

Concordia University Library, Special Collections

Finding Aid - Corridart collection (P119)

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Concordia University Library, Special Collections

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Corridart collection

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Summary information

Repository: Concordia University Library, Special Collections

Title: Corridart collection

ID: P119

Date: 1976-1981 (date of creation)

Physical description: 45 cm of textual documents
ca 850 photographs
ca 10 artists' sketches
6 architectural drawings
2 videocassettes
2 sound recordings
1 artifact

Language: English

Language: French

**Dates of creation,
revision and deletion:**

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Corridart dans la rue Sherbrooke was a major project of the Arts and Culture program of the international Olympic Games that opened July 17, 1976 in Montreal. Corridart was organized by the artist-architect Melvin Charney and coordinated by André Ménard of the Arts and Culture program of the Comité organisateur des jeux olympiques (COJO). It was funded by a \$386,000 grant from the ministère des Affaires culturelles of Quebec.

Initially proposed by Fernande Saint-Martin as a street art festival, Corridart ultimately adopted the theme of the street's role in the history and society of Montreal. A juried competition for Corridart was open to all Quebec artists; it terminated in December 1975, with a total of 306 submissions. The exhibition consisted of 22 projects. The presentation extended 5.5 miles along Sherbrooke Street between Atwater Avenue and the Olympic site at Pie IX Boulevard. Corridart took the form of a series of individual projects and a continuous assemblage known as Mémoire de la rue which wove together the installations and activities.

Corridart was scheduled to be on display from July 7-31, 1976. Artists began installing their work in June. On July 7, a vernissage to celebrate the opening of Corridart took place at the Université du Québec à Montréal art gallery on Sherbrooke Street. There were difficulties: there were acts of vandalism on some works and there were public protests by artists who were not involved in Corridart in protest against the granting process. Andy Dutkewych's Suspension Two was removed from its site in Lafontaine Park by the City Parks Department on July 7 because it was considered unsafe.

On July 13, Mayor Jean Drapeau and the executive committee of the City of Montreal ordered that the exhibition be dismantled. They alleged that the works contravened city by-laws regarding the occupation of public space, and that some of them represented a danger to public safety. However, newspaper reports quote a spokesman from the mayor's office who apparently stated that the exhibition was removed because it was ugly and obscene. With police protection, municipal employees dismantled most of the works, including the continuous assemblage, during the night of July 13. Several works were dismantled by their creators. The complete dismantling took three days. Several sculptures that had been situated on private property adjacent to Sherbrooke Street were left standing. The majority of the artworks removed by city workers were ruined or severely damaged. The minister of Cultural Affairs of Quebec, Jean-Paul L'Allier, ordered that the exhibition be replaced, but was ignored by city officials.

In the late summer of 1976, legal action was begun by several of the Corridart participants. In November, twelve Corridart artists began a civil suit against the City of Montreal for \$350,000 in damages. Five years later a decision for the City was based more on Corridart's perceived aesthetic defects than on judicial precedent; authorities considered that too many of the works showed unfavourable images of the city, its people, and its growth. Although the artists began an appeal against this decision in 1982, the City of Montreal was able to stall the case. Finally, in 1988 when the appeal was about to be heard, the newly elected mayor Jean Doré offered an out-of-court settlement. The twelve artists involved in the case were collectively awarded \$85,000. Almost 60 percent of the amount was used to cover legal fees, leaving each artist with token payment of about \$3,000.

The following artists, architects, craftspersons, and performers were involved in Corridart dans la rue Sherbrooke: Archigrok (Tom Dubicanac with Ted Cavanagh), Pierre Ayot, Bruno Caroit, Jean-Serge, Champagne, Melvin Charney, Yvon Cozic, Monique Brassard Cozic, Marc Cramer, Gilles Dussureault, Andy Dutkewych, Le Groupe de l'Enfant Fort, Denis Forcier, Serge Gagnon, Laurent Gascon, Trevor Goring, Michael Haslam, Louis L'Abbé, Jean-Claude Marsan, Bob McKenna, Kevin McKenna, Guy Montpetit, Danyelle Morin, Jean Noël, Kina Reusch, Pierre Richard, Lucie Ruelland, Jean-Pierre Séguin, Françoise Sullivan, Claude Thibodeau, Bill Vazan, René Viau

An appendix to this finding aid lists the projects that made up Corridart dans la rue Sherbrooke, with the names of the creator(s) of each work, a brief description of the work, its location, and a list of photographs in the collection in which it is depicted.

