

# A WIGWAM IN VENICE: THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA BUILDS A PAVILION, 1954-1958

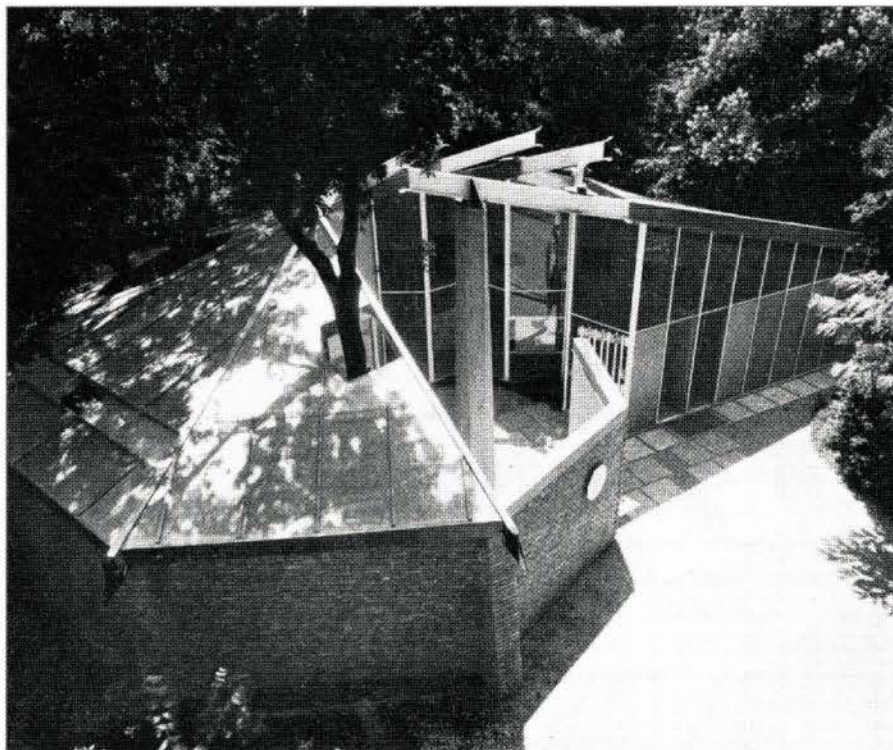
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Canada has built an intricate wigwam of glass and wood around a tree, presumably to symbolize love of nature. In truth, perhaps all the pavilions are, to some extent, folkloric.

— Lawrence Alloway, *The Venice Biennale 1895-1968*.

Canada's first permanent international pavilion for the display of art opened to the general public on the grounds of the Venice Biennale in June 1958.<sup>2</sup> The Milanese architectural firm Studio Architetti BBPR designed the brick, glass, wood, and steel wigwam-like structure on commission from the National Gallery of Canada acting on behalf of the Canadian Government (figs. 1-3). The pavilion opened the same year in which BBPR's controversial Milanese Torre Velasca and Brussels Pavilion were completed. The English critic Reyner Banham hailed those two works as evidence of Italy's "retreat" from the modern.<sup>3</sup> Compared with the international style Canadian Pavilion by Charles Greenberg at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, the Venice Pavilion offers a distinct Canadian character for spectators to contemplate. It is a testimony to engagement with issues of national identity in architecture during difficult years following the end of World War II. The modernism of the Canadian Pavilion opposed the neutrality of the international "white box" that would dominate art exhibition spaces in the 1960s. That divergence was typical of Italian architects during the 1950s. Carlo Scarpa, Franco Albini, and the Studio Architetti BBPR came up with singular responses to the design of museums; rather than



CANADIAN ART, 1958.

FIG. 1. BIRDS EYE VIEW, CANADIAN PAVILION, VENICE.



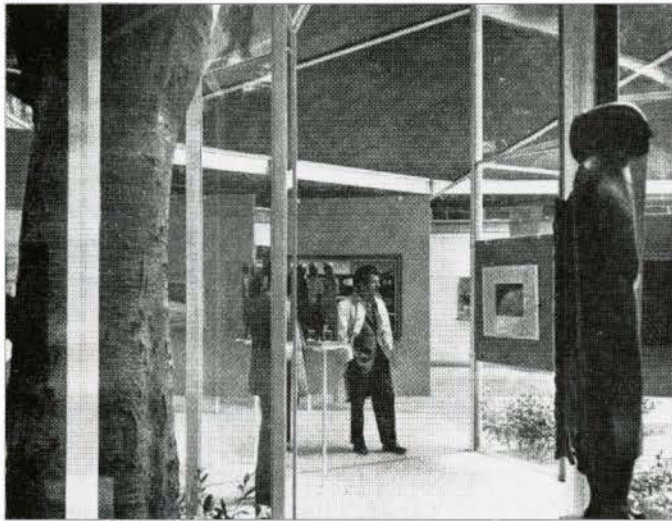


FIG. 2. INTERIOR, CANADIAN PAVILION, VENICE.

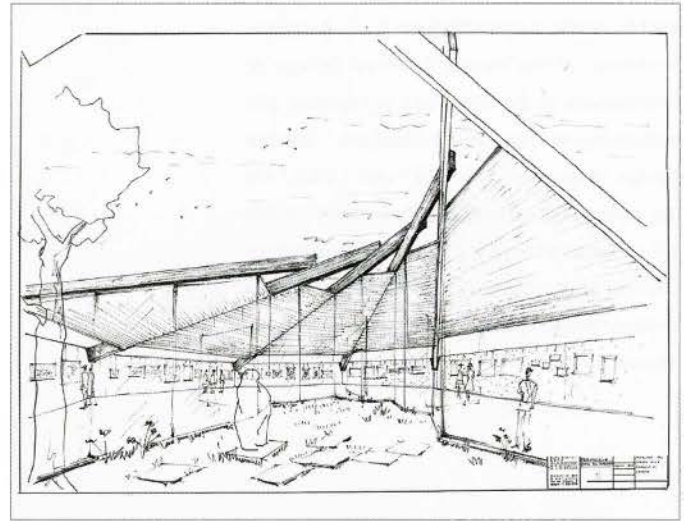


FIG. 3. PERSPECTIVE DRAWING, CANADIAN PAVILION, STUDIO ARCHITETTI BBPR.

viewing the buildings as containers of moveable objects, the architects permanently embedded art objects in the architecture. Such an approach was encouraged by the fact that architects in postwar Italy were faced with the delicate task of restoring or adapting extant buildings for museums rather than designing new ones.<sup>4</sup>

The qualities that make this quirky and idiosyncratic pavilion significant in the history of Italian as well as Canadian architecture and culture have also made it difficult for art curators over the last decades to display work of various shapes and sizes. The pavilion was conceived for paintings, drawings, and sculpture, without considering the possibility that new media might one day expand the field of art. Its inflexibility is one reason for the paucity of studies on the building's history.<sup>5</sup> The conflict between form and use—not unlike Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York (1959)—emerged early on; just two years after the grand opening in 1958, Claude Picher—a National Gallery Liaison Officer for eastern Canada—raised concerns about the pavilion's capacity to fulfill its program: "I was told by serious people that the Venice Pavilion was constructed

in such an aesthetic way that you could not decently see one painting on its walls, because of the tree in the centre and the continuous moving areas of light and shadow its creates"<sup>6</sup> (figs. 4-5).

