

Imagi/Nations

Native North American photographs from the Royal Anthropological Institute collections

The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (RAI) inaugurates a new series of photographic exhibitions with anthropological theme with *Imagi/Nations*: a show of thirty-five images of Native North Americans from the 19th and 20th c. selected from its collections. The photographs, some of which have never been seen publicly, were chosen to reveal the richness of RAI's archives and draw the attention of specialized researchers, and laymen to little known collections now finally available for consultation, research, and reproduction. The show offers a rare glimpse into the visual history of indigenous North American nations (Canadian First Nations, Native Americans, Inuit) with images that strike the viewer as much for their refined visual impact as for the emotive power of its subjects. The exhibition's title reflects the ambivalent relationship that Native North Americans historically developed with photography and image-making throughout the colonial experience. While retaining their national and cultural sovereignty Native nations have often been captured through images, and simultaneously imagined by the colonial gaze, here represented in the guise of scientific reportage, romantic captivation, or commercial product. Imaginatively assembled on the basis of this rationale by anthropologist Max Carocci, the show brings to light the multifaceted nature of anthropology in which art and science converge in unexpected, surprising, and challenging ways. The exhibition will open with the launch of Max Carocci's book *Warriors of the Plains: the Arts of Plains Indian Warfare* which contains photographs also displayed in the exhibition. The book, published by British Museum Press and McGill Queens University Press follows the touring exhibition with the same title that Max Carocci curated for the British Museum where he also teaches indigenous arts of the Americas for the programme World Arts and Artefacts, which he directs for Birkbeck College's Department of Art History.