



PRESS RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood
At the McCord Museum from November 25, 2005 until March 26, 2006

Montréal, November 14, 2005 — An exhibition exploring historic representations of girlhood from the 1860s to today, *Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood* opens this fall at the McCord Museum in Montréal.

The ongoing debate over images of young girls in the media is just one example of how the portrayal of young girls provokes frequent controversy. *Picturing Her* demonstrates the historic roots of these discussions and raises still more questions about the modern cultural assumptions that surround the idea of “girl.” Drawing on the McCord Museum’s extensive historic art holdings as well as contemporary artworks, guest curator Dr. Loren Lerner, Chair & Professor of Art History at Concordia University, considers the definition of girlhood and traces how the depiction of girls has developed to reflect ever-changing cultural, social and economic conditions.

Included are a range of images from the 1860s to the present day, including paintings, prints, drawings and photographs from the renowned Notman Photographic Archives. Confederation-era political cartoons show girls personifying the hopes and struggles of the newly created Canada — inherently strong and capable of growth, but also vulnerable and in need of protection. Portrait paintings and photographs from the turn of the century, meanwhile, depict young girls in the private sphere, in settings carefully chosen to illustrate Victorian ideals of good character. Whether at home, in the garden or at leisure, these representations of girlhood emphasized virtue, natural innocence and domesticity.

The identity of girlhood is constantly evolving, as are artistic expressions of this stage of life. And so as Canada matures as a nation, sentimental portraits of girls are superseded by images that reveal an interest in autobiographical exploration and also in adolescence as an emerging category of childhood. An assortment of works by modern and contemporary women artists completes this exhibition, exploring young, modern femininity and illustrating how the ideal of the Canadian girl has expanded to reflect the range of social classes and cultures of a diverse population.

Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood is on view at the McCord Museum from November 25, 2005 until March 26, 2006. The McCord is open from Tuesday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm, and on weekends, and Mondays during the summer months from 10 am to 5 pm. Entrance fees (including taxes) are \$10 general admission, \$7.50 for seniors, \$5.50 for students, \$3 for children between the ages of 6 and 12, and \$20 for families. Museum admission is available free of charge to members, children aged 5 and under, and to all on the first Saturday of each month from 10 am to 12 pm.

Related Event

A symposium in conjunction with the exhibition *Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood* will be held at the McCord Museum of Canadian History on Thursday, December 1, 2005 at 1pm. For more information call (514) 398-7100 ext. 305. Organized in conjunction with the Department of Art History, Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University and the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art.

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Photos available upon request

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The McCord Museum wishes to acknowledge the generous assistance of

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Technical information

Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood

Dates

November 25, 2005 to March 26, 2006

Number of artifacts

Over 100 objects, including paintings, drawings, cartoons, magazine illustrations and photographs.

Guest Curator

Dr Loren Lerner, Chair & Professor of Art History at Concordia University

Hours

Tuesday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm, and on weekends, and Mondays during the summer months from 10 am to 5 pm

Admission (including taxes)

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Curator biographical information

Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood

Loren Lerner

Dr Loren Lerner is the guest curator for *Picturing Her: Images of Girlhood*. As well as an award-winning author, she is Chair & Professor of Art History at Concordia University in Montréal.

Her previous research focused on ethnic, diasporic and ethical consciousness in North American art-making of the last fifty years. She was guest curator for an exhibit at the Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University in 2002 entitled *Memories and Testimonies* and a contributing editor for the publication of *Afterimage: Evocations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Canadian Arts and Literature*. More recently, Dr Lerner was guest curator for the Sam Borenstein retrospective exhibition at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts in the summer of 2005.

Her current research focuses on the cultural meanings of images of children in Canadian art. She has obtained a three-year grant from the Fonds de recherche sur la société et la culture to examine images of children from the 1860s to 1940s as indications of social, cultural and political change in Canada over 80 years.

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