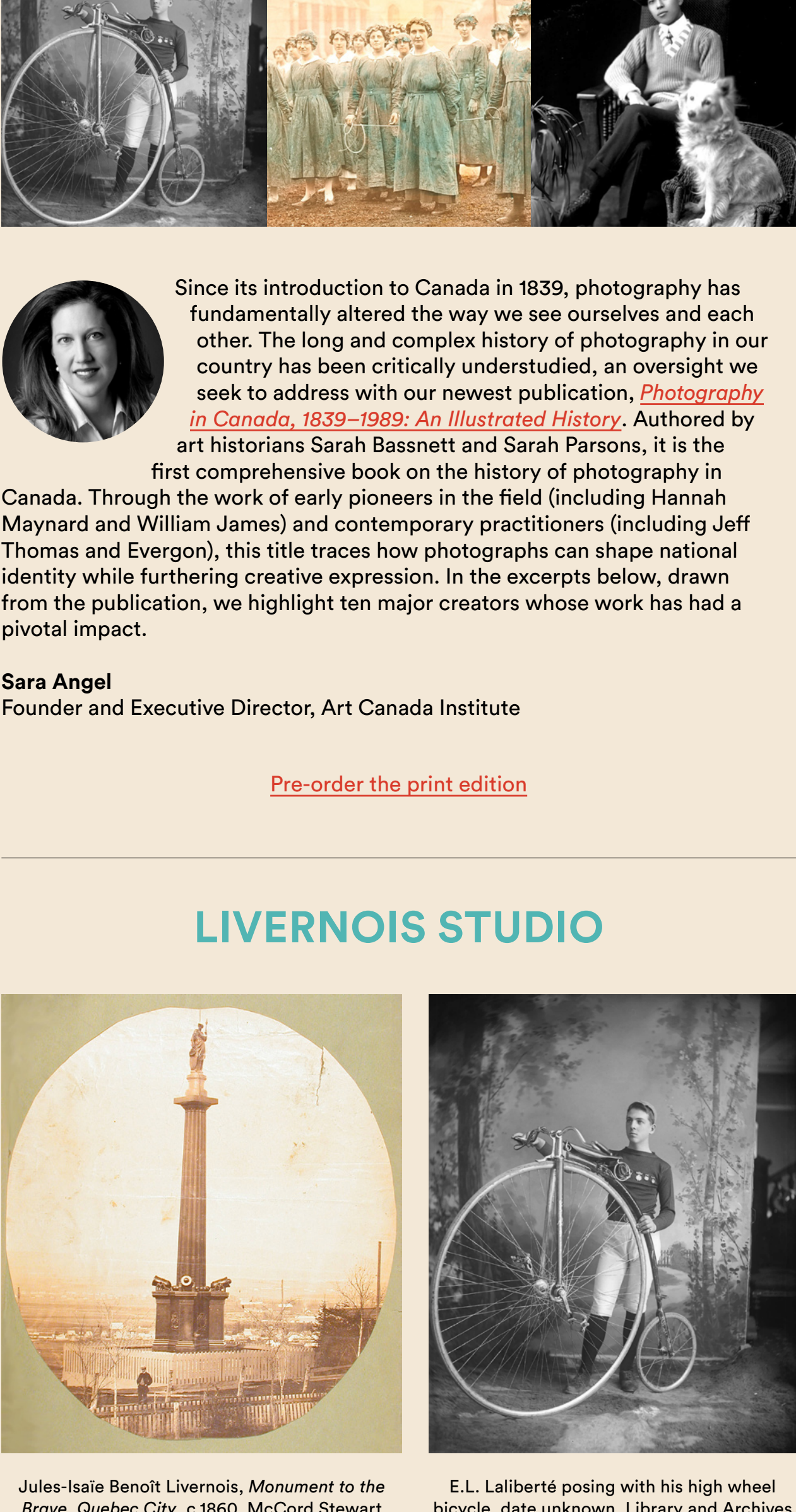


SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

10 PHOTOGRAPHY PIONEERS FROM OUR NEW PUBLICATION

PHOTOGRAPHY IN CANADA, 1839–1989

Today the Art Canada Institute proudly publishes [Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History](#) by Sarah Bassnett and Sarah Parsons. This publication—the first comprehensive book to be published on the history of the art form in Canada—tells the story of camera-based creativity from its introduction to the country in 1839.



