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Finding Aid - Véhicule Art (Montréal) Inc. fonds (P027)

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Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

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Véhicule Art (Montréal) Inc. fonds

Table of contents

Summary information	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch	3
Scope and content	5
Notes	6
Access points	6
Series descriptions	6
P027/01, Organization, 1972-1981, [197-]-[198-]	6
P027/02, Personnel, 1973-[1980]	7
P027/03, Finances, 1972-1981, [197-]-[198-]	7
P027/04, Programming, 1972-1983, [197-]-[198-]	8
P027/05, Artists, exhibitions and performances, 1970-1982, [197-]-[198-]	8
P027/06, Associations, 1974-1982	9
P027/07, Correspondence, 1971-1982, [197-]-[198-]	10
P027/08, Photographs, 1973-1977, [197-]-[198-]	10
P027/09, Sound recordings, 1973-1979, [197-]-[198-]	10
P027/10, Posters, 1972-1977, [197-]-[198-]	11

Summary information

Repository: Concordia University Libraries Special Collections
Title: Véhicule Art (Montréal) Inc. fonds
ID: P027
Date: 1970-1983, predominant 1973-1976, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Physical description: 4.96 m of textual records
 1,826 photographs : b&w and col., various formats ; 39.7 x 28.2 cm or smaller
 168 posters ; 88.8 x 58.5 cm or smaller
 72 postcards
 15 audio reels ; 18 cm
 6 collages
 5 drawings
 4 audio cassettes
 2 audio discs : 45 rpm
 1 architectural drawing
 1 map
 1 microfilm frame

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

Note [generalNote]:

The administrative history of Véhicule Art Inc. was written in by Sandra Paikowsky, then Curator of the Concordia Art Gallery (now the Leonard and Ellen Bina Gallery). It appeared in 1991 in the newsletter of the Concordia Art Gallery on the occasion of an exhibition on Véhicule Art Inc. that included materials from this fonds: Paikowsky, Sandra. Véhicule Art: A Brief History. Artefact: Concordia Art Gallery Bulletin 1, no. 3 (1991): n.p..
 More information on Véhicule Art Inc. and its art historical context can be found in: Nemiroff, Diana P.C.. A History of Artist-Run Spaces in Canada with Particular Reference to Véhicule, A Space and the Western Front. Master's thesis, Concordia University, 1985.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Véhicule Art Inc. was legally founded in March 1972 and the gallery opened at 61 Ste.Catherine St. West in the central core of Montréal on October 13, 1972. The first alternate space in the city, it was the creation of thirteen founding members who wanted a "non-profit, non-political centre directed by and for

artists." The gallery was intended "to provide a space for the community in which to encounter art and art ideas through as many forms as these processes involve." This would hopefully, "rejuvenate public interest in the visual arts in Montréal, stimulating public consciousness and developing its interest." Véhicule was conceived as both an exhibition space for visual artists and a locale for performance, video, film, dance, music, and poetry readings. As well, the founders stressed its essential role as an education and information centre with discussion groups, guest lectures, resource and documentation libraries as well as a liaison programme with public schools and universities within the city. Such aims were intended "to fill a gap in the community."

With some financial support from federal granting agencies, Véhicule embarked on its highly ambitious gallery programming and public information activities. The establishment of a press in 1973, at the back of the gallery, led to the production of artists' books, exhibition catalogues, newsletters, posters and poetry publications. Such Véhicule Press works reflected the multi-disciplinary atmosphere of Véhicule as various members of the group collaborated on specific projects. In addition, a slide bank and video collection were begun, adding to its informational resources.

In the early years, Véhicule's primary preoccupation was to bring to public attention the work of experimental local artists and in particular, their involvement with international trends. The opening exhibition of thirty-two works by twenty Montréal artists, chosen by nine Véhicule members, exemplified not only the concern for the new in the city but the spirit of a collectivity through the jury system. Although only four women artists participated in this show, two months later an exhibition of artwork by thirty-five young Montréal women was presented.

While Véhicule stated it espoused no single ideology, its orientation toward experimental aesthetic attitudes explains its strong support of anti-object art, with its particular emphasis on installation, performance and multi-media projects. During 1972 and 1973, about sixty events and exhibitions were presented, with three hundred participants, almost all from Montréal. A year later, approximately one half of the artists and performers were from outside of the local community. This shift reflected Véhicule's growing concern for becoming a vital part of a larger art milieu. The number of exhibitions and events remained quite constant through the 1970's, reaffirming the energy and ambition of its programming. By 1975, Véhicule had gained official recognition by the inclusion of its members in two exhibitions organized by Montréal's Musée d'art contemporain. Public galleries outside Montréal also showed the works of Véhicule artists. Véhicule Press had expanded to form a cooperative printing company. The membership more than doubled and the gallery became involved in important exchanges with other alternative art centres in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Its programme of school visits, exhibitions of art students' work from local art schools and universities, as well as public events like the Kite Show (1973) and projects for the 1976 Olympics suggest Véhicule's determination to become an integral part of Montréal's cultural community.

