

PRESS RELEASE

PHOTOGRAPHY



For immediate release

***Griffintown – Evolving Montreal* by Robert Walker**

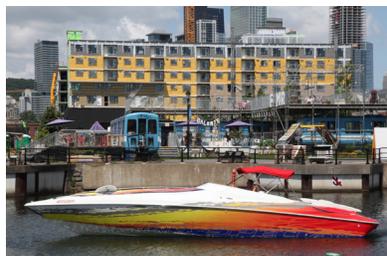
McCord Museum exploring Montreal neighbourhoods undergoing change

Montreal, February 5, 2020 – In an exhibition at the McCord Museum that will run from **February 7 to August 9**, celebrated Montreal street photographer **Robert Walker** takes viewers on a tour of Griffintown. An invitation to reflect on the relationship between frenzied real estate development and the preservation of our built heritage, *Griffintown – Evolving Montréal* showcases works drawn from the first photography commission under the *Evolving Montreal* program, set up by the McCord to document Montreal neighbourhoods undergoing rapid transformation.

Some 20 large-format prints, along with the projection of another 100 or so, including photos from the McCord's collection, are featured in the exhibition. With his colourful shots from 2018 and 2019, Robert Walker prompts us to take a step back as we observe this Montreal neighbourhood marked by radical changes to its urban fabric. Through his lens, Griffintown becomes a screen on which past and present clash in a maelstrom of colours, shapes and patterns. From this strange blend of the remains of a working-class, industrial district and contemporary buildings designed for the well-off, the new face of Griffintown, one of Montreal's oldest and most storied neighbourhoods, is emerging.

“We are pleased to launch our new initiative *Evolving Montreal* with Robert Walker. With his unique artistic insight, he has responded brilliantly to our request to document a changing Montreal neighbourhood, and visitors will be awed by his photographs, which show us Griffintown from a new perspective. At the same time, *Evolving Montreal* will enrich our photographic collection by recording the changes to various Montreal neighbourhoods over the years, while also promoting documentary photography,” said Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum.

Born in Montreal in 1945, Robert Walker graduated in visual arts from Sir George Williams University in the late 1960s. It was not until 1975, after attending a workshop given by American photographer Lee Friedlander, that Walker adopted street photography as his mode of artistic expression. Wanting to break away from the black and white trend, he turned to colour, which was considered less «artistic» at the time. In 1978, he moved to New York City where he pointed his lens



at Time Square on numerous occasions for almost 10 years. He contributed to various publications, including *Color is Power* (Thames & Hudson, 2000), in which he published street photographs taken over three decades in Montreal, New York, Warsaw, Paris, Rome, Toronto and Provincetown.

“I found Griffintown to be a beehive of colourful activity. Demolition shovels, construction cranes, pile drivers, cement mixers, dump trucks, all dramatically highlighted against the dramatic background of the Montreal cityscape. The Transformation of Griffintown turned out to be an exhilarating and challenging project” says Robert Walker.

The exhibition was curated by Zoë Tousignant, historian of photography.

EVOLVING MONTREAL – A NEW PROGRAM OF PHOTOGRAPHIC COMMISSIONS

To document Montreal’s ongoing urban transformation and promote documentary photography, over the next three years the McCord Museum will be commissioning some well-known local photographers to explore the changes occurring in a neighbourhood of their choice. This program has been made possible thanks in part to funding from the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON THE SIDE OF THE EXHIBITION

Screening of the documentary film *Horse Palace* by Nadine Gomez

Wednesday, February 19, 6 p.m., free

Between the abandoned factories and decrepit buildings of Griffintown is Montreal’s oldest stable, the last remnant of a bygone era. Like an urban tale, this documentary invites us to reflect on the meaning and value of our cities’ intangible heritage.

Photobook Club: About Griffintown with Robert Walker

Wednesday, April 8, 6 p.m., free

The Photobook Club Montréal invites photography enthusiasts to join the discussion group that has the city as its photographic subject for this edition.

Dialogue with Robert Walker

Wednesday, May 5, 6 p.m., free

In conjunction with the exhibition *Griffintown*, Robert Walker will speak with Hélène Samson, Curator, Photography at the Musée, about his long photographic practice that has taken him from Montreal to Warsaw and New York.

City Talks – Special Edition

Griffintown – *Evolving Montreal*

Wednesday, June 3, 6 p.m., free

The McCord Museum and Héritage Montréal offer a discussion on the recent transformation of this neighbourhood.

McCord Museum, museum of photography

The McCord’s photography collection encompasses over 1,300,000 photographs that primarily document the social history of Montreal, but also that of Quebec and Canada. Ranging from a series of daguerreotypes from the 1840s and 1850s to modern digital images, the collection illustrates the development of the art of photography along with the great transformations that have marked the city over the last two centuries. The Notman Photographic Archives constitute the core of the collection, with some 450,000 photographs from the Montreal studio founded in 1856 by William Notman (1826–1891) and run by his sons until 1935 under the name Wm. Notman & Son. The archives were added to the prestigious Memory of the World Register of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO in the fall of 2019.

ABOUT THE McCORD MUSEUM

The McCord Museum is the museum of all Montrealers, a social history museum that celebrates life in Montreal, both past and present—its history, its people and its communities. Open to the city and the world, the Museum presents exciting exhibitions, educational programming and cultural activities that offer a contemporary perspective on history, engaging visitors from Montreal, Canada and beyond. It is home to over 1.5 million artefacts, comprising one of the largest historical collections in North America, organized into the following departments: Dress, Fashion and Textiles, Photography, Indigenous Cultures, Paintings, Prints and Drawings, Material Culture, and Textual Archives. McCord Museum: Our People, Our Stories.

- 30 -

Possibility of interviews with Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum, and Hélène Samson, curator, Photography, McCord Museum, as well as Robert Walker, in english.

Contact

Ludovic IOP
Officer, Public relations
514 861-6701 ext. 1239
ludovic.iop@mccord-stewart.ca

[Photos available here.](#)

The McCord Museum gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec and the Conseil des arts de Montréal, Accès Montréal, CAA, as well as its media partners, La Presse, Montréal Gazette and La Vitrine culturelle.