

**communiqué /press release****For Immediate Release*****Cedric Price: Mean Time***

From 19 October 1999 to 27 February 2000

In the Octagonal Gallery

*"Time present has no length as a line has no thickness"*

**Montréal, 19 October 1999** – The Canadian Centre for Architecture presents the exhibition ***Cedric Price: Mean Time*** from 19 October 1999 to 27 February 2000, in the museum's Octagonal Gallery. British architect Cedric Price has been one of the most challenging and witty provocateurs in the field, forcing us to look with a fresh eye at what architecture is and suggesting radical ideas of what it might be.

Price's work proposes a dynamic approach to architecture. Arguing that "movement is implicit, together with change, in the surrounding conditions," Price stands against the production of permanent, specific spaces for particular functions, stressing the unpredictability of future use and the need for adaptability. He asks us to think about a built environment that anticipates unexpected social needs rather than accommodating those we think we know, that relishes the possibilities for re-use and obsolescence, and that explores the ways space can be constructed to participate in movement. At the same time, he is convinced that there are ways of gauging and responding to the apparent unpredictability of time and movement: "The speed of a total *life span* can be measured", he adds. "The fourth dimension can thus be introduced to design. The condition of movement in space and time, and the occasion and occurrence of its start and finish, everything required to describe the design and method of such movement, its sources, reinforcement, distortion, need and ageing – *the life-span* – can be determined. The essential equation is then complete."

In the exhibition ***Mean Time***, Price draws upon the collection of the CCA to develop this complex idea of the relationships between time, movement, and space and teach us to observe how they act in the built environment. At the same time, he uses these objects and images to draw attention to our failure to consider these relationships adequately.

Looking at structures and building elements through the ages (including some of Price's own projects), ***Mean Time*** presents photographs of an ancient Aztec sun dial, a railroad switching yard, a shot tower, and a Russian radio pylon; a model book for Renaissance labyrinths and mazes; trade catalogues for revolving doors; prints of an 18th century firework structure and an ice palace of the late 19th century; plans for an unbuilt heliport in Montréal's Milton Park and for the unbuilt high-speed rail service at Mirabel airport.

These are constructions in which time is measured through space, where movement is controlled and synchronized by structure, where spatial constraints are overcome by simultaneity, where time is distorted and distance deceptive, where the structure predicts its own demise, or where efforts to anticipate social conditions have proved either strangely prescient or woefully wrong.

Cedric Price received his undergraduate degree in architecture from Cambridge University in 1955 and his diploma from the Architectural Association in London in 1957. He founded Cedric Price Architects, London, in 1960. In 1999, Cedric Price was one of the five finalists in the first International Foundation for the Canadian Centre for Architecture Prize Competition for the Design of Cities, focused on New York. Price's reputation rests chiefly, however, on the radicality of his unbuilt ideas. Among the most influential of these highly original proposals are the Fun Palace (1961), a multipurpose theatre complex projected as a life-sized kit-of-parts with fixed and mobile elements that participants could transform at will; and the Potteries Thinkbelt Project (1964), which imagined the re-use of an abandoned railway line for a roving university located in train carriages. The complete archive of Price's architectural work from 1953 to 1981 was acquired by the CCA in 1994. From this archive, three projects designed in response to adaptability and movement appear in ***Mean Time***: a demountable house for an archeologist, a modern-day labyrinth, and a stock-pen that serves double duty as a picnic site and playground.

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