1-1-2011

Architecture and Canada : the character of context

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Architecture and Canada: The Character of Context

by

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B. Arch. Sc.

A design research thesis presented to Ryerson University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture
in the Program of
The Department of Architectural Science
Toronto, Ontario, Canada 2011
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Architecture and Canada: The Character of Context

Jason Wayne Fung

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Master of Architecture 2011

Abstract

This Master of Architecture thesis postulates that national values representing Canada can be expressed through architecture. The thesis focuses on the Canada Pavilion, built in 1958, at the Venice Biennale. An early example of an effort to represent a national identity, it is a result, in part, of the *Royal Commission on the National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* – informally acknowledged as *The Massey Report* – directed by Vincent Massey in 1951. Through the investigation of national pavilions and Canadian embassies after *The Massey Report*'s publication and continuing with award winning contemporary architecture, this thesis identifies common themes across a range of projects. Using these common themes, which suggest an architectural consensus in a national identity, this thesis proposes a new architectural intervention to the Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Acknowledgements

Marco Polo has been a very supportive supervisor throughout this process. Thanks for helping me transform an interest into a thesis. Your encouragement and expertise has been an invaluable source of motivation. Colin Ripley and John Cirka have equally shaped my studies during my graduate education. Your role as director of the program has made my education a constant upward journey of discovery. To all the professors and students at the Department of Architectural Science at Ryerson: you have made a resounding impression on my educational experience.

I cannot forget all the help I received outside of the school. Catherine Dowling truly helped me start this thesis. It didn't conclude the way we expected, but without a proper beginning, there wouldn't have been a proper end. Tamara Andruszkiewicz contributed to my sense of compassion toward the Canada Pavilion in Venice. Our talks opened avenues in the research that would have been completely overlooked. To Paul Backewich and all my work colleagues who have both supported and challenged my ideas, I thank you as well. I would also like to thank all the people that have provided warm words of encouragement toward my academic endeavours.

Finally, I could not have completed this thesis without the full support of my family. To my mother, father, and sister; you have given an incalculable amount of love and support toward me and my education. Any success of mine should be equally shared as your own.

To my parents, Theresa and Wayne.

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Introduction

“We argue for the critical place that architecture must occupy in any serious discussion of nation and national values; that Canadian architecture can be characterized and this is worthwhile; not in a quixotic search for a national style, but in order to assess the economic and institutional regimes that shape architectural production in this country” (Scott Wilson, Foreword to *Substance over Spectacle*, 2005, p.5).

The thesis proposal began with a simple interest in Canadian architecture. Initially having been overwhelmed by the wide array of architecture that this nation has produced and, simultaneously, astonished at the indifferent response from the general public, questions emerged regarding Canada’s culture of architectural production. Early research led to *The Royal Commission on the Arts, Letters and Sciences* – informally referred to as *The Massey Report* – directed by Vincent Massey in 1951 in an effort to understand and further develop Canada’s production in the arts, including architecture (Figure 1.1). The commission found that Canadian culture was “struggling to be itself” (Massey, 1951, p.18), due to Canada’s small and dispersed population in close proximity to the border of the United States of America, thus having a strong influence on the development of Canada’s own distinct culture (Massey, 1951).

A year after *The Massey Report*’s publication, Canada began participating in the Venice Biennale of Art, opening with Emily Carr, David Milne, Goodridge Roberts and Alfred Pellán, and continuing in subsequent years with artists like Michael Snow, Janet Cardiff & Geroche Bures Miller, and most recently Steven Shearer. Today, Canada’s entire arts culture has evolved with considerable advancement, receiving international recognition in literature and the visual arts – most recently Cardiff and Miller were awarded special jury prizes at the 2001 Venice Biennale for their installation: *The Paradise Institute* (The Canada Council for the Arts, 2001) – which can be at least partially attributed to *The Massey Report*’s initiatives.

If *The Massey Report* had a positive effect on the arts culture in Canada, then one can postulate that there might have been some effect on Canadian architecture. The report stated that “[a]rchitecture... has the greatest influence of all the arts on the manner of living, but is largely ignored by the public” (Massey, 1951, p.216) and sought to rectify this problem by suggesting an open competition commissioning process for the design of public buildings, which would improve the overall quality of architecture in Canada. It identified that Canadian culture was “struggling to be itself” (Massey, 1951, p.18), due to Canada’s small dispersed population in close proximity to the border with the United States of America (Massey, 1951).

“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” (Massey, 1951, p.216-217).

The report also highlighted the regional qualities that inform Canadian architecture, which at the same time make it impossible to define as a singular aesthetic style. Like much of the architecture across the globe, it is the particularities of a local context that seem to shape the formal and performative qualities of built projects. The vastness and variety of the Canadian landscape, accompanied by a highly varied and often harsh climate, make for a diverse collection of projects that require close attention to detail in the building envelope but also an overall formal sensibility toward the immediate context. Historically, this tradition of a responsive architecture originated from First Nations building techniques – semi-nomadic traditions that utilized local materials to construct temporary and often portable shelters – arguably the beginning of architecture in Canada (Kalman, Volume I, 1994, p.1). With the arrival of European settlers, architecture progressed in the way of mimicry – through the use of aesthetic styles imported from overseas – a result of this nation’s colonial roots (Massey, 1951, p.216).

“For throughout the 1970s there was an exacerbation of stylistic concerns at the expense of programmatic ones and a reduction of architecture as a form of knowledge to architecture as knowledge of form. From modernism to postmodernism, the history of architecture was surreptitiously turned into a history of styles. This perverted form of history borrowed from semiotics the ability to “read” layers of interpretation but reduced architecture to a system of surface signs at the expense of the reciprocal, indifferent, or even conflictive relationship of spaces and events.” (Tschumi, 1996, p.7)

In Canada, there seems to be a particular struggle in the reduction of “architecture to a system of surface signs”. Historically, much of Canadian architecture has resorted in the use of imported aesthetic styles. Along with the harsh Canadian climate, a focus is placed on resolving a building’s exterior envelope. The combination of imported styles with a focus on the exterior envelope has resulted in an architectural façade-ism. For a practice that is integrated in our everyday lives – informing where we live, work and play, architectural values must have roots far deeper than its façade. The difficulty in Canada is that this society is exceptionally multivalent – constantly changing with the convenience of travel and technology. It is for this reason that an investigation in a national identity must be continually addressed. Who are we as a people? What do we stand for? These questions transcend tawdry judgements of a society’s appearance for Canadians who believe in equal rights and a freedom of belief. So then why do we not think about architecture with that same depth? What is our architecture about? What are our cultural values in architectural design? These questions dig beneath the surface of what has plagued our architectural façade-ism. Is there a particular culture of architecture that has been informed by our values as a nation?

“This social provenance gives Canadian architecture of all epochs its particular quality. Architecture is a most social art requiring a consensus of agreement to generate the funds needed to build. Our architecture is as distinctly Canadian as our cultural landscape, and as elusive to define” (Whiteson, 1983, p.9).

The multitude of cultures in Canada adds to the difficulty in trying to define Canadian architecture. Its youth only extends the last 150 years, a sliver in time for many other developed nations. Its constant change from the first indigenous settlements to the more recent trend of immigration has resulted in a wide spectrum of cultures. The most important aspect to draw from these developed and emerging cultures is that Canada is multi-faceted and complex in its composition. Its demographics span many ethnicities, beliefs and ages. The resulting acclaimed contemporary architecture has rejected superficial aesthetic styles as a means to define Canadian architecture. Although the architecture does not subscribe to any particular style, there is an identifiable approach in design that has resulted in the new published or award winning contemporary vernacular and regionally responsive precedents. It is not only the vernacular or regionally responsive outcomes that make these projects essentially Canadian – for example, there exists great Canadian architecture in urban centres where vernacular traditions of regionalism are not as relevant. It was found that many great Canadian projects in urban centres somehow creatively integrated themselves into the fabric of their context (Cawker and Bernstein, 1988). The apparent ‘identifiable approach’ in design that is distinctly Canadian, therefore, is based on an architecture that roots itself in context. Mixed with the harsh climates found across the country, architecture for the most part, lends itself on the side of subservience.

“[A]rchitecture is more than the provision of shelter. It is a response, even to the point of subservience, to the land, climate, and nature; it is an understanding of time, geological and human, that insight of a moment we all experience, which shifts the mind and changes the course of life: it is appropriateness of thoughts and action to serve social needs in the context of architecture in the evolutionary continuity of life” (Moriyama, 1983, *Modern Canadian Architecture* – Foreword, p.6).

Moriyama alludes to a design sensitivity rooted in place and culture. This rootedness has manifested, architecturally, as a sensibility to the landscape along with communal places for people to intermingle, but can vary in resolution depending on the context that surrounds the response. These architectural concepts can be interpreted as non-architectural principles like attitudes of truth, respect and community, which in turn refer to a Canadian identity.

So, what is Canadian architecture? Such an ambiguous and opened-ended question is this – a heated question, usually leading to various divergent opinions. It evokes a feeling of uncertainty anchoring this researcher’s speculation, “does a Canadian architecture exist?” This is not a question in regard to style, for such a thing would reduce architecture’s value in a cultural context; but rather a question of a process and methodology. Is there a distinctly Canadian way of approaching a design scheme – and then can the process reveal nuances that further inform the Canadian identity?

Chapter I – Architecture's role in Canadian Identity

I.1 The Problem in defining a Canadian Identity – Unity vs. Fragmentation

Figure 1.2 – The Toronto Inuksuk at Battery Park—An Inuit symbol imported from the traditions of the Arctic to Toronto – an effort to define a unifying symbol for all of Canada.

“Canadians, with their customary optimism, may think that the fate of their civilization is in their own hands. So it is. But this young nation, struggling to be itself, must shape its course with an eye to three conditions so familiar that their significance can too easily be ignored. Canada has a small and scattered population in a vast area; this population is clustered along the rim of another country many times more populous and of far greater economic strength; a majority of Canadians share their mother tongue with that neighbour, which leads to peculiarly close and intimate relations. One or two of these conditions will be found in many modern countries. But Canada alone possesses all three. What is their effect, good or bad, on what we call Canadianism?” (Massey, 1951, p.18).

The problem with trying to define a Canadian identity is that Canada is comprised of a small population across a vast area, which results in various regions with distinct cultures. The most apparent observation is how variable the Canadian climate and landscape is within its borders. These regional characteristics have physically fragmented the culture, between and within regions. For example, it is wrong to state that ‘West Coast Canada’ is the same as ‘Atlantic Canada’. Nor is it correct to state that all of ‘Prairie Canada’ is homogeneous in culture. To even say Canada is

a physically unified country seems to be a contradictory concept. Northrop Frye suggests that defining a national identity is difficult because it presumes a unity (1971). To some degree Frye is correct in his logic: finding a singular Canadian identity is impossible – a direct result of the many pluralisms that exist in this country – the physical regional qualities spanning from east to west; the multicultural and ethnic distinctions of the people; the multitude of beliefs and religions. The problem with Frye's argument is in his presumption that a search for an identity would lead to discovering a single identity. The religious leader the Aga Khan (Sayyid Karim al-Hussayni) stated in 2010, "We might talk not just about the ideal of harmony (in Canada) – the sounding of a single chord – but also about counterpoint. In counterpoint, each voice follows a separate musical line, but always as part of a single work of art, with a sense both of independence and belonging" (Brown, 2010). The Aga Khan alludes to Canada as being a community of individuals – many identities – which brings forth the idea of a pluralism that comprises our unity.

The Aga Khan's distinction that Canada represents more of a counterpoint rather than a harmony is a particularly astute observation. Within this nation there are various independent cultures that act, at times, to establish recognition of their own distinct culture from the rest of the nation. The French Canadian population, mainly in Quebec but also scattered across Canada in isolated regions, is an example of a culture that has fought for recognition as a distinct society. The referendums on Quebec separation held in 1980 and 1995 have displayed a radicalized version of this belief and have illustrated how Canada consists of at least two major cultures: the Anglophone culture and the Francophone culture.

By discussing the Anglo and Franco founding traditions of Canada, it is impossible to overlook Canada's aboriginal origins. Most recently added to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as founding peoples (along with the French and the English) the First Nations are officially recognized as the first settlers of this land awarding them Special Rights. The recognition of this distinct culture has brought forth a prominent aspect of Canadian pluralism. This distinction is an important part of Canadian identity because it separates this nation from the United States of America. It can be said that America acknowledges its aboriginal origins but it certainly does not identify with them. Canada, on the other hand, has used native symbols in art and architecture as a means to illustrate a national identity.

There exist many other aspects that define Canada that cannot be discussed in this thesis. Yet, the past has demonstrated that finding a Canadian identity is truly difficult due to the myriad of distinct cultures across the land. The underlying question for this thesis is: "How has architecture responded to this difficulty in finding a national identity?" This question became a reality during the 1940s and 1950s with Canada's initiatives in national development – an effort to shed its colonial roots and find its distinctive place on the international stage.

1.2 The Massey Report and a time for Nation Building

Figure 1.2 – Flag before 1967 – This image illustrates how different Canada was prior to 1967 when compared to today

The fragmentation between the Anglo, Franco and Native traditions of Canada have resulted in a history of architecture, leading up to the 1950s, of imitative styles. Predominantly influenced by its colonial roots, Canadian architecture before the end of the Second World War consisted of a mix of styles like Bruce Price's Romanesque train stations and French Chateaux style railway hotels (Kalman, Volume 2, 1994), as well as the English neo-gothic government buildings found across the nation (Kalman, Volume 2, 1994) which would give way to the Beaux-Arts Styles imported from America (Kalman, Volume 2, 1994). Styles were also combined, as at the Supreme Court of Canada building – a tribute to Modern Classicism topped with a Chateaux style hat (Kalman, Volume 2, 1994, p.721) - and were being referred to as a new 'Canadian style' (Kalman, Volume 2, 1994, p.721).

The Canadian identity was merely a small subset of a European tradition imported to project the image of an established nation. Although it was effective in distinguishing itself from the independent America, it was ineffective at speaking of its own developing traditions and culture. By the late 1940s, it became imperative for Canada to clearly represent itself as an independent nation. Mainly due to the international climate after the Second World War, Canada quickly became a destination for immigrants fleeing from the economically decimated European countries. The end of the War also resulted in the Baby Boom which meant a general population increase across the map. This large influx of people brought economic prosperity to the nation, but it also would result in radical changes in culture if left unchecked. Thus, a government priority in national development would serve to properly guide the culture of this increased population.

“An extensive national cultural policy has been gradually developed... although Canadians may feel that, in certain sectors, it has been too modest or timid... This policy has been aimed at strengthening and developing our main cultures without attempting to impose either of them upon any Canadians. It is based upon the principle that private initiative has the main responsibility in most aspects of our cultural development. It has provided financial assistance to individuals, voluntary organizations and institutions in order to support them without attempting, however, to control their activities. Finally this policy has also included the setting up of several public agencies which were deemed essential for the development and the adequate expression of our cultural life” (Ostry, p.68-69).

Under the direction of Vincent Massey, *The Royal Commission on the National Development of the Arts, Letters and Sciences* studied the nation's cultural changes in the arts. The commission's findings, published in 1951 and unofficially referred to as *The Massey Report*, summarized the state of Canada's cultural production and concluded the necessity of establishing national institutions to guide further development in the arts, some of which include the Canada Council for the Arts, the National Film Board and the National Gallery. It also recommended the allocation of government subsidies for universities as well as establishing scholarship programs for the education of citizens.

The Massey Report's chapter on Architecture and Urban Planning stated that “Architecture... has the greatest influence of all the arts on the manner of living, but is largely ignored by the public” (Massey, 1951, p.216). The causes of this, however, are not explicitly stated, but its proposed solution was to commission projects based on merit through open competitions so to “help raise the standards of our architecture and would contribute at the same time to the development of a healthy sense of rivalry in the profession” (Massey, 1951, p.220). It positively projected a potential “for the development of a regional architecture adapted to the landscape and the climate and also to the materials typical of the area” (Massey, 1951, p.218). *The Massey Report* alludes to the vernacular and regional approaches in Canadian architecture, decades before Kenneth Frampton's renowned 1983 essay on *Critical Regionalism*, which is a recurring theme in contemporary Canadian projects today.

