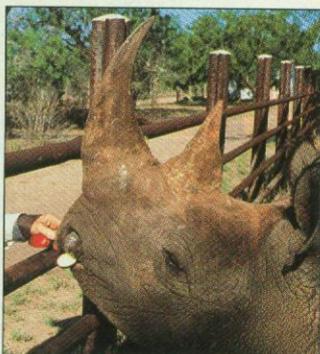


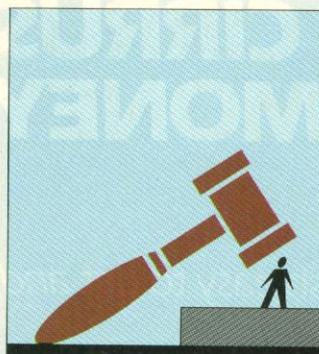
No matter where you are...



**SCENE: In Texas, a rhino's new home on the range**

On 80 acres of ranch in the Rio Grande valley, a former cattleman raises one of Africa's most endangered species on land that makes the animals feel right at home.

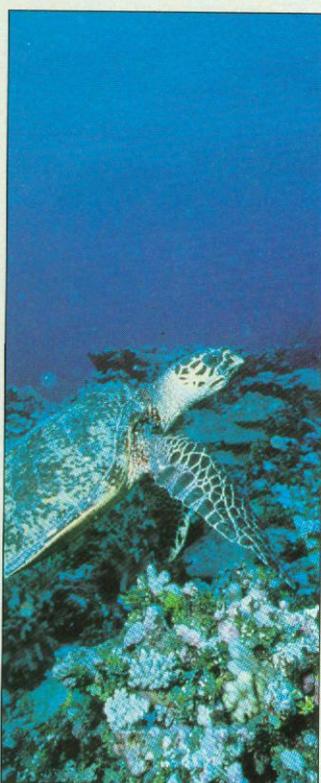
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**LAW: A law-and-order majority flexes its muscle**

The U.S. Supreme Court decides that capital punishment for the mentally retarded and for 16- and 17-year-olds is not "cruel and unusual" punishment.

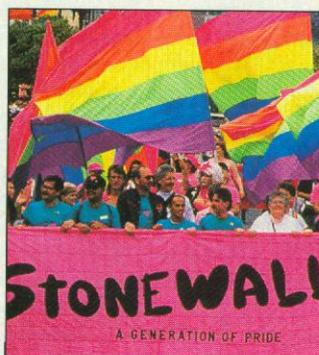
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**ENVIRONMENT: With new global clout and responsibilities, Japan needs to show a greater regard for Mother Nature**

Faced with accusations that its aggressive trade policies threaten rain forests, the oceans and a host of endangered species, the superpower has launched a series of initiatives. But the country is handicapped by a shortage of conservation activists and experts. Do its actions signal a heightened environmental awareness or merely skillful public relations?

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**BEHAVIOR: Has the gay revolution been a failure?**

A provocative new book argues that most Americans still fear and hate homosexuals and that to overcome the hostility, gay men and women need to tone down and blend in.

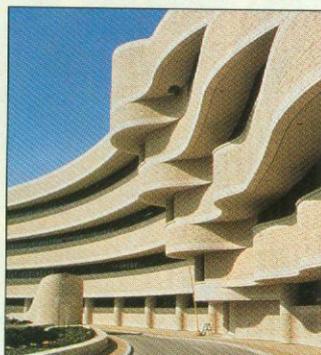
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**RELIGION: A fiery black priest defies his church**

The defection of Washington's Father George Stallings and devastating parish closings in Detroit expose Catholicism's failings among U.S. blacks.

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**DESIGN: Antoni Gaudí meets Frank Lloyd Wright**

The quiet, gray city of Toronto gets a blast of flamboyant eccentricity in architect Douglas Cardinal's immense and curvaceous Museum of Civilization.

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**PROFILE: The detached views of a great writer**

V.S. Naipaul gives three cheers for the legacy of Western civilization, but not a hoot for the romanticizers of the Third World.

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# A Grand Folly in Ottawa

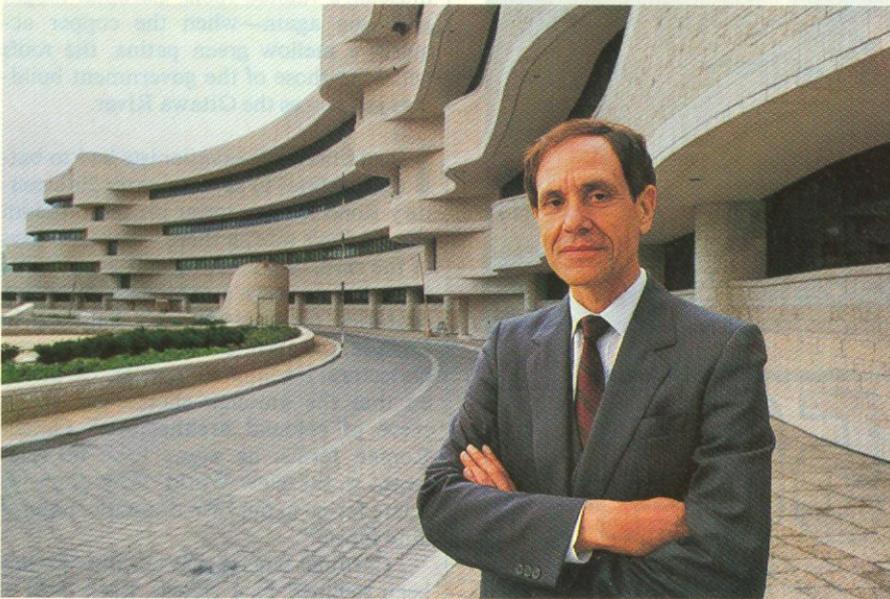
*Canada's newest museum is costly, controversial and curious*

