

# PRESS RELEASE

INDIGENOUS CULTURES



## Sharing our expertise with Montreal's arts community

McCord Museum chosen by Conseil des arts de Montréal for its engagement with Indigenous communities

**Montreal, February 12, 2020** – The McCord Museum is one of eight Montreal cultural institutions selected by the Conseil des arts de Montréal to share its expertise, resources and networks with the arts community. Under the agreement, the Museum will carry out two projects focussed on creating stronger ties with Indigenous creators and increasing awareness of Indigenous realities and issues.

In fall 2019, the McCord Museum developed the educational workshop *Teach Me a Legend: Learn, Create and Share a Living Story* with Wapikoni Mobile and contemporary Innu storyteller and director Donovan Vollant, a co-creation experience that will be shared with the arts community in the coming months.

This new workshop introduces young people to the legends of the First Nations of Quebec while developing their sense of a living story. Using objects from the Museum's collection and Donovan Vollant's film *Le roi des oiseaux (The King of the Birds)*, participants explore an Innu story and reflect as a group on their values, while developing creativity and an intercultural perspective. By adopting a co-creation approach to design this workshop, the Museum is continuing to implement best practices consistent with the spirit of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* while avoiding the pitfalls of cultural appropriation.

The best practices identified and developed while co-creating the *Teach Me a Legend* workshop, along with those acquired through the Museum's longstanding collaborations with Indigenous communities, will be shared with Montreal's arts community at a half-day discussion event.

“The McCord Museum has been committed to the reconciliation process with Indigenous Peoples for a number of years. This new partnership with the Conseil des arts de Montréal is an opportunity for us to strengthen our ties with Indigenous creators while sharing our experiences with our peers in the Montreal arts community”, notes Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum.

## The McCord Museum's Indigenization process

Among the various initiatives launched as part of its Indigenization process, the Museum modified its by-laws to reserve two seats on its Board of Trustees for members belonging to an Indigenous culture. These seats are currently held by Michèle Audette, of Innu and Quebec ancestry, and Melissa Mollen Dupuis, an Innu. They were elected in 2016 and 2019, respectively. The Museum thus hopes to ensure that this important voice is always represented at the table when decisions are being made at the institution. In addition, on February 6 the Museum announced the appointment of Jonathan Lainey, a member of the Huron-Wendat Nation, as Curator, Indigenous Cultures. His mandate is to promote and bring a new perspective to the Museum's internationally renowned Indigenous Cultures collection, one of the largest in Canada. At the same time, he will play an active role in the Museum's ongoing Indigenization process.

As part of the CultivART Indigenous Program run by the Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM), the Museum will welcome an Atikamekw arts student for a 650-hour paid internship. Catherine Boivin will be paired with an external mentor, France Trépanier, a renowned visual artist of Kanien'kéhaka (Mohawk) and Quebec ancestry. Another collaboration with the CAM is the Museum's Indigenous Artist Residency project. The chosen artist's works will be exhibited at the Museum from September 4, 2020, to January 31, 2021. The jury to select the artist will be composed of Suzanne Sauvage, Jonathan Lainey and a committee of First Nations artists.

## 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 objects, comprising one of the largest historical collections in North America and organized into the following departments: Dress, Fashion and Textiles, Photography, Indigenous Cultures, Paintings, Prints and Drawings, Material Culture, and Textual Archives. The McCord Museum: Our People, Our Stories.

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Interview opportunities with Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Mélanie Deveault, Head, Education, Community Engagement and Cultural Programs.

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The McCord Museum is grateful for the support of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, the Conseil des arts de Montréal, Accès Montréal, CAA, and its media partners: La Presse, Télé-Québec and the Montreal Gazette.