“Nonetheless many hopeful signs of a growing architectural sense in Canada have been brought to our attention. There as the possibilities of the new ‘engineering architecture’ symbolized in Canada defined by grain elevators, whether in wood as is typical on the Prairies or in concrete about the Great Lakes. On the architectural merits of these, opinion differs; one of our informants finds them honest and no more, another admits a beauty in ‘simplicity of form, unbroken surface texture and the play of shadow’. We were, however, reminded that in French-speaking Canada as elsewhere important experiments are being made in public buildings and in domestic architecture. Architects, we are told, are striving at once to come to terms with the new technology, and to shake off an obsession with the past. They are insisting on the right to face their problem as it is, dealing with the conditions imposed by site, the spiritual and

physical needs of the clients and the cost. It was drawn to our attention that there is an 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 materials typical of the area. Earlier signs of this, as we have noted, disappeared in the flood of cheap standardized materials. There are now, however, distinguishable regional developments in British Columbia which take advantage of commanding views and of the relative cheapness of wood. No such experiments are yet apparent elsewhere. It has been stated to us that a true Canadian architecture must develop in this way” (Massey, 1951, p.218).

The Massey Report’s suggestion for the future development of Canadian architecture is apparent and signals for a transition in the way in which architectural design should be approached in this country. This transition in Canadian architecture can be observed from the time *The Massey Report* was published progressing toward the Canadian Centennial, and leading into present day contemporary architecture. Compendium publications on Canadian architecture by authors Leon Whiteson, Ruth Cawker and William Bernstein, and Harold Kalman illustrate the transition from imitative styles to the Canadian modern and post-modern styles, while authors Lisa Rochon, George Kapelos, John McMinn and Marco Polo, and Andrew Gruft have highlighted contemporary examples of regional and responsive approaches to Canadian architecture.

The quote (Massey, 1951, p.218) additionally suggests that the interpretations of Canadian architecture are varied across the profession. This reality is apparent today since opinions on Canadian architecture can result in various heated debates. Rochon, Kapelos, McMinn and Polo, and Gruft have tried to grapple with this multitude of opinions in trying to find a consensus on what architecture in Canada might be. Their explorations, although each have their similarities, suggest different interpretations on what they consider the defining characteristics of Canadian architecture.

1.3 Period Publications on Modern and Post-Modern Canadian Architecture

From the time of *The Massey Report* (1951) to the 1980s, Canadian architecture transitioned from imitating styles of European architecture to an architectural intention of expressing modern ideas. Early projects have been highlighted in compendium texts by authors Whiteson, Cawker and Bernstein, and Kalman. Their objective perspectives on a broad assortment of projects illustrate particularities in the Canadian Modern approach that stand distinct from other manifestations of the movement.

“Modernism is by inspiration the International Style, as it was once known. It is universalist in tone, one world by hope, expressive of a common humanity free of those narrow nationalisms and regional quirks that have caused so much grief in the past and still do in the present. Its populism is intellectual, not grassroots; its humanism is abstract, not sentimental; its metaphysic is technological, not traditional. *Purity* is a key

note; a sense of new beginnings, of “starting from zero,” of eliminating “from our hearts and minds all dead concepts,” and even the inherited, confused, and deadly past itself.” (Whiteson, 1983, p.9)

Modern Canadian Architecture, written by Leon Whiteson, surveys sixty Canadian projects built between 1950 and 1980. Within these three decades, Whiteson comments that the Modern movement in North America had signalled a “new beginning” for Canada, allowing it to shed “all dead concepts” – its own previous colonial history. Canada, however, did not blindly adopt the Modern style, but rather adapted it to its national and regional sensibilities. Most notably the above quote reveals particularities in Canadian modernism that distinguish it from American modernism. For one, Whiteson notes the “universalist” attitudes of the Modern movement, but also acknowledges the existence of national and regional “quirks” which resist these totalizing ideas. The quote, itself, is rather interesting as it introduces the so called ‘key’ idea of *Purity*, but at the same time alludes to a pluralism in expression, an abstract humanism, and a combination of national and regional qualities that hinder the clarity of the Modern movement.

Whiteson suggests that the idea of “eliminating dead concepts” thrust from the Modern movement, even with all its clarity and purpose, could not reposition Canada’s roots in history and place. “This rooted inertia has saved Canada from many of the worst crudities of the International Style at its most arrogant and urgent. On the other hand, not knowing exactly who you are, lacking ready answers to questions of identity, is most un-Modernist” (Whiteson, 1983, p.10). Returning to the question of identity and its hindrance on the Modern movement, Whiteson argues that Canada’s lack of identity, although frustrating at times, has provided a shield of modesty from the negative effects of overconfidence in a singular idea. The compendium text is broken down into four regions, introduced by master architects, according to Whiteson, of those regions: Ron Thom for the West Coast; Peter Hemingway for the Prairie Provinces; John C. Parkin for Ontario; and Raymond Affleck for Montreal as a representation of Quebec. Whiteson neglects entire portions of Canada, like the Maritimes, as well as the territories. This suggests that perhaps the rootedness in these regions was so strong in a resistance to the Modern approach that it would not stand up to the publication’s theme.

Each region’s climatic and cultural particularities have informed the emergent Modern period of architecture in Canada. For Ron Thom, Vancouver architecture is informed and shaped by the particularity of the hard edge of the ocean and the sloped topography of the mountains (Whiteson, 1983). The city breeds a characteristic “drama of its location... its curious sense of floating on the edge of the known world, confronting oceanic space... [i]t is unlike any other Canadian city” (Whiteson, 1983, p.23). Accordingly, Peter Hemingway suggests Prairie architecture also responds to its particular landscape, similar to Thom’s commentary on Vancouver’s development, but resulting in a completely different architectural articulation. One example that Hemingway mentions is Clifford Weins’ Central Heating and Cooling Plant in Regina as “a vertical building that punctuates the flat Prairie landscape in the same way as did the pioneer churches and the grain elevators” (Whiteson, 1983, p.69). This exemplifies how Canadian Modern architecture holds a responsiveness to the landscape, a rootedness to place.

John C. Parkin and Raymond Affleck's commentaries on Ontario and Quebec, respectively, suggest a different sensibility to Canadian Modern architecture. For Ontario and Quebec architecture, the authors suggest an idea of community – individuals working together in the design process – which resisted the “highly individual and explicit symbols” (Whiteson, 1983, p.122) of the Modern movement. Ontario's increasing urbanization had led to architectural developments in transportation in conjunction with urban planning. Parkin, of course, is referring to the creation of Toronto's subway system and arterial thoroughfares, while also noting that the community became aware of its problems in purely focusing on infrastructural development that could lead to the decimation of key historical sites around the city. This sensibility resulted in the revitalization of the Annex which was originally slated to be disfigured by the construction of the Spadina Expressway. This sense of community, a rootedness in society, an awareness of being affected by other factors is also exhibited in Montreal's architectural development. Affleck states that, “Montreal's predominance in this respect derives from a variety of factors: location, climate, history, concentration of capital, and, above all, the dynamic interaction of French and English cultures” (Whiteson, 1983, p.212). From Affleck's account, the reported architecture from Montreal seems to have been affected little by the Modern movement. However, the author continues to suggest that the opposite is true as the Modern influences from America had gradually transitioned Montreal architecture away from a European style (Whiteson, 1983, p.212). Affleck distinguishes a middle threshold in this transition being Expo '67, which was a creative pinnacle in its “commitment to high-quality planning, landscape design and architecture”(Whiteson, 1983, p.213). This resistance to the pure ideals of the Modern period is evidence that rootedness in place is a powerful characteristic of Canadian architecture.

Expo '67 serves as a point of departure for Cawker and Bernstein's publication *Contemporary Canadian Architecture*. Their view differs from Whiteson's argument of a modernism rooted in place; instead of “distinguishing Canada as a nation, from other nations, the fair proved that Canadians were just like everyone else. Put another way, Canada was just as *modern* as anyplace else” (Cawker and Bernstein, 1988, p.18). Cawker and Bernstein alluded to Canada's coming-of-age, how over the years of development since the War had now formed a nation with a so-called identity. It was a celebration that was centered on the individual, further emphasized by the Expo theme, *Man and His World*. This theme was about a subject's place in a larger context – a sensibility to the community.

Four nodes punctuate the theme, *Man and His World*, and are celebrated in the corresponding pavilions: *Man the Explorer*, *Man the Producer*, *Man the Provider* and *Man in the Community*. Most notably the latter, *Man in the Community* (Figure 1.4); was designed by Arthur Erickson and symbolized a “Garden of Eden”. Although Erickson's mandate in this pavilion was not to define a national identity, there are aspects that speak of the Canadian land and also of a sacredness of place. The structurally complex yet formally simple roof seems to be cathedral like, amplifying this characteristic of a sacredness of place. The idea of the ‘*complex*’ together with the ‘*simple*’ is a contradiction – a duality – and is present throughout the scheme. Its cave-like

Figure 1.4 – Man in the Community Pavilion Exterior

interior space is juxtaposed with an overall airy tribute to an outdoor haven – displaying a play on the outdoor and indoor environments. Emulated in the use of cold concrete with the warmth of water and vegetation, it is a symbol of the Canadian built context.

Erickson's formal approach to the design displays an iconic symbol, but the pavilion itself has an experiential quality that begins to speak about the Canadian culture. Within the pavilion, visitors follow a path that drops in elevation, creating different perspectives. The movement from a compressed entrance to the expanse of the high canopy evokes an awe-inspiring feeling intended to dwarf the human scale (Figure 1.5). This projects the vastness of the Canadian land, but also advocates a Canadian humility and subservience to it – that one can only be subjected by their surroundings.

Many pavilions serve as large public spaces, like the Man in the Community pavilion, which is a theme that carried through subsequent Canadian architectural projects. Cawker and Bernstein identify a surge of large civic projects after Expo '67 suggesting that a new consciousness of the community had emerged. Some projects also blur the boundaries between

Figure 1.5 – Man in the
Community Pavilion Interior

architecture, landscape and city planning, such as Robson Square, Eaton Centre, The National Gallery, and Complexe Desjardins. These large scale projects illustrated an approach rooted in urbanism – providing for the community. This differs from the American Post-Modern movement predominantly concerned with a deconstructivist attitude – a separation of architectural syntax and vocabulary. For Canada, places like the Eaton Centre, The National Gallery, and Robson Square speak less of these abstract Post-Modern ideals, and in its place are tangible urban planning and architectural features, such as vast promenades that stitch into the city's fabric, an attitude of weaving into the community. *Contemporary Canadian Architecture* outlines this theme and touches upon early research on architects Percy Nobbs and John Lyle who advocated that “the roots of a distinctly Canadian architecture, [is] one that is attuned to local culture and climate” (Cawker and Bernstein, 1988, p.7). These ideas, along the very same lines as *Modern Canadian Architecture*, hoped to further the “theoretical activity surrounding architecture in Canada” and give “a clearer sense of national and regional traditions of building and urban design” (Cawker and Bernstein, 1988, p.7). It outlined many projects in Canada that had moved away from the stylistic mimicry of European architecture and also revealed nuances that differentiated Canadian modernism from the American approach.

These two publications surveyed a short history of Canadian architecture. Harold Kalman, on the other hand, dives into a broad overview of Canadian architectural history beginning with the First Nations building traditions. Published in two volumes, Kalman's second volume touches upon the more recent Modern works in Canada. The value of this immense overview is that Kalman identified particularities throughout that correlate to the findings of Whiteson, and Cawker and Bernstein's publications.

“Architecture, above all, is an expression of society's values, and it is in our buildings that we discover much about our distinctively Canadian nature. At the same time, by searching for common threads in the architecture of all periods, we can begin to identify a specifically Canadian point of view. One key Canadianism is the tendency to simplify prototypes, to absorb ideas from abroad and modify them into something more restrained and less ostentatious. ...These architectural directions mirror the modesty, self-deprecation, and avoidance of the spotlight that are so characteristic of Canadians” (Kalman, Volume 2, 1994, p.869).

Kalman also mentions other common features across the board such as a “respect shown to nature, natural forms, and local materials” which have manifested in the “*habitant* farmstead of the seventeenth century, and the curvilinear splendour of ... the twenties, and in the retention of distinctive regional differences” (Kalman, Volume 2, 1994, p.869). These key aspects of Canadian architecture are not stylistic concerns, but characteristics and attitudes in architecture – elaborated further in contemporary texts.

1.4 Contemporary Publications on Canadian Architecture

Recent publications including *Up North* (Lisa Rochon, 2005), *41° to 66°: Regional Responses to Sustainable Architecture in Canada* (McMinn and Polo, 2005), *Winnipeg Modern* (Keshavjee, 2006), *Atlantic Modern* (Mannell, 2004), as well as many others funded by *The Support to the Promotion of Architecture* grants provided by the Canada Council for the Arts, have highlighted geographic regionalism – the response to an immediate context – as one common theme for architecture in Canada. Due to the enormity of the land and regional variations, this condition yields an incredible myriad of building typologies – a result of the distinct geographic and cultural characteristics of each locality. This categorization of architecture, undertaken by various authors, constitutes an important step toward understanding a distinctly *Canadian* architecture. It is still difficult to say that the Canadian way is an architecture that is somehow intrinsically tied to the landscape. Such a statement can be applied to a vast majority of architecture that exists. Furthermore, the general trend of Canadian society is toward urbanization; what then of the landscape? *The Massey Report* comments on the urbanization of Canada:

“At present [1951], we were told, 54 per cent of Canada’s population is urban, and the proportion is growing rapidly. It is increasingly urgent therefore that anyone who constructs a building of any kind considers the relation of the new structure both to the site and to neighbouring buildings actual and potential, a point strongly brought to our attention by a professional architect who referred to this responsibility both as a public duty and as architectural good manners” (Massey, 1951, p.216).

The most striking note regards to a “responsibility both as a public duty and as architectural good manners”. Such a thought evokes ideas about servitude, courteousness, and benevolence. An architecture that ties itself to the landscape is not what makes Canadian architecture distinct; it is only one manifestation of the attitudes of servitude, courteousness and benevolence to the land.

George Kapelos’ 1994 publication, *Interpretations of Nature*, discusses architecture in Canada, at the time, as being largely influenced by nature. Inspired by the work of The Group of Seven at the McMichael Gallery, the discourse explores the idea of nature’s influence on architectural design, mainly in Ontario. The resultant case studies presented in *Interpretations of Nature* lend themselves more toward the symbolism of nature, rather than responding to it. These projects include Cumberland Park, Bay Adelaide Park and the Parliamentary Precinct Area along with other post-modern civic buildings. In this way, this publication travels along the same lines as *Contemporary Canadian Architecture* in the investigation of large scale public projects. The difference in this case is that *Interpretations of Nature* has drawn upon the explicit theme of nature in Canadian architecture rather than architecture’s interface with the built context. Kapelos, therefore, has outlined the importance of nature in the Canadian identity, but only seems to penetrate the surface of the topic.

This theme continues in Lisa Rochon’s publication: *Up North* (2005). For Rochon, Canadian architecture is not just a symbol of nature, but an engagement with the landscape of a region. She discusses how the land is essentially a dictator of the architecture – that form is

derived by the physical climatic context – which is what makes Canadian architecture distinct. Although Rochon's argument allows her to pursue the study of a vast array of great Canadian projects, this study challenges Rochon's view and identifies Canadian architecture as much more than her ambiguous definition.

