

BOOKS Lorna Crozier's compendium of the everyday is anything but banal S6

ART Ordered outdoor installation honours a lost Eden in Caraquet S7

salon



Our merchants of Venice

On Aug. 29, the 13th international Venice Biennale of Architecture opens with 55 nations competing for the coveted Golden Lion awards. For the first time ever, New Brunswick will be represented in the grand affair, considered the Olympics of architecture. Saint John-based Acre Architects are one of 18 teams participating in the Canadian pavilion. Story by Mike Landry S4

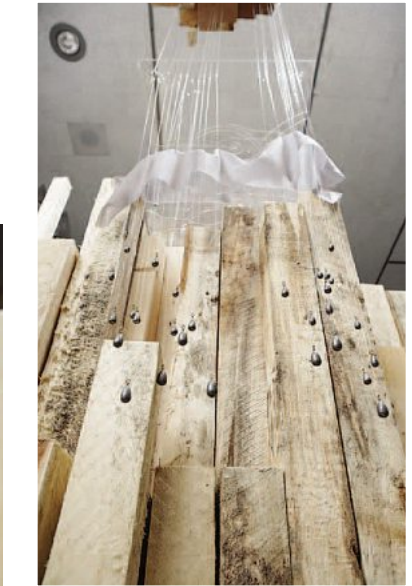
salon focus



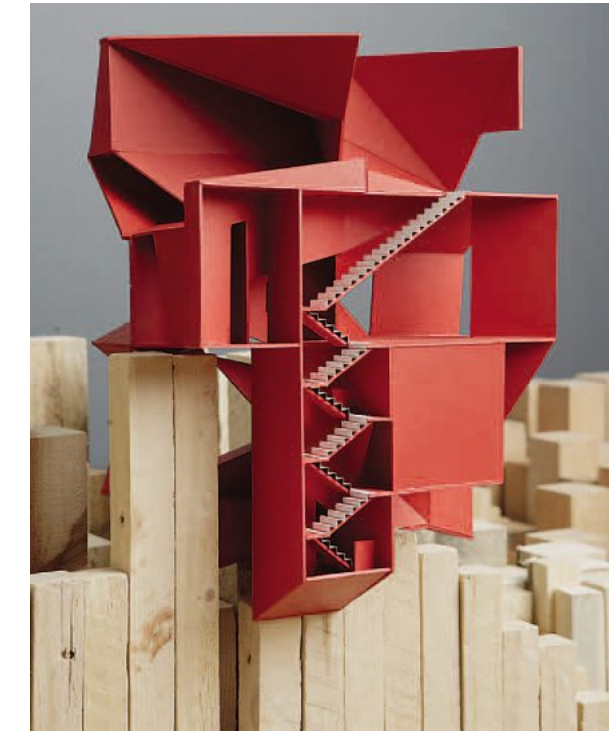
'Trap Line Cabins' by Tiffany Shaw-Collinge from Alberta. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



're | settlements' by Victoria Yong-Hing, Robyn Robertson, Mark Sin, Brad Pickard and April Hiebert from Saskatchewan. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'[Re]Settlement/[Re]Generation' by Marianna de Cola from Newfoundland. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Merging Landscapes' by Felix Tue from Quebec. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Pickle House' by Anca Matyiku and Chad Conner from Manitoba. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Unfolded box; the first moment of rest' by Kfir Gluzberg and Liana Bresler from Ontario. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Carry On Belonging' by Olena Chytra, Philipp Dittus, Alana Green and Katy Young from British Columbia. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Dance of the Minarets' by Amiral Javidan from British Columbia. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'They will arrive one day' by Andre Silva, Chris Gilmour and Kory Kasper from Manitoba. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Semi (Detached)' by Andrew Batay-Csorba and Jodi Batay-Csorba from Ontario. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'An Unfinished Basement' by D'Arcy Jones from British Columbia. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'In between the countryside and the city' by Jean-Nicolas Bouchard and Philippe Charest from Quebec. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'The Winnipeg Condition' by Travis Cooke and Jason Kun from Manitoba. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Kite' by Mira Yung and IMu Chan from British Columbia. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC



'Memory Making' by George Simonopoulos and Erica Pecoskie from Ontario. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC

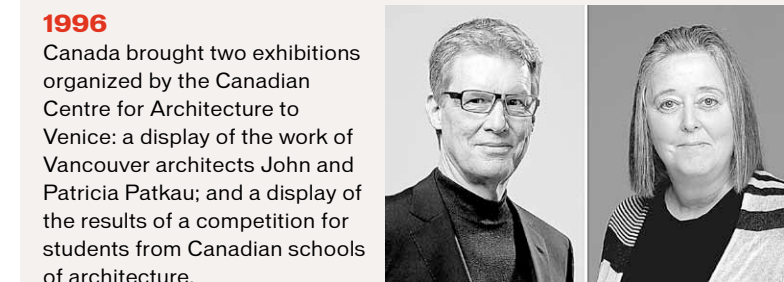


'Migrating (Bounded) Landscapes' by Jason Hare from Manitoba. PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC

timeline



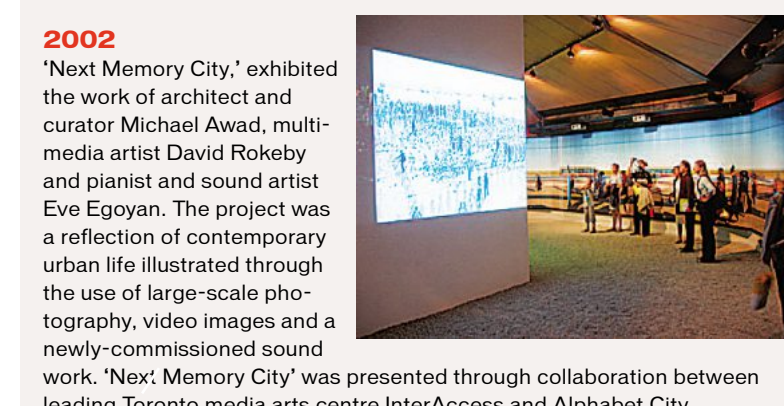
1991
Canada's inaugural year participating in the Venice Biennale of Architecture featured a display of documents celebrating the newly built Canadian Centre for Architecture, designed by Canadian architect Peter Rose in consultation with Phyllis Lambert. The Centre for Architecture acted as producer and curator of this representation of its own building.



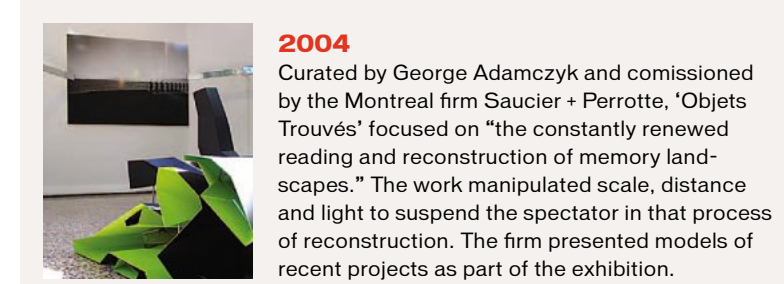
1996
Canada brought two exhibitions organized by the Canadian Centre for Architecture to Venice: a display of the work of Vancouver architects John and Patricia Patkau; and a display of the results of a competition for students from Canadian schools of architecture.



2000
For the first year, the Canada Council for the Arts supports the presentation at the pavilion with a grant of \$50,000 for Melvin Charney's 'UN DICTIONNAIRE ...' selected by the Canadian Centre for Architecture. 'UN DICTIONNAIRE ...' featured Charney's decade's-long compilation of newspaper pages bearing photographs in which architecture comes into contact with current events.



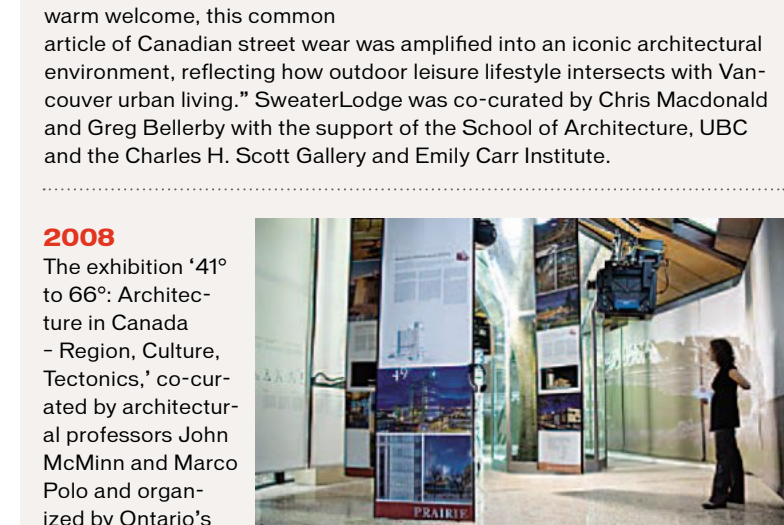
2002
'Next Memory City,' exhibited the work of architect and curator Michael Awad, multimedia artist David Rokeby and pianist and sound artist Eve Egoyan. The project was a reflection of contemporary urban life illustrated through the use of large-scale photography, video images and a newly-commissioned sound work. 'Next: Memory City' was presented through collaboration between leading Toronto media arts centre InterAccess and Alphabet City.