Irritation at the awkwardness of the exhibition space conceals a more deep-seated—if unspoken—criticism of the underlying message of the pavilion. By using an indigenous wigwam as a source of inspiration for the pavilion, the designers were venturing into national identity building, an arena that rarely finds all parties in agreement. The pavilion was designed and built at a time when Canada began its move from a Franco-English bicultural identity to a multicultural identity in order to dissolve the contradictions biculturalism posed.<sup>7</sup> In light of that pluralism, Studio BBPR's use of a form associated with Canada's First Nations might seem naïve and opportunistic.<sup>8</sup> Despite the obvious reference, Lawrence Alloway was one of the first commentators to explicitly compare the Canadian Pavilion to a wigwam.<sup>9</sup> There is no documentary evidence to suggest that the architects were prompted by their Canadian patrons to adopt or reinterpret the wigwam model or that they had ever visited Native-Indian communities in Canada and the United

States of America. Perhaps the architects were able to view the monumental collection of photographs assembled by the US photographer Edward S. Curtis.<sup>10</sup> The efforts of cultural professionals in Canada and Italy to construct an image of national identity that was modern and indigenous makes the pavilion, despite its shortcomings as a place to exhibit art, a site that discloses contradictions embedded in the contemporary cultures of both nations, for which the fusion of modernity and the "primitive" promised to work as a solvent.

The wigwam image that BBPR utilized to construct identity recalls the dwellings of some of North America's indigenous population before European settlement. By evoking one of Canada's most ancient dwellers, the Italian architects (and the National Gallery Board of Trustees, who ultimately approved the design) circumvented the diplomatic tug-of-war that would have followed a decision favouring either Anglo or Francophile sources.<sup>11</sup> BBPR sought to express an "original" Canadian identity that could be shared by the entire nation. Despite the pavilion's functional shortcomings, that pursuit of "authenticity" reflected the momentum of the Report



of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (informally known as the *Massey Report*), issued in 1951, whose aim was to free the arts of the country from colonial subservience<sup>12</sup> (fig. 6). The recommendations of the *Massey Report* led, amongst other things, to the establishment of the Canada Council for the Arts, which continues to play an important role in the cultural life of the nation.

The *Massey Report* emerged from a desire to project a position of cultural independence for Canada by reducing its reliance on England, France, and the United States. The document did not yield immediate and quantifiable results in terms of architecture and art, but it stirred debate.<sup>13</sup> The authors of the report asserted:

A specific problem of architecture in Canada has been the tendency toward imitative and derivative styles of architecture. The authors of both the special studies prepared for us dealt severely with the longstanding and widespread practice of imitating inappropriately styles of past generations or of other countries which have indeed solved their own architectural problems but not necessarily in a manner which can be suitable at this time and in this country [...] It was drawn to our attention that there is increasing consciousness of the need in Canada for the development of a regional architecture adapted to the landscape and the climate and also to the material typical of the area... It has been stated to us that a true Canadian architecture must develop in this way.<sup>14</sup>

## ITALIAN ARCHITECTS FOR A CANADIAN PAVILION

The architects of the Studio Architetti BBPR firm were Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, Enrico Peressutti, and Ernesto N. Rogers (Gian Luigi Banfi, the first B in BBPR, died

in 1945). Despite the explicitly collaborative nature of the group, archival materials and official accounts attribute the design to Enrico Peressutti alone.<sup>15</sup> The impetus for a Canadian Pavilion in Venice came when the prestige and fame of Studio Architetti BBPR in both North America and Europe was at its height. Of the three architects in the firm, Enrico Peressutti and Ernesto N. Rogers enjoyed the greatest international exposure; both taught at American ivy-league universities and both were involved with the CIAM (Congrès international d'architecture moderne). Along with the engineer Pier Luigi Nervi, Peressutti and Rogers were the most visible Italian architects in North America and they gained that renown just as the arts in Canada were undergoing a "coming of age." In 1955, Harry Orr McCurry retired as Director of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, giving way to charismatic Alan Hepburn Jarvis (1915-1972), a sculptor, author, art critic, film producer, and television commentator.<sup>16</sup> Although Jarvis resigned in 1959, his tenure coincided with the planning and construction of the Canadian Pavilion. Since the National Gallery was responsible for promoting the arts in Canada and abroad, it was the institution's responsibility to initiate the project. Board of Trustees minutes show that McCurry had



FIG. 4. INTERIOR, CANADIAN PAVILION, VENICE.

Canadian Art, 1958.

started to lay the groundwork before the arrival of Jarvis:

The Director pointed out that as in the fifty years since the Biennale di Venezia was first opened in Venice all the principal European countries as well as the United States and Argentine have built national fine arts pavilions within the grounds of the Biennale and as the art of these countries has in this way been brought regularly before the informed international public, the Canadian Government should emulate the initiative of other nations in this respect and build a suitable small pavilion to house Canadian art on a site to be donated by the authorities of the Biennale, the cost to be paid out of blocked lira available to the Canadian Government in Italy. The Board felt that this was a matter for further investigation and that the question of whether or not there was blocked lira available should be looked into.<sup>17</sup>



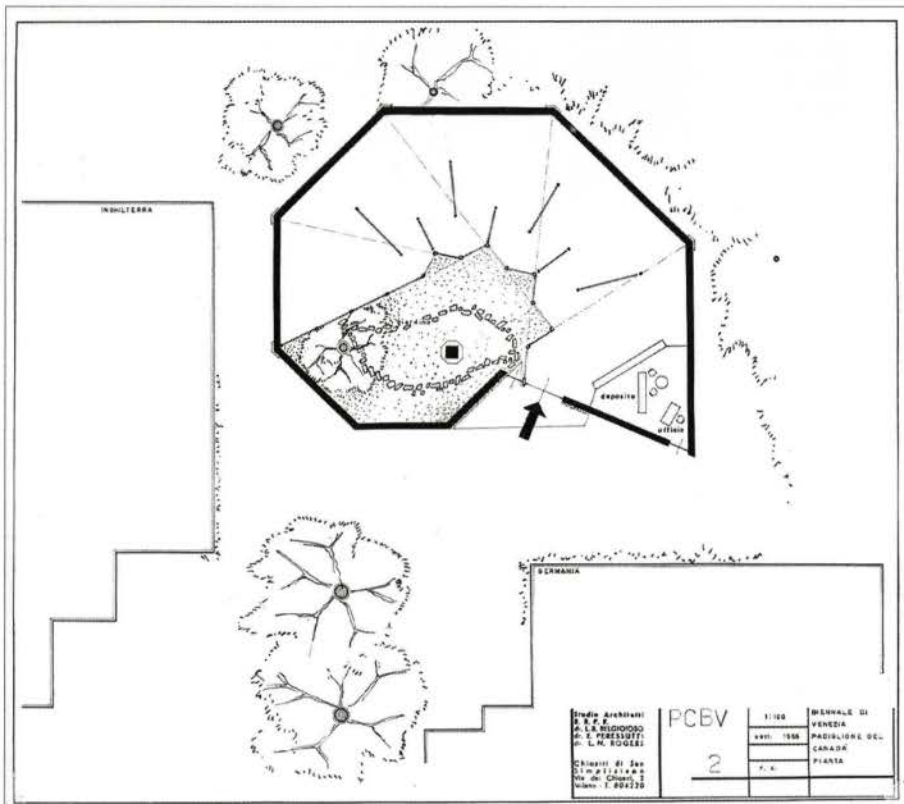


FIG. 5. PLAN, CANADIAN PAVILION.

