

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Undead Archive: 100 Years of Photographing Ghosts

An Exhibition Curated by Dr. Serena Keshavjee

Winnipeg, MB – Step into a world where the ethereal meets the tangible. *The Undead Archive: 100 Years of Photographing Ghosts* exhibition, curated by Dr. Serena Keshavjee, brings together historical photographs, contemporary artworks, and scientific documents to explore the intersection where history intertwines with the supernatural, and where art and science converge.

One hundred years ago, renowned author and Spiritualist Sir Arthur Conan Doyle visited Winnipeg to give a lecture on communicating with ghosts and spirits. In the audience that night were Winnipeg physician Thomas Glendenning Hamilton, and his wife, Lillian Hamilton, a nurse. The Hamiltons went on to conduct hundreds of controlled séance experiments investigating the possibility of personalities surviving corporeal death. These experiments resulted in a series of captivating photographs, which form the core of *The Undead Archive*. *The Undead Archive* and the accompanying anthology, *The Art of Ectoplasm*, contextualize the photographs from an art historical point of view, revealing attitudes to science and religion after World War I and the 1919 pandemic.



Grace A. Williams, *Fingertip Forgeries*, 2013, giclée photo rag mounted on aluminum with battens. Photo courtesy of the artist.

In the 1930s, Dr. Hamilton's photographs were received in some international circles as scientific evidence of life after death. In the early 2000s, they were digitized and circulated online, prompting a second wave of recognition, including by many artists. Featuring séance-related archival manuscripts, alternative scientific documents, and contemporary artworks in a variety of media, *The Undead Archive* highlights how contemporary artists from Winnipeg and around the world have responded to these photographs.

Co-presented by The University of Winnipeg's Gallery 1C03, the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections, and the University of Manitoba's School of Art Gallery, the exhibition features the work of twenty-two artists: KC Adams, Irene Bindi, Aston Coles, Celia Coles + Martin Finkenzeller, Teresa Burrows, Estelle Chaigne, Erika DeFreitas, Lily Despic, Chris Dorosz, Sarah Hodges-Kolisnyk, Evan Johnson, Galen Johnson + Guy Maddin, Jodie Mack, Susan MacWilliam, Megan Moore, Michael Pittman, Paul Robles, Shannon Taggart, Tricia Wasney, Wendt + Dufaux, and Grace A. Williams, with historical photographs and documents from the Hamilton Family Fonds, housed at the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections and the Survival Research Institute of Canada.

The Undead Archive is presented with the generous support of the Manitoba Arts Council. The exhibition draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Exhibition Details:

- **September 7 – November 10, 2023**
Gallery 1C03
1st Floor, Centennial Hall, 515 Portage Avenue, The University of Winnipeg
- **September 21, 2023 to April 21, 2024**
University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections
330 Elizabeth Dafoe Library, 25 Chancellor's Circle, University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus
- **September 21 – November 10, 2023**
School of Art Gallery
255 ARTlab, 180 Dafoe Road, University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus
umanitoba.ca/art/undead-archive

Event Details:

- **Opening Reception and Bus Tour:** Thursday, September 21, 4:00-9:00 pm
- **Tours with Dr. Serena Keshavjee:** September 19, 20, 23
- **Panel Discussion: *Photographing Ghosts* with Estelle Chaigne and Shannon Taggart:** September 20, 12:00-1:30 pm
- **Workshop: *The 3rd Eye* with Estelle Chaigne:** September 20, 2:30-4:30 pm
- **Performance: Estelle Chaigne: *Surfaces sensible*:** September 21, 4:00-8:45 pm
- **Online Lecture: *Magick, Mediumship, and Contemporary Art* by Dr. Grace A. Williams:** September 22, 12:00-1:30 pm
- **Conference: *Study of Psychic Phenomena*:** September 22-23, 7:00 pm - 5:00 pm
- **Performance: Estelle Chaigne: *Nāi*:** September 26, 7:00 pm
- **Panel Discussion: *Unsettling the Spirits* with KC Adams, Erika DeFreitas, Chris Dorosz, and Paul Robles:** October 19, 4:00-5:15 pm
- **Screening: *Ceremonies of Light: The Films of Kenneth Anger*:** October 28, 7:00 pm
- **Book Launch: *The Art of Ectoplasm: Encounters with Winnipeg's Ghost Photographs*:** November 1, 7:00 pm

About the Curator

Serena Keshavjee is a professor of Art and Architectural history at The University of Winnipeg. Keshavjee's research focuses on the intersection of art and science in visual culture. Widely published on these subjects, Keshavjee discovered the "ghost" photographs in the Hamilton Family Fonds in 1997, and in 2019, received a SSHRC grant to contextualize the photographs, resulting in the exhibition *The Undead Archive* and the edited collection *The Art of Ectoplasm* (University of Manitoba Press, 2023).

About the Co-Presenting Institutions

- **Gallery 1C03, The University of Winnipeg:** Gallery 1C03 is the campus art gallery of The University of Winnipeg. The gallery opened in September of 1986 with the mission to engage diverse communities through the development and presentation of contemporary and historical art exhibitions and related programming initiatives. The Gallery is also responsible for the development, preservation, and presentation of the University's art collection.
uwinnipeg.ca/art-gallery
- **University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections:** Since its establishment in 1978, the UM Archives' mission has been to acquire, catalogue and preserve university records and special research collections which further the educational aims of the University of Manitoba, and to promote and provide wide access to them.
umanitoba.ca/libraries/archives-special-collections
- **School of Art Gallery, University of Manitoba:** The School of Art Gallery has been serving the School of Art, the University of Manitoba, and broader communities since it was established in 1965 as *Gallery One One One*. The Gallery exhibits and collects contemporary and historical art addressing a range of practices and perspectives. Exhibitions and collections are complemented by engaging outreach programs and publications.
umanitoba.ca/art/gallery

Acknowledgments

The University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba campuses are located on the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

For more information, including event details, artist biographies, gallery hours, and venue locations, please visit the official exhibition websites or contact us. **Media Contacts:**

- **Gallery 1C03, UoFW:** Jennifer Gibson, Director/Curator, j.gibson@uwinnipeg.ca, 204-786-9253
- **University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections:**
- **School of Art Gallery, UM:** Cailyn Harrison, Communications Coordinator, Cailyn.harrison@umanitoba.ca, 1-431-338-3954

Join us on a journey that blurs the lines between the known and the unseen, science and spirituality, art and history, as we explore *The Undead Archive: 100 Years of Photographing Ghosts*.

Press inquiries, private media tours, and high-resolution images available upon request