

# Architecture in Quebec

*National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives*

*7 May – 29 August 2008*







*Gendreau House, Saint-Laurent, Île d'Orléans, Quebec, 1959-60. ©Jean-Paul Morisset fonds. [32]*

The holdings of the Library and Archives include a collection of more than 360,000 research photographs that document art and architecture in, primarily, Canada, Europe, and the United States. To commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Quebec City in 1608, the Library and Archives presents a selection from its holdings of documentary photographs of architecture in Quebec. These files include a general collection of original and copy photographs from a wide variety of sources, and, in addition, three special collections that are noteworthy for their scope and research value: the *Inventaire des œuvres d'art*, the Gérard Lavallée fonds, and the Jean-Paul Morisset fonds.

As well as photographs, the holdings include some 2000 colour slides acquired in 1971 from the scholar and photographer Léopold Désy. These slides provide extensive documentation of numerous early churches in Quebec, with a special focus on interior decoration and sculpture.

**Top:** *Church of Saint-Mathias, Saint-Mathias-sur-Richelieu.* IOA. Ref. no. F-II. [19]

**Lower right:** *Break-neck Steps, Quebec City.* IOA. Ref. no. GG-10. [3]

**Centre left:** *Chevalier House, Cap Santé.* IOA. Ref. no. E-1. [27]

**Lower left:** *Windmill, Île-aux-Coudres.* IOA. Ref. no. A-8. [29]

Photos © BAnQ/Centre d'archives de Québec, E6, S8, S8r.

# Gérard Morisset and the *Inventaire des œuvres d'art*

Gérard Morisset (1898–1970) studied law at Laval University and then worked as a notary in Quebec City. With the support of Jean-Thomas Nadeau, a priest, scholar, and journalist, Morisset soon began focusing on his interest in art and architecture. He created inventories of art works in several parishes near Quebec City, studied architecture and drawing, and began publishing articles about art in the local press. In 1929 Morisset left for France for graduate work in Lyon and in Paris at the École du Louvre, writing his doctoral thesis on early painting in French Canada.

In 1937 the provincial government created the *Inventaire des œuvres d'art* with the aim of documenting all early art works, artefacts, silver, and architecture. Morisset headed a team of researchers who compiled all known published sources of information, and used various libraries, archives, and parish registers to identify and catalogue individual works. They also collected documentation about art works that had disappeared and buildings that had been demolished or destroyed by fire [5, 6, 7, 8, 10]. Images that accompanied the documentation included copies of historic photographs and prints, as well as new photography undertaken by staff members.

With this research archive at his disposal, Morisset was able to publish extensively, producing general histories of painting and architecture in Quebec, several artist monographs, and innumerable articles. In 1953 he was appointed curator of the Musée de la Province, retiring in 1965. He was also a member of the Commission des monuments historiques and oversaw the restoration of several important buildings, including Chevalier House [27].

The inventory is now known as the *Inventaire des œuvres d'art de Gérard Morisset* and maintained as an archive by the provincial Ministère de la Culture,

## Checklist

Unless otherwise indicated, photographs are in the collection of the Library and Archives of the National Gallery of Canada, and are by unknown photographers. Photographs from the *Inventaire des œuvres d'art de Gérard Morisset* are indicated with the abbreviation IOA.

1. *The Seminary and Laval University, Quebec City*, 1863. IOA. Photo: Jules Benoît Livernois.

2. *Lower Town, Quebec City*, c. 1880. IOA.

3. *Break-neck Steps, Quebec City*, c. 1868–79. IOA. Photo: Louis-Prudent Vallée.

4. *The Seminary, Quebec City*. IOA. Construction begun in 1678.

5. *Notre Dame Cathedral, Quebec City*, c. 1868. IOA. Façade constructed in 1844 by Thomas Baillairgé, destroyed by fire in 1922, reconstructed in 1922–30. IOA.

6. *Notre Dame Cathedral, Quebec City*. IOA. Interior decoration begun in 1786 by François Baillairgé, destroyed by fire in 1922, reconstructed in 1922–30.

