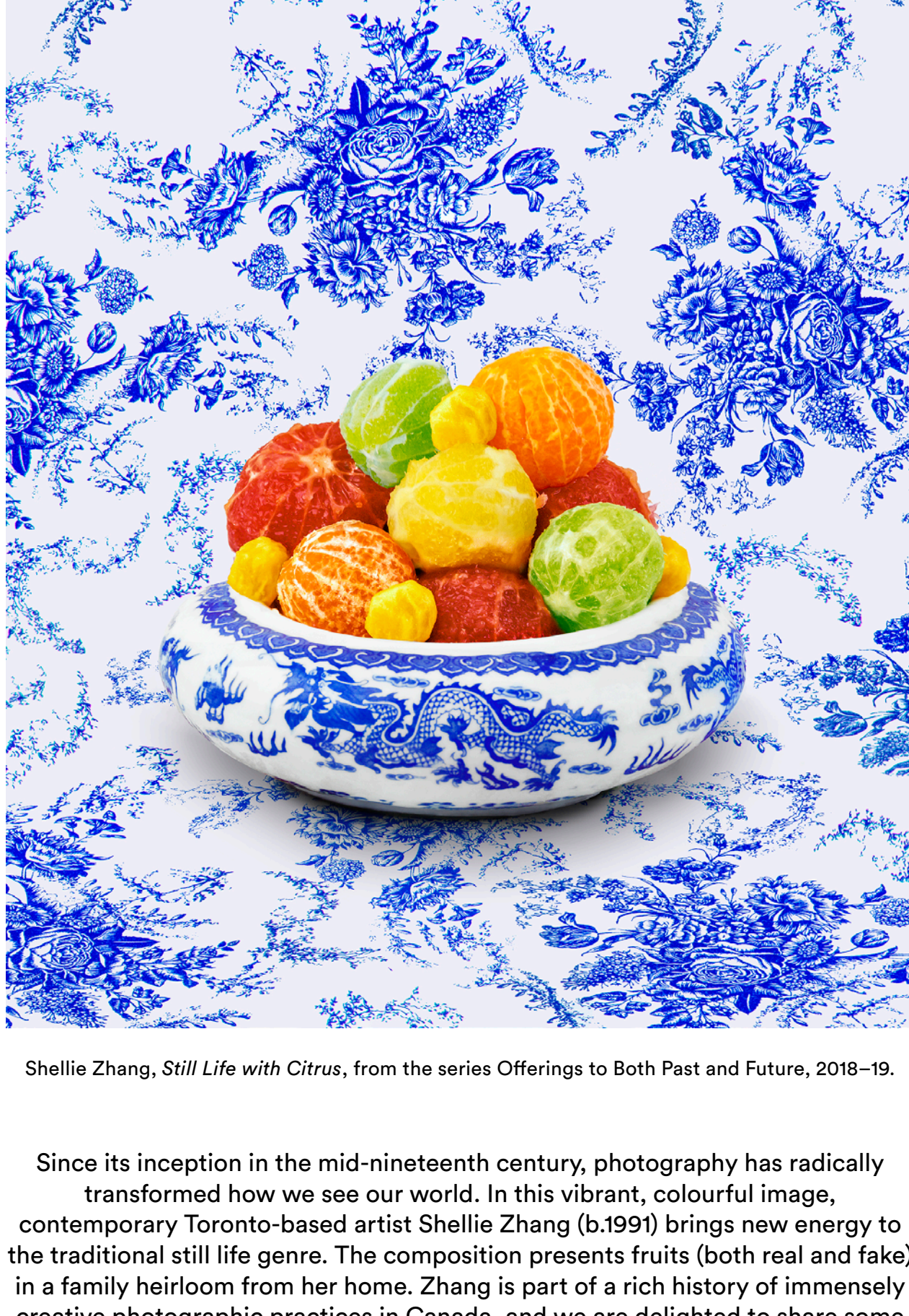


FROM STILL LIFES TO THE SELFIE CAMERA ART IN CANADA

Five artists who approach photography with creativity, purpose, and radical innovation

