



Roger Charbonneau, *Première communion, réception chez les Arnold, série « Les Quartiers populaires de Montréal »*, 1972–74, gelatin silver print, 2/5, 27.94 x 35.56 cm (sheet), 20.32 x 30.48 cm (image), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Roger Charbonneau (b. 1947) is a French-Canadian photographer known for his contribution to the emerging field of documentary photography during the 1960s and 1970s. He captures the lived realities of people in Quebec by photographing people in their homes, within their everyday surroundings, in a manner less concerned with artistry than with capturing an honest

moment in time. This process can be compared to that of an anthropologist documenting the everyday lives of a city's inhabitants. *Première communion, réception chez les Arnold, série « Les Quartiers populaires de Montréal »* (1972–74) presents the viewer with two young girls—a first communicant kneeling down with her hands clasped together in prayer, and another girl, presumably a family member, cupping the first communicant's joined hands with her left hand. The first communicant is wearing an elegant white ceremonial gown with a veil, while the girl beside her is sporting a long sailor dress. Their formal poses contrast with the casualness of the domestic setting; on the left, there is one shoe lying at a distance from its counterpart, and behind the first communicant are two finely dressed adults with their backs turned to the viewer, attending to something beyond the frame of the image. The photographer has documented an important event in a young girl's life. As such, the emphasis is on individual lived experience, with the lens of the camera shifts from the “we” of politically engaged documentary photography to the “I” of family photography.

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