Donald W. Buchanan (1908-1966), Deputy Director of the National Gallery under McCurry and Jarvis, provided continuity for the project through the change of leadership. Correspondence reveals that Buchanan worked behind the scenes on the pavilion with the Canadian Ambassador to Italy, Pierre Dupuy.<sup>18</sup>

In a letter dated January 27, 1954, Peressutti responded to McCurry's inquiry about costs, which, according to the latter, were not to exceed \$25,000, for a pavilion measuring approximately 60 x 45 feet. McCurry had begun to think about engaging the Milanese firm as designer of the pavilion.<sup>19</sup> Peressutti visited Ottawa later that year, likely during one of his regular visits to North America to teach at Princeton University, where his students included Charles Moore and William Turnbull.<sup>20</sup> Peressutti wrote a

letter to Charles Moore in July 1958 (only a month after the opening of the Canadian Pavilion in Venice):

Present architecture is going through a very important period: the dogma of functionalism being surpassed is an already acquired fact, a wider and more free field of architectonic expression opens in front of us. We are these years, crossing the gate, architecturally speaking, between the recent past and the next future. Through this gate we must lead the students and it is of very great importance that we use in our discussions the right tools well defined and without possible misunderstandings. Because also the students must go through this gate.<sup>21</sup>

On December 14, 1955, the newly appointed Jarvis informed the Biennale Secretary Rodolfo Pallucchini that he

had "just received authorization from the Government of Canada to proceed with building a Canadian Pavilion for La Biennale di Venezia if space is still available."<sup>22</sup> It may have been the fact that the blocked funds—initially earmarked for scholarships for Canadian students traveling to Italy—were available only in lira that prompted Curry and the Board of Trustees (and later Jarvis) to opt for an Italian rather than a Canadian architect.<sup>23</sup> Or this may have been a politically expedient rationale for their open-minded (and practical) decision to give the job to an internationally recognized architect who had a strong local presence in Italy and could work without a language barrier.

The promotion of Canadian art by the *Massey Report* coincided with a new public presence for the National Gallery in Canada and abroad. In 1959, one year after inaugurating the Canadian Pavilion in Ottawa had been abandoned and the museum was moved into the uninspired Lorne office building.<sup>24</sup> After World War II, the Venice Biennale emerged as the premier international art venue for Europe. For a long time, the United States was the only non-European country with its own pavilion. Only in 1952 was Canada first represented at the Biennale, in a small room in the Italian Pavilion. During the 1950s, when the Marshall Plan was lending a new stability to Italy, Italians were anxious to shake off the stigma of fascism with a renewed sense of cosmopolitanism. The rebirth of the Venice Biennale was led by its General Secretary Rodolfo Pallucchini, a scholar of Venetian Renaissance art. Under Pallucchini (1948-1956) and subsequently Gian Alberto Dell'Acqua (1958-1968), a number of modernist pavilions were added to the many permanent historicist ones erected during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>25</sup> The Canadian Pavilion, which would be owned



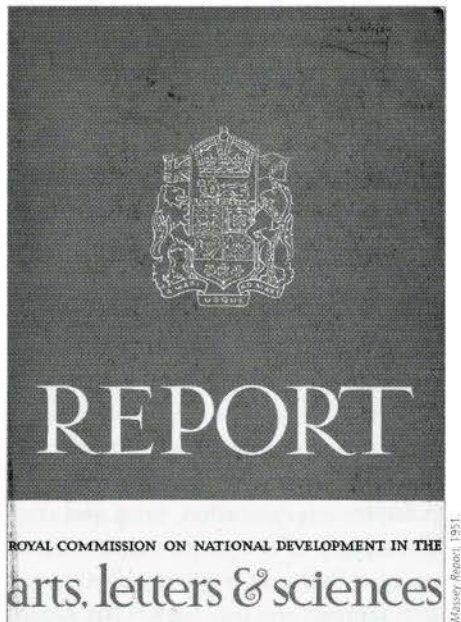


FIG. 6. COVER PAGE.

by Canada, was to be built on land of the City of Venice. It was the twenty-third in a growing list of buildings designed by an international coterie of architects. Among the most notable postwar additions were Gerrit Rietveld's Dutch Pavilion (1954), Carlo Scarpa's Venezuelan Pavilion (1954), Alvar Aalto's Finnish Pavilion (1956), and Sverre Fehn's Nordic Pavilion (1961). The Canadian Pavilion was one of the few to be designed by architects who didn't have the citizenship of the country they were designing it for.<sup>26</sup> This receptiveness to modern architecture on the Biennale grounds is in marked contrast to the fierce resistance during the mid 1950s to Frank Lloyd Wright's design for a new building along the Grand Canal. The Biennale itself did not include an architecture section until several decades later, when Vittorio Gregotti was asked to direct the first architecture biennale in 1976.

The Studio Architetti BBPR acquired a reputation as "humanist" architects who rejected the sterile formalism of the "international style." They were seen as creatively engaged with cultural realities

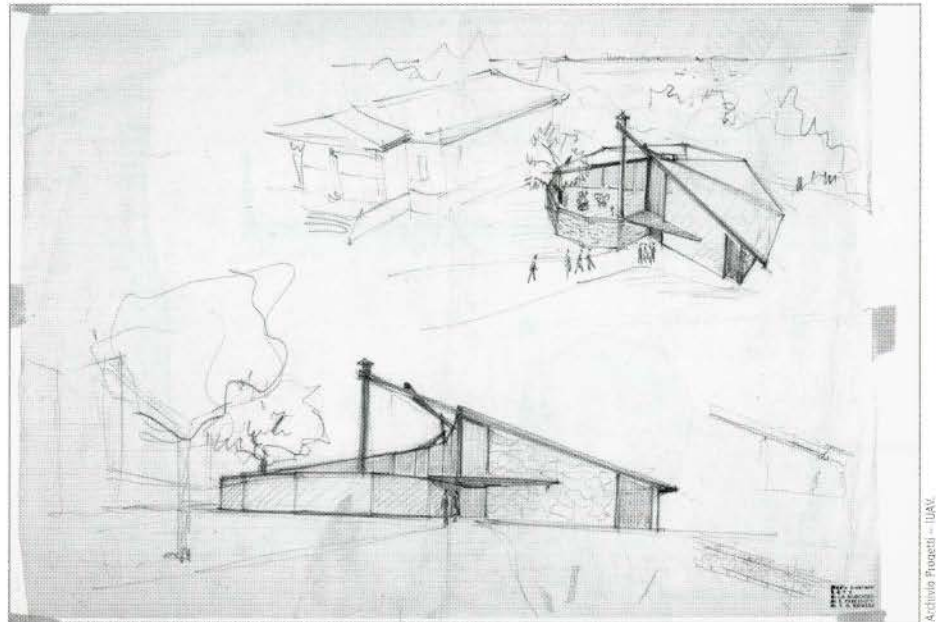


FIG. 7. PERSPECTIVE SKETCH, CANADIAN PAVILION.