Most importantly, this thesis draws upon the work of John McMinn and Marco Polo, who investigate Canadian architecture as a response “to the marginalisation of sustainability in relation to the larger critical discourse on contemporary architecture, which has been, in part, self imposed” (McMinn and Polo, 2005, p.3). Their publication, *41° to 66°: Regional Responses to Sustainable Architecture in Canada*, delves into the concept of designing in context more deeply, exploring the role of architecture in “helping define humanity's relationship to its larger physical and cultural context” (McMinn and Polo, 2005, p.3). In an almost seamless narrative, the publication reviews 32 Canadian projects organized into six distinct regions across Canada – the Arctic, West Coast, Mountain, Prairie, Continental and Atlantic. The projects reviewed in *41° to 66°* are discussed in terms of their contribution to the cultural traditions or their responsiveness to the landscape for each region. As an example, the discourse on the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology not only addresses the design process drawing from the regional geographic conditions, but also discusses the local cultural traditions of the Native people. The authors comment on Busby Perkins+Will's open communication with five local Native bands – active consultation on “the needs of a modern academic institution while acknowledging the significant features of the site and the heritage and culture of the native students” (McMinn and Polo, 2005, p.27). The authors' publication clearly frames the argument that this responsiveness to environment and culture is a distinguishing feature of Canadian architecture.

Therefore, it is not that Canadian architecture is defined only by its link to the natural landscape or of utilizing First Nations building traditions. Although a large number of projects considered as great Canadian works hold those ideas, the attitudes of subservience, modesty and meekness, are the characteristics of Canadian architecture that have lent themselves to be responsive to the landscape, or to have aspects of local cultures.

On the other hand, Rochon identifies an interesting characteristic for Canadian architecture; that it occupies a middle ground between polar design reactions. “...Canadian architecture takes up a remarkable position. It occupies the ground somewhere between the fabulously dull and the fabulously sensational” (Rochon, 2005, p.28). She suggests that Canadian architecture is neither boring nor spectacular. Andrew Gruft theorizes that this may be due to pragmatics: dealing with the harsh climactic conditions, which is accompanied by building regulations and policy (Gruft, 1986, p.51). Gruft points out that “...if one were to attempt to summarize the distinguishing feature of contemporary Canadian architecture in one, perhaps overly simple statement, it would express its resistance to the spectacular and pursuit of a more balanced design approach” (Gruft, 2005, p.16). At the heart of this discussion is a characteristic of Canadian architecture: modesty. Raymond Moriyama (1983) alludes to this in a foreword to Whiteson's *Modern Canadian Architecture*: “As demonstrated by their work, and the achievements

of others included in this book, architecture is more than the provision of shelter. It is a response, even to the point of subservience, to the land, climate, and nature; it is an understanding of time, geological and human, that insight of a moment we all experience, which shifts the mind and changes the course of life: it is appropriateness of thoughts and action to serve social needs in the context of architecture in the evolutionary continuity of life” (p.6).

The idea of subservience or modesty is an architectural process, an attitude, a characteristic. Gruft explores this concept as a means to unify Canadian architecture – seeking to find a *consensus* between projects. In *A Measure of Consensus* (1986), Gruft sought to investigate architecture beyond aesthetic styles using an approach that organized examples of contemporary Canadian architecture into categories that describe its ‘spirit’. This exploratory work identified a handful of projects that share thematic commonalities defined by Gruft which included: *Informed by the City, History, Complexity, Materiality and Thick Space*, and *Rooms and Procession* (Figure 1.6). One of Gruft’s final points raises the issue of regionalism and the vastness of Canada. He states that the “major intention of much of the work is the creation of a sense of place” (1986, p.51) because of the nature of Canada’s small population across its large area. Gruft suggests that this issue may be “hastening the new consensus” (1986, p.51). The author, with the help of students from the University of British Columbia, organized the projects in a matrix in order to look for patterns in Canadian architecture. The matrix led to the aforementioned thematic categorizations which in turn are the focus of discussion for each project.

Gruft further writes about the “social-democratic tradition of government” (1986, p.51) and the complex framework that theoretically constricts the emergence of radical projects in Canada, alluding to a manner of reserve. He concludes that this “seems to have challenged rather than inhibited the imagination of the designers” and also “enriched their work with a multivalent layering of response to a broad range of demands” (Gruft, 1986, p.51). This has led to the development of provincial building codes that standardize the construction quality of architectural projects so even the most mediocre architectural solutions can withstand the Canadian climatic context. At times, building policies and regulations seem to be so rigid that they restrict the architect’s ability to create radical projects in Canada.

Although working within the confines of rigid policies and regulations make explorations in architecture difficult, it is also a unifying aspect in Canadian architecture. Such rigid policies and codes are rooted in a practice of proficiency so as to effectively design in a climate that ranges from frigid winters to hot and humid summers. Gruft suggests that Canadian architects have risen to the challenge by using ingenuity to solve architecturally complex problems while somehow retaining coherent architectural concepts. Nearly 20 years after *A Measure of Consensus* was written, its discourse continues with Gruft’s publication *Substance over Spectacle* (2005) which illustrates projects that have creatively dealt with the rigid Canadian regulations while also showcasing an imaginative architectural articulation. Projects by Saucier + Perrotte, Shim-Sutcliffe, the Patkaus and MacKay-Lyons as well as many others have presented a consensus that great architecture can be responsive to a context and extraordinary at the same time.

Figure 1.6 – *A Measure of Consensus* (On next page)

PLANNING STRATEGIES (PROCESSES OF DEVELOPMENT) CONCEPTS AND OF SUBJECT PRODUCTION	CIVIC/URBAN ELEMENTS (AID CONCEPTS)	CREATING OWN CONTEXT (PLACE MAKING)	HISTORIC TYPOLOGIES (SITE SPECIFIC)	RECALLING OF HISTORIC ELEMENTS	CREATION OF AN IMAGINARY HISTORY FOR SITE/BUILDING	REGIONAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MATERIALS	PLURALITY OF CONCEPTS
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The image is a dense, hand-drawn collage of architectural sketches, diagrams, and text, organized into a grid-like structure. The sketches are small, often showing building elevations, floor plans, or site plans. The text is handwritten in various styles, often in all caps, and is interspersed with the sketches. The overall theme appears to be urban planning or architecture, with many references to specific buildings, streets, and urban forms. The collage is a visual representation of a design process or a collection of ideas related to urban design.

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Gruft notes the value of this consensus, which is what a national identity in architecture is for Canada (2005, p.177). This nationalism is not a symbolic representation in architecture, but a use of fundamental principles inherent in the culture of Canada that has informed architecture. According to Gruft, this definition of a national architecture can hopefully “intersect with the quotidian interests and political concerns of the general populace” (2005, p.180).

1.5 Recent Government Initiatives

Beyond publications that have tried to define a Canadian architecture, government policies have existed, for a time, which sought to guide architectural development in the nation. In the early 1990s, the Federal Government funded an initiative to commission prominent Canadian architects to design new schools for First Nations bands. Guided by the B.C. Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs, ten schools were built in British Columbia including the Seabird Island School by Patkau Architects, Chief Matthews School by Acton Johnson Ostry, Red Stone School by Larry MacFarland Architects and the Stone School by Peter Cardew. Although an investment in education, the development of these Canadian schools fell under heavy criticism from the general public, based on the perception that the architectural development of the schools was a waste of taxpayers’ money (Weder, 2001). It seemed that a large group of people would not understand the benefits in advancing school design. Regardless, each school’s architectural articulation was informed by the particularities of each Native band. Most evident is in the Red Stone School, a “longhouse-inspired post-and-beamer in the Chilcotins” (Weder, 2009) by Larry MacFarland Architects. Accompanied by a sunken reading circle and an open plan, the overall configuration of the school lends itself to the Chilcotin culture. Another example is the Stone School, which architect Peter Cardew – with input from the Local Stone band (Weder 2009) – designed along the lines of the “pre-contact design traditions of the Chilcotin peoples” (Weder 2009). The scheme refers to traditional concepts like the pit house while exposing the materiality in its raw state.

On this topic, it is impossible to neglect speaking about the Seabird Island School designed by Patkau Architects (Figure 1.7). However, according to Rochon “[t]he Patkaus never intended to use architecture as a cultural metaphor for the Seabird Island Band” (Rochon, 2005, p.275). Whether or not there was an intention to draw upon cultural metaphors, the project can be interpreted many ways.

“Clem Seymour, an elder and member of council at Seabird, tours me around. A wooden arbour articulated against the wind stretches along the south side of the building. It resembles a drying rack for salmon. Classrooms are placed along the southern face, each opening to what is essentially a collective porch. There are drums stacked against a window-sill. ‘It’s the vision of the elders that we’re holding on to here,’ says Seymour” (Rochon, 2005, p.275).

Although the Patkaus never intended this interpretation of the building, it is impossible to avoid associating the architecture with the building techniques of the Pacific Northwest Natives. The school's glulam columns and beams are easily associated with the traditions of heavy timber post-and-beam building traditions. The cedar shingled roof, stretching across the entire school, touches ground, becoming part of the slanted walls, much like the cladding on traditional native buildings.

As hailed as these projects are in the architectural community, they are not well received by the public. Adele Weder reported that Peter Cardew's award winning Stone School wasn't appreciated by its own occupants. "...Since the design's initial burst of acclaim in the early 1990s, is when the local band telephoned him a year after its construction. They wanted to find the original contractor; they told him, so that they could ask him to saw it apart" (Weder, 2009). Furthermore, there was an outcry from the public that these schools were an irresponsible use of taxpayers' money. Shortly after Marie-Odile Marceau (an architect and civil servant responsible for overseeing the schools program) left the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs to pursue her own professional career, the program was suspended (Weder, 2009). For some reason, architecture does not seem to appeal strongly to political or public interests, but this has been one rare instance where small sparks of interest had led to the construction of great Canadian architecture.

Around the same time, The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada began developing a very modest *Model Architectural Policy* in line with the current trend of architectural policies in Europe. Using the Finnish *Architecture Policy* as a primary precedent, along with many others, Canada developed a white paper in an effort to raise public awareness to the importance of architecture.

"If architecture was as important a force in Canadian society as hockey, or even as important as Canadian literature or popular music, there might be no need for such a sweeping policy. Surely our homes, our places of work, and our communities are as important as the sports we play, the books we read, and the music we listen to." (The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, 2005, p.2)

Sharing an almost identical remark on the indifferent attitude to architecture as *The Massey Report* written 54 years prior, the policy's sole purpose was to positively raise public awareness of the built environment. Thus, the policy focused heavily on catering to the public's already growing awareness of the trends of green initiatives. The green initiatives, along with vague goals to increase the quality of building standards, included the use of "green building" rating systems; the application of life-cycle costing; and the increased use of alternative and renewable energy sources; while at the same time reducing construction waste and facilitating an increase in density (The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, 2005, p.22-24). The policy goes on to outline different possibilities in technological advancement. The problem with this policy's focus on the North American trend in green initiatives – an initiative bordering on an obsession with

the technical aspect of construction – is that it marginalizes the goals of sustainability to a series of technical initiatives. In essence, the goals set forth for the policy do not lend themselves to a discussion of developing a culture of architecture, but rather presents quantitative target figures in which emerging architecture should satisfy. In this way, it is solely in the decision-making power of the current government whether or not a policy should be implemented and disregards debate for whether or not a policy on construction targets is in the best interest of the country. This aspect of the policy makes it vulnerable. If the policy had proposed that these initiatives were vital for the country's development, it would be far more difficult to dispute the importance of that policy. For instance, the Finnish architecture policy from 1998 argues that their citizens have a right to live in “a good living environment” (Tallqvist, 1998, p.5), which must include the quality of the built environment. Thus, the development of its architecture can hardly be disputed.

Further, the focus on the technical aspect of “green building” is what 41° to 66° argued as a marginalization of the larger discourse on sustainability. Niklaus Kohler discusses this marginalization and stresses the importance in the regional and cultural aspects as part of an overall understanding of sustainability.

“The prevailing technocratic approach to the creation of ‘green’ or ‘environmentally progressive’ buildings will ultimately fail because it is too narrowly defined. In order to succeed, the transfer and acceptance of technologies and techniques has to be based on a sound knowledge of regional culture. It must be recognized that the existing building stock and urban fabric form an essential aspect of regional diversity and culture” (Kohler, 2003, p.83).

Kohler, of course, represents a European point of view. One that is “marked by centuries of common history” (Kohler, 2003, p.83) and more importantly sees the “necessity of strong public policies, the importance of public service and active state intervention, especially in the realms of the built environment, ‘green’ issues and cultural heritage” (Kohler, 2003, p.83). These European values, embedded in the public consciousness, have yet to be adapted as this nation's values as the *Model Architectural Policy* for Canada. Although an effort to improve the architectural quality throughout the nation, has since halted after two years of development (Chodikoff, 2008).

It is unfortunate that the *Model Architecture Policy*'s development has ceased and it is equally unfortunate that the policy itself failed to tap into the potential for promoting an architecture that could further explore and reflect the Canadian culture. Perhaps government policies cannot adequately address these issues. Maybe architecture that purposely promotes its national identity can instil a new public consciousness toward it. Since *The Massey Report*, there are a wide variety of precedents of national pavilions and embassies along with government awarded projects. What have these projects achieved? And, have they positively influenced the development of architecture in Canada? In Chapter 2, architectural examples that have an official and unofficial purpose to convey a national identity are explored to discover and identify characteristics of an architecture that is distinctly Canadian.

Figure 1.7 – Seabird Island School

Chapter 2 – Common Themes in Canadian Architecture

Part I

2.1 The Official Culture – National Pavilions and Canadian Embassies

“I found the process of starting to think about Canadian architecture difficult. The subject seemed so broad, so undefined – immense. But eventually I began trying to layout the land; a sort of site analysis, a beginning survey of the territory that might comprise Canadian architecture. My hope was to help prepare the way, to draw some sort of map that might encourage others to venture into this relatively uncharted territory, and explore the field in more detail” (Gruft, 2005, p.8).

Andrew Gruft introduces his publication, *Substance over Spectacle*, by conveying an intention to “prepare the way” for others to continue the research on Canadian architecture. With all the developments in Canadian architecture noted since *The Massey Report*, Canada still lacks a sound discourse concerning its own national identity in architecture. Perhaps, for some, the topic of a national identity is not a relevant issue for today’s contemporary culture, for this research project the discussion of a national identity is seen as more pertinent today in our increasingly globalised society. Perhaps politically, socially and economically, Canada has a better sense of its current identity; but architecturally, there is scant acknowledgement from the public that there even exists a *Canadian* architecture.

Lisa Rochon’s theory on Canadian architecture expressed in *Up North* provides some insight into the increasingly indifferent attitude from the public regarding this issue. She comments on a Canadian *Sameness* – a banality – easily observed in the plethora of suburban neighbourhoods sprawling across the nation. How can the public notice a culture of architecture when it consists of a *Sameness*; an architecture of banality, watered down from its overall cultural significance in construction?

It is difficult at first to explore characteristics of a Canadian architecture consisting of this *Sameness*. There exist, however, architectural manifestations that had explicit initiatives in conveying a national identity – found in various national pavilions and embassies abroad. These projects provide a starting point for the investigation of a Canadian identity in architecture. National pavilions in international expositions (and other events such as the Olympics) are examples of architecture with an explicit agenda of representing national values. Further, Canadian embassies are precedents that follow along the same lines. Prominent Canadian architects have been commissioned to design these buildings across the globe, which provided them the opportunity to experiment with their own architectural representation of the nation.

Beginning with Canada’s representation at the Venice Biennale accompanied by early national pavilions and Canadian embassies, Canadian projects after the War had a tendency toward the symbolic representation of the nation. Yet, more contemporary projects have

displayed a focus on the architectural process, by using the context of the site to inform architectural design intentions. On the other hand, it is important to note that the problem in investigating projects of this nature is that they essentially are what we might call “Disneyfied” products; that is, they exist in a theme park-like place, in context with other national buildings, but are technically ephemeral and placeless.

This thesis cannot, however, investigate all of Canada’s participation in international expositions and embassies; the sheer magnitude in research would be well beyond the scope of this project. By investigating a select group of relevant projects and identifying common themes across a variety of precedents, this thesis can convey enough of an idea for research to continue in the future. Like Cawker and Bernstein’s publication, the aim of this text is to bring forth a resurgence of interest on the topic of a national identity in architecture.

2.1.1 The Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale – A Beginning

In 1958, the National Gallery of Canada commissioned Canada’s first National pavilion dedicated as a gallery for the visual arts at the Venice Biennale (Figure 2.1), a bi-annual international exhibition of art originating in 1895 and now includes over 30 permanent national pavilions with the participation of many other countries housed in the large main pavilion (the historic significance of the Venice Biennale is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3). Before 1958, Canada’s representation of its arts culture was temporarily housed in the Italian pavilion. The permanent pavilion was to promote Canada’s prominence on the international stage. It provided an international exhibition space for prominent Canadian artists every two years, along with the additional support of government funding.

