

communiqué /press release**For immediate release****AN ARCHITECTURAL ODYSSEY: THE TRAVEL SKETCHES OF LOUIS I. KAHN****At the Canadian Centre for Architecture
from 19 May to 29 August, 1993**

Montréal, 18 May 1993 -- The architect Louis I. Kahn (1901-1974) is one of the principal figures of twentieth-century American architecture. In works such as the Jonas Salk Institute at La Jolla, California, or the Kimball Art Museum at Fort Worth, Texas, he created an architecture of abstract, almost primeval geometry, in which the interplay between natural light and simple brick and concrete masses was raised to heroic status. This discovery of abstract geometric forms and their monumental potential came rather late in Kahn's career, after long decades of experimenting with the glass-and-steel architecture of International Style modernism. Judging from his buildings alone, Kahn's late work appears as a radical departure, virtually unheralded by his earlier projects. But a look at his graphic work shows that his search for abstract monumentality, which culminated in his works of the 1960s, began decades earlier, not in his buildings but in his abundant drawings, travel sketches, and landscapes.

In **The Travel Sketches of Louis I. Kahn**, selected items from six decades of the architect's work will be shown. Most of these works have never been exhibited before, such as his intimate landscapes from Gaspé, where he regularly vacationed during the 1930s and 1940s. These studies, travel sketches and landscapes are intriguing as graphic works in their own right; at the same time they are a vivid and highly personal pendant to his professional career, restlessly exploring the same themes and problems as does his architecture. A tireless experimenter, Kahn moved from medium to medium, switching from gouache to graphite, from water colour to pen and ink, as his mood or subject prompted him. Some of his most stirring work was done in pencil, which he held nearly flat and applied in broad, horizontal strokes -his favourite technique during his European trip of 1928. Based not on outline and silhouette, but instead on volume and texture, these drawings express basic mass and form at the expense of detail. Not for decades would Kahn be able to achieve such abstract monumentality in his architecture. Similarly, several studies from the 1950s of Egyptian pyramids and the archaic Greek

temples at Paestum show Kahn's renewed interest in history as a source of architectural inspiration. The exhibition suggests that Kahn's spare, innocent travel sketches were the cradle of some of his most powerful architectural ideas.

The Travel Sketches of Louis I. Kahn will open on 19 May 1993, and will close on 29 August. The exhibition is curated by Michael J. Lewis, CCA Historiographer.

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Information: www.cca.qc.ca/press