and traditions ("continuity" was the term Rogers used to refer to the design process) without falling into historical mimeticism. In 1955, they designed the acclaimed Olivetti showroom in New York with the collaboration of the émigré artist and sculptor Costantino Nivola (1911-1988). Stalagmites of green cipollino marble thrusting up from the floor on which the typewriters and business machines were displayed (indoors and outdoors) created the impression of a primitive yet modern cave in the heart of Manhattan.<sup>27</sup> Rather than celebrate the machine-aesthetic as an impersonal and anonymous style, the architects chose—taking their cues from the enlightened approach of Olivetti's promotion of the arts in Italy—to highlight craftsmanship and human ingenuity. The architects' involvement with an addition (never realized) to Ca' Venier, home of the American art collector Peggy Guggenheim, introduced them to the cosmopolitan circles of Venice that Canadians were eager to join during those years. BBPR had many commissions for pavilion design in Italy during the 1950s, including the American building for the

IX<sup>th</sup> Triennale in Milan and the cupola-like exhibition pavilion in Turin (1953). In 1956 Eric Arthur invited Rogers to serve as a juror in the international competition for the new city hall for Toronto.<sup>28</sup>

The reaction against post-and-lintel "rationalism" that Studio BBPR's evocation of the wigwam suggests reflected a preoccupation in postwar Italy with organic architecture that was paralleled on Canada's West Coast or in Arizona by such renegades as the Italian émigré architect Paolo Soleri.<sup>29</sup> Rationalism, with its classical underpinnings, was stigmatized in postwar Italy by its association with Fascist architecture during the inter-war years. A new generation of Italian critics and historians directed architects towards more "democratic" forms of expression. Bruno Zevi (1918-2000) forcefully advocated that position in his book *Towards an Organic Architecture*, published in Italian in 1945 (and in English in 1950), and his short-lived journal, *Metron*.<sup>30</sup> In writing about the Canadian Pavilion, Zevi characteristically pointed out how it subverts the compact and monumental qualities



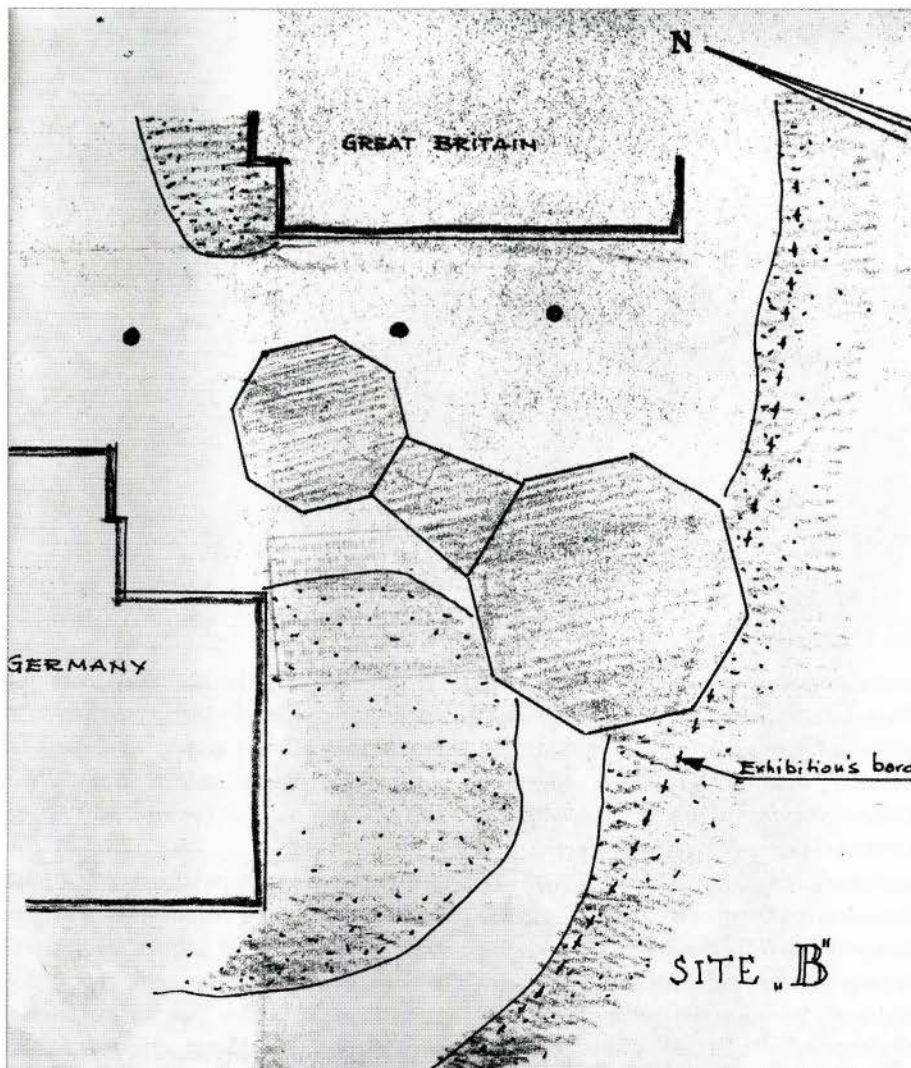


FIG. 8. SCHEMATIC PLAN, SITE B, CANADIAN PAVILION.

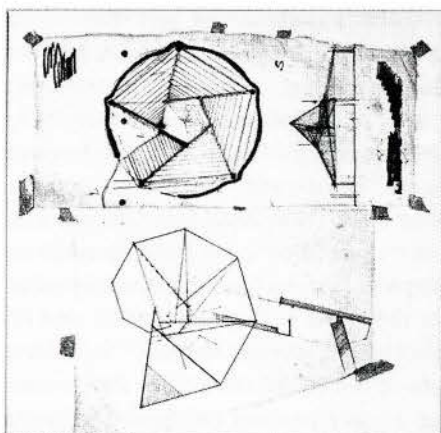


FIG. 9. SKETCHES, CANADIAN PAVILION.

Archivio Progetti - IMAV

National Gallery of Canada Archives

of the neighbouring classical English and German pavilions.<sup>31</sup> For architects who had not distanced themselves from fascism in time, the move from classicism towards an anthropologically oriented "primitive" vernacular offered possibilities for redemption and "continuity" with inter-war interests. The redemptive role of the vernacular in the discourse of postwar Italian modernism was evident in Franco Albini and Giancarlo De Carlo's "Spontaneous Architecture" exhibition at the Milan Triennale of 1951, based on the model provided years earlier

by Giuseppe Pagano and his "Architettura rurale italiana" (Italian rural architecture) exhibition of 1936.<sup>32</sup>

The wigwam evoked by the structural and spatial organization of the pavilion (as reflected in preparatory sketches) is an indigenous Canadian dwelling type that predates European settlement (fig. 7). Other dwelling types associated with Canada's First Nations include the Iroquoian longhouse, the teepee (tipi) of the Plains Indians, the six and two-beam wood houses of the West Coast Nations, and the snow houses (igloos) of the North.<sup>33</sup> In BBPR's interpretation, brick and steel lent weight to a semi-permanent building type that was originally constructed with saplings and tree bark.<sup>34</sup> The Algonquian wigwam used saplings covered with sheets of bark whereas the teepee employed poles (peeled pine or cedar) that were covered with buffalo skins sewn together. More significantly, the intimate-sized wigwam is significantly blown up in scale by the designers in order to fulfill the requirements of a fully inhabitable exhibition space. Studio BBPR's first schematic drawings of the pavilion were of two octagons of varying sizes linked by a passageway<sup>35</sup> (fig. 8). The facets of the octagon recalled the round or oblong plan of both wigwam and teepee. Sketches show the architects struggling with the spatial and functional implications of an octagon and circle plan (figs. 9-11). There is no evidence that the architects and patrons considered the possibility of a wood building in the manner of other earlier pavilions on the Biennale grounds, such as Alvar Aalto's pavilion for Finland (1956) and Carlo Scarpa's Galleria del Libro d'Arte (1950).<sup>36</sup>