Designed by the internationally renowned Milan-based architects BBPR (Banfi Belgiojoso Peressutti Rogers), the Canada Pavilion in Venice (Figure 2.3) is arguably one of the first attempts at expressing a national identity in architecture for this country, a result of Canada trying to move away from its colonial history with Britain. Its site in the Biennale Giardini is a place of prominence, between the English and German Pavilions, and is further proof of Canada’s high standing, at the time, on the international stage in the years following the Second World War.

BBPR’s choice to use the symbolism of a First Nations building form – a wigwam, a conscious departure from the common colonial styles of the Anglo and Franco aesthetic roots typical of Canadian design of earlier times – is a clear intention of representing a particular cultural group as a means of conveying a national identity. Although the nautilus-shell form produces a radial configuration, distinct from the typical generic-box gallery designs, the pavilion very much functions as a conventional art exhibition space typical of and prior to the mid 20th century. The radial form was intended to showcase paintings mounted on moveable vertical panels – a common modular approach to gallery design of the day (Figure 2.2).

However this traditional approach to gallery design is not without particularities. The pavilion includes an abundance of transparent glass. Although designed to showcase paintings and

Figure 2.1 – The Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 1959

Figure 2.2 – Interior Modular Panels for showcasing paintings

still images in general, the space is filled with natural light. In turn, this addition of natural light animates the static artwork on display – an interesting architectural connection to the outdoor environment. This unorthodox use of transparency for a gallery space also makes the control of light in the pavilion very challenging.

This particularity in the Canada Pavilion is contrasted against the other national pavilions at the Biennale. A majority of the other pavilions at the Biennale follow a typical generic-box type with an architectural style applied only to the façade. The Canada Pavilion, on the other hand, is a complete formal gesture and conveys a character where the interior and exterior are informed by one another. Robert Venturi may argue that the Canada Pavilion is a *duck* as opposed to a *decorated shed* (1972).

Canada's search for its own identity was in its infancy during the 1950s. Predating Whiteson's exploration of Modern Canadian architecture by 25 years, 1958 was a time when Canada had only just begun to shed its colonial roots. Thus, the choice to represent Canada with a wigwam-like form, a symbol of First Nations traditions, is a truly radical statement (Sabatino, 2007). The choice to omit a stylistic mimicry of English and French architecture was pioneering for Canada and signals the start of an architectural maturity beginning to emerge – a search for an architectural articulation of a distinct culture.

The Canada Pavilion's wigwam design, however, is not the final answer in defining Canada's culture. To a degree, the use of First Nations building traditions is but another example of stylistic mimicry. This mimicry is only important because of its historic significance in BBPR's intentions to highlight Canada moving away from its colonial roots. It represents a first gesture for Canada as a distinct culture from its French or English traditions. This intention follows along the objectives set forth by *The Massey Report* during a period of nation building for Canada. In less than 10 years later, the architecture of the Canada Pavilion at Expo '67 showcased an incredible development in a mature national identity.

2.1.2 The Canada Pavilion at Expo '67

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Expo '67 signalled the culmination of a maturing process for Canadian architecture. This particular Expo is pertinent to Canada's development – noted by Meredith Dixon's recent 2007 research work – Expo '67 had profound social, political and cultural effects on post-war Canada (Adams, 2007). The effects on architecture can be attributed to the overall progressive character of Canada at the time; changes were occurring across the nation with new federal policies like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, medicare, pension, social programs, federal bilingualism, immigration policy reform and even a new flag, that ultimately many identify as key defining features of Canada today. Hence, Expo '67 at Canada's centennial represented a milestone in Canada's history which became symbolized in its Canada Pavilion. In a 1967 CBC Broadcast "Expedition" hosted by Bob MacGregor, he interviewed the Commissioner General of the pavilion, Leslie Brown, to discuss the symbolic qualities of the pavilion.

Figure 2.3 – Plan of the Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale

Figure 2.4 – Canada Pavilion at Expo '67 (On next page)

TERRE DES HOMMES MAN AND HIS WORLD

The platonic inverted pyramid largely dominates the focus of the pavilion. Symbolizing a Katimavik, Inuktitut for 'meeting place', the pavilion acts as a node across the vast exposition site. Like the Canada Pavilion in Venice, this Canada Pavilion has drawn on an aboriginal tradition, but pushes the boundary further to reflect the characteristics of many other aspects found across Canada. For example, the "people tree", found adjacent to the inverted pyramid, is a stylized red maple tree sculpture. This spherical sculpture encompasses almost 1500 photographs (MacGregor, 1967) of "Canadians at work and leisure" (Morency, 2006) across the various 'leaves' on the tree.

Even more notable is the Canada Pavilion's architectural articulation of the government system. Upon entering the pavilion, underneath the Katimavik, one is bombarded with authoritative and restrictive signage – an overwhelming amount of measures stating "no smoking" or "no turning left" for instance. Continuing on the path, new signage is presented stating "yes" toward humanitarian opportunities like hospital insurance, unemployment insurance, pension plan, etc. The signage is analogous to the recent decisions the government of Canada had made – for governments often say 'no' to many ideas, but this interactive passage had intended to highlight that the Canadian government had occasionally said 'yes' on some very socially defining aspects (MacGregor, 1967). Architecturally, it has manifested as an interior path, or a 'road' accompanied with the aforementioned authoritative and restrictive road signs. An individual is able to divert from the path, however the signage is intended to inform one of the 'proper' circulation through the space. This feature was intended to be a "didactic experience of responsibility; governments are made by man to make the law, but no law can work unless we exercise individual and collective responsibility" (MacGregor, 1967). The 'road' culminates at an interactive *opinion wall* where visitors can agree or disagree with various ideas. This *opinion wall* showcases a diversity of views toward emerging questions for the future. It respectfully acknowledges a greater voice in the consideration of various issues.

The pavilion also showcases Canada's abundant resources. Housed within the pavilion is a large mural that illustrates the technological advancements in cartography, displaying the mere challenge of accurately mapping and tracking the vast resources across Canada (MacGregor, 1967). The space is accompanied by elements that highlight the Canadian landscape – the source of its resources – which include waterfalls, gardens and hard landscaping.

Overall, the pavilion is especially multivalent. MacGregor notes at the end of the session that it usually requires one day to explore any other national pavilion, but for this Canada Pavilion, MacGregor had spent over six days in an effort to cover all of its many aspects, even concluding that many areas were not covered. In a final statement by Martin Bronstein: "The thing about the Canadian Pavilion [is] it's not just a room, it has so many surfaces. Its spatial relationships, its different levels – here you have a waterfall, there you have a lump of rock; and you're walking around them, through them, and over them. This all adds to the tremendous interest of the Canadian Pavilion" (MacGregor, 1967).

2.1.3 The Canada Pavilion at the Osaka Expo '70

The Canada pavilion by Arthur Erickson at the Osaka Expo '70 is an example that illustrates a less multivalent representation of Canadian characteristics in architecture. Erickson approaches the project with the analogous representation of the Canadian landscape through architecture. The project consisted of an exterior mirror-glass clad mountain form that reflects the colours of the sky, making the pavilion mass almost invisible – alluding to both the Rocky Mountains of the West Coast and the big sky of the Prairies (Figure 2.5). In terms of a characteristic, the quality of the mirror-glass conveyed an idea of clarity and reflectivity – the progressive values of an openness in government.

These material qualities continue within the pavilion. Entering, one is engulfed in the warmth of the interior wood cladding. Along with the umbrella-like sculptures, the interior resembles a Canadian forest (Figure 2.6). Its interior is far more intimate than the exterior mass as it hugs visitors on all four sides. At the same time, this form focuses the project toward the centre. Mixed with the warmth of the materiality of wood, the interior conveys a characteristic of caring and compassion. Erickson had designed an iconic project to represent Canada on the international stage – it reflects ideas of the Canadian landscape, but at the same time speaks of the character of Canada in transparency and clarity.

For Erickson, the symbolism of the Canadian landscape is a powerful defining feature for this nation. It can be agreed upon that the Canadian vastness and abundance of natural resources are a trait that this nation can boast. For architecture, the approach to symbolize this aspect of Canada seems to be somewhat artificial. It is only in the reading of these rooted characteristics that a Canadian identity is revealed. Erickson's symbolism is not simply objectifying the Canadian landscape; the architectural approach is providing an experience of the Canadian landscape. He does not, for example, print an image of the Canadian Rockies, but rather tries to manufacture an architectural synecdoche so as to provide the experience of being in the Rockies. The same is true for the interior of the pavilion where Erickson has created an experience of the Canadian forest. This distinction is important because too often pavilion design results in mere painted boxes exploring the limited regions of façadeism. The importance of Erickson's pavilion is in its material rawness accompanied by formal gestures as a representation of the Canadian landscape. It is also notable that there is a characteristic of honesty in this material rawness, that the material qualities themselves need not be covered up. Ultimately, Erickson's focus on the Canadian landscape is the pavilion's shortcoming – which can be read as an iconic monolith rather than a multivalent representation of Canadian society or culture. It is a manufactured context that is symbolic of the Canadian landscape. In other examples, a pluralistic approach in architectural representation seems to relate closer to a Canadian identity.

Figure 2.5 – Canada Pavilion at Osaka '70, Exterior

Figure 2.6 – Canada Pavilion at Osaka '70, Interior

2.1.4 Canadian Embassy in Mexico

Other architectural examples convey pluralistic qualities similar to the Canadian Pavilion at Expo '67, while also drawing design inspiration from the particularities of context. For instance, explorations drawn from Canada's Native culture began to inform subsequent design solutions for Canadian embassies. During the time of the Canadian centennial and reminiscent of the Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, architect Etienne Gaboury's Precious Blood Church took on a similar Native Wigwam shape (Figure 2.7). Although the Canada Pavilion's overall form is stouter, the plan of the Precious Blood Church is strikingly similar in its nautilus shell geometry and structure. This anecdote highlights the importance to also evaluate architecture within Canada, which is conducted in the latter portion of this chapter. In addition, the Precious Blood Church is relevant because it leads to Gaboury's commission to design a Canadian Embassy in Mexico, where he also draws from aboriginal traditions (Figure 2.8).

Although the commission to design an embassy happened many years after the construction of the Precious Blood Church, Gaboury used this opportunity to generate an architecture representative of Canada by using First Nations traditions, not unlike the Canada Pavilions at the Venice Biennale and Expo '67. In 1982, he was commissioned to design the Canadian Embassy in Mexico, and attempted to create a "one-site-country isolated in a foreign land" (Gaboury, 1982, p.13) by drawing design inspiration from both Canadian and Mexican cultures. Thus, the distinguishing aspect of Gaboury's Canadian Embassy is not in its exuberance in Canadian symbolism, but its intention to respond to its site and context.

"To be consistent with its context and purpose, it should reflect both the region and country in which it is built as well as the country it represents. The expression and integration of this dual nature, the harmonious blending of two cultures and traditions, became the underlying theme for the design of the Canadian embassy in Mexico. The crusty exterior sings subtle praise of Uxmal, Palenque, Guadalupe, Mexico past and present with its bold and highly textural geometry, with its baroque articulation of space and detail, while the interior speaks of Canada (Figure 2.9). Two technologies are also playfully interfaced: the soft human technology, craftsmanship in stone, marble, wood and metal, and the hard modern technology of the machine." (Gaboury, 1982, p.13)

The embassy, situated in Mexico City, articulates a response to a site, an aspect lacking in the Canada Pavilions in Venice, Montreal and Osaka. This particular project is multivalent; it conveys a duality of two nations while it also can be interpreted as a display of a "poetic link between early Mexican civilization and (the) native people of Canada" (Gaboury, 1982, p.13). Gaboury intentionally emphasizes the importance of the gateway in his treatment of the embassy doors; it acts both as a linking element and a separator between one country and another. The embassy, therefore, is about dualities – a pluralism – that is on one hand, the nature of all embassies, but in this case has been consciously exploited as a distinctly Canadian architectural articulation.

Precious Blood Church

Figure 2.7 – Reflected Ceiling Plan of the Precious Blood Church

By emphasizing the context of the built environment of Mexico, the architecture of the Canadian embassy showcases national values of compassion, understanding and respect. Architecturally, these values have translated into an idea of duality exhibited in its gateway, materiality, and its formal differentiation of interior and exterior space. These themes become increasingly important for contemporary Canadian architecture.

Figure 2.8 – Canadian Embassy in Mexico – Exterior (Left)

Figure 2.9 – Canadian Embassy in Mexico – Interior (Above)

2.1.5 Canadian Embassy in Bangladesh

Gaboury's juxtaposition of Mexican and Native cultures showcases a Canadian characteristic of respect and understanding by being contextually responsive to the local conditions of its site. Another example of this approach is seen in Brian MacKay-Lyons' architecture. He advocates the use of vernacular building traditions to inform architectural design. His portfolio consists mainly of house projects in Nova Scotia, and his architecture uses the building traditions from the shipbuilding, fishing, and lobster industries – simple light frame structures, timber clad skins and strong geometric forms (Quantrill, 2005, p.15). Consequently, many of his projects in Nova Scotia resemble one another. It can be argued that Mackay-Lyons has defined a so-called contemporary vernacular style, but his high commission in Dhaka, Bangladesh, proves that his architecture is far more than an aesthetic endeavour. MacKay-Lyons states:

“As a young student in my early twenties, I believed that the design of an embassy or high commission was the most privileged of architectural commissions. It offers the best opportunity to represent the cultural values of one's country internationally. Given Canada's domestic policy of multiculturalism, this project for the Canadian Chancery and Official Residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh, has a dual cultural responsibility: to represent Canada and to show respect for the culture of the host country” (Quantrill, 2005, p. 214).

MacKay-Lyons advocates a respect for culture tracing from the non-architectural Canadian policy of multiculturalism. This respect has translated architecturally into the use of local materials to take advantage of the benefits of local building traditions. The inclusion of a courtyard, typical of many buildings in the region, with its ability to cross-ventilate and shade interior spaces, further confirms MacKay-Lyons' use of local building traditions (Figure 2.10). Using clay brick from the Ganges Delta as the principal building material– due to the overabundance of alluvial silt and manpower (Quantrill, 2005) – MacKay-Lyons has designed an uncommon (in his portfolio) large

Figure 2.10 – Sketch of Canadian Embassy in Bangladesh Plan

brick wall that curves around the exterior of the complex, sheltering the interior courtyard. By drawing from the local building traditions, on one hand, shows a respect for the local culture, but it also helps mitigate tangible construction problems at the same time. An obvious benefit is the relative ease of transporting the brick due to its availability in close proximity to the site. At the same time the building form of a courtyard alleviates the tropical climate by using cross ventilation. Thus, this approach in design – using techniques in the traditions of the Bangladeshi people – not only conveying a respect for a foreign culture, but an acknowledgement that the use of local traditions are a simply superior method due the long evolutionary process which has led to the particularities of the building traditions of the region.

The uses of vernacular building traditions not only help solve climatic problems, but they also have roots in a pragmatic economic agenda. MacKay-Lyons believes that “[b]uilding within the material culture or vernacular of a place not only communicates a respect for the building’s regional context but it also maximizes the building’s economic value for the client – an important benefit in developing countries such as Bangladesh” (Quantrill , 2005, p.214). The economic benefits of using the regional building traditions further emphasizes a respectful sensitivity, thus the Canadian Embassy in Dhaka is a good architectural representation of Canadian values manifested from an attitude in the design process.

Figure 2.11 – Canadian Embassy in Bangladesh

2.1.6 Canadian Embassy in Berlin – Recent Changes in the Exploration of a National Identity

The High Commission in Dhaka is a rare example of a contemporary embassy that displays such clarity in concept. While the actual functionality of design can be debated, embassies in general are difficult building types in which to convey concepts of a national identity because of their complex functional requirements.