In addition to the two stages that were included in the exhibition, other performances were held in connection with Corridart. These included chamber music concerts, poetry recitals (at Théâtre de Verdure du Parc Lafontaine), and shows by clowns and magicians at Parc Lafontaine and Carré St-Louis.

A related exhibition entitled Directions Montréal 1972-1976 was organized at the artist-run gallery Véhicule Art. The artists who created work for this exhibition were: Allan Bealy, Pierre Boogaerts, Charles Gagnon, Betty Goodwin, John Heward, Miljenko Horvat, Christian Knudsen, Suzy Lake, Claude Mongrain, Jacques Palumbo, Leopold Plotek, Roland Poulin, Henry Saxe, Roger Vilder, Hans Van Hoek, and Irene Whittome.

Custodial history

The fonds was transferred from Concordia University's Records Management and Archives Department to Concordia University Libraries' Special Collections March 16, 2016, April 13, 2016, April 20, 2016, May 11, 2016, and May 18, 2016.

Scope and content

The collection consists of materials assembled by the plaintiffs' lawyers and deposited with the Quebec Superior Court in connection with the Corridart case. The collection documents the conception and execution of Corridart, as well as its abrupt dismantling and the legal proceedings that followed. There are materials related to the careers of the artists who participated in the court case, and information about related legal precedents.

The collection includes an inventory by Melvin Charney of the sites along Sherbrooke Street, explaining the conception of Corridart as a rue-musée qu'on visite à pied. There is also a comprehensive set of photographs of Corridart, documenting the common elements (the continuous assemblage), as well as the works exhibited along Sherbrooke Street, the panels of text, and the sites of activities. These photographs trace the entire Corridart route from east to west. There are photographs documenting the dismantling. Others show impounded works and several illustrate damage to works. The collection includes project proposals, planning documents, contracts between artists and COJO, correspondence, articles from legal journals, reports of meetings, blueprints, and sketches. There are also artists' curricula vitae, photographs, brochures, and other documents related to the artists' careers that were assembled to establish their status as professional artists.

The collection is arranged into the following two series:

P119/1 Textual and related documents

P119/2 Photographs of Corridart installations

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the contents of the collection.

Immediate source of acquisition

The documents were acquired in 1996 from the plaintiffs' lawyers, with the consent of the artists involved in the legal proceedings. Up to that point, the documents had been deposited by the Quebec Superior Court in le Centre de Pré-archivage du Palais de Justice.

Arrangement

The documents are arranged as they were received from the Centre de Pré-archivage on the basis of coded file markings on the documents.

Conditions governing use

Reproduction for research or private study is permitted in most cases. Use of material in publications cannot be done without permission of the copyright holder.

Finding aids

In addition to the item-level description, box contents listings are available. An Appendix to this finding aid links the photographs with the artworks depicted therein.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Full
- **Status description:** Final
- **Accompanying material:** Reproductions of select photographs from the Corridart Collection prepared for the exhibition "Corridart Revisited/25 ans plus tard" at the Leonard and Bina Ellen Gallery, Concordia University (2001) are also available for consultation.
- **Alpha-numeric designations:** The items in the collection were coded, apparently by lawyers or court personnel in preparation for the court hearings. The coded file headings include a set of numbers in parentheses; these were created by the Concordia University archivist to indicate the consecutive order of the files in series P119/1.
- **Rights:** Copyright belongs to the creator(s).

Access points

- Multiple media (documentary form)
- Arts and culture (subject)
- Montreal (place)

Series descriptions

Series P119/1: Textual and related documents

Date: 1976-1981 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series includes information about the entire Corridart exhibition, information on pieces that were exhibited as part of the street museum, and information on the careers of the artists who participated in Corridart. Files in this series were prepared by the artists' lawyers in preparation for court hearings.

Physical description: 45 cm of textual documents

ca 225 photographs
ca 10 artists' sketches
3 architectural drawings
2 video cassettes
2 audio cassettes
1 artifact

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

File / item list**Series P119/2: Photographs of Corridart installations**

Date: 1976 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series consists of a set of colour and black and white photographic prints. It provides visual documentation of the entire Corridart exhibition (except for the work Street Spectrum by Trevor Goring) made between the time its installation was complete and before it was dismantled. The series includes photographs of the dismantling by Montreal city workers, and of some of the elements of Corridart in storage in the municipal pound. The identity of the photographer(s) is unknown.

Physical description: 625 photographs

Access points:

- Graphic material (documentary form)

File / item list