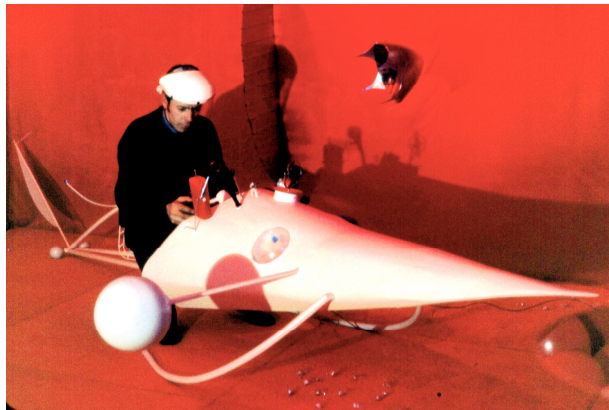


**communiqué / press release****For immediate distribution****CCA presents *Total Environment: Montréal 1965-1975***

**On view 19 March to 23 August 2009, the exhibition traces the lasting influence of the notion of total environment created by ephemeral architecture in Montréal during the 1960s and '70s.**



Maurice Demers, *Futuribilia*, 1966-1968 © Maurice Demers

Montréal, 17 March 2009 — The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) presents the exhibition ***Total Environment: Montréal 1965-1975***. Using diverse material on loan from several institutions and private collectors, the exhibition traces the lasting influence of the notion of total environment created by ephemeral architecture in Montréal during the 1960s and '70s.

"Today everything is environment" proclaimed a Montréal newspaper at the beginning of the 1970s. The word "environment" had dominated the discourses and practices of artists, architects, social activists and intellectuals during the previous decade. Visitors of Expo '67, the event that galvanized the world's attention on Montréal, commented the phantasmagorical presentations. Critics, including Reyner Banham and Sybil Moholy-Nagy, remarked how architectural objects and conventional spaces had been eclipsed by multimedia shows and a spectacular transit system. The Expo itself was perceived by many as a new and radical form of expanded, even extravagant, total environment.

The interest in environmental art and action during the 1960s and '70s built on an aesthetic quest that found its roots in the Nineteenth century's search for the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork). This notion had already resurfaced in the early

Twentieth century in the Bauhaus school's pedagogy, the kinetic art of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and in the environmental sculptures of the Dadaist Kurt Schwitters. These early experiments inspired explorations of total environments by Montréal-based artists, architects, and intellectuals, who enthusiastically adopted the new technologies and materials of the era of space conquest, computerization, and unheard-of development of mass communication. They envisioned the dawn of a "second industrial revolution" that promised to liberate mankind through the use of information technology.

Abandoning galleries and museum, they re-invented old forms of spectacle such as ballet, theatre, circus, cinema, poetry reading, and concert; colonized public spaces; and found new venues for happenings and multimedia installations. *Total Environment: Montréal 1965-1975*, retraces these ephemeral creations through video projections, films, objects, publications, posters, and archival materials. Visitors have the rare opportunity to see Edmund Alleyn's original Introscape (1968-70); inflatable and cybernetic environments by Gilles Boisvert; images of the famous restaurant-gallery-disco "Le Drug"; and the proposal for the shopping and entertainment centre Palais Métro designed by François Dallegret; Maurice Demers' space age environments *Futuribilia* and *Les mondes parallèles*; multimedia kinetic sculptures and machines by Richard Lacroix (*Fusions des arts*); inflatable and everyday objects by Marco Lepage a Canadian member of the well known collective EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology); photographs of the mythical discotheques realized by Jean-Paul Mousseau; models of the inhabitable sculptures by Robert Roussil; together with magazines, video clips, album covers, and posters.

## CURATORIAL TEAM

*Total Environment: Montréal 1965-1975* is the result of a research seminar led by Alessandra Ponte at Université de Montréal, with the master students Christian Aubin, Marie-France D.Bouchard, William Leblanc, Jeanne Leblanc-Trudeau, Sophie Julien, Louis Stabile, and Cuong Tran. *Total Environment* is part of the CCA's ongoing series of exhibitions developed in collaboration with universities, following the earlier exhibitions *Utopia's Ghost: Postmodernism Reconsidered* (with Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and Reinhold Martin, 2008), *Clip/Stamp/Fold 2: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X – 197X* (with Princeton University and Beatriz Colomina, 2007); and *Inside the Sponge: Students Take on MIT Simmons Hall* (with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's SENSEable City Laboratory and Carlo Ratti, 2006). The next collaboration will take place in 2010 with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), based on the Sylvia Lavin's seminar *Take Note*.



## RELATED PROGRAM

During the course of the exhibition, the CCA will host a series of related public programs, including a gallery talk on Thursday, **19 March** at **6 pm** with members of the Université de Montréal curatorial team and Alessandra Ponte.

## ABOUT THE CCA

The CCA is an international research centre and museum founded in 1979 on the conviction that architecture is a public concern. Based on its extensive collection, the CCA is a leading voice in advancing knowledge, promoting public understanding, and widening thought and debate on the art of architecture, its history, theory, practice, and role in society today.

Twenty years after its opening to the public, the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) celebrates its anniversary with an ambitious series of activities throughout 2009. Founding Director and Chair of the Board of Trustees Phyllis Lambert and Executive Director and Chief Curator Mirko Zardini have announced programs and initiatives that underscore the CCA's past achievements and ongoing role as a unique cultural institution.

## FUNDING

The CCA gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts de Montréal, and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Information: [www.cca.qc.ca/press](http://www.cca.qc.ca/press)