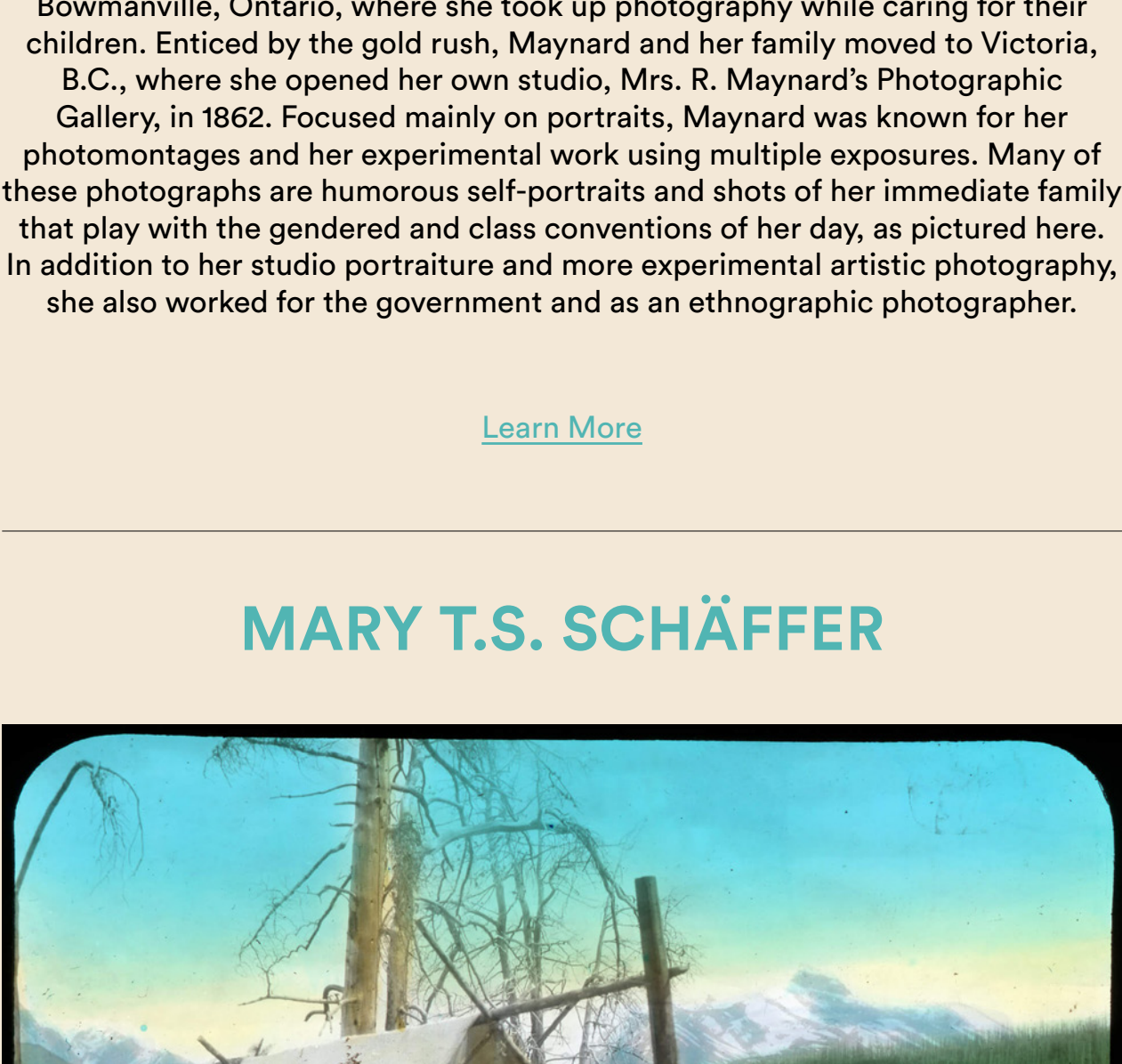
Since its introduction to Canada in 1839, photography has fundamentally altered the way we see ourselves and each other. The long and complex history of photography in our country has been critically understudied, an oversight we seek to address with our newest publication, [Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History](#). Authored by art historians Sarah Bassnett and Sarah Parsons, it is the first comprehensive book on the history of photography in Canada. Through the work of early pioneers in the field (including Hannah Maynard and William James) and contemporary practitioners (including Jeff Thomas and Evergon), this title traces how photographs can shape national identity while furthering creative expression. In the excerpts below, drawn from the publication, we highlight ten major creators whose work has had a pivotal impact.

Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

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LIVERNOIS STUDIO



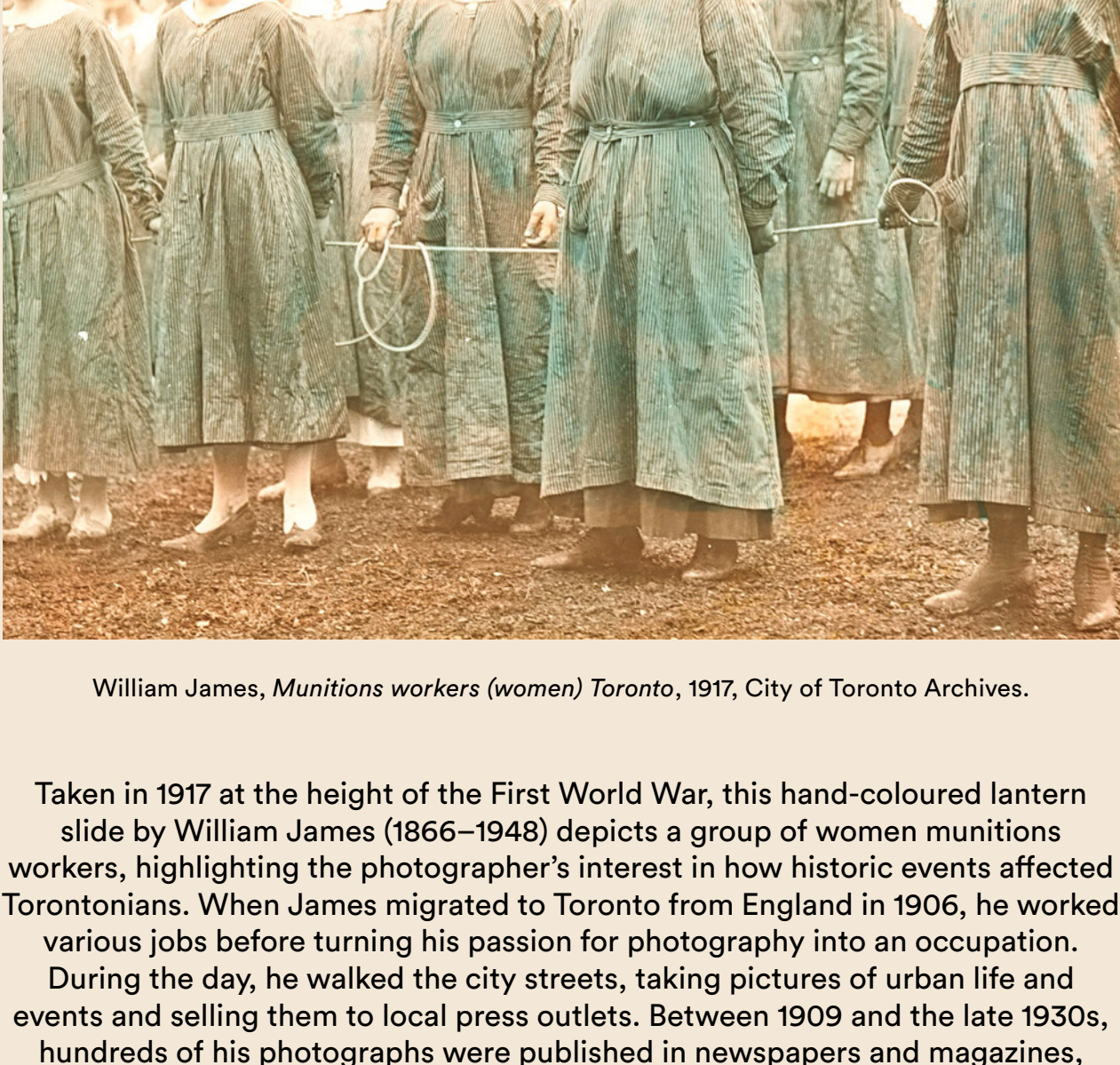
Jules-Isaie Benoît Livernois, *Monument to the Brava*, Quebec City, c.1860, McCord Stewart Museum, Montreal.

E.L. Laliberté posing with his high wheel bicycle, date unknown, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

For over a century, the Livernois Studio (1854–1979) documented the public and private life of Quebec City. Specializing in portraits, such as this shot of the young cyclist E.L. Laliberté, members of the studio photographed a wide range of subjects, from families and private citizens to church officials and local folk heroes. Run by multiple generations of the Livernois family, the studio was first opened in 1854 by Jules-Isaie Benoît Livernois, or J.B. (1830–1865), alongside his wife, fellow photographer Élise L'Hérault dit L'Heureux (1827–1896). Their business was a roaring success, so J.B. launched two additional studios and expanded his photographic repertoire to include French Canadian artifacts and monuments, such as *Monument to the Brava*, Quebec City, c.1860.

