

ARTSWEST

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ArtsWest 84

New Emphasis
On Canadian
Classics

Douglas Cardinal
Fulfills a
National Dream

The Woodland
School of
Image Makers

Representational
Art on Exhibit

The Problems of
the Evolving Artist



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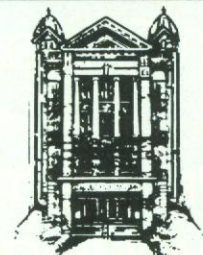
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canadiana galleries

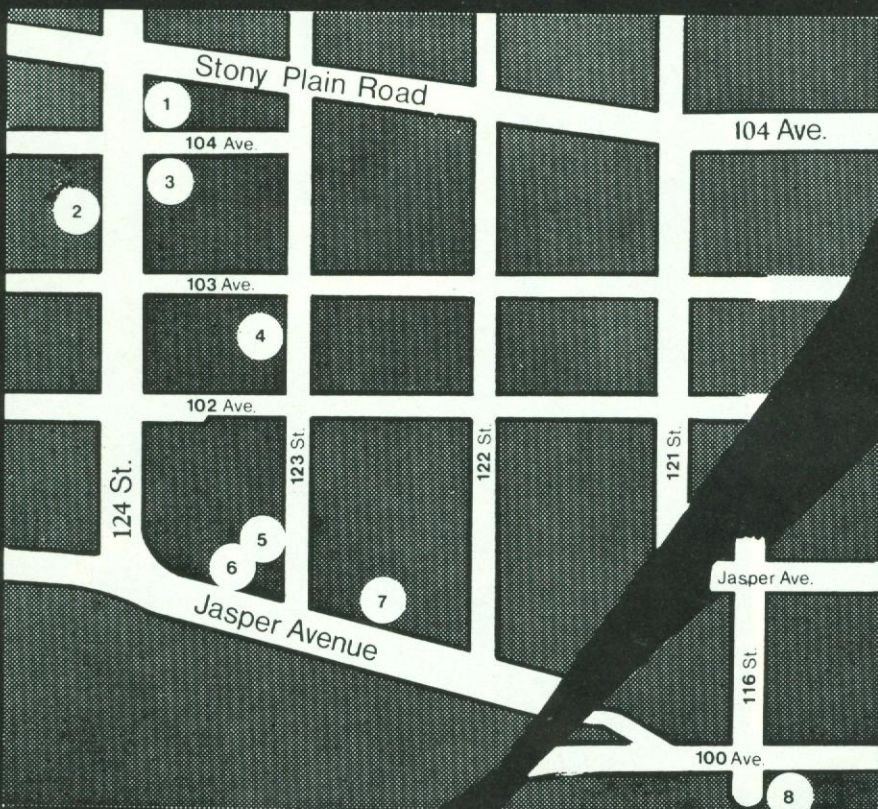
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COVER — ALLAN EDSON, A PAUSE IN THE WOODS, WATERCOLOR, 21x13, 1875.
COLOR SEPARATIONS COURTESY MASTERS GALLERY

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GEHR'S INTUITION

In ten short months, Swiss sculptor Andreas Gehr has established himself as a welcome addition to the Toronto art community, entrancing viewers with a striking installation at the Ydessa Gallery that includes a one-eared knife-wielding rabbit and a twelve-foot metal man. "Sometimes I have no idea what I'm doing," the artist says, "but I have a lot of confidence in my intuition." Toronto Star critic Christopher Hume also has confidence in the work's integrity. "It is indeed," he writes, "a wonderful thing that Gehr has wrought."

NORTHERN MYSTERIES

Art Gallery of Ontario Chief Curator Roald Nasgaard was a disappointed man when *The Mystic North*, a special exhibition he organized to highlight comparisons between Canadian and Scandinavian artists of the first half of this century, brought only 40,000 patrons to the AGO box office.

In recent years J.M.W. Turner attracted nearly a million visitors, and Judy Chicago 50,000.

"If a show does not have public appeal, I should do a book, and keep it to myself," Nasgaard told critic John Bentley Mays bitterly in a frank interview. He has been left with a very poor opinion of Toronto audiences and their response to serious Canadian shows.

HE NEVER GOT THERE

A Calgary art critic thinks a recent exhibition in that city was seriously marred by the omission of several key paintings.

Nancy Tousley of The Calgary Herald visited a William Blair Bruce retrospective only to find that several major works had been forbidden to travel beyond the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario. "The omissions are worth quibbling about," she writes, "because what's left is largely minor, often awkward in execution, and out of context." She feels that without paintings like the Art Gallery of Hamilton's important oil, *The Phantom Hunter*, his career can only be charted in a minor key.

Joan Murray, director of the McLaughlin Gallery and curator of the show, first became interested in the early Canadian painter in 1973. Since then, she has organized two Bruce exhibits, and edited a life of the artist, *Letters Home: 1859-1906, The Letters of William Blair Bruce*. This valuable piece of research documents the background of Bruce's failure to reach artistic maturity, which Murray sees as closely connected with his search for a Canadian identity. She notes that the artist "never really got there" with his impressionist experiments. Too bad her show "never really got" to Calgary.

