

communiqué /press release**For Immediate Release****Visions and Views:
The Architecture of Borromini in the
Photographs of Edward Burtynsky**

On display in the Octagonal Gallery
15 March – 7 May 2000

Montréal, 28 February, 2000 – The Canadian Centre for Architecture presents ***Visions and Views: The Architecture of Borromini in the Photographs of Edward Burtynsky***, an exhibition in the Octagonal Gallery, from 15 March to 7 May 2000.

This selection of 27 photographs and prints, offers us an opportunity to rediscover Roman buildings created by Baroque architect Francesco Borromini, whose 400th birthday was commemorated last year. These new photographs evoke the illusionistic play of perspective, light and space in the creations of a master of Baroque architecture.

Visions and Views brings into dialogue two media, and with them two different approaches to representing Borromini's built work: contemporary photography and engravings from the 17th and 18th centuries. The photographs exhibited, part of a larger commission acquired by the CCA, were taken in Rome by Toronto photographer Edward Burtynsky in 1999. They are presented in conjunction with engravings of the same buildings, including plates derived from Borromini himself, but published posthumously.

This Roman encounter is by no means accidental. Borromini's buildings combine great sculptural expressiveness with a rigorous integration of geometry and architecture. They present a special challenge to photographers and engravers: both the skin and the skeleton of a given building must be captured, and the choice of viewpoint, the framing of a building, and the photographer's or engraver's mastery of his art play decisive roles in delivering an experience approaching that of the actual buildings.

Joining the long line of those who have made the pilgrimage to Rome to photograph its masterpieces, Edward Burtynsky worked alongside the leading expert in Borromini studies, Joseph Connors of Columbia University. Though they reject views of the whole and focus on its parts, the resulting photographs demonstrate the extraordinary inventiveness of Borromini's geometrics and of how they animate his architectural and ornamental motifs. Burtynsky's approach also allows him to capture the spatial dynamism characteristic of the architect's work. Each detail isolated by the eye of the photographer gives us a sense of

the architectural space next to it. This constant encouragement to the viewer to think beyond the space depicted is reinforced in the exhibition by the play between different formats and hanging positions, by the juxtaposition of photographic and digitized prints, and by the contrasts between colour prints and black and white. The works are displayed in the CCA's Octagonal Gallery - itself inspired by the cupola of Borromini's Sant'Ivo church.

The engravings of Borromini's works engage us on a more technical level. They rely on shading and juxtaposition to overcome the inherent difficulty engraving has in rendering depth. The many sources of graphic information reveal the intelligence behind the architect's original design processes. Collections of such prints played an important role in the diffusion of Roman Baroque in general, and of Borromini's work in particular.

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Information: www.cca.qc.ca/press