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HANNAH MAYNARD

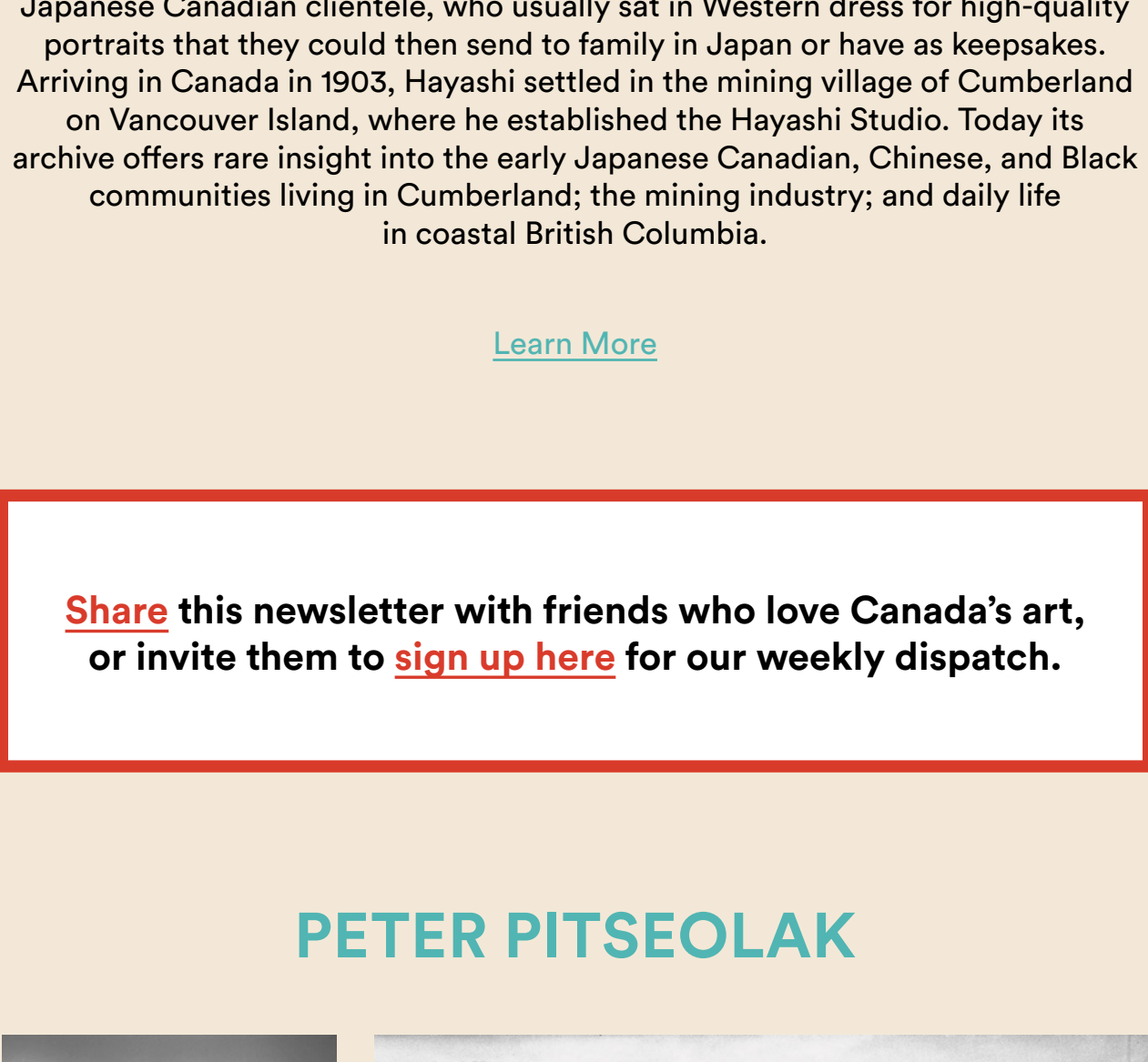


Hannah Maynard, *Hannah Maynard and her grandson, Maynard McDonald, in a tableau vivant composite photo*, c.1893, BC Archives, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.

Celebrated for her innovative vision, British-born photographer Hannah Maynard (1834–1918) immigrated to Canada in 1852 with her husband, settling first in Bowmanville, Ontario, where she took up photography while caring for their children. Enticed by the gold rush, Maynard and her family moved to Victoria, B.C., where she opened her own studio, Mrs. R. Maynard's Photographic Gallery. In 1862, Focused mainly on portraits, Maynard was known for her photomontages and experimental work, using multiple exposures. Many of these photographs are humorous self-portraits and shots of her immediate family that play with the gendered and class conventions of her day, as pictured here. In addition to her studio portraiture and more experimental artistic photography, she also worked for the government and as an ethnographic photographer.

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MARY T.S. SCHÄFFER



Mary T.S. Schäffer, *Looking for goat while baking bread (Camp at lower end of Maligne Lake)*, 1908, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff.

In this hand-tinted glass lantern slide, Mary T.S. Schäffer (1861–1939) depicts a lone woman camping in the mountains. The American illustrator, writer, and flower painter spent summers in the Rockies, where she began using photography to document flower samples as well as the people in the region. Using a folding camera and glass plate negatives, Schäffer created a unique body of work about the Rockies, and often shared her photography and writing in the form of "magic lantern" lectures, complementing colourful hand-painted slides with her tales of adventure. She moved to Banff permanently in 1912, where she continued to photograph and publish articles about the region.