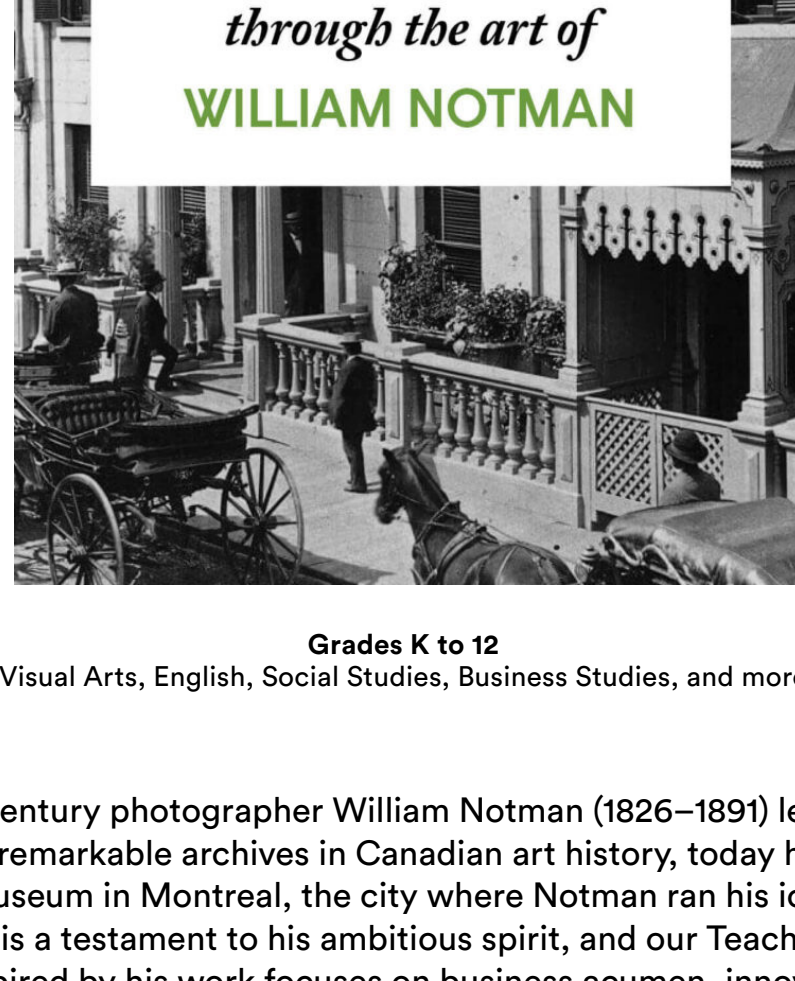


Shellie Zhang, *Still Life with Citrus*, from the series Offerings to Both Past and Future, 2018–19.

Since its inception in the mid-nineteenth century, photography has radically transformed how we see our world. In this vibrant, colourful image, contemporary Toronto-based artist Shellie Zhang (b.1991) brings new energy to the traditional still life genre. The composition presents fruits (both real and fake) in a family heirloom from her home. Zhang is part of a rich history of immensely creative photographic practices in Canada, and we are delighted to share some of our favourite artists with you this week. From the iconic studio portraits of William Notman to the land-based oeuvre of Meryl McMaster, these works are a testament to the continued innovation of photographers across the country.

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

A Legendary Studio



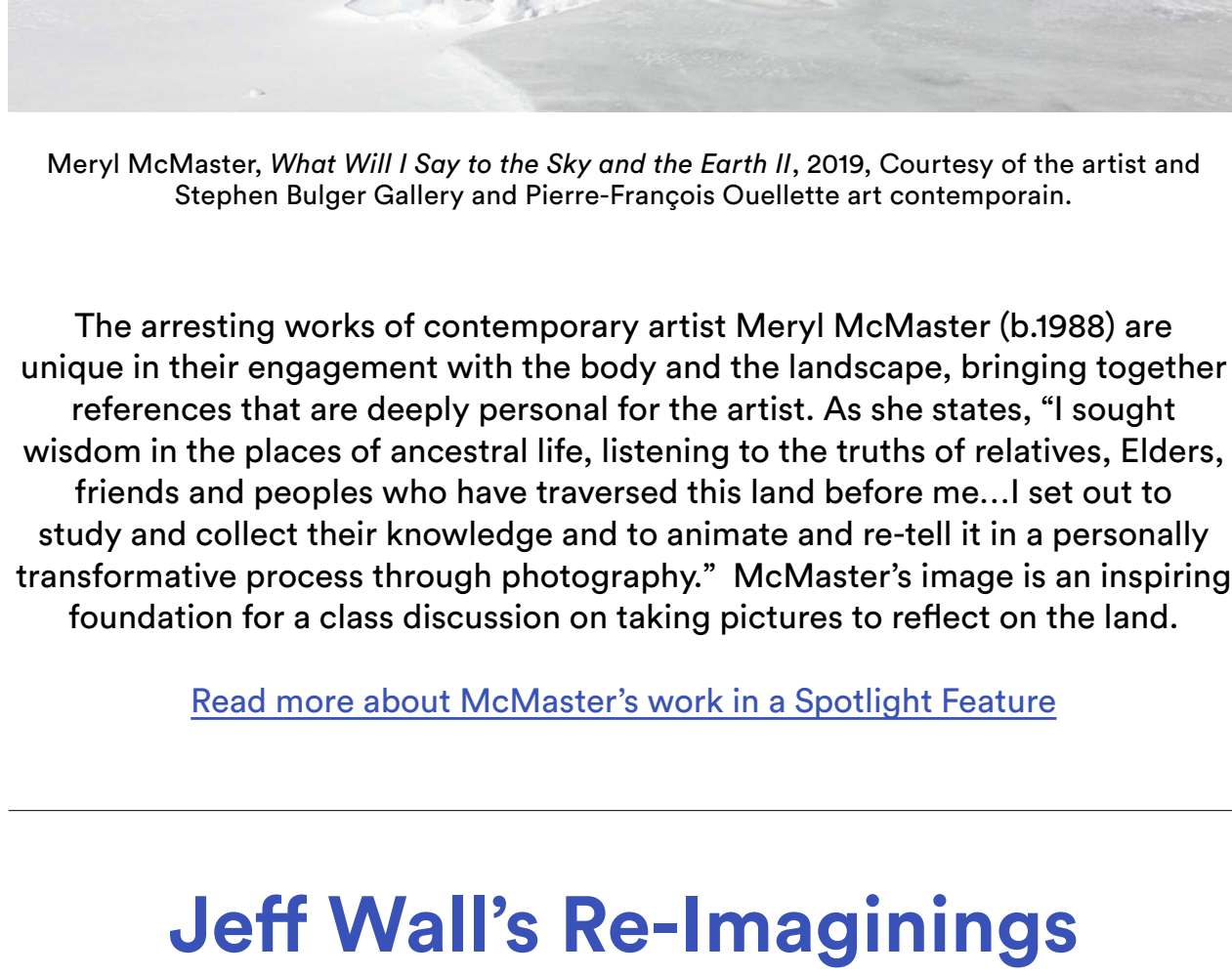
Grades K to 12
Visual Arts, English, Social Studies, Business Studies, and more