“The Canadian Embassy type of the 20th century has evolved from relatively simple administrative programmes to elaborate plans with layers of contradictory requirements...The next generation of diplomatic building (in major cities), the ‘cultural centre-embassy’ was designed to promote Canadian culture, as a result of a political commitment to culture by the Trudeau Government. Official entrances leading to wide-open space, with large exhibition rooms, would serve that promotional purpose, while secondary doors would quietly welcome immigration applicants” (Therrien, 2003, p.23).

Many of the Canadian embassies follow this “type” – the entrance to a large gallery space to showcase artefacts that represent Canada – the only obvious opportunity to display Canadian culture exists in its entrance lobby. This aspect makes the lobby-gallery an especially significant space in embassies in that they allow for an architectural exploration unshackled by the bounding nuisances of its functional requirements. It is this very aspect that would have awarded Saucier + Perrotte the commission to design and build their competition scheme for the Canadian embassy in Berlin a few years ago.

“The competition (for the Berlin Embassy) attracted many of Canada’s best-known architects – Arthur Erickson, Moshe Safdie, Douglas Cardinal, Eb Zeidler – and the five teams that ultimately made up the short list: KPMB with Smith Carter, Gagnon Letellier Cyr, and Vogel Architect; A.J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt & Company; Saucier + Perrotte with Dunlop Farrow; Moriyama & Teshima; and Dan S. Hanganu with Bregman + Hamann” (Weder, 1999, p.21).

Six out of eight jury members recommended Saucier + Perrotte’s scheme, “known in the blind competition as #1209” (Weder, 1999, p.23), due to its “relationship... between the public space of the building and the public space of the site” (Weder, 1999, p.24). In essence, in the jury’s eyes the gallery space was the most poignant aspect that distinguished scheme #1209 from the other competitors. It encompassed an architectural articulation that represented the landscape of Canada: “The sculpted folding surface of the ground plane, referred to as the Geographic Plate...A series of gardens representing the four elements of nature – Water, Rock, Plain and Tree...” (Jury Comments in Weder and Polo, 1999, p.23). These particularities brought distinguishing aspects of Canada to Berlin, and to the jury this was a most appropriate representation of the nation (Figure 2.12).

Saucier + Perrotte architectes/Dunlop Farrow Architects Inc.

This scheme addresses the evolution of Canadian culture in response to the challenges of its vast geography disproportionate to its relatively small population. Based on the premise that all our technological, cultural and economic undertakings have occurred in response to this vastness, the scheme offers an open canvas upon which the symbols of Canadian culture are visible. The Embassy is conceived as an oasis of space and volume within Berlin's urban grid, using light as the expression of communication and connection to the people of Berlin and the world. The sculpted, folding surface of the ground plane, referred to as the Geographic Plate, creates a sequence providing access from Leipziger Platz to Ebertstrasse and Voss Strasse at two different levels. A series of gardens representing the four elements of nature—Water, Rock, Plain and Tree—evoke the forces that molded our culture and represent the heart of the Embassy and the Canadian experience.

imp up	6. elevators to	11. information
airs to Canada	commercial and	12. immigration
oom	residential units	13. ramp to catwalk
anada Room	7. service	14. agora
arden court	8. Geographical Plate	15. exhibition
ommercial	9. embassy entrance	16. embassy offices
	10. reception	17. residential

Facing page, above, far left: view of model showing Leipziger Platz façade. Above left: detail of façade on Ebertstrasse. Far left: view of interior court. This page, above right: view along catwalk, with courtyard at right.

Figure 2.12 – Saucier + Perrotte Canadian Embassy in Berlin submission #1209

This idea of representing the landscape was an important concept for the Canadian Pavilion at Expo '67 and Expo '70. For the design of the Canadian Embassy in Berlin, this concept manifested in this Geographic Plate of the lobby – part of the represented landscape – also provided a connection from Leipziger Platz to Ebertstrasse and Voss Strasse. The introduction of a landscape would have tied to the context of Berlin, much like the conceptual ideas in a contextually responsive architecture in the Canadian Embassy in Mexico and the Canadian Chancery in Bangladesh.

It is strange then that KPMB was awarded the commission by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). DFAIT concluded that their selection was informed by three technical reports, outside of the competition jury ruling, that reviewed each scheme's "cost, security and technology issues" (Weder, 1999, p.27). Although the technical

reports were not released to the public, Weder acquired and reviewed the reports and found that they did not suggest any preferred scheme, only outlining potential advantages and disadvantages in each design. Essentially, the reports revealed that each scheme was equally competent from a technical standpoint suggesting that the government had acted outside of the architectural community's best interests.

This anecdote is not intended to undermine the work of KPMB, whose project was eventually built, but rather illustrates an emerging gap between the initiatives set out in *The Massey Report* and contemporary political intentions. As stated in Chapter I, *The Massey Report* sought to revolutionize the architectural commissioning process with the introduction of open competitions. Along with the report's mandate in building a national identity, it would seem that the Canadian Embassy in Berlin is an example exhibiting changes in government initiatives. What is the point in holding open architectural competitions for projects that can potentially advance a national identity if the commissioning process is obstructed by such political interferences? The Berlin Embassy competition is only one example, however it illustrates the beginning of a dystopic trajectory. Contemporary projects have recently exhibited a lack of architectural consideration, especially toward developing a national identity. It became especially difficult for this researcher to review recent national pavilions due to their lack of any national or even architectural identity.

2.1.7 Canada Pavilions at Shanghai Expo and Vancouver Olympics 2010

Politics exist everywhere and cannot be avoided, especially in a bureaucratic society such as Canada; governing bodies like DFAIT are no exception. For exploratory architecture like pavilions, politics aren't so much a problem until it begins to restrict the very act of exploration or degrade the quality of architecture's construction.

Recently constructed Canada pavilions at the Shanghai Expo and Vancouver Olympics in 2010 have revealed a governing body unwilling to further a Canadian identity in architecture. They have neglected to explore architectural creativity or any representation of an ambition usually associated with such pavilions. The Shanghai Expo's Canada Pavilion promoted the theme: *Inclusive Cities, Sustainable Cities, and Creative Cities*. The project, however, was devoid of an architect or urban planner. Instead the lead designer was a member of Cirque du Soleil, only signing on an obligatory undisclosed architecture firm to produce its contract documents (Rochon, 2010). The outcome is a characteristically inward-looking theatrical project, an internally thunderous showcase of the performing arts (Figure 2.14). Within, the pavilion housed caricature provisions, like the serving of hot dogs and French fries, that are only very mildly associated with a Canadian culture at best. This is a deceitful misrepresentation of a Canadian identity; the building is neither truthful to the culture of the country nor the people it represents.

The Canada Pavilion at the Vancouver Olympics is no better. Unlike the national pavilion in Shanghai, this pavilion was conceived as a low-budget prefabricated shed, shipped from Chicago

– neither Canadian designed nor Canadian built (Figure 2.13). In 2010, James Moore, Canada’s Heritage Minister, unveiled the Canada Pavilion in Vancouver and stated that it “is going to be a destination for people to come and enjoy the Games, not to stand with folded arms and have an architectural experience. We can engage architects and we can spend endless amounts of money if that’s what people want, but I don’t think that’s what taxpayers want. And frankly, I think if you compare it apples to apples with the other pavilions that are on the ground in the city of Vancouver, ours looks fantastic” (McDowell, 2010). Utilizing a principle to “responsibly spend tax-payers’ dollars” this project sacrifices all cultural value for the sake of short-term economic benefits. Underneath these monetary motives, the decision prompts an obviously provocative thought: the government sees little value in architecture and the arts.

Clearly, these pavilions are not the pinnacle of architectural design in Canada today. A far cry from the multivalent Canada Pavilion at Expo ’67, these recent pavilions have failed to convey any sort of national identity. From the trend of a lack of government initiatives in art and architecture, it has become evident that a search for a Canadian identity cannot be continued in reviewing new national pavilions. However, there exists a rich architectural design culture in the private and public sectors within Canada that, while not having an explicit mandate in representing a national identity, has distinct characteristics. Similar to the collected works of Whiteson, Cawker and Bernstein, Kapelos, Rochon, McMinn and Polo, and Gruft, recent Canadian projects have similarities which can lend themselves to be interpreted for the purposes of defining a national identity.

Figure 2.13 – Canada Pavilion at the Vancouver Olympics 2010

Figure 2.14 – Canada Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo 2010 (On next page)

Part 2

2.2 The Unofficial Representation of a Nation – the Governor

General's Awards

Architecture in Canada, similar to the historically significant projects investigated by various authors discussed in Chapter 1, has continually progressed toward the contemporary regional traditions. These traditions are rooted in a Canadian modesty; subservient to the landscape; respect for an immediate context; and compassion for an existing community. Many of these works have been acclaimed, in this instance, with Governor General's Medals in Architecture organized by the "Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, with the RAIC College of Fellows" (The Canada Council for the Arts, 2007) with a jury selected by the Canada Council for the Arts.

"As Canadian architects continue to develop regional design sensibilities in contemporary architecture, defining an overarching trend remains difficult. However, a few characteristic drivers emerge when assessing this year's winning projects. Firstly, there is the ongoing consideration with respect to the skilful incorporation of sustainable design strategies that respond to the often-hard Canadian climate... Another ongoing topic of consideration for Canadian architects is the landscape. What is remarkable about the winners of this year's (2008) Governor General's Awards is the range of explorations in the relationship between landscape and architecture" (Anonymous, *The Canadian Architect*, 2008, p.25).

Although written in 2008 and pertaining to that year's Governor General's Awards recipients, the 2010 selection follows the same pattern. The awarded projects demonstrate a sensibility to context, with each manifesting in slightly different ways – from the obvious display of the landscape to the subtle nuance of a detail. Beginning with the simple concept of *a machine for viewing* – architecture with prominent framed views overlooking the landscape – the exploration links the Governor General's Awards together across various architectural approaches defined in this thesis.

2.2.1 A Machine for Viewing

The most obvious response to a stunning and vast context would be to frame a view from the interior toward the exterior. This is an obvious and common solution in many prominent Canadian projects due to the sheer variety of landscapes this country contains. By framing views, the interior of an architectural project can be flooded by a surge of exterior warmth, resulting in an outward looking design toward many views (many projects do not focus on a singular view, but rather a panorama or a series of views). In many instances, a strong view would accent spaces that are more often occupied, such as the bedroom, kitchen, etc. In other cases, strong views would terminate a designated path or circulation corridor, emphasizing a direction of flow. Saucier + Perrotte's Prud'Homme Dulude Residence is such an example that overlooks a vista toward various vantage points (Figures 2.15 and 2.16), presenting the landscape from many sides. Its transparency in its envelope makes the architecture also seem to lightly touch the ground. Building on the traditions set forth by Mies van der Rohe in the International Style, his Tugendhat house and Farnsworth House both use transparency and a structural lightness.

This aspect of transparency is so common in Canadian architecture because of the many vast landscapes this country has to offer. Also, the changing nature of Canada's four seasons provides an architectural opportunity to showcase a wide spectrum of cyclical colours with little effort.

In terms of a national identity, architecture as *a machine for viewing* is possibly the simplest form of articulating a response to a local context. The simple gesture of puncturing

Figure 2.15 – Dulude Residence

Figure 2.16 – Dulude Residence

views toward the local context can immediately connect the exterior environment with an interior built condition. But there exists many other and more poignant ways for architecture to respond to its context – beyond *a machine for viewing* – and it is this pluralism, the multivalent aspects in a response to context that characterises a Canadian identity in architecture.

This pluralism lends itself to be read in many different ways regardless of the original intent of the architect. For the purposes of this thesis, these ideas can be used to inform conscious design intentions to convey a Canadian identity in the next chapter. For example, the design of the Dulude Residence probably did not have any intention of representing a Canadian identity, but received a Governor General's Medal. A comparative analysis with other award recipients provides a consensus on what Canadian architecture might be defined as, and as an extension, what a Canadian identity in architecture might be.

“The architectural clarity of the plan and sections (of the Dulude Residence) is enriched by the views of the landscape. It looks deceptively simple but has a complexity that starts with a deep understanding of construction. The materials are restrained while considering local building traditions.” (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, Jury Comments, 2010)

This particular example of a *machine for viewing* is only legible because of Saucier + Perrotte's careful formal arrangement and selection of materials. The simple configuration of the plan while strategically minimizing the material palette allows the exterior views to shine. The emphasis of the architecture's exterior perspectives would not have been as prevalent without these other aspects.

The material restraint focuses the framed views of the Dulude Residence. Keeping the material palette simple transforms the panoramic views of the landscape into a non-traditional material palette of constantly changing wallpapers from day to night and from season to season. The jury also commented on the “simple complexity” in construction, an idea explored later in this chapter.

Many other Governor General's Awards are also *machines for viewing*. For example, the Photographers Studio over Boathouse by gh3 architects (Figure 2.18), and Craven Studio by Shim-Sutcliffe (Figure 2.17); along with the French River Visitor's Centre by Baird Sampson Neuert, Prefab Cottage for Two Families by Kohn Shnier, Ravine Guest House by Shim-Sutcliffe (Figure 2.19) and the Promenade de Samuel de Champlain by DAOUST LESTAGE all exhibit the principle of architecture as a *machine for viewing*. It would also be difficult to leave out other projects from the 2008 Governor Generals Awards like Gleneagles Community Centre (Figure 2.20) and Winnipeg Centennial Library Addition (Figure 2.21) both by Patkau architects and Canada's National Ballet School Project Grand Jeté by KPMB.

All these projects, illustrated below in selected photographs, are prime examples of architecture as *a machine for viewing*. However, is this individual principle really so distinctly Canadian? Many exemplary projects across the globe have exploited the use of transparency

to emphasize an exterior condition. Thus, it is important to reiterate an earlier point; it is not that the singular concept of a *machine for viewing* is what makes these projects Canadian, but the culmination of many context-driven responses that inform the overall architectural expression. This responsive approach has manifested across many award-winning projects in their similar approaches in its material selection, articulation of details, site placement, the treatment of old and new; while also drawing formal inspiration from an immediate local context. The result of these responses illustrates a *consensus* on a Canadian identity in architecture.

Figure 2.17 – Craven Studio

Figure 2.18 – Photographers Studio over Boathouse (On next page)

Figure 2.19 – Ravine Guest House

Figure 2.20 – Gleneagles Community Centre (Below)

Figure 2.21 – Winnipeg Centennial Library Addition (On Next Page)

2.2.2 A Material Rawness

The concept of *a machine for viewing* alone does not constitute a Canadian identity in architecture. The Dulude Residence is much more than just *a machine for viewing*, but is also accompanied with a particular limited and raw material palette. This partially allows the various framed views to be the focus of spaces, uncluttered by an overly ornate interior. Rather, the *material rawness* complements the views out to nature by existing in its own natural state.

The Ravine Guest House by Shim-Sutcliffe is similar to the Dulude Residence in its framed views toward the landscape, but further expresses its exposed *material rawness* (Figure 2.22). Clearly articulated in form, like Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, the Ravine Guest house differs in its intention toward meaning in materiality. The Ravine Guest House's materiality is clearly defined, but it is also an honest representation of components. Accompanied by framed views toward forested surroundings, the materiality exposes the architectural elements of structure, separator, and hearth in its materiality. The clear post and beam structure makes the "clerestory seem to float above the seemingly continuous space" (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010), while movable planes of transparent glass blend the interior and exterior space (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010). All the while, the hearth is punctuated with a cast-in-place concrete fireplace, a connection to the source of heat during the cold winter months. Even the dry firewood becomes part of the material palette and relates to the overall wood construction while also providing a variability in type.

There is no deception in its materiality; unlike the Barcelona Pavilion's invisible cruciform columns and seemingly heavy stone walls, the Ravine Guest House's architectural logic is made clear and true in its material articulation. An interpretation of this material articulation is the representation of a truth in the Canadian culture. For a long time, Canada was known to have a transparency of government. Although this aspect seems to be drifting away, it is still an identifying part of Canada – our democracy that allows for freedom of speech and belief. The attitude to leave materials exposed also allows their inherent qualities to resonate in architecture. The warm grains of the wood juxtaposed with the transparent clear glass, all highlighted by steel connections creates a symphony of elements. This composition – completely situated in the forest – seamlessly blends with its surroundings, an intertwined scheme of built form and natural growth.