BBPR's final scheme abandoned the octagon plan of the initial design for the Archimedes spiral of the nautilus shell. However, since the spiral can be generated



from the octagon, its faceted presence is felt throughout the plan and in the tapered octagonal column that supports the roof beams (figs. 12-13). Rogers and other members of the Studio BBPR participated in an important international conference on *De divina proportione* (divine proportion) held in 1951 at the Milan Triennale, alongside Rudolf Wittkower and Sigfried Giedion.<sup>37</sup> Ico Parisi's Hospitality Pavilion for the Milan Triennale of 1954 was also based upon the geometry of the spiral and bears a striking resemblance to the Canadian Pavilion completed four years later<sup>38</sup> (fig. 14). Movable walls/screens reflecting the generative geometry of the plan and the layout of the roof beams were added to the Venice Pavilion to expand the hanging surfaces and articulate the inner space (fig. 15). Yet, the relatively limited size of the permanent and movable walls (as well as the sloped ceilings) reflected lack of planning (or foresight) by the pavilion's clients and architects. The explosion of canvas size during the 1960s left many Canadian curators of the pavilion hard pressed to display the paintings of Jack Bush and Paul-Emile Borduas.

Sketches of the octagon plan show that Enrico Peressutti considered various options. In these drawings, the iconic image of a preindustrial semi-permanent dwelling is combined with ideal proportions; the "spontaneous" quality of the former competes with the idealism of the latter. Though lacking the mysticism of the Canadian painter Emily Carr's West Coast "primitivism," the pavilion's embrace of native-American imagery reflects a spirit of rugged vitality and a heightened awareness of texture similar to those perceptible in the spectacular Canadian landscape paintings of the Group of Seven and associates like Tom Thomson. The rugged and eccentric qualities of the Canadian pavilion parallel Thomson's

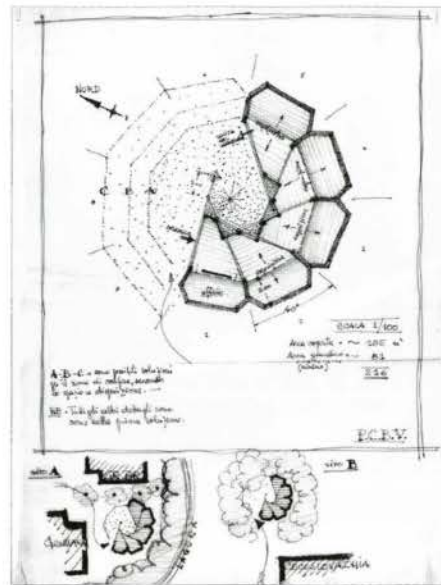


FIG. 10. SKETCHES, CANADIAN PAVILION.

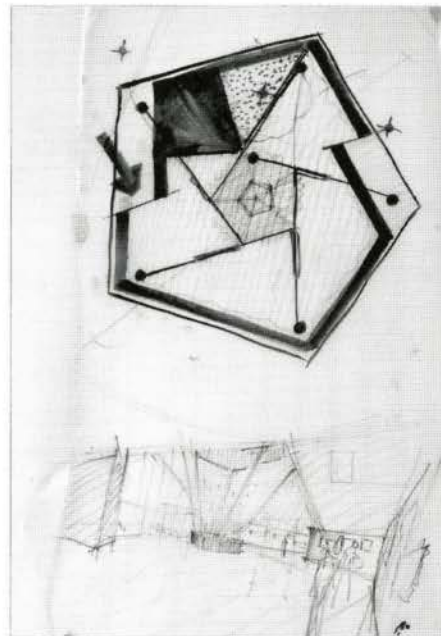


FIG. 11. SKETCHES, CANADIAN PAVILION.

renegade decision to live immersed in the Canadian wilderness so that he might capture the spirit of the place on his canvases.

The conflation of the wigwam and the nautilus shell revealed by Peressutti's many sketches created an ever-changing space

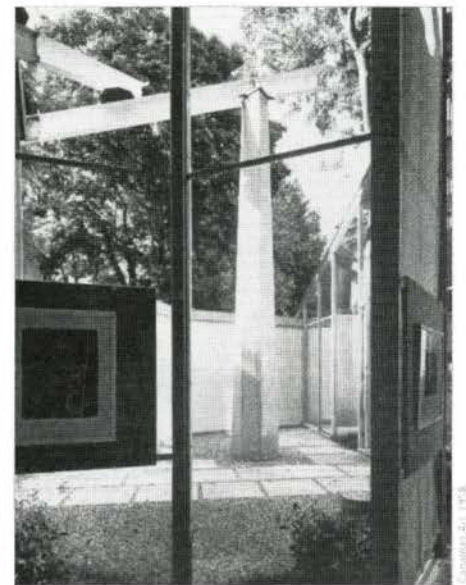


FIG. 12. VIEW OF COLUMN FROM INSIDE THE CANADIAN PAVILION.



FIG. 13. VIEW OF COLUMN FROM OUTSIDE THE CANADIAN PAVILION.

for the display of art. Like a wigwam, the building does not have exterior windows apart from narrow ribbon apertures located just under the roofline. On the interior, floor-to-ceiling windows face a small open-air courtyard, drawing indirect light into a space that is otherwise shaded by two tall trees located within



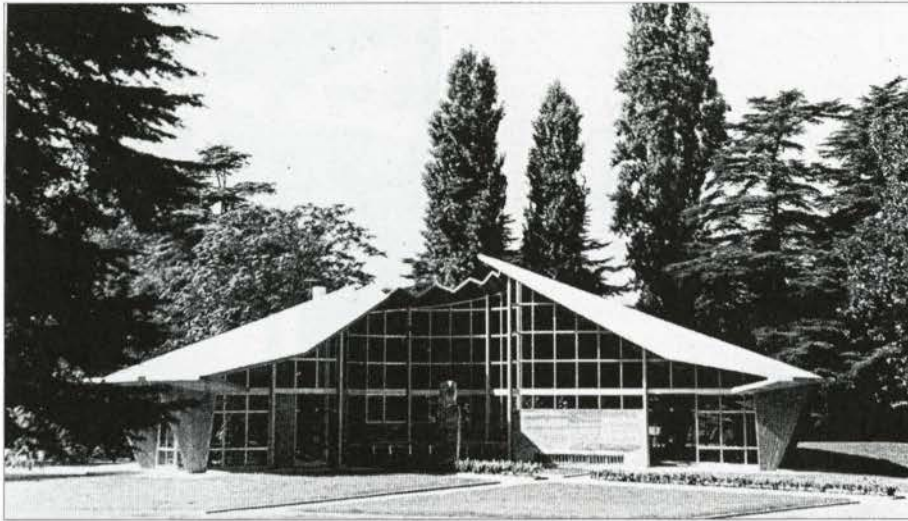


FIG. 14. HOSPITALITY PAVILION, ICO PARISI, MILAN TRIENNALE, 1954.