2004
Curated by George Adamczyk and commissioned by the Montreal firm Saucier + Perrotte, 'Objets Trouvés' focused on "the constantly renewed reading and reconstruction of memory landscapes." The work manipulated color, distance and light to suspend the spectator in that process of reconstruction. The firm presented models of recent projects as part of the exhibition.



2006
The main element of 'Sweater-Lodge,' a project by Vancouver's Pan-couver's Vech and Robb Studio, was a giant, room-sized polar fleece sweater. "Offering visitors a warm welcome, this common article of Canadian street wear was amplified into an iconic architectural environment, reflecting how outdoor leisure lifestyle intersects with Vancouver urban living." SweaterLodge was co-curated by Chris Macdonald and Greg Bellerby with the support of the School of Architecture, UBC and the Charles H. Scott Gallery and Emily Carr Institute.



2008
The exhibition '41' to 66': Architecture - Region, Culture, Tectonics,' co-curated by architectural professors John McMinn and Marco Polo and organized by Ontario's Cambridge Galleries, presented a selection of contemporary buildings organized within six distinct cultural and geographic regions of Canada. The exhibition featured a variety of leading contemporary Canadian architects whose work draws on iconic Canadian building types - Busby Perkins + Will, Patkau Architects, Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB) Architects and Mackay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects.



2010
'Hylozoic Ground,' by Toronto architect Philip Beesley with Philip Beesley Architecture Inc., was a huge step forward on a project of experimental architecture looking at qualities of contemporary wilderness that Beesley had been exploring in previous shows. The project transformed the pavilion into "an immersive environment made of a network of interactive mechanical fronds, filters and whisks sensing and responding to its human occupants" to create a breathing motion, "luring visitors into eerie shimmering depths of a forest of light."



2012
'Migrating Landscapes,' commissioned by 5468796 Architecture and Jae-Sung Chon from Winnipeg, exposes new housing designs by young Canadian architects with an experience of migration - a video companion narrates the migration story behind each design. Eighteen participating architect teams' designs were selected by way of regional and national competitions.

The great migration

Venice is an awful place to install a show, but a coveted venue for artists. A look at how the Biennale of Architecture works - and what it means to make it there. Story by Mike Landry

With just a week left before the opening of the 13th Venice Biennale of Architecture, the organizers of this edition's Canadian pavilion found themselves in a diplomatic skirmish with their German neighbours.

The Germans drew exception to the decision by Canada's 5468796 Architecture and Jae-Sung Chon, known collectively as the Migrating Landscapes Organizer, to have its exhibition spill out of the pavilion, onto the common ground of the Giardini, the biennale's central exhibition area.

Canada ultimately agreed to retreat its exhibit closer to its pavilion later that day to resolve the "pretty intense situation."

Given that Canada's entry into the biennale is *Migrating Landscapes*, and the expo's overall theme is *Common Ground*, the spat encapsulated this year's ideological difficulties. As 2012's director, knighted British architect David Chipperfield, explains, *Common Ground* is intended "to reassert the existence of an architectural culture made up not just of singular talents but a rich continuity of diverse ideas."

While buildings are the result of drafting tables, blueprints and code regulations, the architecture at the biennale is often composed of gesture, metaphor and evanescence. It is a place where buildings aren't necessarily built, but constructions are considered.

Migrating Landscapes is comprised of 18 teams of one to five members of young architects from across Canada. The Migrating Landscapes Organizer put out a call asking for designers to submit "dwelling" based on their cultural memories.

Through a series of regional competitions and a national competition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Saint John-based Acre Architects earned one of the coveted tickets to Venice. The team - principal architects Monica Adair and Stephen Kopp, associate John Leroux, designer Jessie Croll and computer aided design technician Alicia Halas - is one of just two representatives for Atlantic Canada in Venice, and the only one from New Brunswick.

has literally and metaphorically divorced its development. Acre Architects argues that this shift would create a re-energized destination for migrants.

If it sounds abstract, that is because it is. Canada's 18 designs are further complicated by an exhibition infrastructure of vertical wooden logs of varying height designed by the organizers and called the "new landscape."

Ian Chodikoff, editor of Canadian Architect magazine and one of the jurors who selected the *Migrating Landscapes* participants in Winnipeg, admits the exhibit could be considered obtuse. It's the dialogue the piece invites, more than its design, that he is looking forward to in Venice.