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WILLIAM JAMES

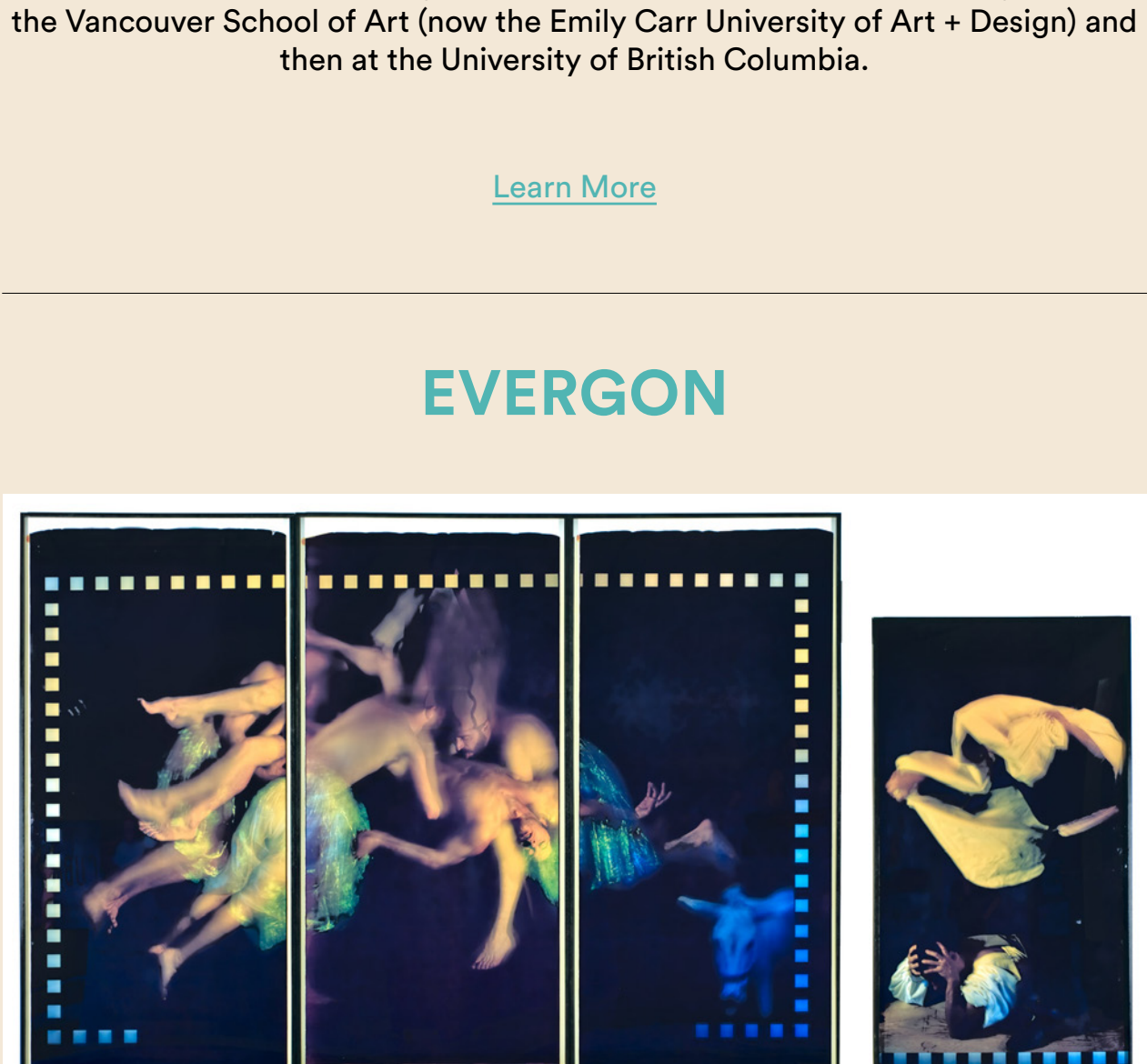


William James, *Munitions workers (women) Toronto*, 1917, City of Toronto Archives.

Taken in 1917 at the height of the First World War, this hand-coloured lantern slide by William James (1866–1948) depicts a group of women munitions workers, highlighting the photographer's interest in how historic events affected Torontonians. When James migrated to Toronto from England in 1906, he worked various jobs before turning his passion for photography into an occupation. During the day, he walked the city streets, taking pictures of urban life and events and selling them to local press outlets. Between 1909 and the late 1930s, hundreds of his photographs were published in newspapers and magazines, including *Toronto World*, the *Toronto Daily Star*, and *Chateaine*. James was also the founding president of the Canadian Photographers Association, the country's first organization of press photographers, and influenced a generation of young photographers throughout his prolific career.

