

**communiqué /press release****For immediate release****The Idea of Penitentiary**

8 November 1995 to 5 May 1996

In the hall cases

**Montréal, 8 November 1995** – The Canadian Centre for Architecture presents the exhibition ***The Idea of Penitentiary*** in the hall cases, from 8 November 1995 to 5 May 1996. The Idea of the Penitentiary brings together over 50 architectural drawings, books, reports, trade catalogues, and material artefacts. Based upon the collections of the CCA, it includes material from the National Archives of Canada, McGill University Library, and the Correctional Service of Canada Museum.

The exhibition worked its way into the consciousness and across the landscape of Europe and North America during the nineteenth century. Drawing upon the growing rationalist tendencies in architecture and in social theory during the eighteenth century, proponents of penitentiary emphasised a clear geometry of separation, surveillance, and hygiene. Architects, faced with these increasingly complex penitentiary programmes, began to produce elaborate models.

In an atmosphere of intense debate, each country struggled to find a penitentiary system that could be introduced in its large central prisons and then applied via standard plans to the smallest of rural jails. By the end of the century, the reality of standardisation was evident in the details of prison architecture: doors, locks, and even entire cell-blocks were mass-produced and marketed by the prison-hardware industry.

The exhibition is curated by David Vanderburgh, Professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, and Cammie McAtee, Curatorial Assistant, CCA Prints and Drawings.

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