The phenomenon of Folk Art does not extend far beyond Central Europe and certainly has not been part of the Canadian Tradition.

— John R. Taylor



WILLIAM BLAIR BRUCE

UP BY A THOUSAND

In spite of the economic recession the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon was pleased to discover that its local 1983 fund-raising campaign had raised \$1,000 more than it had in the previous year, and provided the gallery with encouraging support from the community. The committee chairman stated that he was "delighted at the response from both individuals and corporations" in Saskatoon.

BOGGS HONORED

The Glenbow Museum Acquisitions Society in Calgary has presented its gold medal of achievement to Dr. Jean Sutherland Boggs, chairman and chief executive officer of the Canada Museums Construction Corporation and responsible for the implementation of the design and construction programs for the new Museum of Man and National Gallery buildings.

PHOTO FOCUS

Several photography exhibitions have been scheduled for the Edmonton Art Gallery over the next few months, including a November *Masters of Photography* show featuring works by Alfred Stieglitz, Imogen Cunningham and William Curtis. An April survey features works by Edmonton photo-documentarian Orest Semchishen, while future plans call for Douglas Curran to commemorate the centenary of the Northwest Rebellion, and family snapshots to demonstrate the work of Henry Singer.

UNSEEN PICASSOS

An exclusive retrospective of largely unseen works by Pablo Picasso will go on show at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts late next year. Featured works will be from the personal collection of the artist's widow.

ONE MAN AND A NATIONAL DREAM

DOUGLAS CARDINAL AND THE NEW MUSEUM OF MAN

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY CANADA MUSEUMS CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION

There is something absolutely satisfying about the selection of Douglas Cardinal as the architect of the new National Museum of Man. Not only is he one of the most successful practitioners of his profession in Canada today; his Metis roots extend back into a pre-national Canada and allow him to uniquely represent the summation of our national dreams. In his brilliant design, he realizes the evolving forms of our multiple heritage. History meets high technology in one magnificent plan.

Cardinal's \$93 million celebration of Canadian achievement will provide four times the exhibition space now occupied by the Museum of Man in 17 different sites all over the Ottawa area. Its location on Parc Laurier in Hull, Quebec, is in a place important in the past for its association with Indians, explorers, missionaries and voyageurs. Through Douglas Cardinal himself, the new museum building will further exemplify our history. Though of native ancestry and presently living in Edmonton, Cardinal will be associated on the project with the Montreal architectural firm of Tetrault, Parent, Languedoc et Associes. "In many ways they feel like me, isolated from Upper Canada," he

has said of the French-Canadians. Whether he was speaking as a Metis or an Albertan it is hard to say.

— SPIRITUAL QUEST —

For Cardinal, the Museum of Man is more than just another design project. It is a spiritual exploration, and a quest to link Canada's many cultures through symbol and form. In his Architect's Statement he explains that the structure is intended to suggest the emergence of a continent sculptured by winds, rivers and glaciers. "It will speak of the emergence of man from the melting glaciers," he goes on, "of man and woman living in harmony with the forces of nature and evolving with them. It will show the way in which man first learned to cope with the environment, then mastered it and shaped it to the needs of his own goals and aspirations. It will depict man as a creature of the earth who knows his tremendous power to change his environment, yet understands that he must live in harmony with it." Cardinal continues his statement by outlining how the building itself will

truly aspire to be an artifact of our time, a celebration of man's evolution and achievement. It will point optimistically to the future, promising man's continued growth to a higher form of life, exploring not just this continent or planet but outer space as well. It will demand from those contributing to its design and construction the very best of their endeavors.