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HAYASHI STUDIO



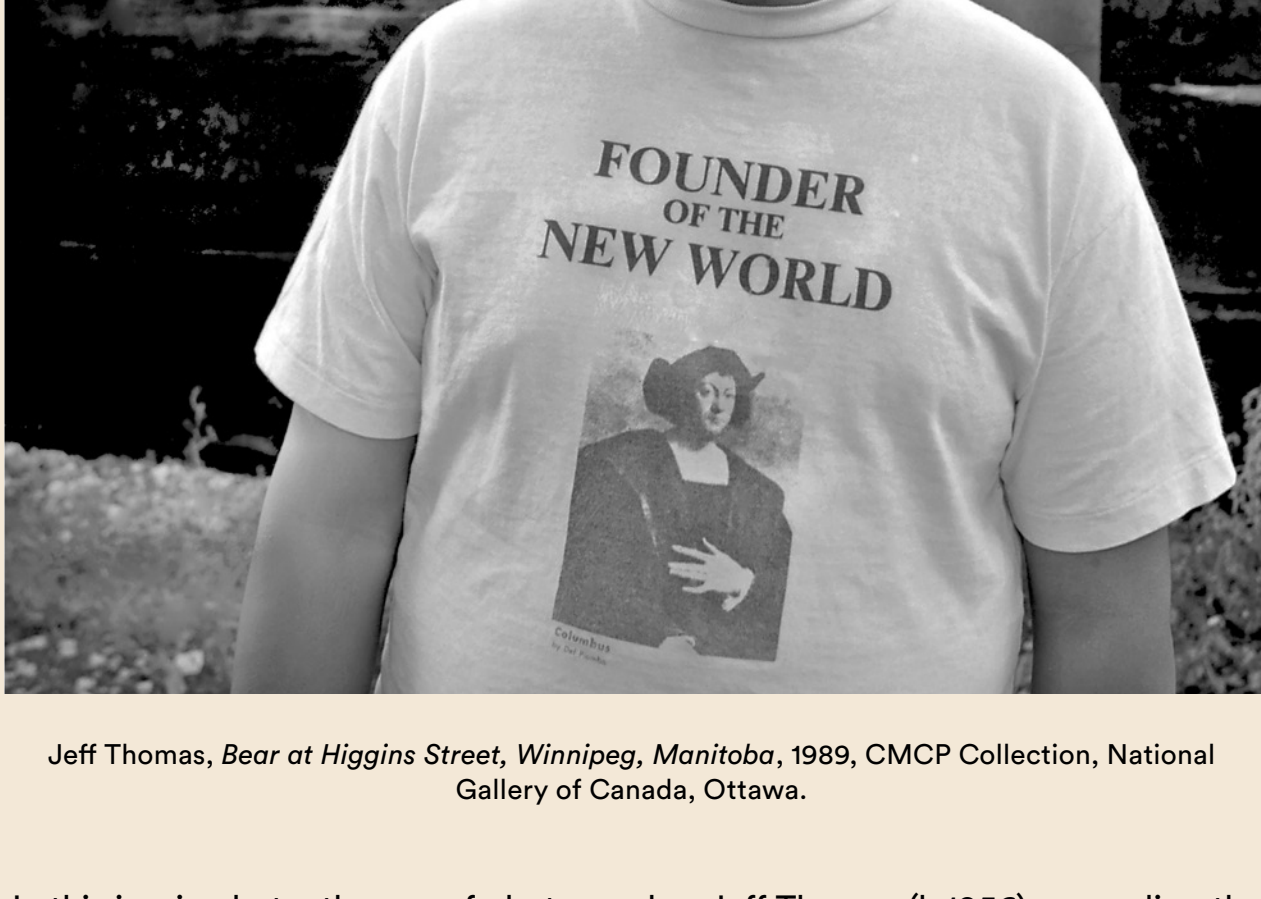
Kiyoshi Shirimoto and his dog, date unknown, Cumberland Museum and Archive.

In this portrait by Japanese-born photographer Senjiro Hayashi (1880–1935), a dapper young man named Kiyoshi Shirimoto poses confidently with his dog nearby. It is a striking example of work by a studio that catered to a mainly Japanese Canadian clientele, who usually sat in Western dress for high-quality portraits that they could then send to family in Japan or have as keepsakes. Arriving in Canada in 1903, Hayashi settled in the mining village of Cumberland on Vancouver Island, where he established the Hayashi Studio. Today its archive offers rare insight into the early Japanese Canadian, Chinese, and Black communities living in Cumberland; the mining industry; and daily life in coastal British Columbia.

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PETER PITSEOLAK



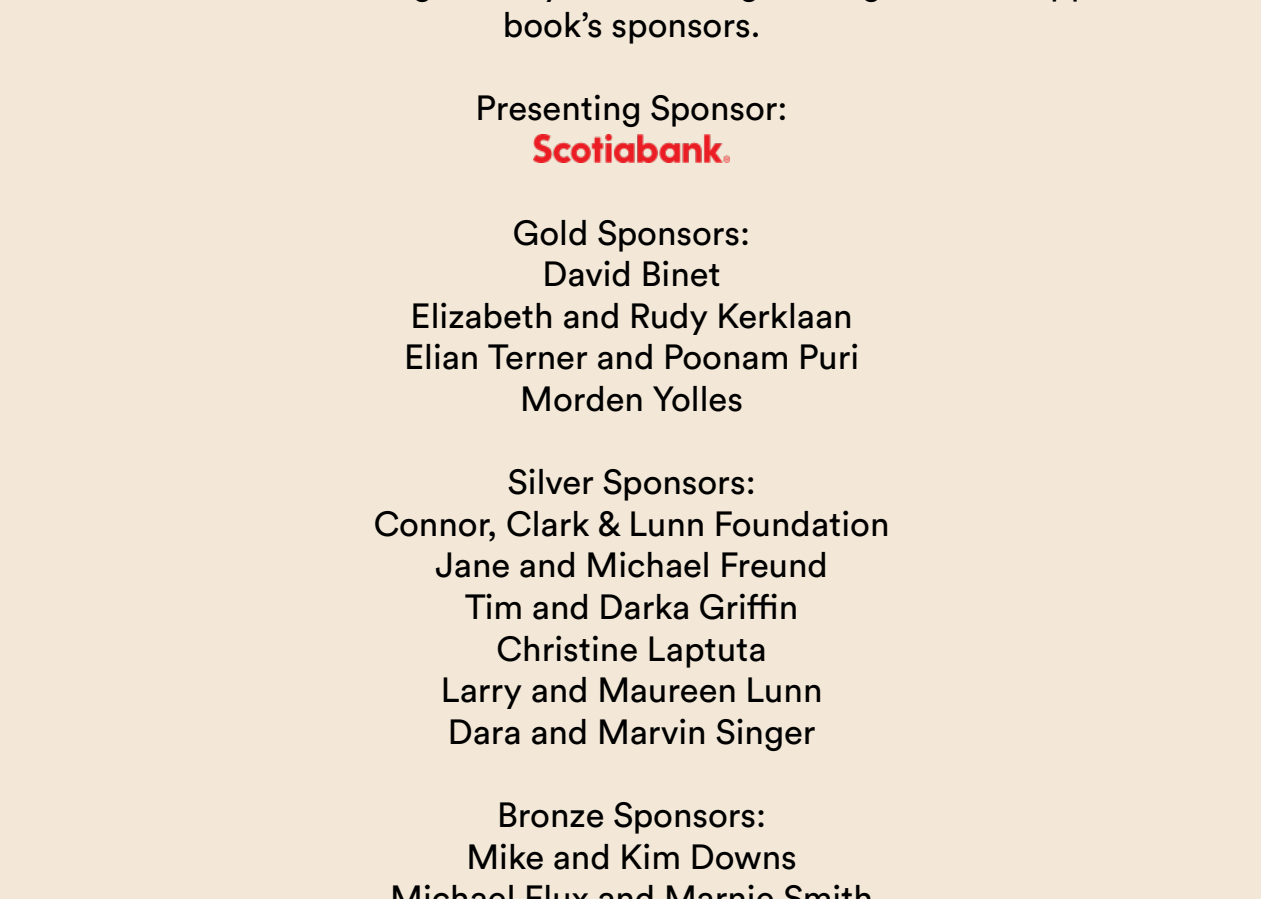
Aggeok Pitseolak wearing a beaded amauti, c.1940–60, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.