7. *Church of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré*. IOA. Photo:

des Communications et de la Condition féminine; the photographs and negatives are held at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, which published the *Inventaire* on microfilm in 1986. At the National Gallery, the Library and Archives holds nearly 3000 photographs from the *Inventaire*, with an emphasis on church architecture and sculpture.



## Jean-Paul Morisset Fonds

A small but important collection in the Library and Archives is a set of 90 photographs taken by Jean-Paul Morisset from 1959 to 1960 for a series of exhibitions toured by the National Gallery.

Jean-Paul Morisset was born in Quebec City in 1928 to Gérard Morisset and Marguerite Mignault. He studied art history at the Sorbonne, and returned to Quebec in 1954 to join the staff of the *Inventaire des œuvres d'art*, eventually assuming the directorship from his father in 1959.

After his return to Canada, Morisset also studied photography, exhibited his work frequently, and contributed many documentary photographs to the *Inventaire*. In 1959 he was commissioned by the National Gallery to produce three exhibitions of his photographs of traditional French Canadian sculpture, architecture, and applied arts.

A small catalogue was published for each exhibition. The first show, *Early Sculpture of Quebec*, toured from 1959 to 1967 and was accompanied by a twelve-page catalogue, the most ambitious of the three publications. The photographs and text first appeared in the form of an article in the autumn 1959 issue of the journal *Canadian Art*. The second exhibition, *Early Quebec Architecture: 30 Original Photographs by Jean-Paul Morisset*, toured from 1961 to 1964 and again from 1967 to 1971. The third, *The Applied Arts of Early Quebec: 30 Photographs by Jean-Paul Morisset*, toured from 1963 to 1967. In all three, the

Jules Benoît Livernois. Construction begun in 1676, demolished in 1878.

8. Church of Saint-Laurent, Saint-Laurent-de-l'Île-d'Orléans. IOA. Construction begun in 1695, demolished in 1864.

9. Church of Saint-Laurent, Saint-Laurent-de-l'Île-d'Orléans. IOA. Construction begun in 1860.

10. Church of Saint-François-de-Sales, Saint-François, Île d'Orléans. IOA. Construction begun in 1734, destroyed by fire in 1988, rebuilt in 1991.

11. Calvary Chapels, Oka. Gérard Lavallée fonds. Construction begun in 1740.

12. Church of Sainte-Famille, Sainte-Famille, Île d'Orléans. Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau. Construction begun in 1743.

13. Church Façade, Sainte-Famille, Île d'Orléans, Quebec, 1959-60. Jean-Paul Morisset fonds. Construction begun in 1743.

14. Church of Sainte-Famille, Cap-Santé, IOA. Construction begun in 1754.

15. Church of Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours, L'Islet [exterior]. Photo: Pruneau and Kirouac, Quebec City. Private collection. Construction begun in 1770. Architect: Jean Baillairgé.

16. Church of Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours, L'Islet [interior]. Photo: Pruneau and Kirouac,

formal properties of Morisset's fine art photographs are evident in the framing, cropping, and use of filters, and go well beyond purely documentary interests.

In 1962 Morisset joined the staff of the National Gallery of Canada as the liaison officer for Eastern Canada under the Extension Services program, working out of the Gallery's office in Quebec City. Apart from touring exhibitions to various centres east of Ontario, his duties included visiting regional museums, art centres, and societies to offer the Gallery's support and expertise in all matters related to the arts, from mounting exhibitions to the administration and management of collections. In 1966 Morisset became Director of Extension Services. He left the Gallery in 1970.

The Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in Ottawa has 144 photographs by Jean-Paul Morisset in its permanent collection, including the series of photographs produced for the National Gallery touring exhibitions.



## G rard Lavall e Fonds

G rard Lavall e was born in 1928 in Montreal, and educated in general arts at the Coll ge de Saint-Laurent and then in theology at the Universit  de Montr al. He left for Paris in 1956 to study art history at the  cole du Louvre and fine art at the Acad mie Julien.

Lavall e joined the staff of the Coll ge Saint-Laurent in 1953, teaching fine art, art history, and theatre. In 1962 he founded the Galerie d'art Nova et Vetera at the college. As director and curator from 1972 to 1987, he not only exhibited works from the school's permanent collection of early French Canadian art and artefacts, but also mounted shows by such contemporary artists as Guido Molinari and Rita Letendre. The gallery was renamed twice in quick succession, becoming the Galerie d'art K bec

Quebec City. Private collection.  
Construction begun in 1770. Architect:  
Jean Baillairg .

