

**communiqué /press release****For immediate release****FROM SOCIETY TO SOLITUDE:  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE****12 October 1994 to 15 January 1995**

**Montreal, 6 October 1994** – The exhibition entitled **From Society to Solitude: Public and Private Space in Seventeenth-Century France** combines history, literature and architecture, focusing particularly on the literary theme of the retreat and its interrelation with the physical organization of space, both real and imaginary.

Displayed in the hall cases of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the exhibition features approximately 30 engravings, plans, frontispieces from portfolios, treatises and manuals. It focuses on seven main spatial typologies, each of which contributes to the emergence, real or imaginary, of a private or an inner space.

The terms *contemplation, solitude, exile, leisure, rest, retreat, reverse* and *solitude*, and their antonyms, *action, court, world, worldliness* and *society*, constitute a frequently recurring chain of ideas in seventeenth-century fictional and biographical literature. From political disgrace to spiritual retreat, from the dream of amorous solitude featured in courtly romances to the georgic, pastoral dream of Virgilian inspiration, there are abundant examples of this turning-away from society and public life.

What visual evidence do we have of this cleavage between public and private life? Is this opposition reflected in seventeenth-century architectural iconography? The CCA has taken up the challenge of answering these questions, and the results of its research are presented in this exhibition.

Bernard Beugnot, a full professor with the French Studies Department at the Université de Montréal, is the guest curator of the exhibition. He is assisted by Pierre-Édouard Latouche, curator and researcher at the CCA. A bilingual brochure explaining the various spatial typologies explored in the exhibition is available to the CCA's visitors.

It is with a view to breaking clown barriers between fields of research that the CCA encourages multidisciplinary endeavours. To this end, it regularly sets aside its seven hall cases for multidisciplinary displays.

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A complete press kit, photographs and slides are available upon request.

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