Perhaps *a material rawness* is also a result of the harsh Canadian climate accompanied by budgetary constraints. Canadian architects have risen to the challenge, and under such difficult conditions may have consciously explored this idea of *a material rawness*. Why would a concrete or wood column need to be clad

Figure 2.22 – Ravine Guest House

in an additional aesthetic fascia, or why not let an exterior material weather and age? These are questions that may have resulted in designing for a difficult climatic condition under tight budgetary constraints. A *material rawness* speaks of an architecture of necessity; of a principle that function can also be beauty.

For La Grande Bibliothèque du Québec by Patkau Architects (Figure 2.23) and the New Canadian War Museum by Moriyama & Teshima Architects (Figure 2.26 and 2.27), a *material rawness* is clearly illustrated in the interior treatment of the architecture. Other examples like the Promenade Samuel de Champlain by Saucier + Perrotte (Figure 2.25) and the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre by Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden Architects (Figure 2.24), this concept is more prevalent on the exterior treatment of the buildings.

Figure 2.23 – La Grande Bibliothèque du Québec

Figure 2.24 – Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre

Figure 2.25 – Promenade Samuel de Champlain (On previous page)

Figure 2.26 – New Canadian War Museum (Above)

Figure 2.27 – New Canadian War Museum (Right)

2.2.3 Intertwined Landscape

Architecture as *a machine for viewing*, and also exhibiting *a material rawness* are many times accompanied by siting within a natural growth. With views to the landscape and a natural material palette, it is no stretch of the imagination that Canadian architecture is oftentimes situated within natural landscapes. As an intuitive progression of design ideas, an *intertwined landscape* is a theme that is illustrated in Kohn Shnier's Prefab Cottage for Two Families project.

It has an interesting characteristic in its material rawness since the project was designed and constructed using prefabricated components; two almost contradictory concepts. Yet Kohn Shnier have balanced the challenges of a remote place while carefully designing a well-sited configuration in the landscape (Figure 2.28). Lightly situated in the forest like the Ravine Guest House, and also taking advantage of various views like the Dulude Residence, the Prefab Cottage for Two Families' use of imported prefabricated components while being carefully designed to suit a contextually sensitive place conveys innovative thinking in response to a difficult problem. As mentioned by Gruft in Chapter 1, architects in Canada have risen to the challenge in finding innovative solutions for designing in difficult conditions.

The project embeds itself into the landscape, situated within a forest of trees. Kohn Shnier almost seamlessly integrate the built context and natural growth, yet both are distinct. This interconnectedness juxtaposed with a majority of the materials being prefabricated and imported to site means the architecture was literally placed in context. At the same time, the project seems to hover in the growth like a treehouse. This crass generalisation for its comprehensive resolution makes it hard for one to believe that there may have been some major difficulties presented in designing for such a remote location.

The overall symbiosis of the scheme – built and natural – emphasizes Canadian

Figure 2.28 – Prefab cottage for Two Families

architecture's subservience to the landscape – instead of fighting with the context, this example lightly floats between the trees. Like the attitude of modesty, an architecture that speaks of a Canadian identity should not be outwardly expressive. Perhaps this is what Rochon means in her theory on a Canadian architecture of *sameness*. Canadian architecture is banal; but not in its negative connotation. Stated by Kenneth Frampton in an interview during Brian MacKay-Lyons' PBS documentary *The Village Architect* (PBS Documentary, 2008): it is as if the architecture was always there, which actually requires a masterful skill to accomplish.

For instance, the Prefab Cottage for Two Families project is easily identifiable as architecture intertwined in its landscape, but when looked at more closely the architecture is so silent, or banal, it seems it was always been there since the forest's beginnings. In retrospect,

the project was entirely constructed in a matter of days (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010). It is this quality that is also found in urban examples of Canadian architecture. The Royal Conservatory of Music, TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning renovation by KPMB is an almost invisible intervention, intertwined in its own surrounding context (Figure 2.30). It is difficult at times to even distinguish the old from the new. The project's elevation reveals an insightful juxtaposition of a non-Canadian approach – the extroverted Michael Lee-Chin Crystal addition to the Royal Ontario Museum by Daniel Libeskind beside the quiet and modest RCM TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning intervention. Both are renovations but could not differ more in terms of a design response (Figure 2.29).

Along with the Prefab Cottage for Two Families and the RCM TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, the Ravine Guest House by Shim-Sutcliffe and the First Nations Pavilion/Garden by Saucier + Perrotte (Figure 2.33) are all examples that exhibit the principle of an *intertwined landscape*.

Figure 2.29 – Elevation of the RCM TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning and the ROM Michael Lee-Chin Crystal

Figure 2.30 – RCM TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning

Figure 2.31 – Ravine Guest House (On previous page)

Figure 2.32 – Ravine Guest House (Left)

Figure 2.33 – First Nations Pavilion/Garden (Above)

2.2.4 Complex Detailing to Simplicity

The aforementioned principles of responding to context – *a machine for viewing*, *material rawness*, *intertwined landscape* – all respectfully acknowledge a surrounding context. It is no wonder that Canadian architects also excel at retrofitting or renovating existing buildings. Treating an existing built context much like a natural condition, many award-winning projects have woven old and new architecture together to produce vastly improved spaces. Canadian architecture has expressed this sublime and modest characteristic in its detailing – not in the sense of a detail that is overly complex and expressive, but rather resolved to the point that it seems almost too simple.

Shim-Sutcliffe's Corkin Gallery in the Distillery District of Toronto cleverly inserts itself into an abandoned industrial structure. "Delivered with impeccable detailing, the project distinguishes between the old and the new – a well-rehearsed genre – but here brings the two into seamless and inventive cohesion" (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010) (Figure 2.34). Shim-Sutcliffe managed to create a cohesive composition amidst the challenge of integrating old and new. Further, being a gallery for art – a programme that is sometimes at odds with expressive architecture – the building balances itself as both a work of art and a gallery for art (Dault, 2005, p.22-25) (Figure 2.35). Much like the natural condition of the Prefab Cottage for Two Families or the urban condition of the RCM TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning; the Corkin Gallery modestly retrofits onto an older context. It is particularly sympathetic toward this previous existing context by sensibly contributing to the architecture. Not only does Shim-Sutcliffe's design pay tribute to the old, but adds a new volumetric complexity.

Shim-Sutcliffe brought about a "spatial complexity that the original building lacked" (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010) with their insertion of multiple levels in section (Figures 2.36 and 2.37). In essence, they have strategically created an interior landscape for the exhibition of art. The slight changes in level alter the perspective to generate the volumetrically complex space.

Figure 2.34 – Corkin Gallery Detail of Column (Left)

Figure 2.35 – Corkin Gallery (Right)

Figure 2.36 – Corkin Gallery Section (Above)

Figure 2.37 – Corkin Gallery (On next page)

Figure 2.38 – Scandinave Spa

Figure 2.39 – Scandinave Spa

Figure 2.40 – RCM TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning (Above)

Figure 2.41 – Terrance Donnelly Centre for Cellular and Biomolecular Research (Right)

2.2.5 Landscape as Form Generator

Aspects in Canadian architecture exist both in response to and inspired by context. Architects Saucier + Perrotte have often used the landscape as an inspiration to their designs. Especially when situated atop a hill with a vista beyond, or when sited in the natural growth of a forest, it seems only fitting to draw upon these landscapes for design inspiration. Saucier + Perrotte exploit this idea in many of their works to produce dynamic spaces that would otherwise have been flat, box-like settings. Their design for the Scandinave les Bains Vieux-Montreal spa is situated in historic Old Montreal and occupies an abandoned warehouse building, similar to the Corkin Gallery. However, the architectural intervention differs. The Corkin Gallery adopts the vocabulary of the surrounding Distillery District, the Scandinave Spa is intended to transport people into a veritable oasis. “Within a banal context, right next to the sidewalk, the project ‘transports’ and distances its audience to another place” (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010). An appropriate idea in a place designed for relaxation, the Scandinave Spa is a retreat from the outside world.

“Nature is mother as well as muse for Saucier + Perrotte Architects. A photomural of windswept prairie and churning river runs the width of one floor at the firm’s office. ‘If I could even make something as beautiful as a tree, then I’d truly be an architect.’ Gilles Saucier says. And while the firm’s thermal spa, Scandinave les Bains Vieux-Montreal, may not resemble a trunk, branches, and foliage, the interior does evoke a natural cavern” (Sokol, 2009, p.167).

In order to generate the retreat from the outside world, Saucier + Perrotte have created an interior landscape, unlike the flavour of Old Montreal, so as to transport a person into an oasis. An interior filled with pools of water, crystalline marble facets, and long curving perspectives invoke senses of a calm lake, rough exposed stone, and long mysterious views out into the land. This idea of a landscape as a form generator had been previously discussed in their unbuilt competition design for the Canadian embassy in Berlin, but can be found throughout their impressive portfolio of work. An example would be their First Nations Pavilion/Garden commemorating the Great Peace between warring First Nations brokered by the French in 1701 (Carter, 2004) (Figure 2.42). Upon studying the project’s placement on site, the pavilion is situated at the threshold of two forests, one consisting of coniferous trees and the other consisting of deciduous trees, which also happens to be the historic middle ground between different native bands (Carter, 2004) (Figure 2.43). The pavilion, situated at this threshold condition, also blurs the distinction between interior and exterior space, consisting of a ribbon-like canopy indicative of the rise and fall in a rolling landscape, or the randomness in the cover of a tree canopy (Figure 2.44). It is a strong example of architecture intertwined in the landscape – a formal response to the landscape, but is also generated by the landscape.

Landscape as form generator is an architectural articulation which can be attributed to the sheer size of Canada. As discussed earlier in terms of regionalism, the vastness of the Canadian

geography has so many particularities for architects to draw upon. From the sharp Rockies out West, the cold Arctic in the North, with the flat Prairies in the middle, and everything in between; the landscape in Canada is an awe-inspiring resource for creativity. Why would not one identify with the Canadian landscape? For Saucier + Perrotte, *landscape as a form generator* would typically mean the design of an architecture that carries a person along a meandering path, changing in elevation and spatial volume. *Landscape as a form generator* requires the architect to consciously think about the physical procession in a design; especially when a project is sited to draw from an existing pathway or to transport a person to an oasis.

This method of generating inspiration from a landscape also allows Saucier + Perrotte to utilize the principles of *a machine for viewing*, *material rawness*, *intertwined landscapes* and *complex detailing*. The generated landscape can present opportunities through the design of an experience of a natural context. Although this is somewhat an artificial representation of nature, the origins of *landscape as form generator* is rooted to a context. In some cases, a *landscape as form generator* draws from the local regional physical particularities. In other cases, the architectural articulation emerges as a new landscape all on its own. For example, the French River Visitor Centre design is informed by the rock formations and hiking trails of the site (Figure 2.45) – the project draws inspiration from its surrounding context. In another instance, the Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church emerges from the ground as its own generated feature in the landscape – designed to formally fit in place without drawings from its contextual surroundings (Figure 2.46).

The New Canadian War Museum seems to both draw from surrounding context while also imposing a completely new material and formal gesture. The large undulating green roof connects to the surrounding site, almost invisible from a birds-eye view (Figure 2.47). However, at ground level, the large copper fin emerges from the ground, a foreign ship's stern, a faceted organic sculpture in the landscape (Figure 2.48).

Figure 2.42 – Sketch of the First Nations Pavilion/Garden

Figure 2.43 – Site Plan of the First Nations Pavilion/Garden

Figure 2.44 – First Nations Pavilion/Garden

Figure 2.45 – French River Visitors Centre (Above)

Figure 2.46 – Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church (On next page)

Figure 2.47 – Bird's Eye View of the New Canadian War Museum (Left)

Figure 2.48 – New Canadian War Museum (Above)

2.2.6 Procession

The masterful culmination of *a machine for viewing, material rawness, intertwined landscape, complex detailing, landscape as form generator* cannot exist as a haphazard hodgepodge of characteristics. The presented works balance these aspects across a progression of experiences in architecture. In essence, the architecture tells a story from start, middle, and end. At times, inspiration for the *procession* is drawn from existing conditions like paths or trails, mixed together with strong views and raw materials.

The French River Visitor Centre by Baird Sampson Neuert Architects is a landscape-inspired bunker inserted into the ground, drawing upon the local context in its site, materiality, and formal characteristics. Beginning with its site, which ultimately informed the entire scheme of the project (Figure 2.47), the French River Visitor Centre inserts itself into the ground of the sloped granite landscape. The site is filled with existing footpaths indented into the landscape, which further encouraged the overall formal and organizational configuration of the project.

“A desire to establish a close relationship to the river’s edge and the existing network of trails and picnic facilities translates into a building that descends down the slope, mimicking the landscape conditions while connecting the upper-level parking and arrivals area to the river below” (Jen, 2007, p.31).

Further mimicking the landscape, concrete forms are used to relate with the exposed granite (Figure 2.47). Not because granite and concrete are both solid materials, but because of their fluid characteristics (Jen, 2007). The granite on the sloping landscape has formed into rolling dunes, a fluid-looking surface from which Baird Sampson Neuert thought to draw inspiration for the concrete work – a material that begins as fluid (Jen, 2007). Formally, the slope also allows for

the project to have a series of three terraces: “entrance, education and happening” (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010). The progression of the project leads into an elevated framed view of the landscape (Figure 2.49), emerging from the land but also complementing it – *a machine for viewing*. It is the *procession* of the scheme, the path that one takes through it, where one becomes immersed into the surrounding context. The design presents three distinct stages but an almost seamless *progression* from entry to exit (Figure 2.48). Along with the *material rawness*, it is these particular aspects that convey a sense of confidence in architecture, allowing one to instinctively trust wherever the path might lead.

The *procession*, *material rawness* and the generated landscape inserted into the terrain by the terraced form make the French River Visitor Centre a multivalent and complex architecture – it is able to blend into the landscape and is also legible as a distinctly built form. It emerges from the sloped terrain and complements the forested background. Its form is complex but also straightforward to understand and follow. In this way, the French River Visitor Centre represents a particular pinnacle in Canadian architecture, one that is able to encompass all the aspects previously discussed.

Figure 2.47 – French River Visitor Centre

Figure 2.48 – Axonometric of the French River Visitor Centre

“A unique project amongst the submissions, the language and spatial distribution of this project is anything but neutral. The project finds a material palette that engages the Canadian mythology with respect to its land – the topography, the forest, and the vernacular craft associated with its built history, but transforms that narrative with a difficult negotiation between abstraction and figuration. At the end, the project situates itself into nature with deliberate self-consciousness, but sidesteps the clichés and landmines that await that yearning” (Adamczyk, Gomez-Pimienta, Pendergast, Tehrani and Williamson, 2010).

There is an undertone of pleasure from the jury in this statement – that the design of the French River Visitor Centre avoids clichés and neutrality. It is a deliberate exploration in abstraction and figuration in architecture. More important is the jury’s observation that “the project situates itself into nature with deliberate self-consciousness” – this self-consciousness is a result of the purposeful process in a responsive architecture – purposeful in defining itself and its place in context.

Figure 2.49 – Viewing Platform of the French River Visitor Centre

Figure 2.50 – Master Plan of the Promenade Samuel de Champlain

Figure 2.51 – Promenade Samuel de Champlain

Figure 2.52 – Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (Left)

Figure 2.53 – Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre (Above)

Figure 2.54 – New Canadian War Museum

2.5 Common Theme Mapping

The projects discussed along with many others represent a consensus on a Canadian identity. The common themes of *a machine for viewing*, *material rawness*, *complex detailing*, *intertwined landscape*, *landscape as form generator*, and *procession* are characteristics that exist across a majority of award winning Canadian projects. Further, each project has a pluralism of characteristics and do not represent only one theme. This pluralism is important as it is a distinguishing aspect to Canadian architecture – the multitude of responses. Using Gruft's method of categorical mapping, a similar mapping process was undertaken for this thesis (Figure 2.55). The value of this exercise is that it illustrates the qualities in great Canadian works of architecture. It is an evaluation of each project's spirit – and this is a spirit that is common across many Canadian projects. This commonality also emphasizes the reality of these architectural characteristics.

