

**communiqué /press release****For immediate release****The CCA presents the exhibition *Journeys: How travelling fruit, ideas and buildings rearrange our environment*****On view from 20 October 2010 to 13 March 2011, the exhibition examines how migration transforms the physical environment in an increasingly mobile world.**

Pulling a structure across the ice to Conche, Newfoundland. Resettlement Collection, Maritime History Archive, Memorial University, PF-317.488



Max Belcher, photographer. The Tyler Mansion, ca. 1880, Arthington, Liberia. CCA Collection, Montreal. © Max Belcher

Montréal, 14 October 2010 — The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) presents the exhibition *Journeys: How travelling fruit, ideas and buildings rearrange our environment*, on view from 20 October 2010 to 13 March 2011. In an age of heightened global mobility, this exhibition examines the transformative impact of global movement. In particular, *Journeys* addresses the physical changes triggered by exchanges across environmental, architectural, and geo-political parameters in order to reflect on the hybrid territories of today's world. Visitors travel through a collection of 15 narratives to explore the issues raised by increased global movement and observe its impact on the experience of different sites.

The narratives in *Journeys* address questions such as: how the regulations and borders effect change in how we understand a landscape; how movements of communities can impact the configuration of buildings, towns and cities; and how the meeting of disparate influences can give birth to unexpected architectural innovations.

"Forecasts for the coming decades indicate that migrations may eventually involve as many as a billion people," said Mirko Zardini, CCA Director and Chief Curator. "For the foreseeable future, wars, poverty, conflicts, natural disasters and the simple desire for better – or different – working and living conditions will continue to fuel new streams of

people, things and animals. With a continually increasing movement of people and things, it was inevitable that the CCA should turn its attention to the theme of migration and examine its transformative impact". He added: "Considering the growing ease of transportation and the gradual reduction in the limits of time and geography, this type of movement seems set to become a permanent part of life for a larger and larger proportion of the world's population. The exhibition presents new avenues for reflecting on the complexities of this theme."

In analyzing how movement and displacement affect the evolution of space, *Journeys* approaches the dominant theme of migration from a new perspective. Whereas the discussion of immigration in contemporary culture often addresses the human experience and questions of national identity, *Journeys* bypasses the social reality of migration, as well as its associated conflicts and regulations, in order to examine the tangible consequences and results of displacement.

The inspiration for the show is underlined by Giovanna Borasi, Curator for Contemporary Architecture: "The focus is indeed not on the social or anthropological dimensions of migrations and movement, but mainly on the physical transformations they engender. Flows, migrations and encounters between different places and cultures inevitably raise architectural issues and trigger physical consequences. Such movements – forced, encouraged or desired – open up the opportunity and possibility for transformation and challenge the contemporary approach to architecture and urbanism."

Each exhibition topic is represented through a "story", a very specific one, both in terms of geography and time, and interpreted through the lens of a tightly focused. This was a prominent feature of Borasi's approach. "Even if the stories unfold in different places, different eras and different cultures, it is essential to highlight complex connections between stories. In the exhibition, we developed different strategies of display to allow the visitor to explore one story at a time, but also discover links between the different stories. The book that accompanies the show is connected to this curatorial experiment. A dogma, a series of editorial guidelines with which we provided the authors, was a way to achieve an editorial consistency across very diverse content. My intention with the book and exhibition was to explore these topics individually, but, more surprisingly, to arrive at an understanding of the general theme through a compilation of the narratives."

## EXHIBITION CONTENT

The fifteen stories in *Journeys* each address a singular time and place and reflect broader concepts of movement and transformation:

**Classification** (Mobility determined by regulation changes the approach to production, and limits diversity): 1988 E.U. regulations dictated the dimensions of the best quality cucumber. Those that did not fit the classification precisely had to be re-classified as 'intended for processing', determining the variety of fruits and vegetables that we grow and eat.

**Wayfinding** (Movement across a landscape can be determined by oral histories, instructive toponymy or a physical relationship with a territory): For the Inuit, the relationship with the land is a matter of knowing thousands of sequential place names that are learned over the course of journeys and discussions with elders. Places are described in terms of how one gets there, what one sees on the horizon, and which way the prevailing winds blow. These methods provide an alternate perspective on the territory.

