

Michael McCormack - The Little Suitcase That Could

1997 Found on a street corner, an abandoned suitcase was discovered. It simply bore a label that read 'McCleave'. The style suggested the suitcase was manufactured in the 60's. This was the type of suitcase that probably traveled mostly by bus and occasionally on an airplane. Perhaps, when found, it was in retirement or had simply given up. But a twist of fate would prove that new beginnings allow for unimaginable adventures.

2002 McCleave soon began its transformative journey at the University of Guelph where Michael McCormack was completing his Fine Arts degree. It was here that McCormack developed the endless potentiality of converting a simple suitcase into an exhibition space that could feature the works of other artists, was portable and could be exposed to a diverse audience. McCormack was becoming the director, curator, gallery attendant, and janitor of the aptly named McCleave Gallery of Fine Art.

2005 The first big undertaking, under the theme 'Trade & Exchange' McCleave departed Halifax embarking on a cross-Canada drive. In each province a new art project filled suitcase, created by a selected artist, was collected. Spontaneous exhibitions in unusual locations were held. The tour ended in Dawson City, Yukon where the last suitcase was collected and the entire entourage of valises was exhibited at the ODD Gallery.

2006 The need to connect with their respective roots had McCormack and McCleave cross the pond to Ireland and the UK. Under the theme 'Lineage', 18 artists created books and zines that fit into the McCleave Gallery of Fine Art. During their international travels happenstance exhibitions were again held. Together they had their photograph taken at relevant monuments, which later became a post card edition.

2007 A merger with *The Suitcase Art Gallery Space Research Institute (SAGSRI)* had McCormack and McCleave enter the space race. Currently working from a secret Arctic location and again filled with art, the McCleave Gallery of Fine Art has been converted into a satellite and launched into the stars. This exhibition exposes elements of McCormack's work with SAGSRI and witnesses McCleave's full circle transformation from a humble suitcase to a modern technological wonder that allows the possibility to share earthly art with other sentient beings. For more in depth information, please visit www.mccleavegallery.ca

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