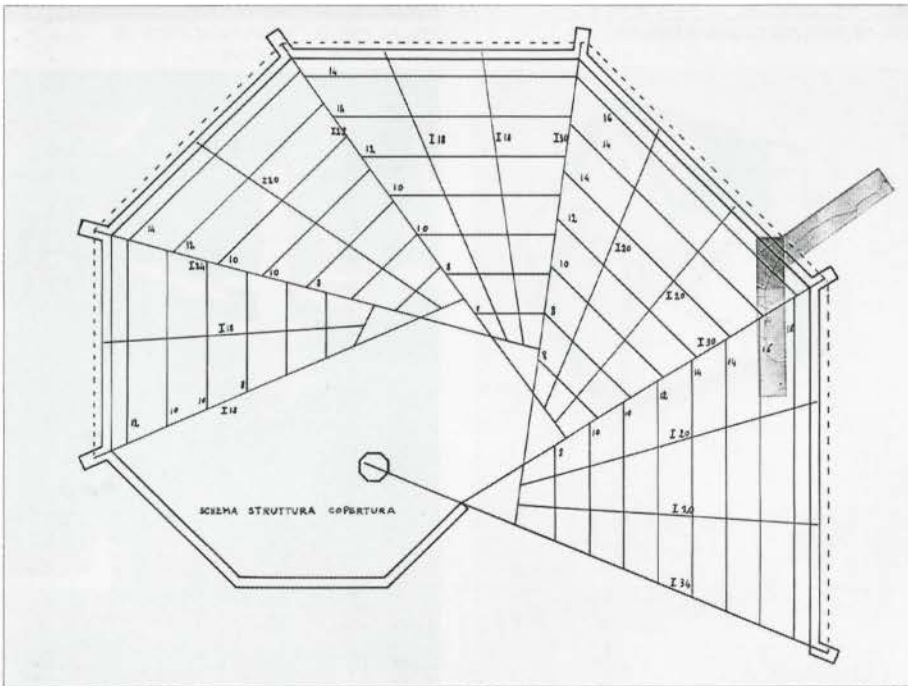


FIG. 15. PLAN OF ROOF, CANADIAN PAVILION.

its footprint. One of those trees is incorporated into the pavilion's floor plan and is encased in glass (fig. 16). The light well created by the glass-encased tree evokes the opening at the apex of the wigwam traditionally used for release of smoke generated by the hearth. Sverre Fehn followed the Canadian Pavilion's lead in his design of the luminous Northern Pavilion

(representing Finland, Norway, and Sweden), completed for the Biennale in 1961. Unlike the vast airy expanse of Fehn's exhibition space, in which the trees are tall and slender enough to weave gracefully in and out of the roof structure without any glass encasements, the integration of the trees is awkward in the Canadian Pavilion. While Fehn's pavilion evokes the elegance and

clarity of a classical modern temple, BBPR's feels more like a rustic tree house. Yet the shortcomings are precisely what make the experience of the space so unique.

Although Canada was considered a young nation in comparison to its European forebears, it was given a prestigious site in the cul-de-sac at the end of the two main thoroughfares in the Biennale gardens, between the classically inspired English and German pavilions and across from the French. Ironically, Canada's founding as a new nation in 1867 had coincided with the political founding of the Italian nation. Canada was presented with two sites for consideration: site A was located behind the United States and Czechoslovakian pavilions; site B was located between the English and German pavilions. Jarvis, advised by Peressutti, chose site B<sup>39</sup> (fig. 17). In a letter dated March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1956 Peressutti went to great lengths to explain in his awkward English why site B was more appropriate. Having taken photographs and sent Jarvis and Buchanan the schematic drawings based upon the octagon plan, Peressutti listed the following reasons for choosing site B over site A: "(1) wider area for the construction, (2) open space in front of the pavilion along the main public circulation, (3) wider horizon on the background of the pavilion looking towards the laguna."

Although the wigwam evoked a timeless, preindustrial vernacular source, the use of brick and of steel I-beams (capped with decorative curved elements that suggested wood) gave the pavilion an "earthy" quality that was less institutional and cerebral than the classical forms of the English and German pavilions (fig. 18). Due to its earth tones (compared to the grey stone and stucco cladding of neighbouring pavilions), the Canadian Pavilion tends to get lost in the forest of trees that



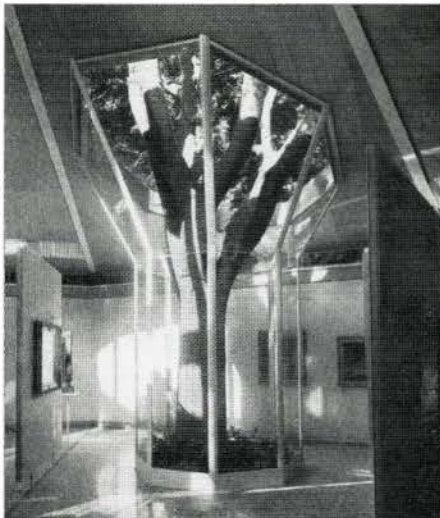


FIG. 16. INTERIOR VIEW, CANADIAN PAVILION, VENICE.

serves as its backdrop (fig. 19). Although Peressutti believed that the shared plaza in front of the English and German pavilions would attract visitors to the building, the pavilion was placed so far back that many visitors have a hard time finding its entrance. Despite Peressutti's stated interest in the view toward the lagoon the pavilion actually turns its back to it. The most welcoming aspect of the pavilion is the fact that it was constructed on the ground (thus avoiding the ceremonial steps used for the classical pavilions).

Philip Pocock, a friend of Buchanan, recounted in an interview that when the pavilion was under discussion and then construction, Peressutti lectured in Ottawa on the cone-shaped stone *trulli* of southern Italy, much to the dismay of those who were expecting to hear him speak on avant-garde architecture. In terms of "primitivism" and modernist architecture, it is useful to note that the initial version of the pavilion featured a Brancusi-like endless column of two elongated modules in the place of octagonal tapered column that supports the steel I-beams holding the roof planes (fig. 20). Recent scholarship has demonstrated to what