As the membership expanded and the various disciplines represented at Véhicule became more consolidated, individual directions emerged. Véhicule Press developed a more extensive and ambitious publishing programme and became autonomous in 1977 when it moved to Chinatown. Dance and poetry readings increasingly became an essential part of Véhicule's activities. Gallery events and exhibitions were consistently reviewed in local newspapers and its public profile flourished. Video Véhicule, begun in 1976, established the gallery's importance as one of Canada's most active centres for the medium. During the late years of the 1970's video events dominated the gallery's programming and the large proportion of international artists at Véhicule attested to its solid reputation.

Despite these accomplishments, internal conflicts arose concerning the direction of Véhicule's programming and its administration. There was also increased polarization between the various disciplines involved with Véhicule. The original premise of a cohesive artists' collective had dramatically

changed. In the summer of 1979, Véhicule moved to a larger space at 307 Ste. Catherine St. West and renamed Le Musée d'art vivant Véhicule.

During the final years, administrative and programming problems continued to plague the group. Memberships fell dramatically but became more restrictive. The separation of Video Véhicule (renamed Prime Video) from the umbrella organization was an example of the fallout from internal discord and conflicting ideologies within the cooperative. The art community which had supported Véhicule for almost a decade now believed that the alternate centre was neither responding to nor reflecting the needs of Montréal artists. That there were three generations of Véhicule artists in one decade demonstrates the shifts in the gallery's orientation and focus. As had happened often in the history of Montréal's art community, a coalition such as Véhicule eventually outlived its original mandate and purpose. As well, the city itself had become more responsive to new tendencies in art. Despite various stop-gap measures to renew interest in Véhicule, the last events took place in June 1982 and it was quietly disbanded in 1983. An era in Montréal's cultural history was over.

Custodial history

The Véhicule Art (Montréal) Inc. fonds was donated to Concordia University in 1983. The fonds was transferred from Concordia University's Records Management and Archives Department to Concordia University Libraries' Special Collections February 18, 2016, March 16, 2016, March 24, 2016, April 13-14, 2016, April 20, 2016, April 26, 2016, May 10-11, 2016, and May 17-18, 2016.

Scope and content

The fonds consists of ten series, many of them subdivided into sub-series. The documents cover the period 1972 to 1982, however, the great majority of the documents were created between 1973 and 1976.

This finding aid deals with the administrative, financial files of this organization as well as the artist and exhibition files, the publicity material (posters, art catalogues), and photographs.

There is little documentation for the activities of the Véhicule Art Inc. gallery from 1976 to 1982. During this time the gallery experienced both administrative and financial difficulties. Frequent changes of staff and insufficient funding contributed to the weakening of the gallery and its activities.

The original order of the documents quite faithfully reflected the internal organization of the gallery.

Thus, the documents dating from 1972 to 1975, were relatively well organized and required no further arrangement; on the other hand, those covering the 1976-1982 period needed complete reorganization.

The fonds is organized into the following series:

P027/01 Organization

P027/02 Personnel

P027/03 Finances

P027/04 Programming

P027/05 Artists, exhibitions and performances

P027/06 Associations

P027/07 Correspondence

P027/08 Photographs

P027/09 Sound recordings

P027/10 Posters

Notes

Title notes

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

Restrictions on access

Some restrictions.

Finding aids

Inventaire disponible.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
 - **Level of detail:** Full
 - **Status description:** Final
 - **Rights:** Copyright belongs to the creator(s).
-

Access points

- Multiple media (documentary form)
 - Arts and culture (subject)
 - Art galleries (institutions) (subject)
-

Series descriptions

Series P027/01: Organization

Date: 1972-1981, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on the organization, administration and financing of Véhicule Art Inc. The series contains various kinds of records, including letters patent and registration, grant applications, employment and payroll records, tax forms, minutes, agendas, activity reports and schedules, legal domicile plans and permits.

The series is divided into the following sub-series:

P027/01a Status and bylaws

P027/01b Local Initiatives Program records

P027/01c Minutes

P027/01d Activity reports
P027/01e Building

Physical description: 0.232 m of textual records.

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File / item list

Series P027/02: Personnel

Date: 1973-[1980] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on Véhicule Art Inc.'s Board of Directors and its personnel. The series contains lists of members and directors, correspondence relating to the resignation of members, payroll books, and tax forms. The series is organized into the following sub-series:
P027/02a Members and directors
P027/02b Resignation of members
P027/02c Payroll
P027/02d Taxation

Physical description: 0.037 m of textual records.

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Restrictions on access:

This series is not available for consultation.

