



Montréal, July 28th 2017

ARLIS/NA Proposal to Host Conference in 2021

Catherine Essinger
ARLIS/NA Chapters Liaison and
ARLIS/NA Executive Board

Dear Members of the Board,

In 2021, we invite you to discover Montréal: one of the largest French speaking cities in the world, a UNESCO city of Design, a festival town, a food lover's paradise, an art metropolis, a technology hub. The Montréal-Ottawa-Québec (MOQ) chapter of the Art Libraries Society of North America proposes to host the 2021 ARLIS/NA conference in Montréal in late March 2021, to allow for milder winter temperatures.

Why Montréal? Over the last decade, the downtown core has benefited from a significant *Quartier des spectacles* revitalization project, which links together public spaces, the Montréal Museum of Contemporary Art, concert halls, theatres, galleries and restaurants in a dynamic and accessible setting. Art and design are intertwined in the daily life of the city, with hundreds of public artworks. Our proposed timing for the conference would provide a particularly intriguing opportunity to experience art's role in this city's civic life, as it would coincide with the annual *Art Souterrain* festival which features hundreds of public art exhibits in Montréal's underground city.

For the 2021 conference, we propose a theme centering around the idea of **convergence**. The city of Montréal itself is a site of convergence, as a place where both French and English are commonly spoken, different languages and cultures come together, and a blend of old and new is manifested in its history, architecture and integration of technologies. This theme also reflects the nature of ARLIS/NA and the MOQ chapter, which are composed of members from a variety of different backgrounds, working in small and large institutions, including public libraries, academic institutions, museums as well as many independent professionals and students. The theme of convergence can be expanded to explore the relationship between professional practice with community and arts organizations like art hives and fablabs. It can also focus on the convergence of new technologies, such as 3D printers, virtual reality, and digital artists' books and how they have become integrated into the practice of librarianship.

We look forward to organizing tours that reflect this theme by visiting libraries, educational and cultural institutions. We will invite attendees to explore how artistic practices in the city merge with the educational and community organisations, including the four major universities and

smaller, specialized art schools. We will plan to provide tours of some of the most prominent collections in the city such as the *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec*, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, and the *Cinémathèque Québécoise*, as well as smaller institutions such as *Artex* and other artist-run centres and galleries. Architectural highlights can be visited with walking tours to sites like the Notre-Dame Basilica, in Old Montréal, and *Habitat 67*. We will plan full day trips to Ottawa, Canada's capital, and Québec City, one of the oldest cities in North America. Only two hours away, Ottawa's tour will include a visit to the National Gallery of Canada. Other possible sites are the Library of Parliament, Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. Québec City is also only three hours from Montréal and is home to a multitude of architectural and cultural gems, including la *Maison de la littérature* and the *Musée nationale des beaux-arts du Québec*.

Since the ARLIS/NA conference was last held in Montréal in 1995, with the theme of *Art and the Francophone World*, the city has continued to evolve, particularly in the arts and cultural sector. We will provide an itinerary that will allow attendees to revisit some historical highlights of the city, while learning about newer initiatives and cultural institutions that have developed over the past twenty years, including organisations with a focus on digital technologies, such as the *Société des arts technologiques* and the *Phi Centre*.

In terms of resources, there are a variety of suitable hotels and convention centres all located in the downtown core where the conference could be held, with our top pick being the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, which recently hosted the Ex Libris Users of North America Conference (+500) in 2014 with great success. The hotel is located in the downtown core, with a variety of meeting rooms and exhibition spaces, and connected to the extensive underground city. There is also a considerable selection of other hotels and a convention center that have successfully accommodated library conference groups of +500 attendees; such as Hotel Bonaventure, the *Palais des congrès* and *Centre Mont-Royal*.

Montréal is a very walkable city, but it is also home to an easily navigable and efficient public transit system, with reliable subway and bus routes, and an interconnected underground city which provides welcome shelter in the colder months.

Getting to Montréal is easy whether you are travelling by plane, rail, bus or by car. The Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport has numerous flights from major cities and hubs in North America. Alternatively, the VIA rail train station is centrally located and offers trains from Toronto, Ottawa and Québec with connections to all parts of Canada as well as Amtrak lines in New York City and Albany. The bus station is also easily accessible and tickets from nearby cities like Toronto and New York are generally very affordable.

We recognize the significant investment of work and commitment that planning such a conference entails. We have discussed the proposal with our membership and we have assembled a group of dedicated individuals as potential candidates for the conference committee and subcommittees. Potential co-chairs are: Jennifer Garland (McGill University), Sarah Severson (McGill University), Adèle Flannery (Université du Québec à Montréal) and

Nancy Duff (Carleton University, Ottawa). Other members that have expressed interest in participating in subcommittees include: Jessica Hébert (Artexste), John Latour (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec), and Mar González Palacios (Canadian Centre for Architecture).

With our team of dynamic and dedicated individuals that make up our chapter, and the richness and diversity of Montréal's cultural, arts and educational institutions, we are confident that we have the content and the infrastructure, required to host a successful conference.

Join us in *La belle province* in 2021!

We thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jessica Hébert, President ARLIS/NA MOQ (Artexste)

Sarah Severson, Treasurer ARLIS/NA MOQ (McGill University)

Adèle Flannery, Membership Secretary ARLIS/NA MOQ (Université du Québec à Montréal)

Mar González Palacios (Canadian Centre for Architecture)

Nancy Duff (Carleton University)

On behalf of the Montréal-Ottawa-Québec chapter of the Art Libraries Society of North America.