

Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

Finding Aid - Lucien Desmarais fonds (P063)

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Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

Vanier Library, VL 121

Concordia University

7141 Sherbrooke Street West

Montreal

Quebec

Canada

H4B 1R6

Telephone: 514-848-2424 x 7774

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Lucien Desmarais fonds

Table of contents

Summary information	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch	3
Scope and content	4
Arrangement	5
Notes	5
Access points	6

Summary information

Repository:	Concordia University Libraries Special Collections
Title:	Lucien Desmarais fonds
ID:	P063
Date:	1911-1988, predominant 1947-1988 (date of creation)
Physical description:	8.75 m of textual records ca. 3400 photographs 430 posters 14 video cassettes 7 technical drawings 4 audio reels 3 video reels ca. 100 textile swatches
Language:	English
Language:	French
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Lucien Desmarais (he sometimes signed his name Des Marais and sometimes DesMarais) was born in St-Césaire, Quebec, September 4, 1925. In 1954 he married Angéline Choquette, with whom he had two children, Marie-Claire and Paul. He died in Montreal November 16, 1988. He obtained a diploma in general studies from Collège St-André in St-Césaire in 1944. From then until 1946 he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts of Montreal. From 1946 to 1948 he took courses at the Université de Montréal, in art history under Maurice Gagnon and then on the history of French-Canadian civilization with J.M. Gauvreau. In 1956 he took specialized courses in weaving and tapestry-making at the École du meuble of Montreal.

He began his career in 1946 as a decorator and as a designer of hand-woven fabric. From 1953 to 1954 he worked for the Centrale d'artisanat du Québec and the Quebec Office for Crafts and Small Industries, where he was in charge of display and craft exhibits. From 1955 to 1956 he was an assistant set designer for six National Film Board of Canada feature films. He also worked in theatre as a properties assistant and as an assistant set decorator. Beginning in 1958, he oriented his production toward the creation of hand-woven fabrics for high-fashion apparel, draperies, carpets, and upholstery. A pioneer and advocate of hand-woven fabrics for Canadian fashion, he collaborated with Montreal couturiers Marielle Fleury, Michel Robichaud, Diane Paré, Irène Chiasson, Jacques de Montjoye, Jean-Raoul Fouré, Denyse Delrue, and Anne-Marie Perron. His work was presented in collections of Canadian fashion in Montreal, Quebec

City, Paris, London, Milan, and Brussels. He participated in numerous craft exhibitions in Quebec and abroad.

From 1951 to 1961 he was secretary and public relations officer for the Association professionnelle des artisans du Québec. In 1972 he founded the Association des artisans de la ceinture fléchée du Québec and, in 1977, he founded the Biennale de la nouvelle tapisserie du Québec (BNTQ). From 1982 to 1983 he was a member of the board of directors of the Fil d'Ariane, a sheltered workshop where handicapped adults could make tapestries. In 1983, he was an advisor for the Grand Prix des métiers d'art (= the Grand Prize for Handicrafts). In 1986 he founded the Centre d'arts textiles anciens et modernes (= the Centre for Ancient and Modern Textile Arts).

In 1960 he received a bursary from the Quebec Office for Crafts and Small Industries. In 1961 he received the first prize for weaving at the crafts exhibition of the artisans du Québec. In 1962 he received the grand prize for weaving at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. In 1967 he received a Canada Council grant. He was the Quebec delegate at the Wurzburg Canadian Festival in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1965, and in 1968 he represented the Canadian Guild of Crafts at the world congress of the World Crafts Council in Lima, Peru. In 1978 he was a Canadian delegate to the World Crafts Council congress in Kyoto, Japan. In 1981 and 1983 he was a BNTQ delegate at the International Biennial of Lausanne. In 1984 he was made a member of the Order of Canada.

He gave numerous speeches, and taught weaving and tapestry-making at the Canadian Guild of Crafts in Montreal, at the CÉGEP St-Laurent, at Algonquin College, Ottawa, at the Pointe-Claire Arts Centre, and at his studio. He was an occasional invited teacher for the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Prince Edward Island Crafts Council, the University of New Brunswick, and other institutions in Quebec. He authored articles for a number of magazines, and his book *Le tissage debasse-lisse* was published by les Éditions Formart in 1972.

Custodial history

The fonds was donated to the Concordia University Archives in 1990 by Angéline Choquette, widow of Lucien Desmarais. The fonds was transferred from Concordia University's Records Management and Archives Department to Concordia University Libraries' Special Collections March 16-17, 2016, April 7, 2016, April 12-14, 2016, April 19-20, 2016, April 26, 2016, May 10-11, 2016, May 17-18, 2016, and June 8, 2016.

Scope and content

The fonds documents the arts and crafts in Montreal and elsewhere between the late 1940s and the 1980s. The fonds covers the evolution of Lucien Desmarais' career from its beginnings at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts until his death in 1988, including his activities in theatre and his travels. The fonds also reveals his diverse interests in theatre, entertainment, and general culture. The fonds is based on the professional activities of Lucien Desmarais, tisserand concepteur (weaver-designer) and gives information on his creations for high fashion and interior decoration and the annual exhibitions in which he participated. The fonds also gives information on his involvement in numerous associations and cultural organizations as founder, director, and jury member. The fonds gives information on his teaching activities and the courses he gave at various colleges, as well as his speeches.

The fonds includes correspondence, textile samples, course notes, theatre programs, posters, invitations to openings and exhibits, photographs, clippings, drawings, albums, and a scrapbook of clippings of fashion

photographs with swatches of the fabrics used in the garments shown. It includes a major collection of documents on the history of textiles and the artists and craftspersons who made them.

The fonds is organized into the following series:

P063/A Biography

P063/B Education

P063/C Administration

P063/D Financial records

P063/E Theatrical properties man

P063/F Weaver-designer

P063/G Consultant

P063/H Teaching and speeches

P063/I External relations

P063/J Travels

P063/K Awards and honours

P063/L Writings and publications

P063/M Research documents

P063/N Shows

P063/O Graphic materials

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the content of the fonds.

Immediate source of acquisition

The fonds was donated to the Concordia University Archives in 1990 by Angéline Choquette, widow of Lucien Desmarais.

Arrangement

The series and sub-series were organized by the archivist, respecting their original order. Most of the titles of series and sub-series were designated by the creator.

Finding aids

Box listings available.

Accruals

Further accruals not expected.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Full

- **Status description:** Final
 - **Conservation:** The pages of the scrapbook and the related fabric samples have been placed in protective Mylar enclosures.
 - **Rights:** Copyright belongs to the creator(s).
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Access points

- Multiple media (documentary form)
 - Arts and culture (subject)
 - Textile art (visual works) (subject)
-

Series descriptions