Figure 2.55 – Mapping of the Characteristics of Canadian Architecture

However, this exercise is a retroactive analysis; it only reviews what has been produced in the past, while this thesis seeks to take on a projective approach to a Canadian identity in architecture. Having surveyed a range of projects that share similarities in spirit, identified themes of *a machine for viewing*, *material rawness*, *complex detailing*, *intertwined landscape*, *landscape as form generator*, and *procession* will inform a design investigation in an effort to produce a Canadian identity in architecture in Chapter 3.

Modesty and Invisibility

Utilizing local context for design precedent

Complex Detailing to Simplify

A thought-out well detailed solution, typically providing a sublime simplicity

Local Precedent

Material Palette drawing from surrounding context

A Material Rawness

An inherent rawness, leaving materials exposed

Chapter 3 – Canada’s representation at the International Exposition on Architecture – The Venice Biennale

3.1 The Representation of Canada at the International Exposition of Architecture

“‘The Projection of Canada Abroad’... is of course a metaphor drawn from the cinema and suggests a practice now universal. Nations project themselves on the international screen in various ways. These extend from the daily work of press officers, to what might be called “cultural export” such as the visit of an orchestra or an exhibition of pictures abroad. The division between information and cultural exchanges between states is indeed often blurred; ... since the projection of Canada abroad through all available channels must be in the nature of a combined operation” (Massey, 1951, p.253).

The Massey Report suggests that Canada as a nation should participate in its own “cultural export” in an exchange with other nations. Subsequently, after the publication of *The Massey Report* in 1951, Canadian art began to be exhibited around the world bringing about an international awareness of a Canadian culture. It also served to define a Canadian identity. In relation to a Canadian architecture, for instance, once exported abroad it seemed to outwardly manifest a national identity; even more so than when compared to the architecture found within Canada. This opinion should not preclude the fact that Canadian architecture abroad consists mainly of national pavilions and embassies, which inherently are required to represent national values – naturally these projects would seem to have a stronger sense of an identity. The Canada Pavilions at the Venice Biennale, Expo '67, Expo '70, as well as the embassies in Mexico and Bangladesh are examples of relevant Canadian architecture which outwardly seeks a national identity on the international stage. When Canadian architecture is exported to other parts of the globe, its sensitivities become even more apparent. This is an important point – in this particular act, the culture of Canada should be exported worldwide so as to consciously continue its development. Exporting culture across the globe will require Canada to consciously evaluate its own culture.

The characteristics identified in the context of award-winning contemporary Canadian architecture are not shared by the recent Canadian pavilions. The architectural characteristics of *a machine for viewing*, *material rawness*, *complex detailing*, *intertwined landscape*, *landscape as form generator*, and *procession* discussed at the latter half of Chapter 2 are absent in the architecture of the national pavilions at the Shanghai Expo and Vancouver Olympics in 2010. Perhaps this is due to the initiatives of *The Massey Report* now being 60 years old. The government mandate to develop its national identity seems to have nearly vanished.

“The Canada Council for the Arts is committed to promoting the value the arts bring to the lives of Canadians. We do this through connecting arts organizations and artists with audiences and finding ways to engage the public in the arts” (The Canada Council for the Arts, 2009).

The Canada Council for the Arts exists as a major institution for the development, through the funding of individuals and organizations, of the arts in Canada. They also fund architecture “as an art form by administering prizes and supporting books, exhibitions and public events on outstanding buildings designed by Canadians” (The Canada Council for the Arts, 2005). Their responsibilities include the aforementioned Governor General’s Awards in architecture, architectural publications through *The Support to the Promotion of Architecture* grants, as well as the architectural representations at the Venice Biennale of Architecture, to name a few. From this short list alone, it would seem that the Canada Council for the Arts must be a well financed organization with a large allocation of funds for architecture. However upon investigation, the Canada Council’s *Strategic Plan for 2011-16* has no mention of architectural development. Brigitte Desrochers, the Architecture Officer in the Visual Arts Department of the Canada Council, in a conversation on November 23rd 2010 estimated that \$943,000 of funding was allocated to architecture for the 2010 year, of which \$837,000 came from the Visual Arts’ allocated funds toward grants and prizes. This amount is but a small fraction of the \$21.3 million allocated toward the Visual Arts for 2010 (Figure 3.1).

The lack of funds for the development of Canada’s arts culture is not the Canada Council’s fault. Their continuing mandate has been to support the arts while also communicating “the value of the arts to stakeholders” (The Canada Council for the Arts 2009). Therefore the Canada Council has a responsibility to justify why their funding is important to the federal

Canada Council Grants, Payments, Awards and Prizes, 2009-10

(in thousands of dollars)

Total: \$158,390

Figure 3.1 – Canada Council Grants and Awards for the 2009-2010 year, altered with the contribution to Architecture

government. Their job can be very difficult if an elected government is blind to the value of the arts in this country. Further, how can architectural development occur with such sparse funding? This thesis has taken the opportunity to project the idea of Canadian architecture on the international stage through the design of a national pavilion with the intention of conveying a national identity.

“The architecture section of the Venice Biennale, after its debut with the theatre section in the exhibition dedicated to “Venice and scenic space,” has its first autonomous initiative at the beginning of the penultimate decade: the First International Exhibition of Architecture. Every two years, the same kind of exhibition will be held in conjunction with the principal manifestations of the Visual Arts section. In this way, tribute will be paid to the continuity of a public institution of historic dimensions, and its original periodicity will be maintained, even if the programs of this section are not exhausted in the first engagement. Rather, they provide for permanent laboratories and for a series of manifestations that strengthen the link between the institution, the city, and its territory, and confirm the function of the Biennale as a center for the elaboration and promotion of architectural debate and research” (Portoghesi, 1980, p.9).

As previously mentioned, one active role Canadian architecture plays on the international stage is at the Venice Biennale of architecture. This existing pavilion, built predominantly for the showcase of art but recently also used to exhibit Canadian architecture, was built as a result of *The Massey Report*. The thesis will explore Canada’s architectural representation at the Venice Biennale largely informed by the projects investigated from the previous chapter to convey a contemporary Canadian identity.

On its own, the Canada Pavilion is particularly interesting. When compared to the Canada Pavilion at the Brussels Expo of the same year, 1958, it stands in stark contrast in terms of defining a national identity. The Canada Pavilion in Brussels was designed by Charles Greenberg in the International Style (Sabatino, 2007) and would otherwise be indistinguishable from any other national pavilion were it not for the “Canada” sign above (Figure 3.2).

On the other hand, the Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale takes on a formal representation of aboriginal culture – in the form of a wigwam – that automatically lends itself to an interpretation of a national identity.

“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. BBPR sought to express an ‘original’ Canadian identity that could be shared by the entire nation. Despite the pavilion’s functional short-comings, that pursuit of ‘authenticity’ reflected the momentum of (*The Massey Report*) ... whose aim was to

Figure 3.2 – Canada Pavilion at the Brussels Expo 1958

free the arts of the country from colonial subservience” (Sabatino, 2007, p.4-5).

The wigwam form, therefore, cleverly avoids the conflict of Anglo or Francophile representation, paving the way for the representation of nationalism abroad. *The Massey Report*’s momentum had resulted in the construction of this particular pavilion and it stands today as a vehicle to house contemporary Canadian art and architectural works on the international stage. As Michelangelo Sabatino points out, the pavilion’s shortcomings represent the sacrificing of function in order to project an ‘original’ or ‘authentic’ vision of Canada. However, the use of a wigwam form today can be interpreted as mimicry – being no better than the Chateaux style railway hotels or neo-gothic government buildings from before World War II. The Canada Pavilion’s architectural relevance is outdated in the context of the evolved traditions of architecture. Hence, this thesis seeks to project a new architectural expression for the pavilion that would convey characteristics of Canadian values.

Although the pavilion lends itself to criticism for mimicking First Nations structures, the irregular nautilus-shell shape of the pavilion stood, at the time of its construction, as a critique of gallery designs – it questioned the empty-box form typical of a majority of gallery spaces.

“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 viewing the buildings as containers of moveable objects, the architects permanently embedded art objects in the architecture” (Sabatino, 2007, p.6-7).

This approach does away with the flexible ‘container’ for art, but has also presented more practical problems for the pavilion. Canada’s artistic representation has simply outgrown the pavilion’s physical boundaries. Having only been intended to exhibit paintings set on modular panels, the pavilion’s overall configuration makes it difficult to exhibit contemporary forms of art. For example, in 2002 Michael Awad, David Rokeby and Eve Egoyan were selected to exhibit their project *Next Memory City*, “reflecting contemporary urban life through the use of large-scale photography, video images and a newly-commissioned sound work” (The Canada Council for the Arts, 2002). The pavilion presented a series of practical challenges where a conventional ‘white-box container’ gallery would not. The windows were blacked out and a complete secondary display structure was constructed in the centre – a series of walls for the projection of video.

Perhaps the pavilion’s irregularity is not so much a problem, but rather a challenge for curators. As Andrew Gruft points out: the difficulty of building in the Canadian context “seems to have challenged rather than inhibited the imagination of the designers,” which may have “enriched their work with a multivalent layering of response to a broad range of demands” (Gruft, 1986, p.51); so should the pavilion challenge the designer to find innovative solutions to its particular problems. John McMinn and Marco Polo’s exhibition, *41° to 66°*, was also challenged by the pavilion requiring the screening of windows to diffuse glare; the introduction of a custom hanging substructure to exhibit the work and other exhibition elements like digital projectors. Along the same theme as their thesis on regional responsive architecture in Canada, the exhibition itself sought to be as responsive

to the pavilion as possible.

Architecturally, a Canadian pavilion could sacrifice the design for ease-of-use if it lends itself to a formal quality that conveys the nationalistic qualities of Canada. It is not an architecture of convenience, but an architecture of subservience. For example, the Canada Pavilion in Venice has been constructed around an existing tree (Figure 3.3). This subservience toward the existing context is undeniable, further emphasized by a second tree embedded in the exterior envelope. It is a logistical problem as it is a source of uncontrolled natural light – undesirable for many exhibitions. On top of the problems of lighting, the tree's roots within the pavilion have recently begun to craze the terrazzo floor.

This negative criticism comes from a distanced evaluation of the pavilion. Critiquing the pavilion from afar makes it easy to address its faults. To experience the true characteristics of the pavilion and the culture of its context, it became necessary to see the pavilion first hand. In February 2011, this researcher had the opportunity to visit the pavilion on site.

Figure 3.3 – Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale

3.2 Venice Site Research

Having explored Venice, new sensibilities emerged that would otherwise have been neglected. From this simple observation, this researcher believes any architectural design of value must be explored on site. The experience altered a preconceived perception based on textbook readings and newspaper articles. On the other hand, after returning home and rereading texts and articles, many aspects were further clarified. It is difficult to understand the particularities of places and architecture through the written word or still images alone.

Arriving in Venice during part of the *Carnivale di Venezia*, the experience was overwhelming. The presence of so many international tourists made understanding Venice relatively difficult. The particularities of the place were overshadowed by the waterbuses full of tourists who arrived in crowds from morning to afternoon. The city was tremendously busy during the day. At night, however, Venice became deafly quiet that even the faintest sounds from a distance could be heard. The buildings appeared frozen, almost abandoned. The polarity of the day and night cycles of the city seemed similar to the hours of operation for a museum or gallery

Figure 3.4 – Map of Venice

(Figure 3.5). Venice is less like a living city, and rather more an island-gallery, showcasing architecture that has been relatively unchanged for centuries.

“One may distinguish today three types of physical environments produced under conditions of globalization with the intent of making places of representation of the other’s cultural tradition: dream landscapes which replicate historical settings; heritage sites which use history beyond their legitimate claim to an authentic past; and nostalgic places which exploit cultural heritage and normalize it for everyday life” (AlSayyad, 2007, p.181).

Figure 3.5 – Panoramic Image of Piazza San Marco

Nezar AlSayyad comments on Venice as being part of the current trend of globalization – the current Disneyfication of places, the changes that Disneyfied places go through and the blurring of the lines between authentic and non-authentic architecture (AlSayyad, 2007, p.182). Venice would fit under his second defined category: heritage sites which use history beyond their legitimate claim to an authentic past.

Venice was once a merchant port, a living city where economic, cultural and social problems were in constant flux. Although there are remnants of Venice's history today, it has become a gallery for tourism. There are communities where Venetians still live on the island that receive fewer numbers of tourists, and it can be argued that the merchant nature of the city has evolved to be heavily focused on a commercial retail market. It was observed that Venice has stopped growing as a living city and has moved into the realm of being a museum – static in its cultural development.

Similarly, the Biennale Giardini is a somewhat frozen gallery. Its low-density sprawl is similar to a theme park (Figure 3.6). The boulevards and lush vegetation are unlike the Venice city centre. It stands in stark contrast to the city centre as the architecture of each pavilion differs stylistically. The Biennale Giardini is home to an outstanding array of national pavilions (Figure 3.9) by internationally renowned architects like Sverre Fehn, Alvar Aalto, Gerrit Rietveld, Carlo Scarpa; and BBPR Architects for the Canada Pavilion. Furthermore, other pavilions also hold historic significance, like the German Pavilion built in 1938 (and characteristic of the architecture of a then emerging Nazi Germany), and the Russian Pavilion of 1914 (characteristic of Czarism just before the Russian Revolution). As such, the Venice Biennale is distinct from all other international expositions and Olympic sites because of this historic lineage and cultural retention.

Entering the Biennale Giardini and approaching the Canada Pavilion, ascending up a long and wide boulevard toward the English Pavilion, my first feelings were of sympathy and embarrassment. The Canada Pavilion sits shyly behind the overbearing British and German Pavilions, dwarfed in scale and tucked away behind shrubbery. Its relatively minute size is an awkward addition to the surroundings of the monumental French, British and German Pavilions (Figure 3.8).

A series of meetings were set up with the Canada Pavilion's manager, Tamara Andruszkiewicz, who openly embraced the opportunity to discuss the Canada Pavilion's history and background (Figure 3.7). A certain sense of national pride is accompanied when meeting others from Canada. After extensive talks about the history of the Biennale, Canada's participation, and the evolution of the pavilion, a new sensibility of pride and respect for the Canada Pavilion began to emerge. Andruszkiewicz communicated her pride in Canada's continuing participation at the Biennale. The fact that such an opportunity exists in Venice for Canadians to exhibit their work on the international stage is exceptional in itself.

Her respect toward the pavilion was surprising at first. Although designed by an Italian architecture firm, this fact was placed in the context that BBPR were world-renowned architects during the construction of the pavilion – all the more remarkable today considering that no architect was commissioned for the Canada Pavilions at the Shanghai Expo and Vancouver Olympics in 2010. One can only sympathize with Andruszkiewicz; it is truly amazing that Canada has a permanent

pavilion for the exhibition of art and architecture at the Venice Biennale. This new sensibility and respect toward the pavilion translated into a change in design attitude. Moving away from notions of demolition, the new scheme would contribute to the context of the site and would retain as much of the old pavilion as possible. It became important for the design response to incorporate the existing pavilion so as to convey this characteristic of respect.

Figure 3.7 – Interview with Tamara Andruszkiewicz

Figure 3.6 – Site Plan of the Biennale Giardini

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

Figure 3.8 – Panoramic View of the French, English Canada and German Pavilions (From Left to Right)

Figure 3.9 – Other National Pavilions in the Biennale Giardini

United States of America Pavilion

Czechoslovakia Pavilion

Dutch Pavilion

Russian Pavilion

Spanish Pavilion

Scandinavian Pavilion

Finnish Pavilion

Venezuela Pavilion

Japan Pavilion

Figure 3.10 – Elevation of Venice, Biennale Giardini (Left) and City of Venice (Right)

3.3 Initial Schematic Ideas – A Reaction

Awareness of small details surrounding the pavilion brought forth qualities that were lost in documentary texts and photographs. The skylights and clerestory, allowing natural light to enter the space, make the pavilion seem almost tent-like. Although the penetrations could have been more strategic in placement and designed to control light, it does make the envelope permeable, atypical of conventional galleries. Around the outside of the pavilion is the lush vegetation of the Giardini; situated near the water's edge, a path exists that leads into the vegetation and terminates at a look-out to the water. This look-out has been typically used to inaugurate the opening of Canada's participation at the Biennale each year. These initial aspects gave insight into the first design responses for the pavilion.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, architecture as *a machine for viewing* is the most obvious way to generate a design that responds to its context; design responses addressing this principle were immediately sketched. The intention was to incorporate a view toward the Venice waterfront, since the pavilion stood in close proximity to the water's edge; it was originally thought that a secondary pavilion could be placed to extend beyond the borders of the Giardini to overlook the landscape (Figure 3.11, 3.12, 3.13).

