

communiqué /press release**For immediate release****THE USE OF MODELS: NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHURCH
ARCHITECTURE IN QUÉBEC**

From 18 May to 11 September 1994

Nothing is more deceptive than the simple delineations which architects make of their works; they are only remedied by great experience on models.

Edward Shaw, *Civil Architecture* (1843)

Montréal, 17 May 1994 - The exhibition **The Use of Models: Nineteenth-Century Church Architecture in Québec** is the first to examine the use of wooden architectural models. Around 1850, Canadian architecture saw a significant increase in model-building, a development to some extent explained by architects' desire to make complex architectural projects accessible to laymen. New stylistic and typological diversity in architecture, as well as growing professionalism among architects, called for drawings much more complex than those of the previous age. Models made up for the difficulties the uninitiated had in trying to interpret the new sort of drawings. British architect Alfred Bartholomew had suggested just such a solution in his *Specifications for Practical Architecture* (1840), in the chapter "Of the incapacity of the greater part of mankind to judge the probable effect of an intended building from drawings alone."

The four models exhibited - for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (ca 1849), Chalmers Free Church (before 1850), Église de Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade (ca 1855) and Église de Sainte-Hélène, in the old district called Kamouraska (ca 1847), - have a special significance for the history of Québec architecture, since they were all built for neo-Gothic churches around the same time (ca 1850) and few other models have survived. Each model is accompanied by archival documents that show the main steps in a given project from conception to completion. Also exhibited are documents describing models that have since disappeared. The artifacts are selected to show how models differed in use from drawings, and how models were used in and of themselves.

The Use of Models: Nineteenth-Century Church Architecture in Québec demonstrates a certain variety in functions ascribed to architectural models around 1850. Yet the examples exhibited suggest this diversity stemmed largely from the tact, acknowledged in several treatises on architecture, that laymen found models more

accessible than drawings. This particular function paved the way for the view, espoused mainly by architects, that architectural models were aids to presentation. But models were also tools for tradesmen, who often used them to convey their ideas to architects and clients. Finally, even clients resorted to them to further their ambitions. For example, to promote his proposed cathedral, Mary Queen of the World (construction of which began in 1870) Monsignor Bourget, then Bishop of Montréal, commissioned a model of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.

The architectural model offers a means by which architectural ideas can be shared among architects, builders, and interested laymen. Witness to an era that saw architectural practice developing a heightened professionalism, the architectural model reveals the divergent interests of all those who wished to participate in the very conception of a given project.

The exhibition will be complemented by a bilingual booklet reproducing the models exhibited and the accompanying wall texts. The booklet will also provide a list of objects shown in the exhibition. The texts have been prepared by guest curator Marc Grignon, architectural historian at Université Laval. Phyllis Lambert has written a foreword. As a related programme, the CCA has also produced an architectural guide of selected neo-Gothic churches in Montréal written by Raymonde Gauthier. The guide is available free of charge at the CCA Ticket Office and Bookstore.

The exhibition and the booklet have been made possible through the support of the Museums Assistance Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.
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