**Definition** (An architectural type adapts its meaning and form across different cultures and historical periods): The definition of the bungalow has evolved and adapted several times since it originated in Bengal, India. In early 20th century Africa and India, the bungalow was the most desirable type of building, occupied by Europeans and senior government officials. The name also applied to holiday homes or affordable lodgings in England and North America.

**Cycle** (A continuous influx of temporary workers in the informal economy of one country changes the way of life in another): In 2001, Senegalese economic migration to Italy was estimated at 80,000 to 100,000 people. Typically each family member spends 3-5 years in Italy before returning home. Goods, materials and money valued at approximately \$400m per year are sent back to Senegal and account for the substantial development and urbanization of the country.

**Interpretation** (New arrivals transform a modernist neighbourhood through unintended uses): In the mid-70s, an ambitious 1960s housing project outside Amsterdam became home to Surinamese and other immigrants. They adapted the modern building to their needs and developed informal uses for the public spaces, such as markets and community centres.

**Experimentation** (A culture of innovation flourishes when transplanted): In the 1950s Japanese migrants formed new communities in Bolivia, where a revolution and agrarian reform had opened vast new tracts of land for farming. The tradition of experimental agriculture brought by the new inhabitants transformed the landscape, both by the introduction of new crops and through imported techniques, such as wet-rice farming.

**Compromise** (Habits of newcomers weave unexpected solutions into an existing urban fabric): An earthquake in 1981 left the centre of the Sicilian town of Mazara largely abandoned. Historically one of Italy's most important fishing harbours, it now supports

some 4,000 fishermen, mostly immigrants. The immigrants dominate the centre (casbah) and the structure, buildings and public spaces of Mazara have been re-negotiated to accommodate this new community.

**Configuration** (The accumulation of buildings from other places rearranges an established urban grid): Between 1954 and 1975, the provincial government of Newfoundland encouraged 300 isolated communities (around 30,000 people) to resettle in central areas. The higher housing prices in these areas often made the purchase of new homes unrealistic for newcomers. Many economized by transporting their houses by sea, which created dramatic change in the built environment of Newfoundland.

**Inheritance** (Architecture built from memory recalls the social structure left behind): From 1816-47, former American slaves, often freed on condition that they emigrate, were encouraged to settle in Liberia. Approximately 17,000 made the journey and founded cities with buildings which reflected their American origins.

**Typology** (A communication infrastructure tied to the circumstances of migration takes similar forms globally): Small shops providing telecommunication services are found in urban centres worldwide, where they offer long-distance calling and internet access for travellers, immigrants and temporary workers. Although these shops appear all over the world, they have a common typology: they are simultaneously generic and independent.

**Opportunity** (The forced relocation of a town offers the potential to try an innovative form of urbanism): Proposals to open the St Lawrence River to ocean-going shipping in Canada in the 1950s involved the relocation of several Ontario communities. The town of Iroquois engaged British architect Wells Coates to design a new town for them. His modernist proposal was never realized but remains interesting for its imaginative re-conception of urban design in Canada.

**Negotiation** (Local ambition, partnered with substantial foreign investment, impacts on the social and built environment for an entire country): The capital of the Republic of the Congo was damaged by civil wars in 1992 and 1997 and is being rebuilt. The presence of the Chinese government and Chinese companies has been instrumental to the development of this city, Brazzaville, which is taking form as a negotiation between local political forces and the Chinese.

**Expertise** (The transfer of knowledge and experience gives a new character to a centre of industry): Skilled Italian stonemasons and cutters were recruited by American immigration companies in the 1880s and 1890s to work in the booming granite and marble quarries of New England. In the town of Barre, Vermont, the industry developed in a special way, not just as a source of raw materials, but also finished products.

**Value** (A change of location leads to a radical shift in significance): The Sacred Ibis once occupied a principal role in ancient Egyptian mythology and ritual, where it was associated with Thoth, the god of writing and culture. Now transplanted to France, the bird is instead perceived as an invasive species and a threat to that country's biodiversity.

