

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Oshawa, Ontario – January 12, 2016**

**The Robert McLaughlin Gallery presents *Their Stories: Unidentified Portraits from the Thomas Bouckley Collection***

**Their Stories: Unidentified Portraits from the Thomas Bouckley Collection**

Curated by Sonya Jones

Exhibition Dates: January 27, 2016 - May 01, 2016

Closing: RMG Fridays, April 1, 7-10pm

Special Event: Durham Folklore Storytellers Present *Their Stories*, April 7, 7-9pm

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery is pleased to present *Their Stories: Unidentified Portraits from the Thomas Bouckley Collection*. In this exhibition, the RMG has taken a different approach to historical photography. During the fall of 2015, we asked the community to help tell the stories of ten unidentified portraits in the Thomas Bouckley Collection.

The responses we received were creative and diverse! A man standing in front of a painted backdrop of Niagara Falls, cigarette in hand, becomes a travelling shoemaker who has posted a dating profile on Matchmaker Dolly. A young woman dressed all in black winter clothing is mourning the passing of her love, a hand placed in front of her body hiding the growing baby in her womb. A priest in formal garb contemplates the implications invented technologies have on his congregation. And a handsome young man tries to mask his excitement about the engagement ring burning a hole in his pocket. Submissions included poems, short stories, letters, diary entries, and dating profiles. A jury reviewed the submissions, and the selected entries are featured in this exhibition.

While in the exhibition space, visitors are encouraged to further engage with the portraits by mounting their own imagined stories on a bulletin board. We may never know the identity of these people or discover more about their lives, yet it is possible to bring them to life through our imagination.

*Their Stories: Unidentified Portraits from the Thomas Bouckley Collection* is curated by the RMG's Associate Curator Sonya Jones. Please join us and celebrate the exhibition at RMG Fridays on April 1 from 7-10pm. As well, the RMG will offer a reading of *Their Stories* by the Durham Folklore Storytellers on April 7 from 7-9pm

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**The Robert McLaughlin Gallery**

72 Queen Street, Civic Centre, Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z3

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Directions: 401 to Oshawa, exit Simcoe St, North to Bagot St. Turn left at Bagot St, 2 blocks to Gallery.

Gallery Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm; Thursday: 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm; Sunday: 12 pm - 4:00 pm.

Admission by donation. Parking available. Accessible location.

## **Their Stories: Unidentified Portraits from the Thomas Bouckley Collection Fact Sheet**

Curated by Sonya Jones

### **Exhibition Dates**

Exhibition Dates: January 27, 2016 - May 1, 2016

### **About the Exhibition**

*"In order to take pleasure in these portraits...it does not seem to be necessary to have known the persons they represent."* – Sadakichi Hartmann

Photographic portraits are taken to document and remember one's life, and can, in the process, capture the essence of a person's character. Sadly, the identities of many historic portraits have been lost over time. The lives, personalities, histories and memories once associated with these portraits now a mystery.

When looking at portraits, the subjects gazing back seem to ask the viewer "Who am I?" Usually the first thing a viewer does in a museum or gallery is check the label for the identity of that person. Unidentified portraits are not commonly displayed, but they can stir the imagination. Who are they? What was their life like? The nameless faces looking back ask the viewer to imagine their lives.

We asked the community to help tell the stories of ten unidentified portraits in the Thomas Bouckley Collection. The responses we received were creative and diverse! A man standing in front of a painted backdrop of Niagara Falls, cigarette in hand, becomes a travelling shoemaker who has posted a dating profile on Matchmaker Dolly. A young woman dressed all in black winter clothing is mourning the passing of her love, a hand placed in front of her body hiding the growing baby in her womb. A priest in formal garb contemplates the implications invented technologies have on his congregation. And a handsome young man tries to mask his excitement about the engagement ring burning a hole in his pocket. Submissions included poems, short stories, letters, diary entries, and dating profiles. A jury reviewed the submissions, and the selected entries are featured in this exhibition. Congratulations to the winners!

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### **Creative Writing Winner**

Best Overall: Gwen Tuinman for "Confectionary Courtship"

### **Honourable Mentions:**

Donald Wotton for "It's the Little Things That Really Hurt"

Freda Jepson for "Night Train"

All stories will be available on [our blog!](#)

**Closing Reception**

**RMG Fridays: Hip-HOpera**

**April 1, 2016 from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM**

Learn about the four cornerstones of Hip-hop, then mix it up with a stunning performance by singers from the Oshawa Opera. Durham Folklore Storytellers perform as we close the exhibition *Their Stories: Unidentified Portraits from the Thomas Bouckley Collection*. Make your mark in the studio with us as we experiment with graffiti! Celebrate the opening of the Durham College Fine Arts Graduate Thesis Exhibition in Gallery A and meet ArtLab resident Ruth Read.

**Special Event**

**Durham Folklore Storytellers Presents Their Stories**

**April 7, 2016 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM**

Come and listen to enchanting stories inspired by unidentified portraits in The Thomas Bouckley Collection. Using the submissions to the *Their Stories* exhibition as inspiration, the Durham Folklore Storytellers will take listeners on a journey to imagine the lives of these unidentified people

**About The Thomas Bouckley Collection**

The Thomas Bouckley Collection was donated to the RMG by the late Thomas Bouckley, collector and history enthusiast of Oshawa. The computerized collection comprises over 3,000 historical photographs of Oshawa and Durham Region, spanning over 100 years. The collection is a remarkable resource for understanding and engaging with Oshawa's local history.

**Credit Line**

Organized by The Robert McLaughlin Gallery.

*Please note the credit line must be used on all published materials.*

**For all press inquiries, please contact:**

Sam Mogelonsky – Manager of Marketing and Communications  
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**The Robert McLaughlin Gallery**

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Directions: From Toronto, 401 East to Oshawa, exit Simcoe Street, North to Bagot Street. Turn left at Bagot, 2 blocks to Gallery. Parking available.

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## **Their Stories: Unidentified Portraits from the Thomas Bouckley Collection Contact Sheet**

**\*\*Please note that all images must be accompanied by complete credits\*\***



Unidentified Portrait from the Thomas Bouckley Collection.

Collection of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery.



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**For access to high resolution images, please contact:**  
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