.



Miss Marianna De Lahaye
Magic & Illusion
Charles Lévy, about 1898
M2014.128.558
© McCord Museum

Activities
Designed for all ages, the exhibition will be accompanied by numerous programming initiatives: a film retrospective, workshops, a lecture series and educational activities. Just like in a magic show, everything will be orchestrated to enthrall spectators and convince them, however briefly, that nothing is impossible!

Book
Published in conjunction with the exhibition, a book about magic featuring some 230 colour reproductions of posters from the Allan Slaight Collection will also include essays by various experts. In addition to explaining the production processes behind these posters that are now considered veritable works of art, this publication will offer some novel perspectives on the world of magic**. Co-published by 5 Continents and the McCord Museum, the catalogue will be available in both French and English.**



Thurston
Levitation – The Greatest Illusion in the World
Strobridge Lithographing Co., 1914
M2014.128.542
© McCord Museum

The Allan Slaight Collection
This collection contains 600 posters from the late 19th and early 20th centuries—the Golden Age of Magic—as well as over 1,000 rare books, programs, handbills, photographs, mementos, letters, autographs, ephemera and objects related to the legendary Harry Houdini (1874–1926). It is the ultimate reference for all magic collectors.

Thanks to La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso, the collection has been stored under optimal conditions, catalogued and digitized, thus making the McCord Museum a centre for information on the subject. The collection will be available online in its entirety as of April 2017, making it accessible to members of the public and researchers from around the world who share an interest in magic.

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/O6TA301V3ES

Interviews can be arranged with Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum, and Christian Vachon, Curator, Paintings, Prints and Drawings, at the McCord Museum

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