He hopes the designers can continue that dialogue when they return from Italy, too.

"(Venice) will allow architects in the future, and Acre Architects, hopefully, to pursue projects that architects didn't typically pursue in the past, but can provide a lot of value to a community," Chodikoff says.

A spin-off of the Venice Biennale, an international exhibition of contemporary art held since 1895, the Venice Biennale of Architecture first occurred in 1980. It was held sporadically until it became biennial in 2000. Canada has participated since the fifth edition, in 1991.

First organized by the Canadian Centre for Architecture, in Montreal, Canada's pavilion is now shepherded by the combined efforts of the Canada Council and Architecture Canada. The council, involved since 2000, facilitates the jury process to select an organizer and provides funding - \$184,000 for the Migrating Landscapes Organizer.

Architecture Canada, involved since 2010, supports the organizers with administration and fundraising. They've helped raise almost \$500,000 through donations and in-kind support. Its previous fundraising high-water mark was \$57,000. "I don't think the extended architecture community has ever come behind a project like this before, not in a national way," Sascha Hastings, Architecture Canada's project manager for the Venice Biennale, says. "We want to get the message out to the public that architecture matters."

"We want to post the wonderful activity in Canada on an international stage," Sigurdson says. "And, if it's not too cornball to say, it invites the whole design community to think in terms that are very inspirational and very large, and our feeling is that advances things in a very profound way."

The council's jury awards a winning proposal long before the biennale announces its theme, so any overlap between the two is serendipitous. The council isn't interested in using the pavilion as cultural diplomacy. Sigurdson says the pavilion is best understood over time, as a "series of oblique or tangential avenues of approach, that one way or another locates the idea of Canada."

"The very notion of national representation is fraught," he says. "It is a bit of an aberration."

Rather, he describes Canada's entries as "a little bit of a slice of something that one way or another stands in for larger things, but it doesn't need a metaphor or absolute."

The council usually receives less than a dozen proposals for the Canadian pavilion. It's an honour to be selected, but it means taking on a year and a half of work.

The Canadian pavilion alone is a headache. Designed by a prestigious Italian architect and opened in 1958, it is shaped like a tepee, but with a glassed-in shrapnel growing up the middle. It's oddly shaped and small. Nothing can be nailed to the walls, and drilling is not permitted.

"It's nothing but hassle to mount a show in Venice," Sigurdson says. "Every time you turn around, you're obliged to spend a shocking amount to get something done."

The payoff is hard to measure, but the 2010 exhibited artist and organizer, Toronto architect Philip Beesley, says it's worthwhile.

He did feel a bit like a cultural ambassador amid the other pavilions. It was a bold feeling, one in contrast to the acute sense of how lacking Canada was in terms of experimentation and risk in architecture.

"It really can be very unsettling and it changes you," Beesley says.

By the time the biennale closes in November, the Migrating Landscapes Organizer will have spent almost exactly two years on its exhibition.

A few months before heading to Venice, the Migrating Landscapes Organizer learned that they weren't allowed to ship the pre-cut wood of its 'new landscape,' due to concerns that the wood could have invasive bugs. So, for the month leading up to the exhibition, the organizers have been re-building and installing its landscape.

Working 12-hour days, broken by lunches cooked on a small charcoal grill and eaten behind the Canadian pavilion overlooking a canal, they've already broken three chop saws. A chain saw roared for

two weeks straight. At night, one of the organizers cooks - only Italian - while another's job is laundry and another dishes.

Jae-Sung Chon, one of the organizers, hopes their effort creates a collective consciousness about migration and our built environment. He knows, as in that dust-up with the German pavilion, that migration and cultural identity continues to be divisive, but says Canada is a prime testing ground for ideas and possible solutions.

And it isn't just Canada that's attempting to find solutions to deal with common ground. Great Britain sent 10 "explorers" from various fields, to other countries to create an exhibit exploring "the creative potential of sharing ideas across borders." The United States' *Spontaneous Interventions* is composed of dozens of small firms working outside conventional practice to make "cities more sustainable, accessible



Saint John-based Acre Architects - Monica Adair, left, Stephen Kopp, Alicia Halas, John Leroux and Jessie Croll (inset) - are one of 18 participating teams from across Canada whose designs won a national competition to be a part of the exhibition 'Migrating Landscapes' at the Canadian pavilion at the 2012 Venice Biennale of Architecture, opening Aug. 29 in Italy.



Acre Architects' winning submission for 'Migrating Landscapes.' 'Why New Brunswick?' PHOTO: GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC

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