

UNDERSTANDING AND BUILDING OUR WORLD AND OUR STORIES TOGETHER

At the McCord Stewart Museum, we use objects, stories, and shared experiences to help our visitors better understand the world around them, no matter their age or background. With our participatory approach and civic perspective, we prioritize observation, questions, and dialogue in our activities.

COSTUME BALLS

DRESSING UP HISTORY, 1870–1927

PARTICIPATORY GUIDED TOUR AT THE MUSEUM

Duration: 60 minutes

Target audiences: Secondary Cycle 2 – CEGEP – university – adult

Target learning areas: Social studies – personal development – ethics and religious culture – history and civilizations – humanities – art history – sociology – philosophy – literature – art and literature

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

A century and a half ago, extravagant costume balls and skating carnivals were the epitome of high society entertainment. On the guided tour of the [Costume Balls – Dressing up History, 1870–1927](#) exhibition, visitors discover these events and the kaleidoscopic array of characters they featured, most of whom were drawn from history and provided the chance of a lifetime for attendees to reinvent themselves as noble heroes and heroines of the past. Guests put on sumptuous attire and then diligently made their way to the photography studio, as reflected in the myriad of memories from these great occasions preserved in the McCord Stewart Museum's collections. But behind the exuberance, the balls and carnivals fortified fundamental myths about colonial destinies and the future of the Empire.

The exhibition features costumes worn at these events from the McCord Stewart Museum's renowned [Dress, Fashion and Textiles](#) collection that are on display for the very first time.

STRATEGIES

Observation – comparison – discussion – consideration – analysis

SKILL DEVELOPED

Critical thinking