

**communiqué /press release****For immediate release****CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE TO OPEN  
*OUT OF THE BOX: PRICE ROSSI STIRLING + MATTA-CLARK******Exploring the archives of four of the most powerful figures  
in recent art and architecture***

**Montréal, 22 October 2003** — The Canadian Centre for Architecture is literally and figuratively working "out of the box" in a new exhibition opening this Fall. Intended to launch an innovative experiment, *out of the box: price rossi stirling + matta-clark*, brings the ideas of these four pivotal figures of the 1970s into dialogue, as the public is invited to share the museum's discovery of a remarkable group of archives that have recently entered the CCA collection. Through drawings, sketches, models and texts, an understanding of the process and development of architectural ideas is made possible. The exhibition opens on **23 October 2003**, and will run through **6 September 2004**.

"With this exhibition, CCA presents some of the most provocative and influential architectural ideas of the 1970s," says Nicholas Olsberg, CCA Director. "Drawing from our extensive collection, *out of the box* continues a long line of inquiry into CCA archives of late 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture, which has already resulted in important exhibitions on Peter Eisenman and John Hejduk. Starting from widely diverse premises and points of view, Cedric Price, Aldo Rossi, James Stirling, and Gordon Matta-Clark each engaged in a radical rethinking of the status, history, and purpose of architecture. The positions they assumed in the 1970s urgently call for reassessment, as we move into a world similarly characterized by a growing sense of uncertainty."

"This exhibition will be the first phase of an ongoing exploration of questions raised by material in the archives," said Mirko Zardini, Senior Consulting Curator at the CCA. "It depends less on traditional museum approaches and more on an open-ended dialogue involving the CCA collection, our research constituency, and our general audience. A distinguished international group of critics, including Anthony Vidler, Mark Wigley, Marco de Michelis, Philip Ursprung, Hubertus von Amelnunxen, and CCA curators Gwendolyn Owens, Howard Shubert, Louise Désy, and Pierre-Édouard Latouche, along with students and visitors, will engage in an ongoing process of reflection on the work of these four figures, continually modifying and refining the way they are understood. To this end, the installation is allowed to be 'unstable,' inconclusive, in order to accommodate new materials, rearrangements, and changes of heart."

## Four Visions

British architect and thinker **Cedric Price** (1934–2003) argued against the production of monuments – permanent, static spaces organized around particular functions – and stressed instead the need for flexibility in view of the unpredictability of possible future uses. Price positioned himself within the ongoing transformations of British society in the 1960s and 1970s by adopting the role of “anti-architect.” Form was of little consequence to him; even building itself might be unnecessary.

One of the most challenging and uncompromising figures working in the field of architecture in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Price’s critical attitude toward professional practice, his radical but humane approach to designing buildings, and a technological bent inspired by his friend and mentor R. Buckminster Fuller have continued to excite, influence and provoke his peers over a period of more than 40 years.

Though Price built little, much of 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture would be inconceivable without his project for a *Fun Palace* (London, 1963–72) and his scheme for the *Potteries Thinkbelt* (1963–66).

Cedric Price’s *Fun Palace* will be presented through some 200 objects, from sketches and finished drawings to models, films, and a rich selection of correspondence and documents. For the first time it will be possible to grasp the investigative breadth, the far-reaching implications, and the serious fun with which this project was undertaken.

**Aldo Rossi** (1931–1997), one of the most powerful voices in Italy’s postwar architectural culture, reacted against the “over-professionalism” and “naïve functionalism” of architecture. Rossi sought a new, autobiographically-based vision, arriving at an architecture that was – through a continuous process of rearrangement and reworking – constructed from a fixed and limited number of formal elements and figures.

In his built work, Rossi was largely inspired by the architecture of his native northern Italy. From project to project, he reinterpreted a restricted architectural vocabulary involving the cone, the chimney, the silo, the gable wall, the *galleria* – forms that he combined and recombined in response to the nature of the given circumstances.

Aldo Rossi founded the Neo-Rationalist movement in Italy, and in 1966 published *L’Architettura della città*, a book that sparked international interest and initiated an important critique of Modernism in architecture. His work influenced both the practice of architecture and theories of urban planning in the 1970s and 1980s.

A selection of Rossi's projects dating from the 1960s and 1970s focuses on his formal vocabulary and urban concerns. These are presented through the architect's familiar and now iconic renderings, as well as virtually unknown materials and projects from the archive.

Internationally acclaimed British architect **James Stirling** (1926–1992), though working in the same cultural context as Cedric Price, took quite a different approach. One of the most imaginative and influential architects of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Stirling fostered an attitude of "listening" to the historical trajectory and urban context that a new work would inhabit. This approach allowed him to draw freely upon the architecture of recent as well as forgotten pasts, playing on Modernist and Neo-Classical themes with unparalleled virtuosity.

Stirling's work is rooted in the Modernism of Le Corbusier, liberally inflected with an eclectic and original fusion of historical and contemporary references drawn from the world of high architecture, but equally - and importantly - from more ordinary, vernacular buildings.

Stirling's museums of the 1970s, culminating with the Staatsgalerie at Stuttgart, form the core of this section of the exhibition. In order to explore the roots of Stirling's radical new engagement with history, urban planning, and the Modern movement, a selection of his early works, including little-known and never-exhibited projects like his university thesis and the *House for an Architect* will be on view.

In the 1970s, American artist **Gordon Matta-Clark** (1943–1978) brought a fresh gaze to bear upon architecture. Trained as an architect, he chose to make buildings and the spaces around them the subject of compelling and often witty investigations into the nature of cities, property, and the social order. His "sculptures," produced by interfering with or cutting into the built environment, were documented in photomontages and films. Blurring the boundaries between artist and architectural theorist, Matta-Clark questioned the very concepts of architecture and space, thus challenging the fundamental assumptions of both disciplines.

The range of Gordon Matta-Clark's activities as artist, photographer, and filmmaker is highlighted in the exhibition through screenings of his films *City Slivers*, *Substrait*, *Paris Underground* and selections of drawings, photographs, and documents for *A Whole House*, *Conical Intersect*, and *Anarchitecture*. In addition, the visitor will be able to explore the genesis of Matta-Clark's art practice through his original correspondence with his father, Roberto Matta-Echaurren (1911–2002), a Surrealist painter who studied architecture with Le Corbusier.

In early Spring 2004, CCA will create a *Garbage Wall* outside the museum building – according to plans drawn by Gordon Matta-Clark – using waste materials left over from the installation of the exhibition. Matta-Clark constructed a similar wall for the first Earth Day in April 1970, using what he found on the streets of New York to demonstrate how

“garbage” could be reused as a building material.

During the exhibition, on 27 March 2004, the CCA will host a symposium at which critics and curators will debate the range of issues raised by this exhibition and speculate on their relevance for architecture’s future.

"CCA holds one of the world's foremost international research collections of publications and architectural design documentation – conceptual studies, drawings, plans, models, prints, and master photographs, archives and oral histories of individual architects, related artefacts and ephemera," says Nicholas Olsberg. "The collection now comprises over half a million examples that testify to the diverse ways in which architecture has been imagined, conceived, built, observed, and transformed over the last six centuries. *out of the box: price rossi stirling + matta-clark* is intended to reveal how the CCA archive can act as a dynamic force in building knowledge and awakening awareness of architectural and urban issues."

*The Canadian Centre for Architecture is an international research centre and museum founded on the conviction that architecture is a public concern. Based on its extensive collections, 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.*

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