Nineteenth-century photographer William Notman (1826–1891) left behind one of the most remarkable archives in Canadian art history, today housed at the McCord Museum in Montreal, the city where Notman ran his iconic studio. Its success is a testament to his ambitious spirit, and our Teacher Resource Guide inspired by his work focuses on business acumen, innovation, and entrepreneurialism through three creative learning activities.

[Download the Guide Here](#)

AVENUES TO EXPLORE

Meryl McMaster's Land-Based Photography



Meryl McMaster, *What Will I Say to the Sky and the Earth II*, 2019, Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Bulger Gallery and Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain.

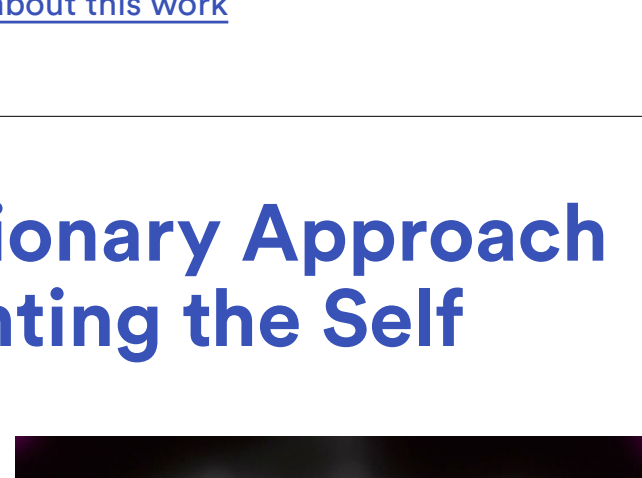
The arresting works of contemporary artist Meryl McMaster (b.1988) are unique in their engagement with the body and the landscape, bringing together references that are deeply personal for the artist. As she states, "I sought wisdom in the places of ancestral life, listening to the truths of relatives, Elders, friends and peoples who have traversed this land before me...I set out to study and collect their knowledge and to animate and re-tell it in a personally transformative process through photography." McMaster's image is an inspiring foundation for a class discussion on taking pictures to reflect on the land.

[Read more about McMaster's work in a Spotlight Feature](#)

Jeff Wall's Re-Imaginings



Katsushika Hokusai, *Ejiri in Suruga Province (Sunshū Ejiri)*, from the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei), c.1830–32, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

