

CINÉMATHÈQUE QUÉBÉCOISE

Montreal, Quebec,
Canada

Founded in 1963, the Cinémathèque Québécoise is a film conservatory with a mission to “preserve and document film and television heritage in order to make it available to an ever-growing and diversified public.” The Cinémathèque complex was extensively redesigned from 1994 to 1997 by the architectural firm, Saucier + Perrotte. Awards for the design included the 1999 Governor General’s Award for Architecture. It is located at 355 De Maisonneuve Boulevard East, in the city’s Quartier Latin, which is also part of the new Quartier des Spectacles cultural district.

Within the Lighting Plan of the Montreal Quartier des Spectacles, Lightemotion, the Montreal firm specialised in lighting design, completed the architectural lighting as well as the light signature of the Cinémathèque Québécoise. “We wanted to create a scenario with moving lights, to create a metaphor of moving images which is what cinema and video represents,” explained François Roupinian, the founding President of Lightemotion.

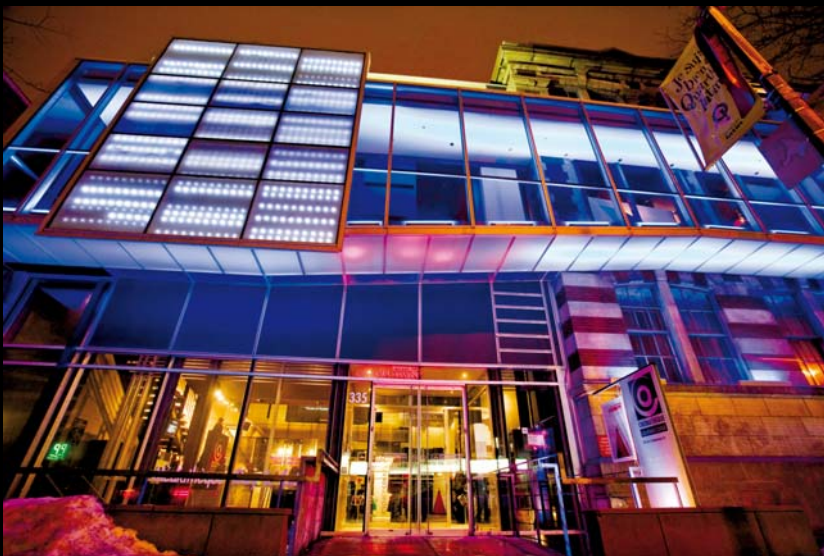
Lighting Design:
Lightemotion (François Roupinian)

Architect:
Saucier + Perrotte Architects

Picture Credits:
Martine Doyon



A dynamic lighting scheme of pre-programmed sequences can change the ambience of the Cinémathèque Québécoise.



The glass catwalk, has its contours lined with blue light to give an illusion of a suspended light box in mid-air.

Highlighting Specific Elements With Hidden Light Sources

If the old section of the building is delicately unveiled with a soft white light, which only highlights specific elements and ornamentations of this heritage architecture (just like the front stage lights would do for an actor) – it is quite the contrary for the contemporary wing, designed by Saucier + Perrotte Architects.

Lightemotion literally drew the contours of the glass catwalk with blue light, not only to underline the dynamic shape, but to give as well the illusion to passers-by to see a suspended light box in mid-air. By hiding all light sources in the building's architecture, the designers succeeded in creating a halo of light that remains subtle and at the same time sufficiently visible to serve as a light beam in the middle of the night. The lighting design then becomes a signal and captures the attention of streetwalkers on Saint-Denis.

A Truly Original Virtual Marquise

To complete the impression of movement that transpires from the whole, Lightemotion designers gave the Cinémathèque a truly original virtual marquise. They placed behind the sandblasted glass panes in the centre of the atrium window, translucent acrylic panels, planted with white coloured LEDs. Because this marquise is transparent, it enables daylight to pass through and does not block the view of the street. When the light of the diodes opens and shuts alternately according to a pre-programmed sequence, it creates waves, pulses or geometric figures, suggesting the unravelling of a film reel. Thanks to this dynamic lighting scheme, the Cinémathèque can change the ambience of its building.

If on one hand, the lighting outside of the building offers a peaceful feeling to passers-by, those that venture inside will definitely go through a very strange sensory experience. The spotlights, hidden behind heat radiators, slide along the metallic window posts to fade away on the ceiling and the light that the LEDs produce transfigure the space on the first floor. As François Roupinian describes it, "Individuals find themselves becoming the colour that is projected. We are literally part of a volume of light points."

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