File / item list

Series P027/03: Finances

Date: 1972-1981, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on the financial administration and budget of Véhicule Art Inc. The series consists of grant applications and related records, financial statements, statements of revenue and expenditures, account books, cheques, cheque stubs, bank books, petty cash books and envelopes, invoices, and receipts. The series is divided into the following sub-series:
P027/03a Canada Council grants
P027/03b Financial statements

P027/03c Accounting

Physical description: 2.441 m of textual records

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File / item list

Series P027/04: Programming

Date: 1972-1983, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on the nature, selection, administration and promotion of activities that took place at Véhicule Art Inc., including exhibitions, poetry readings, video screenings, and educational programs.

The series contains jury selection criteria; exhibition requests that were rejected or unanswered, or accepted but never held; mailing lists of teachers, artists, galleries and spaces; publicity materials, including calendars of events; external contact information; a guest book; posters; general information on Poetry Véhicule, Video Véhicule, and Prime Video; educational program material; and liquor and meeting permits.

The series is organized into the following sub-series:

P027/04a Jury selection

P027/04b Exhibition requests

P027/04c Mailing lists

P027/04d Publicity

P027/04e Educational program

P027/04f Permits

Physical description: 0.448 m of textual records

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File / item list

Series P027/05: Artists, exhibitions and performances

Date: 1970-1982, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on the artists and groups of artists who exhibited or performed at Véhicule.

The artist files consist principally of correspondence, press releases, press clippings, résumés, and photographs. The exhibition and performance files consist principally of press clippings, press releases, exhibition requests, and photographs.

The series is organized into the following sub-series:

P027/05a Artists

P027/05b Exhibitions and performances

Physical description: 1.702 m of textual records

1,024 photographs : positives, negatives, contact sheets ; 39.7 x 28.2 cm or smaller

150 posters : various processes, large and small formats ; 88.8 x 58.5 cm or smaller

72 postcards

6 collages : various media

5 drawings

1 architectural drawing

1 audio cassette

1 map

1 frame of microfilm

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

Arrangement:

The Véhicule Art Inc. fonds contains many photographic materials and large posters which cannot be traced to this series using the notes placed in the textual records folders in 1989. These unaccounted-for materials may have originated in other series, may have been found in and removed from this series earlier than 1989, may have been acquired by the Concordia University Archives as later accruals, or may have always constituted a separate series, one that did not also contain textual records.

Those unaccounted-for photographic materials which do not seem to relate to existing files in this series are described as sub-series P027.8a Photographs. All the photographic materials in this series can be retrieved from Appendix A or Appendix B. Large posters which cannot be traced to this series are described as series P027.10 Posters.

File / item list

Series P027/06: Associations

Date: 1974-1982 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on arts associations that were of interest to Véhicule Art Inc. The series contains publications, press releases, and licences related to Canadian Artist's Representative / Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) and the Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada / l'Association des compositeurs et des éditeurs du Canada (CAPAC).

Physical description: 0.016 m of textual records (2 folders)

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File / item list**Series P027/07: Correspondence**

Date: 1971-1982, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on individuals and organizations, including other galleries and artist-run spaces, that Véhicule Art Inc. communicated with and on the subjects of this communication. The series contains incoming correspondence and drafts and copies of outgoing correspondence.

The series is organized into the following sub-series:

P027/07a General correspondence

P027/07b Correspondence with other galleries

Physical description: 0.092 m of textual records

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File / item list**Series P027/08: Photographs**

Date: 1973-1977, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on exhibitions and performances, and individuals, groups, media, and installations.

The series contains positives, contact sheets, and slides.

The series is organized into the following sub-series:

P027/08a Photographs

P027/08b Slides

Physical description: 806 photographs : b&w and col., slides, positives, contact sheets

Access points:

- Graphic material (documentary form)

File / item list**Series P027/09: Sound recordings**

Date: 1973-1979, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on performances held at Véhicule Art Inc.

The series contains audio reels, audiocassettes, and audio discs.

Physical description: 15 audio reels ; 18 cm

3 audio cassettes
2 audio discs : 45 rpm

Access points:

- Sound recording (documentary form)

Arrangement:

Item P027.9.SR17 is listed in series P027.5 Artists, exhibitions and performances, as it was removed from one of the folders in that series, for conservation reasons, during arrangement and description in 1989.

File / item list

Series P027/10: Posters

Date: 1972-1977, [197-]-[198-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series provides information on Véhicule Art's promotion of the exhibitions and performances held in its space.

The series contains posters.

Physical description: 18 prints : various processes ; 88.8 x 58.5 cm or smaller

Access points:

- Graphic material (documentary form)

Arrangement:

These posters are not cited in notes placed in 1989 in the folders of the textual records of the series Artists, exhibitions and performances series to document the removal of large posters for conservation reasons. They may, however, have been found in the series Artists, exhibitions and performances earlier than 1989, or they may have originated in other series, they may have been later accruals to this fonds, or they may have always constituted a separate series, one without textual records.

These posters are housed in the same box as the large posters in the series Artists, exhibitions and performances. A complete listing of the posters in the series and of the large posters in the series Artists, exhibitions and performances can be found in Appendix E: Posters, as an aid in retrieval.

File / item list