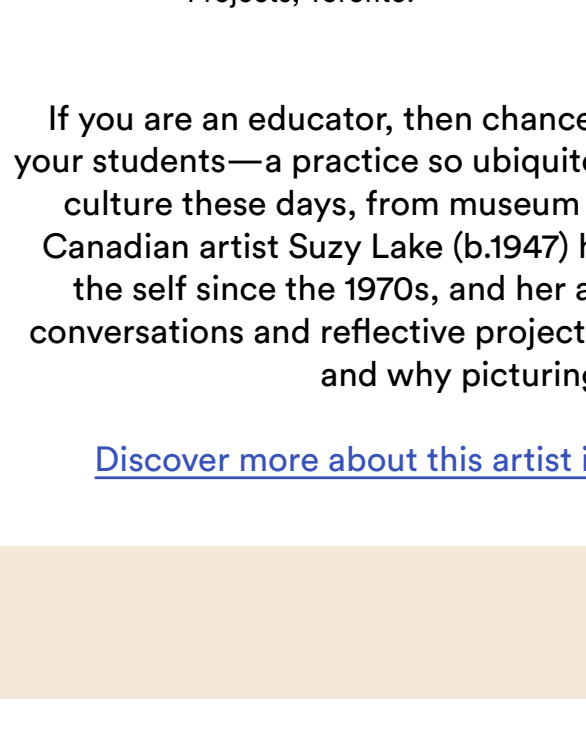


Jeff Wall, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, 1993, Courtesy of the artist.

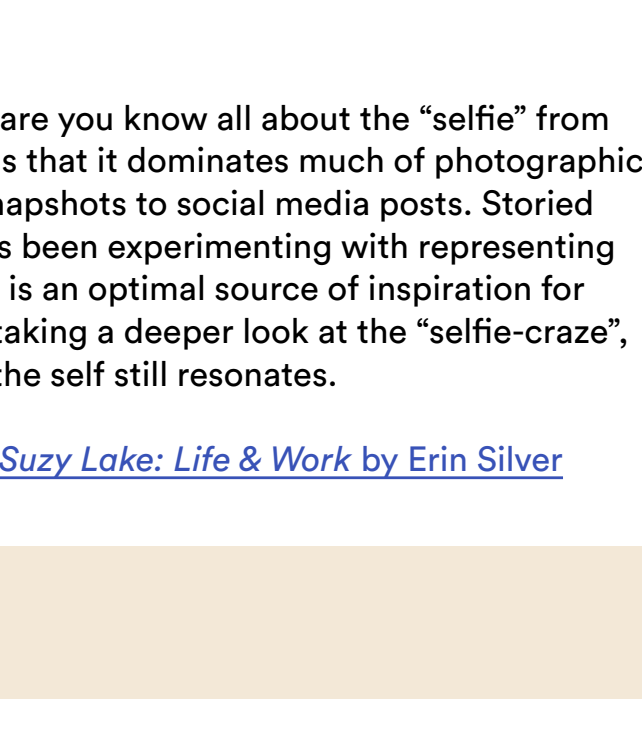
Revered Vancouver-born Conceptual photographer Jeff Wall (b.1946) responds to a famous work by master Japanese printmaker Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) in *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, 1993, transforming the composition in a contemporary light. Wall is particularly known for re-creating art historical paintings in photography, an approach that can be adapted for classroom projects that bring forward skills of analysis, adaptation, and creative problem-solving.

[Read more about this work](#)

Suzy Lake's Visionary Approach to Representing the Self



Suzy Lake, *Imitations of the Self (study #3)*, 1973/2012, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.



Suzy Lake, *Performing Haute Couture #1*, 2014, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

If you are an educator, then chances are you know all about the "selfie" from your students—a practice so ubiquitous that it dominates much of photographic culture these days, from museum snapshots to social media posts. Storied Canadian artist Suzy Lake (b.1947) has been experimenting with representing the self since the 1970s, and her art is an optimal source of inspiration for conversations and reflective projects taking a deeper look at the "selfie-craze", and why picturing the self still resonates.

[Discover more about this artist in Suzy Lake: Life & Work by Erin Silver](#)

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Launched in 2013, the Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. The ACI works with more than fifty of Canada's leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art and where they are located. By functioning as an online art museum, a [digital library](#), and an interactive Canadian art encyclopedia, the ACI is an indispensable resource on Canada's visual heritage.

Visit us at aci-iac.ca

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Image Credits: [1] Shellie Zhang, *Still Life with Citrus*, from the series Offerings to Both Past and Future, 2018–19, chromogenic print, 45.7 x 61 cm. Courtesy of the artist. [2] Meryl McMaster, *What Will I Say to the Sky and the Earth II*, 2019, digital C-Print, 101.6 x 152.4 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Bulger Gallery and Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain. [3] Katsushika Hokusai, *Ejiri in Suruga Province (Sunshū Ejiri)*, from the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei), c.1830–32, woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 25.1 x 37.5 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. [4] Jeff Wall, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, 1993, transparency in lightbox, 229.0 x 377.0 cm. Courtesy of the artist. [5] Suzy Lake, *Imitations of the Self (study #3)*, 1973/2012, archival pigment print, 20 x 18.6 cm. Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. [6] Suzy Lake, *Performing Haute Couture #1*, 2014, chromogenic print, black frame with museum glass, 167.6 x 127 cm. Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.