BY KURT ANDERSEN

As the grayest, quietest, most culturally introverted major city in a gray, quiet, culturally introverted country, Ottawa is not a place where one expects to find architecture on the fringe. But when the Canadian Museum of Civilization officially opened last week just across the river in the city of Hull, it took its place as one of the largest museums in the world and certainly one of the more curious—a wildly eccentric, million-square-foot limestone

laying granite floors and bending Sheetrock to Cardinal's hypertrophic specifications, the architect was wan and tired. "It takes a tremendous amount of warriorship," he says, "to believe in your vision." *Warriorship?* Cardinal, who is one-eighth Blackfoot, uses the phrase constantly; it is New Age Native American for hubris.

Cardinal, 55, is a lifelong maverick not well known outside Canadian architectural circles. He left architecture school in British Columbia at 19 and immigrated to Texas, where he earned his



**Maverick architect Douglas Cardinal in front of his flamboyant Canadian Museum of Civilization**

*Mau-Mauing the bureaucrats and strengthening "warriorship" in the sweat lodge.*

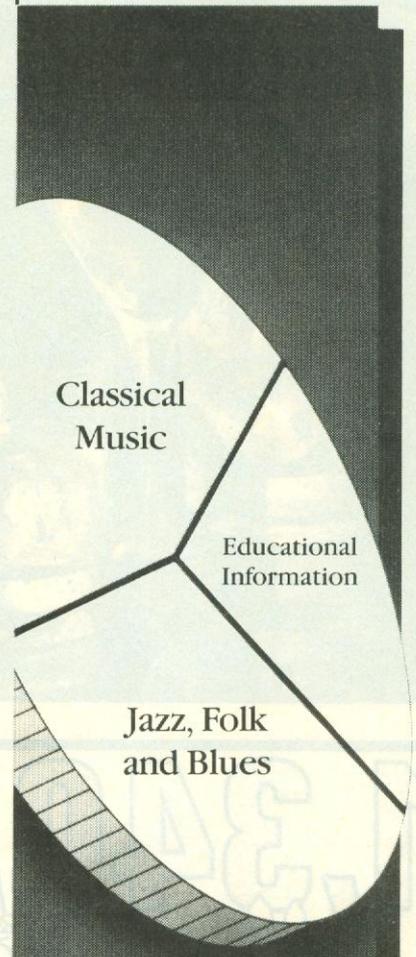
pile of curves and ellipses, Antoni Gaudí crossed with late Frank Lloyd Wright, baroque quirkiness run amuck. Architect Douglas Cardinal's museum is more a fascinating curiosity than a masterwork. But its flamboyance and seductive, Disneyesque natural-history exhibits—life-size Indian homes downstairs, replica townscapes from the past 500 years upstairs—will surely make it the capital's biggest tourist attraction, if not Canada's.

Until this project, which is a year behind schedule and some 200% over budget, Cardinal had designed mostly schools and small civic buildings in his native Alberta and other western provinces. "It is," says Cardinal of the \$213 million museum, "like composing and conducting a symphony at the same time, with an orchestra that's never played your music before—and it's the most important performance of your life." Days before the opening, with scores of workers still

degree a decade later. After returning to Alberta in the '60s, he won his first notable commission, a characteristically undulating brick church in the town of Red Deer. Because of the unorthodox engineering, he was obliged to demonstrate on a computer that the church would be structurally sound, and thus became an early pioneer of computer-aided design. A few years later, he acquired buckskins, beads and a ponytail and became a born-again Native American, lobbying for Indian rights. To this day he takes a weekly sweat-lodge steam bath, where he smokes the traditional stone pipe and chants. "You really see yourself," Cardinal says of the ritual, "and confront your own weaknesses. It strengthens warriorship."

