

PRESS RELEASE

INDIGENOUS CULTURES



McCORD MUSEUM CREATES INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Montreal, June 16, 2021. – The McCord Museum is pleased to announce the establishment of a permanent Indigenous advisory committee, whose primary focus is to take an informed, cross-disciplinary look at the Museum’s indigenization initiatives. The committee is composed of eight members, five Indigenous individuals active in academia, the arts and the community, along with three Museum staff members, including the Curator, Indigenous Cultures, who is himself Indigenous.

The Indigenous Advisory Committee, which began its work in June, is a platform for sharing and discussing the challenges of Indigenous museology. It will recommend approaches and initiatives for indigenizing the Museum, support the institution’s commitment to decolonize museological practices, and, in collaboration with the Collections Management team, analyze future requests for the repatriation of objects from the Indigenous Cultures collection. It will offer a cross-disciplinary perspective on Indigenous content in the Museum’s programming and bolster its efforts to hire and retain Indigenous staff, in accordance with its diversity, equity and inclusion policy.

“The committee and its dynamic members will accelerate our commitment to First Nations communities. It will amplify their voices, ensure the relevance of our indigenization initiatives and help us better understand and reach this important audience. It will also enable us to better serve First Nations communities by being more responsive to their needs. I would like to thank the committee members for accepting our invitation. I am certain that these discussions, undertaken in a spirit of openness, will be very beneficial for the Museum and its teams,” noted Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Museum.

MEMBERS OF THE INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The committee includes **Heather Igloliorte**, Inuk researcher, independent curator and art historian from Nunatsiavut, and Associate Professor of Indigenous art history at Concordia University; **Philippe Meilleur**, of Mohawk ancestry, Executive Director of Native Montréal; **Nadia Myre**, multidisciplinary artist of Algonquin ancestry and co-founder of daphne an artist-run centre; **Melissa Mollen Dupuis**, Innu filmmaker and activist for Indigenous rights; and **Karine Awashish**, an Atikamekw community member, co-founder of Coop Nitaskinan and coordinator of the First Nations Social Economy Regional Table.

The members from the McCord Museum team are **Suzanne Sauvage**, President and Chief Executive Officer; **Cynthia Cooper**, Head, Collections and Research, and Curator, Dress, Fashion and Textiles; and **Jonathan Lainey**, member of the Huron-Wendat Nation and Curator, Indigenous Cultures.

THE INDIGENOUS CULTURES COLLECTION AND THE INDIGENIZATION PROCESS

The McCord Museum's Indigenous Cultures collection is composed of over 16,500 objects recounting nearly 12,000 years of history—eloquent examples of the material culture of First Nations, Inuit and Métis, primarily from Canada. For many years, the institution has been engaged in a process of indigenization aimed at increasing the relevance and accessibility of the Indigenous Cultures collection to Indigenous communities and ensuring that its scope reflects their concerns and contemporary perspectives.

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, its world, 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 artefacts, comprising one of the largest historical collections in North America, organized into the following departments: Dress, Fashion and Textiles; Photography; Indigenous Cultures; Documentary Art; Material Culture; and Archives.

The biographies of the committee members are attached.

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Possibility of interviews with Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer.

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INFORMATION SHEET

BIOGRAPHIES OF INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

HEATHER IGLOLIORTE

An Inuk researcher, independent curator and art historian from Nunatsiavut, Heather Igloliorte is an Associate Professor of Indigenous art history at Concordia University. In addition to curating *Inuit Art. The Brousseau Collection - Ilippunga*, the permanent exhibition at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, she has written a number of essays about Indigenous cultures and arts in Canada.

PHILIPPE MEILLEUR

Of Mohawk ancestry, Philippe Meilleur has a bachelor's degree in business administration from UQAM. He is currently Executive Director of Native Montréal, whose mission is to contribute to the holistic health, cultural strength and success of Aboriginal families, individuals and community in Greater Montréal.

MELISSA MOLLEN DUPUIS

Named an Ambassador of Conscience in 2017 by Amnesty International, Melissa Mollen Dupuis is an Innu filmmaker and activist for Indigenous rights in Quebec. Her films have been streamed on the Website of Wapikoni Mobile, an organization for which she is the President of the Board of Trustees. She is also one of the two co-founders of the Quebec branch of the Idle No More – Jamais plus l'inaction movement.

NADIA MYRE

A multidisciplinary artist of Algonquin ancestry, Nadia Myre holds a Master of Fine Arts from Concordia University. In 2014, she received the Sobey Art Award from the National Gallery of Canada. She is also a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. In 2020, with artists Skawennaki, Hannah Claus and Caroline Monnet, she co-founded daphne, Quebec's first Indigenous artist-run centre.

KARINE AWASHISH

A member of the Atikamekw nation, Karine Awashish has a master's degree in leisure, culture and tourism from Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and is currently pursuing her PhD in sociology at Université Laval. With extensive professional experience in the socio-economic development of Quebec's First Nations, she is co-founder of Coop Nitaskinan and coordinator of the First Nations Social Economy Regional Table.