fancy dance shawl for Sky Woman, 2019

McCORD MUSEUM
OUR PEOPLE OUR STORIES

Dialogue and Encounter: Artist-in-Residence Hannah Claus revisits the McCord Museum's collection with the exhibition *there's a reason for our connection*

Montreal, March 12, 2019 – For the sixth year of its *Artist-in-Residence* program, the McCord Museum is presenting the exhibition *there's a reason for our connection*, by the multidisciplinary visual artist of kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) and English ancestry, Hannah Claus. During her residency, Claus drew inspiration from the McCord's extensive Indigenous Cultures collection, as well as its Textual Archives, to create works embodying the concepts of dialogue and encounter, which are encompassed in what the artist calls *relationality*, "a principle that is at the heart of Indigenous cultures," she says.

"The artefacts in the collection of the McCord Museum—a museum of social history—convey messages in that they bear witness to a part of our history. With the *Artist-in-Residence* program, these objects not only become a source of inspiration and reinterpretation, but also take on a new meaning under an artist's gaze. This is a wonderful way to rediscover our collections from other perspectives" says McCord Museum President and Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Sauvage.

The exhibition *there's a reason for our connection* will run at the McCord Museum until August 11, 2019.

Dialogue and encounters

"I use installations to create sensory environments that speak to memory and transformation. My works explore the relationships between the specific, the personal and the real, which lie at the heart of an Indigenous cosmogony—often the world view of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), in particular—in order to question our perception of time, space and memory," Claus notes.

The new works or art created for the exhibition are presented along with objects from the Museum's collection from which the artist drew inspiration: a trading post register belonging to the North East Fur Company and Haudenosaunee beadwork. They conjure up the invisible encounters and exchanges that are part of our shared histories, and also nourish those of the artefacts: "What I want to do is create a dialogue between present and past," she explains.

While some works raise questions about writing and communication, others evoke temporality through their translucidity and the accumulation and repetition of materials. Claus uses these concepts to invoke what is not necessarily visible at first glance, but can be conveyed through what the visitor feels on viewing her works. "Culture is alive. It's fascinating to draw inspiration from objects and to bring them to life, to make them live and breathe a little," she says.

About Hannah Claus

Hannah Claus, a visual artist of Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) and English ancestry, has been living and working in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) since 2001. In her installations, she explores our connections with memory, space and time; she often works in collaboration with other artists, using processes of repetition and accumulation to express an Indigenous method and perspective. A graduate of the University of Ottawa (1992), the Ontario

College of Art and Design (1998) and Concordia University (MVA, 2004), she has exhibited her works in numerous arts centres and public museums across Canada, as well as in Switzerland, Germany, Mexico, Chile and the United States. Hannah Claus is a member of the Tyendinaga Mohawk community of the Bay of Quinte in Ontario.

Artist-in-Residence program
The McCord Museum's *Artist-in-Residence* program invites artists from Montreal and elsewhere to explore and interact with the museum's collections, casting a critical and conceptual eye and relating them to their own artistic practices. Through the works they create, artists in residence revisit the social and historical facets of artefacts in the McCord's collections and address how they help construct our identity as Montrealers and as a society.

The McCord Museum, custodian of the vast Indigenous Cultures collection
The McCord Museum's Indigenous Cultures collection consists of over 16,500 archaeological and historic artefacts recounting nearly 12,000 years of history—eloquent examples of the material culture of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis, primarily from Canada. It explores the deep meaning of the artefacts not just as historical evidence, but as expressions of the development, evolution and constant revitalization of Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Cultures collection is a key component of the McCord Museum's holdings.

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 1,500,000 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, Decorative Arts and Textual Archives. McCord Museum: Our People, Our Stories.

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Possibility of interviews with Hannah Claus, Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer and with Guislaine Lemay, Curator, Indigenous Cultures and Decorative Arts.

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