In the view of some who have seen him in action, Cardinal has shamelessly Mau-Maued the bureaucrats in Alberta and Ottawa who have been his chief patrons. "He's the doyen of the government

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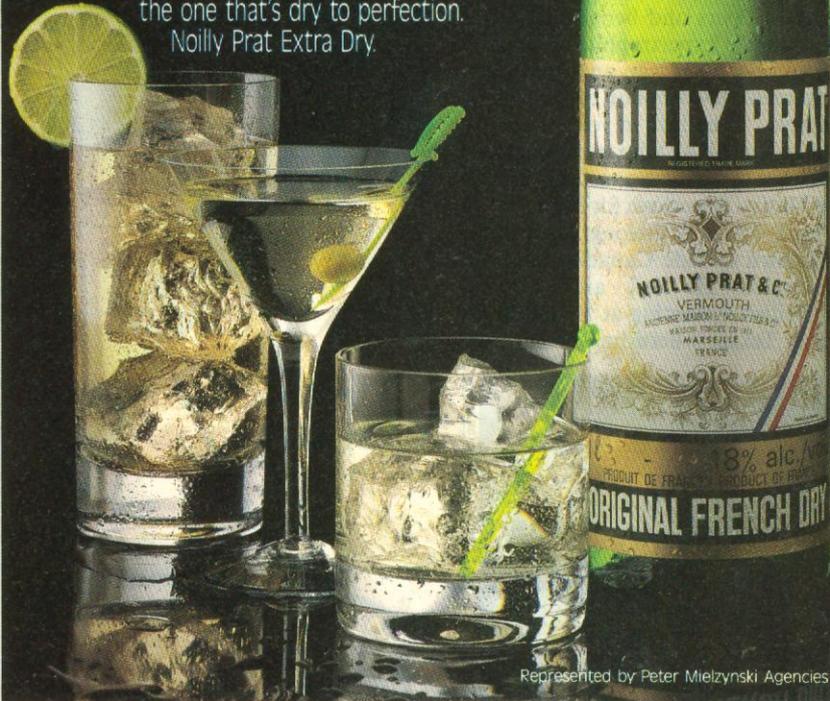


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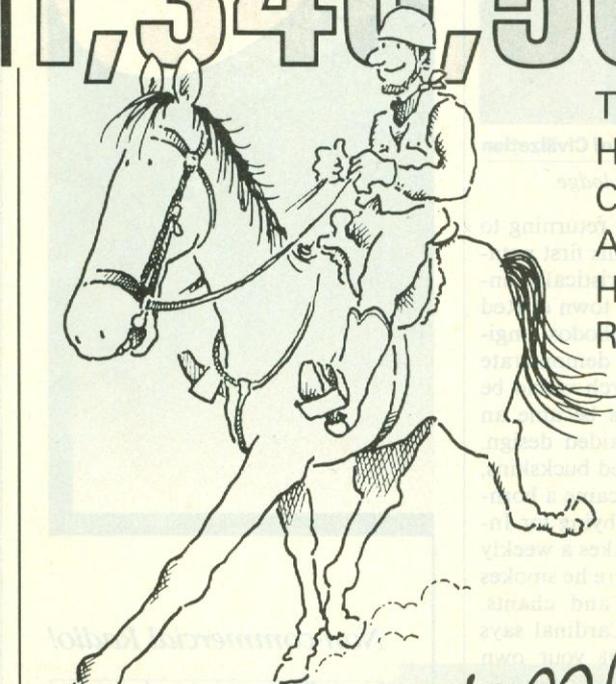
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M. FOG

**PARTICIPATION**

establishment," says Edmonton architect Peter Hemingway, "because with them he can always use emotional means to inflate the budget. He does this thing about the white man killing the native soul, and they cough up whatever he wants."

The Museum of Civilization's schedule and budget problems, however, are not all Cardinal's fault. When he got the job in the spring of 1983, the price tag had been set somewhat arbitrarily at around \$78 million, and at the insistence of then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, construction began later that year, before the design was finished. Necessary changes cost time and money. But Cardinal did his part to complicate things too. He fought for weeks over the pattern on the cafeteria china, and he was upset over the fact that the TV wall outlets were square, not round. When officials tried to substitute aluminum for copper on the museum's vaulted roofs, Cardinal fought and won again—when the copper acquires a mellow green patina, the roofs will echo those of the government buildings just across the Ottawa River.

In addition, preservationists had to battle Cardinal to save an early 20th century stone factory tower on the museum site. "I don't want it there," Cardinal says of the ruin. "I wanna blow it away." Despite his museum's exhibits celebrating centuries of Anglo-French building in Canada, the architect rejects Western architectural tradition altogether. He insisted that the museum should not be "a piece of colonial architecture." Greco-Roman forms, he says, "have no relevance to the New World. Why don't we relate forms to our own dramatic, natural land forms?"

Cardinal fancies that his museum has been sculpted by a glacier. Each level is like its own irregular topographical cross section, with overcroppings cantilevered over the sidewalk below. The museum is really two eskers linked underground. In one are offices and the bulk of the 3.5 million-artifact collection; in the other are the swirling, hyperactive exhibit spaces. Between the two are terraced, serpentine public walks from which visitors have a picture-postcard view of Parliament. A man-made stream and waterfall cascade beside a grand staircase and over part of the central plaza.

For better or worse, Cardinal has built the singular building he wanted. The Museum of Civilization is an earnest folly on a grand scale. Cardinal may be the perfect architect for a country that has a chip on its shoulder about American influence. His museum is like nothing in the U.S.—or anywhere else. The international architectural establishment will surely prefer Moshe Safdie's handsome, lucid National Gallery of Canada nearby, but the masses will flock to Cardinal's odd, one-of-a-kind fun house. ■