

CORRIDART

CHRONOLOGY

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Fall 1974

The Arts and Culture programme of COJO (Comité organisateur des Jeux olympiques) is established by the Government of Québec to formulate activities to accompany the Montréal summer Olympic Games in 1976.

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Winter 1975

At the request of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and COJO, Fernande Saint-Martin, the Director of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, in collaboration with art critic Normand Thériault initiate the concept for an outdoor "corridor of art" along a Montréal street.

Fall 1975

At Saint-Martin's invitation, Melvin Charney, artist, architect, and professor in the Faculté d'aménagement of the Université de Montréal, becomes the planner and designer of *CORRIDART*. The event is to be presented from July 7 to 31, 1976.

Charney produces the report *La rue Sherbrooke: CORRIDART. Inventaire des lieux*. "Art work installed in three west-to-east zones along Sherbrooke St. from Atwater Avenue to the Olympic Stadium will create a linear museum." Sherbrooke Street is the chosen site for the "corridor of art" because of its symbolic place in Montréal history and its traditional role as a processional route. Charney also requests that performing arts events be part of *CORRIDART*.

The brochure, *Concours Corridart/l'art dans la ville*, inviting submissions to the event is distributed to museums, galleries, art associations, regional cultural affairs offices in Québec. Proposals for artworks created specifically for installation along Sherbrooke St. are requested from Québec artists or those living in Québec for a minimum of two years; and projects are to be submitted by mid-December.

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January 1976

The jury, comprised of Laurent Lamy, head of the COJO Visual and Plastic Arts sector, his assistant Paulette Gagnon, Melvin Charney, Fernande Saint-Martin and the sculptor Roland Poulin, meets in early January.

In the final jury meeting in mid-January, proposals by Kina Reusch, Trevor Goring, Jean Noël and Andy Dutkewych are accepted outright. Submissions from Archigrok (Tom Dubicanac), Yvon Cozic and Monic Brassard Cozic, Marc Cramer, Michael Haslam, Kevin and Bob McKenna, Claude Thibaudeau, Danyelle Morin, Laurent Gascon, Bill Vazan, Jean-Pierre Séguin and Françoise Sullivan and the team of René Viau, Serge Gagnon, Bruno Caroit and Louis L'Abbé are left for further consideration but will soon be accepted. Artists will be provided with funds to cover the costs of materials and are assigned installation sites along Sherbrooke Street.

March 1976

Because of the low number of accepted projects, additional works are commissioned from Pierre Ayot, Jean-Claude Marsan, Véhicule Art Gallery and Galerie Média.

May 1976

The Executive Committee of the City of Montreal officially authorizes the presentation of *CORRIDART: dans la rue Sherbrooke*.

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June 1976

The projects *Memoire de la rue*, conceived by Charney and produced by Jean-Claude Marsan and Charney's *Les maisons de la rue Sherbrooke* are added to *CORRIDART*.

Artists begin to install their work along Sherbrooke Street. The installation takes anywhere from a day to several weeks, depending on the project.

July 7, 1976

The vernissage to celebrate the opening of *CORRIDART: dans la rue Sherbrooke* is held at the Université du Québec à Montréal when many of the *CORRIDART* artists meet for the first time.

That same day *Suspension Two* by Andy Dutkewych, installed at Parc Lafontaine, becomes the first *CORRIDART* work to be removed by Montréal's City Parks Department.

July 13, 1976

Mayor Jean Drapeau and the City of Montreal Executive Committee order the demolition of *CORRIDART: dans la rue Sherbrooke*. The removal begins at approximately 10:00 p.m. at both ends of Sherbrooke Street. Trucks, bulldozers and cherry-pickers and seventy-five municipal workers, accompanied by police cruisers participate in the dismantling which takes three days. The majority of *CORRIDART* artworks are ruined or severely damaged.

July 14, 1976

In a press release, the Executive Committee states that *CORRIDART* was dismantled because "Such structures contravened municipal bylaws governing the occupancy of the public domain and moreover, in a number of instances, constituted a safety hazard." A spokesperson from the Mayor's Office remarks that the exhibition had been removed because it was "ugly and obscene."

Québec's Minister of Cultural Affairs sends a telegram to Drapeau ordering the re-installation of *CORRIDART* but this is ignored. Neither COJO nor the Québec government applied further strong pressure against the City.

July 17, 1976

The games of the XXI Olympiad open in Montréal.

August 9, 1976

The *CORRIDART* Artists Committee files a court order to retrieve their work. Financial aid and legal advice is furnished by the Minister of Cultural Affairs, but the order fails due to the lawyer's negligence.

August 27, 1976

The artists are given permission to inspect their damaged works at the city pound. The Canadian army recovers the scaffolding and materials belonging to COJO.

November 1976

Twelve *CORRIDART* artists — Kina Reusch, Kevin McKenna, Françoise Sullivan, Laurent Gascon, Bill Vazan and Jean-Pierre Séguin, Pierre Ayot, Claude Thibaudeau, Michael Haslam, Marc Cramer and Guy Montpetit — file a suit against the City of Montreal in Superior Court for damages incurred to their works, lost profits and tainted reputations.

The exhibition *L'Affaire Corridart* is organized and presented at the artist-run Véhicule Art Gallery and includes photographs, films and other documentary materials.

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October 1980

The court proceedings begin under Judge Ignace Deslauriers. The *CORRIDART* artists and Melvin Charney along with several members of the Montréal art community present their testimony.

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January 1981

The City of Montreal presents their witnesses including board members of various Montréal cultural institutions, private citizens, the police, civic officials and Mayor Jean Drapeau.

May 20, 1981

The Superior Court rejects the \$350,000 suit filed by the artists.

June 1981

The artists appeal the decision but increasing legal costs and motions against the artists by the City of Montreal stall the process.

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April 1982

Editions GRAFF helps the artists finance their appeal by producing an album of serigraph prints. *CORRIDART 1976* includes works by the twelve *CORRIDART* artists and eight texts by Montréal art historians and critics.

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September 1988

After twelve years of legal battles, a collective \$85,000 settlement is made out-of-court by the City of Montreal and its new mayor, Jean Doré. After payment of legal fees, each artist receives approximately \$3,000.

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February 1996

CORRIDART court evidence in storage at the Centre de Pre-Archivage at the Palais de Justice is saved from destruction by the Concordia University Archives. The documents are deposited with the Archives.

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July-August 2001

To mark the 25th anniversary of *CORRIDART: dans la rue Sherbrooke*, the exhibition *CORRIDART Revisited / CORRIDART 25 ans plus tard* is presented by the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery of Concordia University.