



MEDIA RELEASE For immediate release

Newly restored Canada Pavilion unveiled in Venice at the Biennale Architettura 2018 on the 60th anniversary of its inauguration

- The Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale has undergone a \$3-million CAD restoration, after six decades presenting some of the country's most celebrated artists and architects
- Inaugurated in 1958 and designed by Italian architecture studio BBPR, the Canada Pavilion has been carefully restored by Alberico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, heir to BBPR
- The surrounding landscape has been revitalized by la Biennale di Venezia in collaboration with acclaimed Canadian landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander and Bryce Gauthier of Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects
- The Canada Pavilion features a special exhibition titled *Canada Builds/Rebuilds a Pavilion* curated by Réjean Legault that commemorates the building's important history
- By exception this year, Canada's Official representation at la Biennale Architettura 2018, <u>UNCEDED: Voices of the Land</u>, led by Architect Douglas Cardinal, is presented in the Arsenale di Venezia, one of the two main venues of the Biennale

OTTAWA, May 24, 2018 – This afternoon, in the Giardini di Castello at the Biennale Architettura 2018 in Venice, Italy, representatives from the National Gallery of Canada, the Embassy of Canada to Italy, the National Gallery of Canada Foundation, and project patron, Reesa Greenberg, unveiled the meticulously restored and refurbished Canada Pavilion. Built in 1957–58 by the National Gallery of Canada, the Pavilion has featured nearly 60 years of exhibitions by renowned Canadian artists and architects.

"This was an unusual and important architectural statement at the time," said National Gallery of Canada Director and CEO, Marc Mayer. "We are deeply appreciative of the collaborative work between Canadian and Italian agencies that have permitted its rejuvenation and fresh understanding today. Canadian artists also understand the unique opportunity the Canada Pavilion offers us on the world art stage in this magical city that is Venice."

Prompted by the building's precarious state of disrepair and functional limitations, a project for the rehabilitation of the Canada Pavilion was initiated in 2014. Originally designed by Enrico Peressutti of the renowned Milanese architectural studio BBPR (Banfi, Belgiojoso, Peressutti, Rogers) in 1956, the Canada Pavilion was completely restored by architect Alberico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, heir to the BBPR studio, working in close cooperation with Venice-based architect Troels Bruun of M+B Studio.

Tucked between the pavilions of Great Britain and Germany, the Canada Pavilion embraces its wooded site. The building fully integrates two large living trees within its perimeter walls. Shaped in plan like a nautilus shell, the building spirals out from a tapered octagonal column at its centre that supports the dramatic beams of its roof structure. This form, together with undisguised materials – brick, glass, wood, and steel – established the Pavilion's architectural character. Reaction when it was unveiled in June 1958 was overwhelmingly positive, it was described as a "small jewel of a showcase" and its architecture considered the most "advanced" of the pavilions in the Giardini. Later designated a heritage site, the Pavilion presented a restoration challenge that required Barbiano di Belgiojoso both to stabilize it and modernize its components, while respecting the 1956 design.

The newly restored Canada Pavilion is at once a regenerative project and a story of international collaboration. The four-year restoration was led by the National Gallery of Canada with the support of La Biennale di Venezia and the Venice Superintendent for Architectural Heritage, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and Global Affairs Canada with the exceptional collaboration of the Canadian Embassy in Rome.

"The Canada Pavilion is an extraordinary platform for Canada's cultural diplomacy and we are overjoyed to see it restored to its original beauty," added Canada's Ambassador to the Italian Republic, Alexandra Bugailiskis. "Indeed the Pavilion, as it reflects Canada's openness, allows a wonderful presence at the Venice Biennale, which is an important meeting place for leaders on Culture and beyond."

Financial support for the restoration and its accompanying exhibition was provided by Reesa Greenberg, Distinguished Patron of the National Gallery of Canada and Founding Secretary of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada. The project includes the complete restoration of the exterior walls, roof, glass façade and the upgrading of the HVAC and lighting systems. The bagolaro trees growing in the centre of the Pavilion have also been preserved.