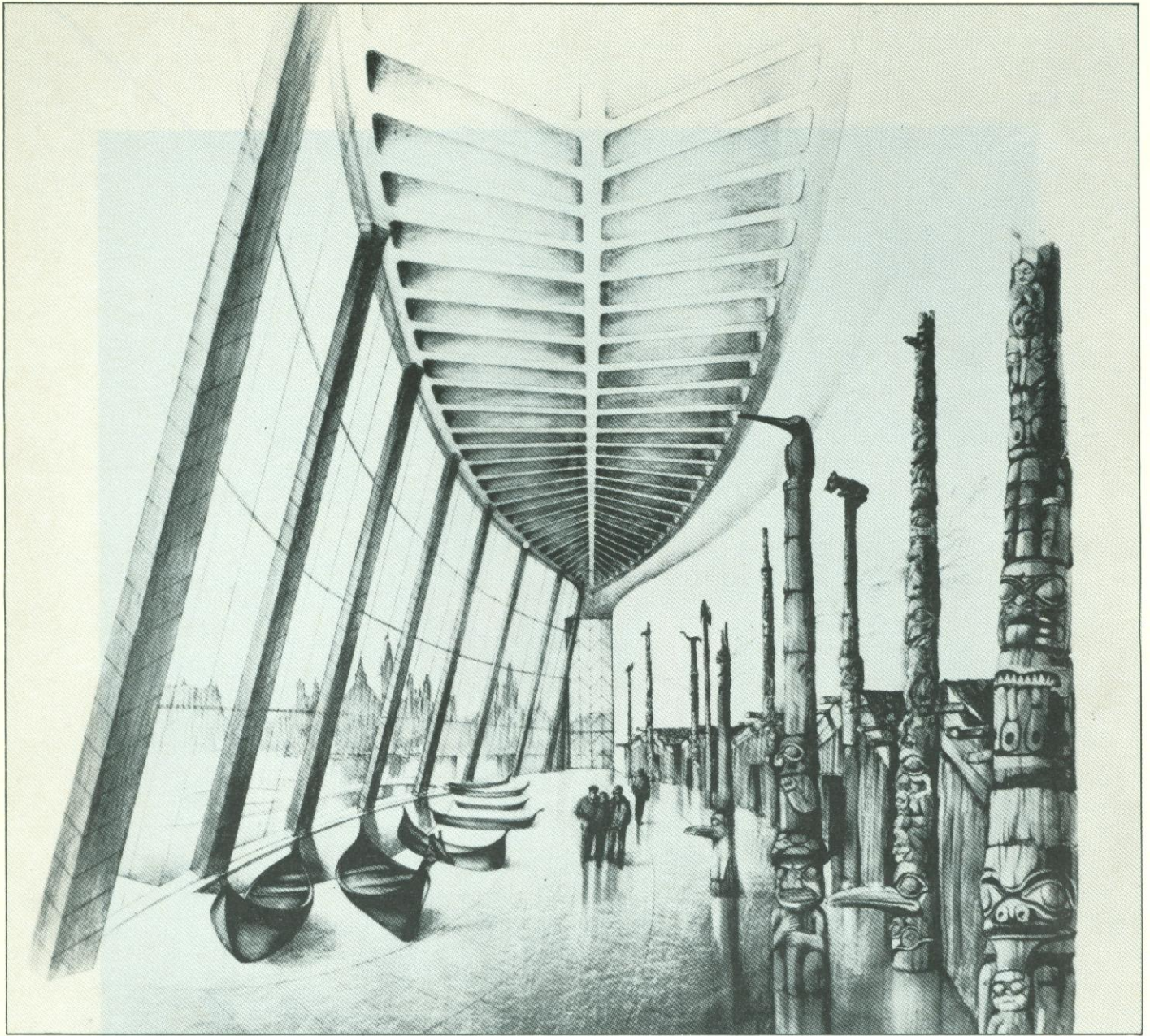
After taking his architectural degree at the University of Texas, Cardinal returned to his native Red Deer, Alberta, to design the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary's there in 1967. He received his first widespread acclaim for its curving forms, dramatic lighting, and imaginative use of materials. Since then, he has continued to design what have been called "undulating shells," structures sinuously shaped to the nature of their use. Someone once dismissed his style as "gopher baroque," but that doesn't bother Cardinal. "I'm not playing to my profession," he says. "I'll do my thing. If people like it, great."

— MUSEUM MANDATE —

The mandate of the National Museum is to conduct research into Canadian studies, as well as to collect, preserve and display more than two million objects reflecting our cultural



CROSS-SECTION
SHOWING THE
RELATIONSHIP
OF THE
EXHIBITION HALLS



ALONG THE GRAND HALL WITH THE VIEW ACROSS THE OTTAWA RIVER ON THE LEFT AND THE ENTRANCES TO THE EXHIBITION HALLS ON THE RIGHT

past. Cardinal has provided what the museum staff requested: broadly-defined halls for lively contextual displays from the vast collections of archaeology, ethnography, folk art, and history. He has sculpturally shaped the walls, piercing them at intervals for natural light or pleasing views. In addition, he has found imaginative solutions to special problems: a children's museum, a gallery for large touring exhibitions, an orientation centre, and a gallery that will demonstrate how the museum works.

Offices and workrooms, which should have natural daylight, have been adroitly wrapped around storage areas, which should not. There are inviting spaces for rest and relaxation, a

restaurant with vistas over the river, a theatre with the latest in film technology, and a resource centre where computers can access information in the museum collections.

— THE GRAND HALL —

The most memorable space in the new museum will be the Grand Hall, a long, sinuous concourse reached from the main entrance off the esplanade. There one will see on the left, through undulating glass curtain-walls, the view of Parliament Hill made familiar by our dollar bill. On the right will be entrances to exhibition areas, together with a passageway leading to additional halls looming above. Here more than at any other place in this spec-

tacular building the visitor will sense the exciting relationship between Cardinal's structure and its environment.

"I don't see why I can't go to a sun-dance one day, and sit down behind a computer the next," Cardinal said recently. He has made great use of the computer in his design process, and his interior and exterior renderings of the Museum of Man building are based on its wire-frame perspectives. Cardinal envisions a future where new technologies make structures more and more dynamic. "I don't see why we can't have buildings that open and shut," he says. "They should close up at night and open to the sun." If Cardinal wants them to, they probably will. □