Peter Pitseolak, *Distant view of Cape Dorset*, c.1942–43, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.

When Peter Pitseolak (1902–1973) began taking photographs in and around Kingsait (Cape Dorset), Nunavut, in the early 1940s, he wanted to show members of his Inuit community going about their days. This portrait of his wife, Aggeok, in a beaded parka and imported fabrics, is typical of Pitseolak's body of work. By documenting hunting expeditions and life around the Pitseolak's camp, he sought to capture traditional Inuit culture during a period of immense change and government incursion. As the first photographer to showcase life in the Arctic from an Inuit perspective, Pitseolak faced several challenges, including the fact that photographic equipment and materials weren't designed for the Arctic climate. In collaboration with Aggeok, he developed film and prints in huts and igloos, working to moderate fluctuations in temperature, and made adjustments to his cameras to mitigate the glare off the snow.

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CLAIRE BEAUGRAND-CHAMPAGNE

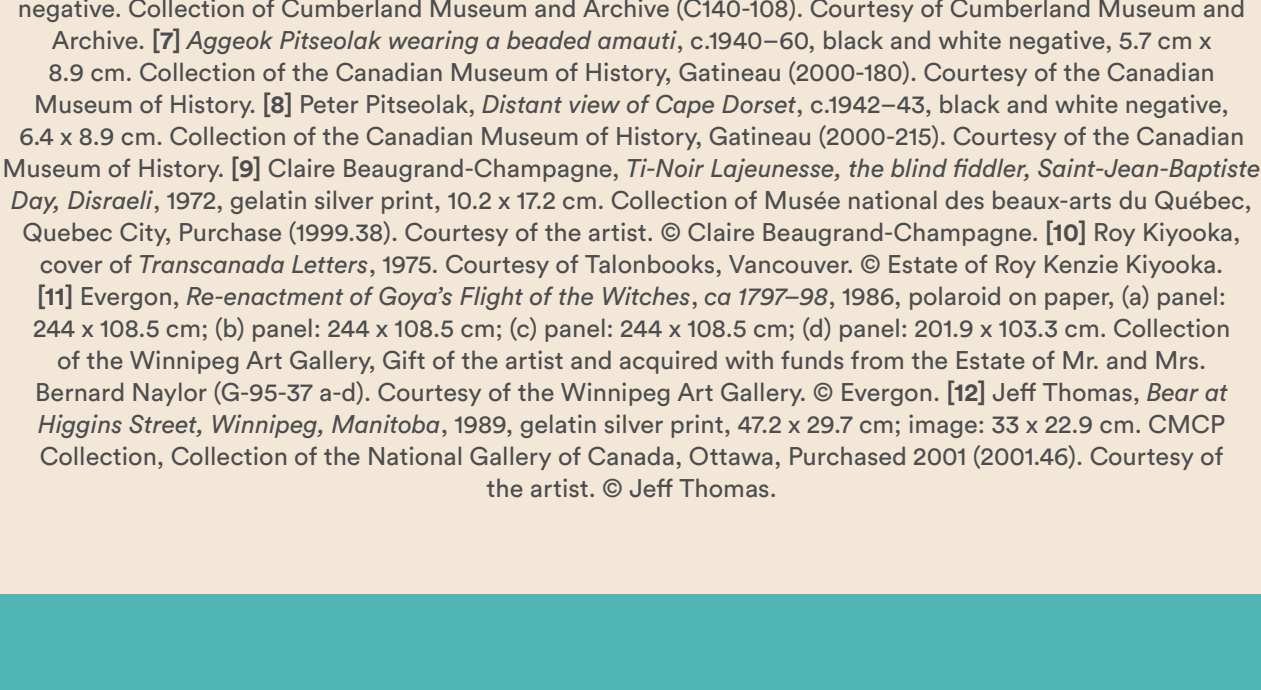


Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, *Ti-Noir Lajeunesse, the blind fiddler, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, Disraeli*, 1972, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City.