**Drift** (The vagabondage of seeds shapes our environment in ways that are not predetermined): The coconut is a global traveller, riding the ocean currents at the whim of the weather and tides. With its tough fibrous husk and air-filled seed, it can float great distances and germinate if it reaches land within four months of leaving its source. Laws cannot curtail the movement of the coconut.

## EXHIBITION DESIGN

New York-based artist Martin Beck collaborated with the CCA curatorial team to develop a conceptual approach to the design of the *Journeys* exhibition. Graphic design of the exhibition is by Alex DeArmond, who joins the CCA for a second time on *Journeys*, following his collaboration on *Other Space Odysseys: Greg Lynn, Michael Maltzan, Alessandro Poli* (2010).

## PUBLICATION

A book in the mode of historical fiction accompanies the *Journeys* exhibition. The *Journeys* book is co-published by the CCA with Actar, Barcelona and is available in French and in English. The book includes a photo essay and each story is introduced by specially commissioned illustrations by Erika Beyer.

A compilation of fictional stories from various invited authors, the book is based on actual facts and archival documentation and raises many of the same questions as the exhibition. Each story takes the form of a narrative-based essay exploring the migrational factors behind transformations of place. The stories provide an initial contribution to any potential history of how these phenomena affect cities and landscapes. "Paradoxically the very specificity of each topic – each story – makes an excellent starting point for a much broader and more complex consideration of contemporary strategies, generating a multitude of imaginative and unexpected configurations", said Giovanna Borasi, editor of the book.

The book is designed by Actar and reproduces 75 images and 16 illustrations on 304 pages. The volume is available at the CCA Bookstore for \$ 34 CAD.



## MICROSITE

A collaborative microsite ([www.cca.qc.ca/journeys](http://www.cca.qc.ca/journeys)) will expand on the exhibition with content from around the world. It will allow visitors to explore stories related to the thematic concerns of *Journeys* and will become a changing archive of projects, essays, observations and research on relevant issues. The microsite will include contributions from international magazines, publishers, and blogs through which visitors can navigate to experience their own 'journey' through the different stories. Contributors include *Abitare*, *Mark Magazine* and *El Croquis*, among others.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

From January 2011, the CCA will present a series of public events in conjunction with the exhibition. All programs take place at 7 pm on Thursday nights in the CCA's Paul Desmarais Theatre and are free of charge.

## CURATORIAL TEAM

Giovanna Borasi is an architect, curator and editor. Curator of Contemporary Architecture at the Canadian Centre for Architecture since 2005, Borasi has worked on several exhibitions and books, with a particular focus on how environmental and social issues are influencing today's urbanism and architecture. Before joining the CCA, Borasi was an editor and writer for *Lotus International* and *Navigator*. She served as Assistant Editor for the book series *Quaderni di Lotus*; and was a member of the editorial staff of the graphic design magazine *Lettera*, a supplement to the architectural magazine *Abitare*.

*Journeys: How travelling fruit, ideas and buildings rearrange our environment* is curated by Giovanna Borasi, in collaboration with CCA's research and curatorial team: Anders Bell, Lev Bratishenko, Meredith Carruthers, and Peter Sealy.

## 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.



*Journeys* is the latest in a series of thematic investigations produced by the CCA exploring contemporary issues in architecture with a specific focus on urban, social, and environmental concerns. In recent years, the CCA has undertaken a number of projects addressing themes that lie at the heart of contemporary life: the perception and use of urban space in *Sense of the City* (2005-06); the exploitation of environmental resources in *1973: Sorry, Out of Gas* (2007-08); the processes of urban transformation in *Actions: What You Can Do With the City* (2008-09); and speed in *Speed Limits* (2009). *Journeys* continues this investigative approach to contemporary architecture. A book, website and public programming accompany the exhibition.

## FUNDING

The CCA thanks sponsor Hydro-Québec for its support of the exhibition.

The CCA gratefully acknowledges the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Conseil des arts de Montréal for their continuous support.

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High-resolution digital images are available from the CCA press website at [www.cca.qc.ca/press](http://www.cca.qc.ca/press), click on "Exhibitions". The login is **general** and the password is **journal**.

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## PRESS PREVIEW

Tuesday, 19 October 2010, 10:30 am

## INAUGURATION

Tuesday, 19 October 2010, 6 pm