

PRESS RELEASE

INDIGENOUS CULTURES



Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience at the McCord Museum **Kent Monkman brings his latest solo exhibition to Montreal**

Montreal, February 5, 2019 – From February 8 to May 5, 2019, the McCord Museum will be hosting *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, by internationally renowned Cree artist Kent Monkman. His second nationally touring solo exhibition for which he is the curator, *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* revisits Canadian history, from Confederation to today, as seen through the eyes of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, his time-travelling, shape-shifting, gender-fluid alter ego. Miss Chief reflects on the 150 years of Canada's existence – a period marked by the adoption of devastating genocidal policies – and honours the resilience of Indigenous peoples today.

“*Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* is a deeply disturbing exhibition about the history of Indigenous peoples from here and across Canada, a story that needs to be told and heard. This is an opportunity for the McCord Museum to initiate encounters, dialogue and reconciliation around a topic that concerns us all and forces us to reflect on ourselves,” said President and Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Sauvage.

At its core, *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* is a celebration of Indigenous resilience. The exhibition uses humour and critical insight to create a troubling retrospective of what Monkman refers to as “the most devastating period for First Peoples.” Monkman’s works shock and demolish popular beliefs; challenge heteronormativity and gender binaries; contrast the glorification of Roman Catholicism with the deep distress it causes; scorn the opulence of colonialism on Indigenous lands; and recall the effects of the treaties that forever changed the course of history.

For the presentation of *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the McCord Museum, the booklet *Excerpts from the Memoirs of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle* will, for the first time, be made available to visitors in three languages: Cree, French and English. The travelling exhibition also draws on the McCord’s rich holdings by incorporating numerous artefacts from its Indigenous Cultures and Decorative Arts collections.

The Memoirs of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle

In a display inspired by manuscripts from another age, visitors will discover Monkman's paintings, sculptures and installations, and their challenge to the predominant interpretation of Canadian history. Throughout the exhibition, the incisive, harrowing story told by Miss Chief Eagle Testickle is shared through her memoir: "They wanted to take the Indian out of us; they couldn't do that, but they did beat down our spirits," she says in the booklet *Excerpts from the Memoirs of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle*.

In nine thematic chapters, Miss Chief relates the ravages of colonialist policies in a not-so-distant past: the arrival of Wolfe and Montcalm, the horror of residential schools, famine, and disease ... Yet what emerges from the darkness is Indigenous peoples' resilience. "The others cannot see our magic, they try to tell us it is not there, but they do not understand the power of Miss Chief and they sorely underestimate the resilience of our people," she concludes.

Exclusive Quebec showing

After a hugely successful tour through Western Canada, the Maritimes and Ontario, *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* is making its only—and highly anticipated—stop in Quebec at the McCord Museum. "Indigenous cultures are a key component of the McCord Museum. It's an honour to be hosting this outstanding exhibition," said Suzanne Sauvage. This is Monkman's second collaboration with the McCord. He was artist in residence in 2013, when he created the monumental work *Welcome to the Studio* in tribute to Montreal—a painting that the museum acquired in 2014 thanks, in part, to support from Montrealers.

Indigenous Art and Cultures Honoured at the McCord Museum

Not only is the Museum starting off the year on a strong note with *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, but it will also be presenting two other exhibitions as part of its exceptionally rich Indigenous cultures programming in 2019. In March, the multidisciplinary visual artist of Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) and English ancestry Hannah Claus, in residence at the Museum for the 2018–2019 season, will present her exhibition *there's a reason for our connection*. Then April will see the opening of *Sding K'awXangs – Haida: Supernatural Stories*, an exhibition showcasing the McCord's outstanding collection of Haida artefacts, along with works by contemporary Haida artists.

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 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 Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum, and with Guislaine Lemay, Curator, Indigenous Cultures and Decorative Arts.

Source and information

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