

PRESS RELEASE

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THE McCORD MUSEUM PRESENTS *THE ART WORLD IN MONTREAL, 1960-1980*, AN EXHIBITION BY RENOWNED PHOTOGRAPHER GABOR SZILASI

Montreal, December 5, 2017 – From December 7, 2017, to April 29, 2018, the McCord Museum presents *Gabor Szilasi – The Art World in Montreal, 1960-1980*, an exhibition of 43 black and white photographs from the artist's personal collection, 40 of which have never been published and were printed especially for the occasion.

Taken at exhibition openings and other artistic events held in Montreal between 1960 and 1980, the selected photographs are presented in chronological order and immortalize the faces, places and vitality of Montreal's art scene at a time of social and cultural upheaval. Shot in a spontaneous documentary style, they capture the art scene of the 1960s and 1970s, a period of unprecedented growth and diversification when art was coming into its own in Quebec. Szilasi's images show the restrained elegance of the early 1960s, which slowly gave way to an atmosphere of unbridled enthusiasm by the end of the decade, before settling into a mood of relaxed irreverence in the 1970s.

The exhibition offers a contemporary reinterpretation of a substantial photographic archive consisting of over 100 rolls of film, or approximately 3,600 negatives. Equipped with a 35-mm camera, the photographer shot, printed and archived the images using a method that had its heyday in the latter half of the 20th century and is now largely obsolete. Contact sheets are an integral part of this mode of photography, so they are included in the exhibition with items like Szilasi's camera, negatives and notebook. Along with providing insight into the photographer's creative process, these elements represent the material nature of the archive.

Although Gabor Szilasi is one of Quebec's best-known living photographers, this significant aspect of his work has never been exhibited before.

"As part of our mandate to feature the best in documentary photography from here and abroad, the Museum is honoured to present, for the second time since 2010, the work of Gabor Szilasi," notes Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum. "A major figure in Quebec photography, Szilasi has influenced an entire generation and created an exceptional record of a period in the cultural history of Montreal."

Numerous activities like lectures, meetings and film screenings are being organized in concert with the exhibition. The Museum is also marking the occasion with a new annual membership category aimed specifically at photographers, both amateur and professional. A description and schedule of the programming is attached to this press release. It is also possible to consult the Museum's Website (mccord-museum.qc.ca), the calendar of activities and the membership inscription page.

Photographer Gabor Szilasi

Photographer Gabor Szilasi was born in Hungary in 1928 and immigrated to Canada in 1957. Soon after settling in Montreal, Szilasi began to photograph the many art openings that he and his lifelong companion, artist Doreen Lindsay, regularly attended. Over the next few decades he produced an extensive photographic record of the individuals that made up Montreal's visual arts community, a number of whom would shape the history of art in Canada. Presented here for the first time as a body of work, these images exemplify Szilasi's longstanding fascination with people—and, in particular, artists. Photographing openings may at first have helped him integrate into the local art scene, but it evolved into a way of acknowledging the affective relationships that bound him to his adopted city.



Armand Vaillancourt, John Max and François Dallegret (*hands only*) at the opening of the pharmacy-boutique *Le Drug*, Montreal, May 1965
Gelatin silver print (2017)



Opening of the *Claude Tousignant* exhibition at the *Galerie Sherbrooke*, Montreal, May 1969
Gelatin silver print (2017)



Irene F. Whittome and Guido Molinari at the opening of the *Irene F. Whittome* exhibition at the *Galerie Martal*, Montreal, October 1973
Gelatin silver print (2017)



Rita Letendre explaining a work at the opening of her exhibition at the *Galerie Gilles Corbeil*, Montreal, November 1980
Gelatin silver print (2017)

About the McCord Museum

The McCord Museum is dedicated to the preservation, study and appreciation of Montreal's history, as well as its people, artists and communities living in the city's past and present. The McCord Museum is home to one of the largest historical collections in North America, consisting of First Peoples objects, costume and textiles, photographs, decorative and visual art, and textual archives, totalling more than 1,451,000 artefacts. The McCord Museum produces exciting exhibitions that engage visitors from Montreal, Canada, and beyond by offering them a contemporary look at the world. The McCord Museum also offers educational and cultural activities, as well as innovative projects on the Internet. **McCord Museum: Our People, Our Stories.**

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Interviews possible with Suzanne Sauvage, President and Chief Executive Officer of the McCord Museum, Zoë Tousignant, Curator of the exhibition, and Gabor Szilasi, Photographer.

Photographs available at <http://ow.ly/btaD30gXfpM>

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Royal Photo is a partner of the exhibition *Gabor Szilasi – The Art World in Montreal, 1960-1980*.

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