The Landscape: Bringing Canada to Italy

The restoration also extends to the surrounding landscape. Undertaken within the context of a larger Giardini di Castello renewal begun in 2013, the landscape surrounding the Canada Pavilion has been redesigned and replanted under the leadership of La Biennale di Venezia, in collaboration with the award-winning landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, and Bryce Gauthier of Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects, and the Venice Superintendent for Architecture Heritage.

Canada Builds/Rebuilds a Pavilion

To commemorate the restoration of the Canada Pavilion, as well as its sixtieth anniversary, a special exhibition is presented in the Pavilion during the Biennale Architettura 2018. Organized by Réjean Legault, associate professor at the École de design of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), with the support of architectural and design historian Cammie McAtee, *Canada Builds/Rebuilds a Pavilion in Venice* explores the sixty-year life of the Pavilion and offers an unprecedented study of the building's important modern architecture.

"The National Gallery's commissioning of the Pavilion to Enrico Peressutti and studio BBPR was nothing less than a coup for Canada, as well as an enlightened decision. The result is a truly modern building in terms of structural articulation, spatial organization and material expression," said Réjean Legault, curator of *Canada Builds/Rebuilds a Pavilion in Venice*. "The restoration project offered an ideal opportunity to examine the Pavilion's original design, explore its long life as an exhibition space, and reflect on the spirit of collaboration that was central to its birth and its reconstruction."

In addition to a series of short documentary films produced by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) featuring interviews with key Canadian and Italian contributors to the restoration project, *Canada Builds/Rebuilds a Pavilion in Venice* includes a photo-documentation project by photographer Andrea Pertoldeo, professor at the Università IUAV di Venezia, that records the work and people involved in the restoration.

A scholarly, generously illustrated publication, edited by Réjean Legault, is scheduled for release in 2019. Featuring contributions by leading Italian and Canadian scholars in the fields of art and architectural history, building preservation and landscape design, as well as contemporary art, it will contextualize the commissioning of the Canada Pavilion and highlight the building's relevance and significance as a work of modern architecture.

UNCEDED: Voices of the Land

By exception this year, Canada's official representation at la Biennale Architettura 2018, *UNCEDED: Voices of the Land*, is presented in the Arsenale di Venezia, from May 26 to November 25, 2018. Renowned architect Douglas Cardinal, with co-curators Gerald McMaster and David Fortin, presents an immersive and breathtaking installation that celebrates the work of 18 Indigenous architects and designers from Turtle Island (Canada and the USA). www.unceded.ca/

About the National Gallery of Canada

The National Gallery of Canada is home to the most important collections of historical and contemporary Canadian art. The Gallery also maintains Canada's premier collection of European Art from the 14th to the 21st centuries, as well as important works of American, Asian and Indigenous Art and renowned international collections of prints, drawings and photographs. In 2015, the National Gallery of Canada established the Canadian Photography Institute, a global multidisciplinary research center dedicated to the history, evolution and future of photography. Created in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada has played a key role in Canadian culture for well over a century. Among its principal missions is to increase access to excellent works of art for all Canadians. For more information, visit gallery.ca and follow us on Twitter @NatGalleryCan.

About the National Gallery of Canada Foundation

The National Gallery of Canada Foundation is dedicated to supporting the National Gallery of Canada in fulfilling its mandate. By fostering strong philanthropic partnerships, the Foundation provides the Gallery with the additional financial support required to lead Canada's visual arts community locally, nationally and internationally. The blend of public support and private philanthropy empowers the Gallery to preserve and interpret Canada's visual arts heritage. The Foundation welcomes present and deferred gifts for special projects and endowments. To learn more about the National Gallery of Canada Foundation, visit ngcfoundation.ca and follow us on Twitter ngcfoundation.ca and follow us on

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