



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Souvenirs of Here, the Photograph Album as Private Archive of
Chinese Montrealers
Images of a society celebrating 150 years of immigration to Canada***

Montreal, September 27, 2007 — The McCord Museum is pleased to announce the opening of its exhibition *Souvenirs of Here, The Photograph Album As Private Archive*, devoted to the personal photograph collections of four Montreal families of Chinese origin. Until April 20, 2008, visitors will learn about the cultural history of this community and discover the wealth of its contributions to Montreal society. Little known and unknown aspects of the history of the Chinese people in Montreal will be revealed, in French, English and Chinese.

An original visual heritage — The 13 photo albums presented in this new McCord exhibition contain a number of significant graphic and narrative inventions, giving these works the status of created objects. Rejecting the aesthetic conventions of amateur and family photography, these collectors renewed the album form, not only through photography, but also by incorporating drawing, writing and collage. Photographs taken from these albums and grouped under eight broad themes portray the life of the Chinese in Montreal, primarily between 1930 and 1970. Reproductions of the richly decorated pages on which these photographs were placed are also exhibited, in the form of an open book. Veritable cultural enlighteners, these photographic documents constitute an astounding record of the 20th century, an original account perceived through fresh eyes.

For Vincent Lavoie, the exhibition's curator and a professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), photography in this context is "*a tool of cultural integration, a means of socialization. Sometimes emotional, sometimes playful, sometimes political or even professional, these works are not only an expression of creative freedom but demonstrate a strong desire to be a part of the times.*" The immigration context of these albums further underlines this aspiration to create a new family and community memory rooted in Canada.

The McCord Museum would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the families who made this exhibition possible by lending their albums and offering their testimonials.

Images of Society: Changing Trajectories — On September 20th, 2007, the McCord Museum hosted a symposium entitled *Images of Society : Changing Trajectories*. This event was seen as an interesting complement to the exhibition *Souvenirs of Here*. It was organized in collaboration with the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art, Concordia University and UQAM. The program focused on the evolution and perception of vernacular and documentary photography over the years. Photography experts shared the results of their research work with the

participants; each of these lectures helped decipher the *Variable Trajectories* of photography. Speakers included Hélène Samson, the McCord Museum's curator of photography, Martha Langford, from Concordia University, and Vincent Lavoie, curator of the exhibition *Souvenirs of Here*.

The McCord

The McCord is home to one of the finest historical collections in North America. It possesses some of Canada's most significant cultural treasures, including the most comprehensive collection of clothing made or worn in Canada; an extensive collection related to Aboriginal history and art; and the renowned Notman Photographic Archives.

Museum Hours & Admission

The McCord is open from Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends, holiday weekends and on Mondays during the summer months. Entrance fees (including taxes) are \$12 general admission, \$9 for seniors, \$6 for students, \$4 for children between the ages of 6 and 12, and \$22 for families. Museum admission is free of charge to Friends of the McCord and children aged five and under. The museum offers free entry to all visitors the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

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Source and information:

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The McCord wishes to acknowledge the support of the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the following partners:

LA PRESSE

The Gazette

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