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ILLUSIONS THE ART OF MAGIC

Texts by David Ben, Ersy Contogouris, Kevin Grace, Katharina Rein, Christian Vachon and Zeev Gourarier

In 2015 the McCord Museum in Montreal, Canada, was gifted with the Allan Slight Collection, one of the largest treasuries of posters and documents on magic in the world. Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Illusions. The Art of Magic* at the McCord Museum, this volume presents 250 exceptional posters from this collection, dating from the 1880s to the 1940s. During this period, known as the Golden Age of Magic, droves of travelling magicians and prestidigitators fought a veritable advertising war. All over the United States and Europe, city walls and billboards were plastered with posters offering tantalizing previews of their most spectacular tricks, giving poster-designers and printers of the era a golden opportunity to flex their imaginations and load their work with devils and demons, skeletons and skulls, bodies and decapitated heads, playing-cards and rabbits, alluring assistants, phantasmagoria and esoteric symbols.

Seven authors recognized as experts in their respective fields introduce this dazzling array of colour and fantastic imagery, providing insights to explain the full historic, social and artistic value of these magnificent posters.

David Ben is a world-renowned magician and historian of magic. He is the co-founder and current Artistic Director of Magicana, and the publisher of *Magical*, a journal for magic history and collectibles.

Ersy Contogouris is an adjunct professor in the Department of Art History at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Since 2012 she is Managing Editor at RACAR.

Kevin Grace is the Head of the Archives & Rare Books Library at the University of Cincinnati, where he also teaches multicultural courses in the University Honors Program.

Katharina Rein is a researcher and lecturer in cultural history and media studies, currently working at the International Research Institute for Cultural Techniques and Media Philosophy (IKKM) at Bauhaus University Weimar.

Christian Vachon is an art historian specialized in Canadian iconography. He earned a Master's in Art Studies from the Université du Québec à Montréal in 1988. In 2010, he was also appointed Curator, Paintings, Prints and Drawings at the McCord Museum, Montreal.

A general heritage curator, **Zeev Gourarier** is Scientific Director and Head of Collections at the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MuCEM) in Marseille.