

**communiqué /press release****For immediate release****The Canadian Centre for Architecture Presents  
32 Italian Photographers: A Tribute to Phyllis Lambert**

In the Octagonal Gallery, 21 April to 26 September 1999

Andrea Abati Cesare Ballardini Olivo Barbieri Gabriele Basilico  
Nunzio Battaglia Giannantonio Battistella Roberto Bossaglia Luca Campigotto  
Vincenzo Castella Marina Ballo Charmet Alessandra Chemollo Giovanni Chiamonte  
Mario Cresci Vittore Fossati Moreno Gentili Luigi Ghirri Paolo Gioli William Guerrieri  
Guido Guidi Mimmo Jodice Martino Marangoni Walter Niedermayr Fulvio Orsenigo  
Paola de Pietri Francesco Radino Gloria Salvatori George Tatge Franco Vaccari  
Fulvio Ventura Silvio Wolf Giovanni Zaffagnini Marco Zanta

**Montreal, 21 April 1999** – Thirty-two Italian photographers were asked by Paolo Costantini, the brilliant CCA Curator of Photographs, to join him in honouring Phyllis Lambert, Founding Director and Chair of the CCA, on her seventieth birthday. In recognition of her commitment and contribution to the art of photography, each of the photographers presented a work that is a personal vision of the built environment as a gift to the CCA collection. On view from 21 April to 26 September in the Octagonal Gallery, the exhibition **32 Italian Photographers: A Tribute to Phyllis Lambert** provides the public with an opportunity to view this exceptional gift, while recalling Paolo Costantini's curatorial contribution to the CCA.

Selected under Costantini's guidance, these photographs represent the concerns of Italian photographers since the 1970s and provide an overview of recent Italian photographic culture, which has not yet received the critical attention it deserves. Through the efforts of Paolo Costantini, who died shortly after this gift was made, the CCA is now in a position to draw attention to this important body of visual work.

There are many points of entry into this collection of photographs, but one image in particular resonates with special force: the view of Versailles by Luigi Ghirri (1943-1992). Through his masterful use of light Ghirri evokes a mythic time and space, a surreal place shrouded in mystery.

The three generations of artists who were close to Ghirri and are represented in the exhibition have adopted Ghirri's phenomenological point of view. His poetic sensibility toward the built landscape has served as a point of departure for their own work.

The works presented in the exhibition **32 Italian Photographers: A Tribute to Phyllis Lambert** explore marginal sites in both Italy and abroad. In a creative attempt to eschew the tradition of picturesque representations of classical monuments so ingrained in Western views of the Italian landscape, these photographers capture "scattered fragments" of the borders of the modern world. With intuitive insight, they chart a map of the ordinary.

The exhibition provides a random yet highly expressive sampling of the contemporary habitat: pulsating light and nightscapes; empty classrooms and factories; old houses and walls; graffiti; colourful old cars and unusual buses; tourists and local inhabitants going about their business (sometimes aware of the photographer's presence). These images show everyday scenes captured spontaneously and transformed into abstract patterns. