

Elek Imredy Collection

Dates of Creation: 1970-1992

Physical Extent: 0.33 meters of textual records; 109 photographs; 3x5 – 8x10, b&w; colour; 2 negatives; 5x7; colour

Biographical History:

Elek Imredy was born April 13, 1912 in Budapest, Hungary. He received formal art training in Hungary before fleeing in 1956 and settling in Vancouver, B.C. in 1957. From 1965 to 1968 he taught evening courses at the Vancouver School of Art and Vancouver City College (Langara) with classes in drawing techniques and anatomy. He was one of the founders of the Western chapter of the Canadian Sculptor's Society. In 1968 he married Doreen (Peggy) Lehti.

During his career, Elek Imredy created many small sculptures for private, religious and educational institutions. He participated in numerous public exhibitions between 1958-1989 and his sculptures were exhibited across Canada, the United States and Europe. Major commissions were executed in bronze, wood, granite, limestone, fiberglass & concrete. Some of his more notable works include a life-size statue of Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent in the Supreme Court in Ottawa; a bust of archivist Major J.S. Matthews at the City of Vancouver Archives; a sculpture of Judge Matthew Begbie (Begbie Square) and *Lady of Justice* at the Vancouver Law Courts.

Imredy's most famous sculpture *Girl in Wetsuit* situated in Vancouver's Stanley Park was commissioned in 1971 by the Harbour Improvement Society. The Society was specifically formed by Douglas Brown in order to finance the creation of the statue. The original statue was modeled in clay and a fiberglass replica was sent to Rome to be cast in bronze since there was no suitable foundry in Vancouver in the early 1970s. While often mistaken as a replica of Copenhagen's Little Mermaid statue, Imredy created the statue of skin diver to symbolize BC's modern spirit of exploration. He has sited her so that she is gazing out towards the Province's continental shelf. The woman who posed for the work was Debra Harrington of Vancouver, whose father Clyde was a professional photographer.

The statue was unveiled in June 1972 and her rock base in Vancouver harbour was elevated 30 inches so that the statue would sit above the water at high tide. Each year until his death in 1994, Imredy and companions would return to Stanley Park and wait for low tide so they could clean the statue.

Further information can be found in the publication *The Sculpture of Elek Imredy* by Elek Imredy (Vancouver, B.C.: Terry Noble, 1993).

Scope and Content:

Collection consists of correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs, sketches, working papers, publicity materials, and promotional materials related to the creation of the *Girl in Wetsuit* sculpture located in Vancouver Harbour at Stanley Park. Also included are contracts and invoices for the casting of the sculpture.

The collection is divided into the following series:

- Series 1 *Girl in Wetsuit* (1970-1992)
- Series 2 Photographs (1971-1992)
- Series 3 Negatives (no date)

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Notes:

Source of Title: Title based on contents of collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Collection of archival material donated to VMM by wife Peggy Imredy in 1997. Other library materials and artifacts have been donated to the museum by Peggy & Elek Imredy including a maquette of *Girl in Wetsuit*.

Accruals: No further accruals are expected.

Finding Aid: A box-file list is available.

Language: Records in this collection are in English and Italian.

Elek Imredy Collection

Box / File List

PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 1	Date: 1971-1982
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - Biographical History	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 2	Date: 1970-1989
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - Girl's History	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 3	Date: 1968-1973
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - Vancouver Harbour Improvement Society Correspondence	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 4	Date: 1970-1972
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - Nicci correspondence	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 5	Date: 1970-1983
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - Unveiling	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 6	Date: 19--
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - F.N. Johnson drawing	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 7	Date: 1972-1992
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - Newspaper clippings	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 1 File No: 8	Date: 1974-1983
Title: Girl in Wetsuit - Publications containing	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 2 File No: 1	Date: 19--
Title: Photographs - site preparation	
PartOf Elek Imredy Collection	Location: Box 1
Series No: 2 File No: 2	Date: 1971
Title: Photographs - sculpture casting	

Elek Imredy Collection

PartOf **Elek Imredy Collection**

Series No: 2 **File No:** 3

Title: Photographs - miniature

Location: Box 1

Date: 19--

PartOf **Elek Imredy Collection**

Series No: 2 **File No:** 4

Title: Photographs - cleaning & general views

Location: Box 1

Date: 1972-1987

PartOf **Elek Imredy Collection**

Series No: 2 **File No:** 5

Title: Photographs - 20th anniversary of sculpture

Location: Box 1

Date: 1992

PartOf **Elek Imredy Collection**

Series No: 2 **File No:** 6

Title: Photographs - poster images & promotional photographs

Location: Box 1

Date: 19--

PartOf **Elek Imredy Collection**

Series No: 3 **File No:** 1

Title: Negatives

Location: Box 1

Date: 19--