17. *Church, Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Quebec,*  
1959–60. Jean-Paul Morisset fonds.  
Construction begun in 1779.

18. *Church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Saint-Jean-Port-Joli.* Photo: Marge and Phil Shackleton. Construction begun in 1779.

19. *Church of Saint-Mathias, Saint-Mathias-sur-Richelieu.* IOA. Construction begun in 1784.

20. *Church of Saint-Andr , Saint-Andr .* Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau. Construction begun in 1805.

21. *Church of Saint-Andr , Saint-Andr .* G rard Lavall e fonds. Construction begun in 1805.

22. *Church of Saint-Charles-Borrom e, Charlesbourg.* Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau. Construction begun in 1827. Architect: Thomas Baillairg .

23. *Church of Saint-Louis, Lotbini re.* Photo: Marge and Phil Shackleton. Construction begun in 1818. Architect: Fran ois Baillairg .

24. *Church of Saint-Louis, Lotbini re.* IOA. Construction begun in 1818. Architect: Fran ois Baillairg .

in 1972, and the Musée d'art de Saint-Laurent in 1977 when it moved into the deconsecrated chapel of the college (which had itself become the Cégep de Saint-Laurent in 1968). The chapel is the former St. Andrew and St. Paul church, built in 1867 on Dorchester Boulevard (now boulevard René-Lévesque) in Montreal. It was dismantled and reconstructed at the college in 1931. Since 2003, the museum has been known as the Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec.

In 1967 the National Gallery commissioned Lavallée to photograph approximately sixty early Quebec churches, and the resultant fonds contains nearly 2000 photographs. Each church is documented extensively, with special attention to interior sculpture and decoration. Also included in the Lavallée fonds is a selection of his photographs of works in the permanent collection of the Galerie d'art Nova et Vetera.



## Further Reading

Mario Béland. *Questions de sculpture ancienne: hommage à Gérard Lavallée*. Quebec City: Musée du Québec, 2003.

Robert Derome. *Art ancien du Québec et Gérard Lavallée: actes du colloque hommage tenu le 25 mars à la Salle Émile-Legault du Cégep de Saint-Laurent*. Montreal, 2005.

Jean-Paul Morisset. *The Applied Arts of Early Quebec: 30 Photographs by Jean-Paul Morisset*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1963.

Jean-Paul Morisset. *Early Quebec Architecture: 30 Original Photographs by Jean-Paul Morisset*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1961.

Jean-Paul Morisset. *Early Sculpture of Quebec*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1959.

Musée du Québec. *À la découverte du patrimoine avec Gérard Morisset: exposition présentée au Musée du Québec du 4 février au 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1981*. Quebec City: Ministère des Affaires culturelles, 1981.

25. *Church of Saint-Joseph-de-Deschambault, Deschambault*. Photo: Joseph Conwill. Construction begun in 1835. Architect: Thomas Baillairegé.

26. *Church of Saint-Joseph-de-Deschambault, Deschambault*. Gérard Lavallée fonds. Construction begun in 1835. Architect: Thomas Baillairegé.

27. *Chevalier House, Cap Santé*, IOA. Construction begun in late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

28. *Mill, Sales-Laterrière House, Les Éboulements*. Tourist Bureau, Province of Quebec. Photo: Edgar Gariépy. Construction begun in late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

29. *Windmill, Île-aux-Coudres*. IOA. Construction begun in 1836.

30. *Villeneuve House, Charlesbourg, Quebec*, 1959–60. Jean-Paul Morisset fonds. Construction begun in late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

31. *Mauvide Manor, Saint-Jean, Île d'Orléans, Quebec*, 1959–60. Jean-Paul Morisset fonds. Construction begun c. 1740.

32. *Gendreau House, Saint-Laurent, Île d'Orléans, Quebec*, 1959–60. Jean-Paul Morisset fonds. Construction begun in early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

33. *Farmhouse, Saint-François, Île d'Orléans, Quebec*, 1959–60. Jean-Paul Morisset fonds.

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