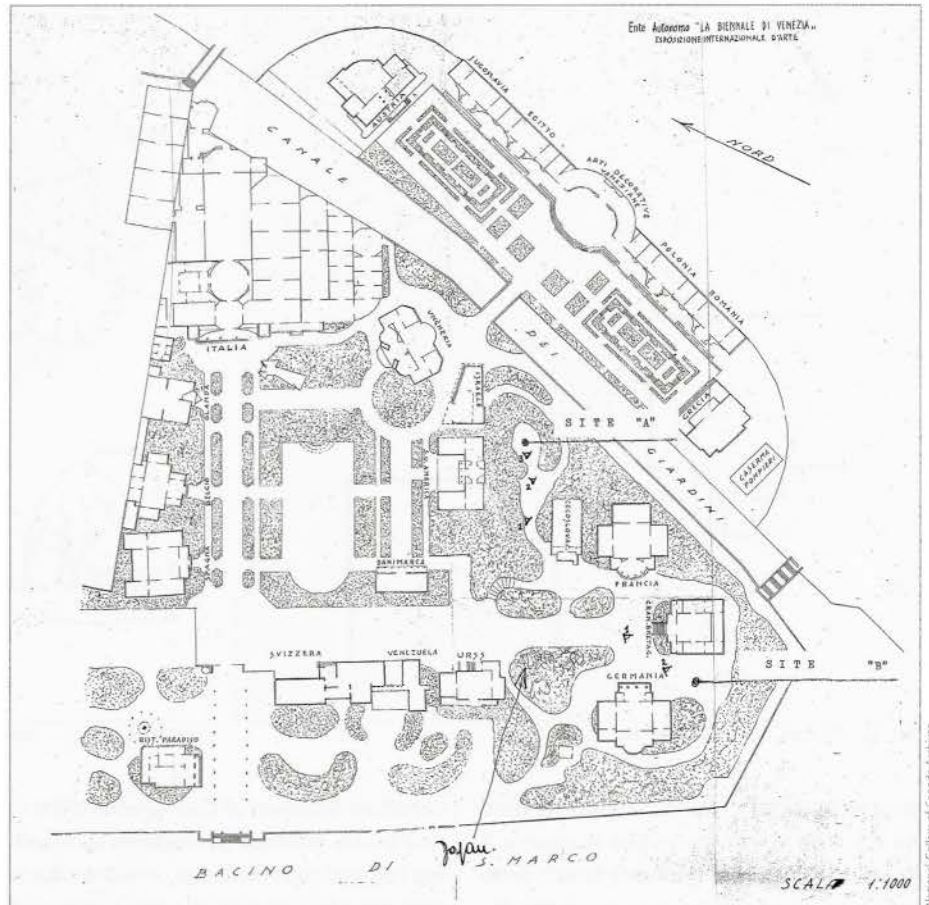


FIG. 17. PLAN, VENICE BIENNALE GARDENS (SITES A AND B).



FIG. 18. EXTERIOR VIEW, DETAIL OF I-BEAM, CANADIAN PAVILION, VENICE.







landscape forever transformed by more recent housing at odds with any sense of place. Not unlike the Mississauga City Hall, the Venice Pavilion reminds visitors, almost fifty years after its inauguration, of Canada's impressive natural environment and the difficulties involved with achieving a balance—common to ancient as well as modern-day dwellers—between gentle stewardship of the land and responding to the aggressive demands of urbanization.

## NOTES

- This article closes a chapter of my life spent traveling between Italy and Canada. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada deserves my gratitude for a doctoral and a postdoctoral grant that made my studies on Italian modernism possible. I would like to thank Cyndie Campbell (Head of Archives) and David Franklin (Deputy Director and Chief Curator) at the National Gallery of Canada. In Italy the staff of the Archivio Progetti of the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV) was most helpful. A host of Canadian colleagues deserves collective thanks: George Baird, Robert Hill, Stephen Otto, Phyllis Lambert, and Larry Richards. Thanks are in order for my University of Houston colleagues who read and commented the essay: Stephen Fox, John Zemanek, and Bruce Webb.
- The pavilion opened with a retrospective exhibition of the post-impressionist painter James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924) and work by contemporary artists Jacques de Tonnancour (1917-), Jack Nichols (1921-), and Anne Kahane (1924-). See the exhibition catalogue *XXIX Biennale di Venezia*, Venice, La Biennale, 1958, p. 220-224. For an overview of Canada's participation at the Venice Biennale, see Reesor, Carol Harrison, 1995, *The Chronicles of The National Gallery of Canada at the Venice Biennale*, Master's thesis, Concordia University, p. 18-39. Paikowsky, S., 1999, "Constructing an Identity - The 1952 XXVI Biennale di Venezia and 'The Projection of Canada Abroad'", *The Journal of Canadian Art History*, XX/1-2, 130-181. The opening celebrations for the pavilion were captured in the documentary, *City Out of Time*, produced by the National Film Board of Canada in 1958 [Camera operator: Dufaux; 58-209-ECN-6].
- Banham, Reyner, 1959, « Neoliberty—The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture », *The Architectural Review*, vol. 747, p. 231-235.
- Significant examples of "renovations" are Franco Albini's Palazzo Bianco and Rosso in Genua (1952-1962), Carlo Scarpa's Castelvécchio in Verona (1954-1967), and the Studio Architetti BBPR's intervention in the Castello Sforzesco of Milan (1949-1963).
- The pavilion has received only cursory attention in Canada and abroad: see 1958, « Venice Pavilion », *The Canadian Architect*, no. 3, November. p. 62-64; Buchanan, Donald W., 1958, « Canada Builds a Pavilion at Venice », *Canadian Art*, January, p. 29-31; Fenwick, Kathleen M., 1958, « The New Canadian Pavilion at Venice », *Canadian Art*, November, p. 274-277; 1958, « Il padiglione del Canada alla Biennale di Venezia », *Casabella—Continuità*, September-October, no. 221, p. 40-45; and Mulazzani, Marco, 1988, *I padiglioni della Biennale a Venezia 1887-1993*, Milan, Electa, p. 108-111.
- That letter, dated February 9, 1960, was addressed to Mr. Richard B. Simmins (Director of Exhibition Extension Services), with a copy to Mr. Buchanan (Deputy Director) by National Gallery staff. (Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968 (3 file folders), file no. 19-4, National Gallery of Canada fonds, National Gallery of Canada Archives.)  
More recently Phyllis Lambert—founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture—complained about the pavilion: "I do not thank him for that building! It is not a good exhibition space." (Phyllis Lambert to author, February 29, 1996.)
- Canada's Landmark Multiculturalism Act was approved in 1971. (See Palmer, Howard, 1975, *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism*, Vancouver, Copp Clark Publishers.) For a less flattering view of that policy, see Bissoondath, Neil, 1994, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, Toronto, Penguin Books.
- Relatively recently, one commentator warned that "the pavilion itself has perpetuated the outdated image of Canada as a land of noble savages or a country of hewers of wood and drawers of water." (See Balfour Bowen, Lisa, 1982, « The 40<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale », *Art Magazine*, September-October, p. 29-30.)
- Alloway, Lawrence, 1968, *The Venice Biennale 1895-1968—From Salon to Goldfish Bowl*, London, Faber & Faber, p. 18.
- Curtis, Edward S., 1935, *The North American Indian: Being a Series of Volumes Picturing and Describing the Indians of the United States and Alaska*, Boston, Charles E. Lauriat Co.
- There is much evidence of that struggle in the nation's capital, Ottawa: compare the picturesque neo-Gothic parliament buildings of Anglo derivation with the Château Laurier of Franco derivation.
- Litt, Paul, 1992, *The Muses and the Masses and the Massey Commission*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
- Recent overviews have unfairly minimized the influence of the report. (See, for example, Therrien, Marie-Josée, and France Vanlaethem, 2002, « Modern Architecture in Canada 1940-1967 », in Hubert-Jan Henket and Hilde Heyden (eds.), *Back from Utopia: The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, Rotterdam, 010 Publishers, p. 126-137.)
- Royal Commission Studies: A Selection of Essays Prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951*, Ottawa, Edmond Cloutier, 1951, p. 216-221; republished in Simmins, Geoffrey (ed.), 1992, *Documents in Canadian Architecture*, Peterborough, Ontario, Broadview Press, p. 183-204. Only recently a French translation of the report has been published (Ottawa, National Library of Canada, 1999).
- See *The National Gallery of Canada: Annual Report of the Board of Trustees for the Fiscal Year 1958-1959*, Ottawa, The National Gallery of Canada, 1959, p. 32-36. The summary reads: "There is no doubt that the Canadian Government was most fortunate in obtaining the services of the brilliant young Italian architect, Enrico Perresutti of Milan, who was persuaded to take on the assignment of designing the pavilion and overseeing its construction, for he has given Canada an exceptionally fine pavilion which he has designed and supervised to the last detail from the landscaping of its immediate surroundings to the interior display panels and stands."
- Ord, Douglas, 2003, *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture*, Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press; Mainprize, Garry, 1984, *The National Gallery of Canada: A Hundred Years of Exhibitions*, Ottawa, The National Gallery of Canada, originally published in *RACAR—Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, nos. 1-2, 1984; and Sutherland Boggs, Jean, 1971, *The National Gallery of Canada*, London, Thames and Hudson.



17. Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968, *op. cit.*
18. See Donald Buchanan to Harry Orr, August 28, 1954. Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968, *op. cit.*
19. Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968, *op. cit.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Cited in Keim, Kevin, 1996, *An Architectural Life—Memoirs & Memories of Charles W. Moore*, Boston, A Bulfinch Press Book / Little, Brown and Company, p. 28.
22. Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968, *op. cit.*
23. That is the ambiguous impression left by a letter of May 14, 1956, from Alan Jarvis to Geoffrey Massey, who had solicited future plans for the pavilion: "Many thanks for your letter about the Canadian Pavilion in Venice. In fact this has been arranged through External Affairs using blocked funds and we have therefore chosen an Italian architect to do this job. It is Peressutti of Milan, whom I imagine you know. We are sorry that we could not use a Canadian architect for this job." (Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968, *op. cit.*)
24. Rybczynski, Witold, 1993, *A Place for Art: The Architecture of the National Gallery of Canada*, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada.
25. On the history of the Biennale, see: Alloway, *op. cit.*; Rizzi, Paolo, and Enzo Di Martino, 1982, *Storia della Biennale 1895-1982*, Milan, Electa; and Di Martino, Enzo, 1995, *La Biennale di Venezia—1895-1995—Cento Anni di Arte e Cultura*, Milan, Editoriale Giorgio Mondadori.
26. Mulazzani, *op. cit.*
27. See Huxtable, Ada Luisa, 1954, « Olivetti's Lavish Shop », *Art Digest*, July, p. 15; and 1954, « Typewriter Palazzo in New York », *Architectural Forum*, August, p. 98-103.
28. In the brief biographies compiled by Arthur for the article announcing the winner of the Toronto City Hall competition published in the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (October 1958), he draws attention to the fact that "Dr. Rogers' firm is engaged on the Canadian Pavilion for the 'Biennale d'Arte,' Venice, 1958."
29. Liscombe, Rhodri Windsor, 1997, *The New Spirit—Modern Architecture in Vancouver, 1938-1963*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press; Lima, Antonietta Iolanda, 2003, *Soleri: Architecture as Human Ecology*, New York, Monacelli Press.
30. Zevi, Bruno, 1945, *Verso un'architettura organica*, Turin, Giulio Einaudi; English ed., 1950, *Towards an Organic Architecture*, London, Faber & Faber.
31. Zevi, Bruno, 1958, « Architetture alla Biennale—Arredi Scarpiani Spaccato BBPR », *L'architettura—Cronache e storia di architettura*, p. 216; republished in Zevi, Bruno, 1978, *Cronache di architettura—dall'Expo mondiale di Bruxelles all'Unesco parigino*, Rome and Bari, Laterza, p. 216.
32. For an overview, see Sabatino, Michelangelo, 2004, « Back to the Drawing Board: Revisiting the Vernacular Tradition in Italian Modernism », *Annali di architettura*, no. 16, p. 169-185.
33. For a discussion of the "first buildings" of Canada, see Kalman, Harold, 2000, *A Concise History of Canadian Architecture*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 1-23.
34. For an overview of indigenous dwellings in North America, see Nabokov, Peter, and Robert Easton, 1989, *Native American Architecture*, New York, Oxford University Press.
35. Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968, *op. cit.*
36. That option would also have been more in keeping with the longstanding Canadian tradition of building in wood, whether for log cabins or barns. (See Rempel, John I., 1967 [rev. ed. 1980], *Building with Wood and Other Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Building in Central Canada*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press.) On the tent in history, see Hatton, E.M., 1979, *The Tent Book*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company.
37. See Payne, Alina A., 1994, « Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism », *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, no. 53, September, p. 322-342. The classic text suggesting the relationship possible between natural organisms and architecture is Wentworth Thompson, D'Arcy, 1917 [2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1992], *On Growth and Form*, Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press. See also Otto, Frei, 1982, *Natürliche Konstruktionen: Formen und Konstruktionen in Natur und Technik und Prozesse ihrer Entstehung*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt (Italian translation: Otto, Frei, 1984, *L'architettura della natura*, Milan, Il saggiatore); and Coineau, Yves, and Biruta Kresling, 1989, *Les inventions de la nature et la bionique*, Hachette, Paris.
38. Peressutti, Belgiojoso, and Rogers were no doubt familiar with that building, just minutes from their office and published in 1954 in *Casabella—Continuità*, no. 202, August-September, p. 31-32. (See Gualdoni, Flaminio, 1990, *Ico Parisi & Architecture*, Modena, Nuova Alfa Editore.)
39. In a memorandum to the Secretary of the Treasury Board, July 26, 1956, Alan Jarvis wrote: "I have recently returned from Venice where I have chosen the site in the Biennale grounds which is being given us for our permanent use by the Biennale authorities. The National Gallery of Canada now wishes to obtain permission to make a contract with the architectural firm of Belgiojoso, Peressutti and Rogers, via dei Chiostris 2, Milan, Italy, for the designing of this small pavilion." (Canadian Pavilion Venice 1953-1968, *op. cit.*)
40. Balas, Edith, 1987, *Brancusi and Rumanian Folk Traditions*, Boulder, East European Monographs.
41. Steele, Allen (ed.), 1988, *The Architecture of Arthur Erickson*, London, Thames and Hudson; Shapiro, Barbara E. (ed.), 1985, *Arthur Erickson: Selected Projects 1971-1985*, New York, The Center.
42. *Brian Mackay Lyons*, Halifax, Tuns Press, 1998.
43. See Baird, George, 1982, « Northern Polarities: Architecture in Canada Since 1950 », *Okanada*, Ottawa, The Canada Council.
44. Arthur, Eric R., 1938, *The Early Buildings of Ontario*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press; Arthur, Eric R., 1926, *Small Houses of the Late 18<sup>th</sup> and Early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries in Ontario*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press; Arthur, Eric R., and Dudley Witney, 1972, *The Barn—A Vanishing Landmark in North America*, Toronto, M.F. Feheley Arts. On Arthur, see my 2001, « Eric Arthur: Practical Visions », *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada*, vol. 26, nos. 1-2, December p. 33-42.
45. The phrase "quiet dignity" is taken from Greenhill, Ralph, Ken Macpherson, and Douglas Richardson, 1974, *Ontario Towns*, Toronto, Oberon.
46. Rogers, Ernesto N., 1958, « Continuity or Crisis? », *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, May, p. 188-189 (originally published in *Casabella-Continuità*, April-May 1957).