This photograph of a blind fiddler in a barnyard by Claire Beaugrand-Champagne (b.1948) is part of a body of work that documents everyday life in rural Quebec. Beaugrand-Champagne moved to Montreal from the suburbs in the late 1960s, where she quickly established herself as a leading figure in the field of documentary photography. Through her empathetic vision, and by developing her projects over time and in dialogue with the people featured in her work, Beaugrand-Champagne has helped raise awareness around pressing social issues such as immigration and poverty. Now recognized as one of Quebec's first female press photographers, she continues to build on a prolific career spanning decades. This work was made in 1972—the same year that she joined Groupe d'action photographique (GAP), a collective of socially engaged documentary photographers that created *Disrèlèl, une expérience humaine en photographie*, 1972–74.

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ROY KIYOOKA



Roy Kiyooka, cover of *Transcanada Letters*, 1975, courtesy of Talonbooks, Vancouver.

Saskatchewan-born artist Roy Kiyooka's (1926–1994) interest in serial images as a vehicle to represent movement is evident in *Transcanada Letters*, 1975. A book project in which Kiyooka used snapshots and family photographs alongside his own letters and texts, it represents his experience of place as a second-generation Japanese Canadian and questions the geographic limits of identity and belonging. Kiyooka began his career as a painter in the late 1940s, studying with members of Painters Eleven and participating in the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan. After moving to Vancouver in 1959, he made a shift toward photography and later filmmaking, music, and poetry. Throughout his career, Kiyooka remained highly influential in the Vancouver scene as an organizer, collaborator, and teacher; he taught first at the Vancouver School of Art (now the Emily Carr University of Art + Design) and then at the University of British Columbia.

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EVERGON

Evergon, *Re-enactment of Goya's Flight of the Witches*, ca 1797–98, 1986, Winnipeg Art Gallery.

For more than 50 years, the Montreal-based artist and Concordia University professor Evergon (b.1946) has explored gay culture, sexuality, and the body through his oeuvre. Born Robert Lunt and since known as Celluloso Evergonni, Eve R. Gonzales, and Egon But, he grew up in Niagara Falls and learned photography while studying at the Rochester Institute of Technology. In the 1970s, Evergon turned to Polaroid for its flexibility and instantaneous prints, and later gained notoriety for his large-scale works re-enacting dramatic historical paintings and incorporating his own likeness, such as *Re-enactment of Goya's Flight of the Witches*, ca 1797–98, 1986. Throughout his career Evergon has experimented with various techniques and technologies to create a queer historical record and visual language.

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JEFF THOMAS



Jeff Thomas, *Bear at Higgins Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba*, 1989, CMCP Collection, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

In this ironic photo, the son of photographer Jeff Thomas (b.1956) gazes directly at the viewer, wearing a T-shirt featuring a picture of Christopher Columbus and the statement, "Founder of the New World." Now based in Ottawa, the Haudenosaunee photographer grew up in Buffalo, New York, and spent time on the Six Nations of the Grand River in southern Ontario. In the 1980s, Thomas, a self-described "urban Inquisitor," began creating collaborative portraits with youth in a variety of city scenes, working to assert contemporary Indigenous agency and life in sites where it was absent. Committed to questioning the legitimacy of settler culture and to the ongoing vitality of Indigenous cultures, Thomas' practice has been internationally recognized for its contributions to the process of decolonization. In 2019 he was a recipient of a Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

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About the Authors of Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History



Sarah Bassnett is a professor of art history at Western University, where she specializes in the history of photography and photo-based contemporary art. Her research focuses on the intersections of photography and social change, especially as it relates to issues of power and resistance. Her current SSHRC-funded project investigates how stories of forced migration are told through photography. Bassnett states, "I've always been fascinated by how photography shapes our relationships to each other and the world. In working on this book with Sarah Parsons, I was interested in bringing to light the way critical issues in the field relate to the Canadian context."



Sarah Parsons is an associate professor of art history at York University in Toronto. She is the author of *William Notman: Life & Work* (Art Canada Institute, 2014). Her current SSHRC-funded research project, *Feeling Exposed: Photography, Privacy, and Visibility in Nineteenth-Century North America* will culminate in a book and a co-curated exhibition at The Image Centre at Toronto Metropolitan University. In 2024, Parsons states, "Photographs have become such an integral part of our public and personal lives. As a result, there are many different possible histories of photography. Sarah Bassnett and I were keen to capture that diversity in this multifaceted history of photography as shaped by Canada and Canadians."

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