The origin of this response was also rooted in the experience of arriving in Venice by waterbus. The route of the waterbus travels around the island's southern tip – passing the Canada Pavilion site (Figure 3.10). A tremendous opportunity existed in penetrating the tree canopy out toward the water. The panoramic photograph of the Venice waterfront conveys how the Canada Pavilion could act as a punctuation for the island. Ideas of adding a light beacon, viewing platform, or even a canoe-rental facility were explored. These ideas were abandoned because they seemed to be becoming prey to the same caricature problems as the Canada Pavilions at the Shanghai Expo and Vancouver Olympics.

Although this response seemed correct at the time – paying homage to the landscape of Venice – it seemed too simple and lacked the complexity that this thesis seeks in determining a distinctly Canadian architecture. The scheme required an authentic responsiveness to the immediate context; only in its place was an aesthetic reaction. It became apparent that the immediate context around the Canada Pavilion is not the Venice familiar to most tourists. The Biennale Giardini is unlike the rest of Venice – it sits in a lush, forested, sprawled context where the pavilions relate little to one another. To try and relate the pavilion to the built context of the Venice waterfront would not be responsive to its immediate site conditions.

Taking a step back and contemplating the non-architectural Canadian characteristics of modesty, respect and compassion – along with the architectural characteristics of *a machine for viewing, material rawness, complex detailing, intertwined landscape, landscape as form generator, and procession* – new schemes materialized that proposed submerging an extension of the pavilion below grade (Figure 3.14). In this way, the existing footprint would remain relatively unchanged. An underground gallery and pavilion allows for the control of light, while also presenting an entirely new experience in Venice (Figure 3.15) – very little is built below grade in Venice due to its situation on the water. The pavilion itself, being submerged below ground, is also a modest response in its actual architectural articulation, but as an experience, it seeks to convey *a material rawness* in its large vertical spaces and strategic views toward the outdoors. Additionally with changes in elevation – a generated landscape (Figure 3.16) – its experiential quality would be like no other in Venice. Soon it became difficult to represent this scheme through simple section sketches. A new representational method was then developed to convey this experience.

Figure 3.11 – Preliminary Sketch Scheme I

Figure 3.12 – Preliminary Sketch Scheme 2

Figure 3.13 – Preliminary Perspective of Scheme 2

Figure 3.14 – Preliminary Section Scheme 3A

Figure 3.15 – Preliminary Section Scheme 3B

Figure 3.16 – Preliminary Section Scheme 3C

Figure 3.17 – Experiential Section Unwrapping

3.4 The Experiential Section – Designing a characteristic

It was imperative to re-evaluate the way in which the design process should continue. As a way to counter the façade-ism exhibited in other national pavilions, a method of drawing the perceived space was developed. Also, the choice to submerge the pavilion presented many obstacles in understanding the circulation of the pavilion – how does one avoid the roots of the trees? Where does one descend and ascend? How does this all tie together as a coherent design? These were all questions that could not be adequately answered by drawing the reality of the physical space. Rather than trying to draw a technically accurate representation of the pavilion, the design continued through the exploration in approximate scale, representing what the experience might feel like in plan, section and perspective. Each investigation sought to convey this notion of a Canadian pluralism of the characteristics distilled in Chapter 2.

The entire exploration is titled an Experiential Section; however it encompasses three drawing exercises. First, the exploration of an *experiential plan* would organize a natural *procession* for each experience. By drawing the plan in an approximate scale in a more linear configuration and sequence (Figure 3.17), a complex circulation from entry to exit could be represented. Second, with an accompanying *experiential section*, this would illustrate a *landscape as form generator*. The *procession* in section illustrates changes in elevation and volume, similar to Saucier + Perrotte's treatment of the First Nations Pavilion. Further, the section conveys the scheme's characteristics in an *intertwined landscape*. By including the surrounding context in section, the schemes are represented within a natural growth, rather than its current placement on the edge. Third, the perspectives serve as a vessel for the principle of *a machine for viewing*. By selecting key 'pauses' along the *procession*, each perspective would further elaborate characteristics of *a machine for viewing*, *material rawness*, *complex detailing*, *intertwined landscape*, *landscape as form generator*, and *procession*.

The Experiential Section is, in essence, a representation of how architecture might be perceived. The purpose of this exercise is to uncover potential design solutions that might not have been explored within the confines of real space. By communicating the possibilities of the context without the exact parameters of the physical limitations, the process uncovered goals and initiatives important to the design. The Experiential Section is an exercise in thinking. The process seeks to communicate a space that this designer wanted to achieve, only to then further elaborate on how it might be feasible in the design.

The process was not linear. While drawing the experiential plan, considerations were made in tandem to understanding the physical space. However, drawing a transformed version of the plan allowed for the evaluation of space from a different vantage point, opening up design opportunities in circulation, material palette, and form.

Figure 3.18 – Experiential Section A

Figure 3.19 – Prefab Cottage for Two Families (Above)
 Shown in relation to Figure 3.20, the image of the Prefab Cottage for Two Families highlights the concept of an *intertwined landscape*. It also encompasses the ideas of *a machine for viewing*, *a material rawness*, *landscape as form generator*, and *procession*.

Figure 3.20 – Entry Through a Forest A (Right)
 This entrance, with the addition of further vegetation, would serve to intertwine the pavilion into the landscape. The image resembles the Prefab Cottage for two Families in its situation in the growth of trees.

Figure 3.21 – Colour Sketch showcasing an *intertwined landscape*

Figure 3.22 – Terrance Donnelly Centre for Cellular and Biomolecular Research (Above)
Shown in relation to Figure 3.23, the interior green space of the Terrance Donnelly Centre for Cellular and Biomolecular Research is an interesting threshold condition between old and new. From the new addition, one descends down into the natural growth of the bamboo garden. Similar to the descent in Figure 3.23, the idea is to convey the concept of *complex detailing to simplicity* while also including the ideas of an *intertwined landscape*, *landscape as form generator*, and *procession*.

Figure 3.23 – Interior Descent A (Right)
The strongest illustration of a material rawness is exhibited here. From the existing terrazzo floor, glass and plaster walls and wood roof comes with an accompaniment of a concrete cavernous underground extension. This particular view is a threshold between old and new, like that of the examples in *complex detailing to simplicity*.

Figure 3.24 – Scandinave Spa (Top)

Figure 3.25 – French River Visitor Centre (Above)

Both these examples are shown in relation to Figure 3.26 in their interior treatment of the space. Using the idea of *landscape as form generator*, the interior space seems like a natural cave-like formation. The material treatment follows along the lines of a *material rawness* while also leading along a *procession*.

Figure 3.26 – Interior Underground Landscape A (Right)

The underground extension is a form generated from landscape. The changes in elevation with the exposed formed concrete are intended to resemble architecture similar to that of Saucier + Perrotte. The penetrations above resemble the lighting effects similar to those of a tree canopy.

Figure 3.27 – Experiential Section B

Figure 3.28 – Ravine Guest House (Left)
 Figure 3.29 – Scandinave Spa (Above)
 Focusing on the water feature in both projects in relation to Figure 3.30, the entry to the pavilion is intended to convey both an *intertwined landscape* and *landscape as form generator*. At the same time, the detailing of the water's edge would convey the ideas of *complex detailing*, and a *material rawness*.

Figure 3.30 – Entry Descent B (Right)
 The entry descent beneath the reflecting pond is an elaboration of the *intertwined landscape* idea from Scheme I. However, by using water and a concrete retaining wall, the overall entrance would also have a *material rawness* with a *landscape as form generator*.

Figure 3.31 – New Canadian War Museum (Above)
This image of the New Canadian War Museum is intended to relate to the idea of a *procession* in Figure 3.32. With the exposed concrete and the slanted walls, the ideas of a *material rawness* and *landscape as form generator* are also prevalent.

Figure 3.32 – Interior Ascent B (Right)
The view of the ascent back into the current pavilion portrays the *material rawness* of the space. This particular framed view provides insight into the entire *procession* of the scheme, one knows they are underground and that the existing pavilion is directly in front. Natural light would pour into the space through the transparency of the current pavilion, and would also filter through the water feature above. This water and light feature are particular to a non-traditional *material rawness* while also being intertwined in the landscape.

Figure 3.33 – First Nations Garden/Pavilion
(Above)

The canopy of the First Nations Garden/Pavilion undulates like a rolling landform. Relating to the permeable trellis in Figure 3.34, intended to simulate tree cover, the idea of *landscape as form generator* first comes to mind.

Figure 3.34 – Exit into a Landscape B (Right)

The termination of the Experiential Section is outdoors at the south end of the pavilion. Here, one is immersed in the *intertwined landscape*, where current walking trails – behind the English and German pavilions – continue the *procession* of the gallery. The small trellis is intended to relate to the tall existing trees – a response to the context. At the end of the trellis would be the viewpoint looking out into the water, a vista, a *machine for viewing*.

3.5 Realizing a Vision – The transposition of the idea into correct space

Experiential Section B holds strong potential in conveying a national identity. The particular circulation pattern – descending under the water to enter, travelling along a dark and heavy underground space, with an ascent into the lightness of the existing pavilion, exiting out into the landscape provides a wonderful plurality of experiences. This scheme was explored in further detail to develop characteristics of a national identity in architecture.

Transposing the experiential section into real space became a straightforward exercise. The pavilion's lower circulation was required to avoid the roots of the trees above, which inevitably dictated the circulation system. Ultimately, the procession of this scheme was most intriguing due to the flow of the path through a multitude of spaces and experiences that relate to a Canadian identity in architecture.

First, entering the pavilion one can see the original BBPR pavilion across a reflecting pond, unchanged. The addition of the reflecting pond along with new vegetation make the pavilion intertwined in the landscape. Visitors must also become part of this landscape as they descend down into the water toward the entrance. The composition underground wraps around the outside of the pavilion. The *material rawness* of the cast-in-place concrete retaining walls accompanied by changes in elevation provide an interior generated landscape. Natural light trickles from above, animating the walls with a soft glow.

The underground spaces all have particularly distinct characteristics with a different experience as one passes through each volume. Arriving at the Ascension Hall, one becomes aware of the *complex detailing* between the old and new pavilion. Above is the bright translucent pavilion while down below is the dark heavy underground extension.

The procession continues through the existing pavilion at grade and wraps around the courtyard, now acting as the threshold between interior and exterior experiences. The final steps of the pavilion are a gradual crescendo of natural growth with a landscaped vista.

Terminating at a vista overlooking the water, the procession reclaims existing pathways that curl behind the German and English Pavilions.

Figure 3.35 – Intervention Plan at Grade

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Figure 3.43 – Stepping outside – looking back

Figure 3.44 – Exit out to the Forested Landscape

Figure 3.45 – Overlook out to the Water

Conclusion

Investigating the idea of a Canadian identity in architecture has encompassed a multitude of research in history, policy and architecture. In Chapter 1, it was found that Canada sought to move away from its colonial roots after the Second World War which resulted in the significant publication of *The Massey Report*. This particular policy brought about initiatives in national development through the establishment of organizations to expand the arts culture in Canada. It was a time of nation building; a priority for the government of Canada at the time. It became evident in the research that priorities change as governments come and go. Most currently, the Canada Pavilions at both the Shanghai Expo and the Vancouver Olympics are prime examples of a government uninterested in developing a national identity in architecture.

The investigation of recent national pavilions has demonstrated a real shift in government priorities. On the other hand, the pavilions and embassies of the past 50 years have illustrated an evolutionary process where architecture has progressed away from imitative styles. The Canadian pavilions at the Venice Biennale, Expo '67, and Expo '70; along with the Canadian embassies in Mexico and Bangladesh illustrate a gradual increase in architectural complexity. Pavilions and embassies have a purpose to promote a national identity and for the examples in Venice, Montreal and Osaka, this has manifested in an architectural symbolism showcasing a Canadian culture, society and economy to the international community. In latter examples like the embassies in Mexico and Bangladesh, the architecture resulted in an attitude to respond to the regional context – using local materials and traditions to inform the design. The architecture was therefore not an aesthetic style, but a method in drawing inspiration from the local and regional context.

This method is prominent in award winning contemporary works found across the nation. Upon investigating the works that received Governor General Medals in Architecture, commonalities were identified between projects that include: *a machine for viewing*, *a material rawness*, *intertwined landscape*, *complex detailing*, *landscape as form generator*, and *procession*. The themes identified do not individually represent a Canadian architecture, but rather are pieces that culminate in a multitude of characteristics; a pluralism of themes. The commonalities are also evidence that a consensus exists across a variety of Canadian projects. It might be premature to state that this culmination of themes is a distinctly Canadian architecture, but it does present design similarities that articulate particular Canadian architectural responses.

The many projects explored, from early government policies to publications, across many national pavilions, embassies and contemporary works, illustrates the evolution in Canadian architecture. The thesis has identified characteristics across these projects in an effort to define a national identity. This in itself contributes to a larger body of knowledge and research on a Canadian architecture and provides a departure point from which others may continue the exploration into a Canadian identity in architecture. But, the thesis has also highlights a current government priority that does not include national developments of this kind. This observation may help direct the next generation of decision-makers in Canada to find value in nation building through architecture. In terms of the general populace, as mentioned in Chapter 1, architecture in Canada “is largely ignored by the public” (Massey, 1951, p.216) and so the thesis hopes to raise the overall public awareness of the richness that Canadian architecture has to offer. Although *The Massey Report’s* observation had been made over 50 years ago, it is still a relevant concern for today.

Canada does not need to start from ground zero in its own architectural promotion. The existing grant programs to send prominent Canadian artists and architects to participate at the Venice Biennale of Art and Architecture are promotional opportunities that allow for designers from this country to be exposed on the international stage. It is a privilege for Canada to have a permanent national pavilion in the Biennale Giardini. By highlighting the history of the pavilion and its surrounding context – in the presence of other world renowned architects – the thesis illustrates the value of Canada’s participation at the Biennale.

The pavilion serves as an exploratory design lab to test the limits of the characteristics outlined at the latter portion of Chapter 2, and further develops one manifestation of this idea. It gives evidence that Canadian architecture is a symphony of characteristics drawn from a regionally responsive design sensitivity. The characteristics of *a machine for viewing*, *a material rawness*, *intertwined landscape*, *complex detailing*, *landscape as form generator* and *procession* are but only a short list that this thesis has uncovered. The categories are not intended to be canonical, but rather are a starting point for further discussions. There might also be other hidden characteristics that may be explored in future research work.

By evaluating the design responses before and after visiting Venice, the experience has altered this researcher's perception of BBPR's Canada Pavilion. It invoked a sensitivity to retain the pavilion amidst its programmatic shortcomings. More importantly, the design has expanded the research by exploring alternative ways of representing architecture. The Experiential Section has allowed the research to dive into illustrating architectural characteristics outside the boundaries of traditional methods of representation. The final steps in transposing those ideas into real space did not further the ambitions of the Experiential Section, but furthered the examination of details while also adding a sense of conclusion to the entire process.

Although this is a logical place for a conclusion, it should not be a point of termination for the ideas presented. The overall intervention has defined a non-traditional process in architectural design and will hopefully progress further in this researcher's future design ambitions. It presents only one exploration of a national identity in architecture and, by no stretch of the imagination, this publication's findings are subject to change. The thesis is written in a particular time and context, which necessitates a process of refinement and revision in the future. For what is true about Canadian architecture is its changing nature; ever evolving around its context.

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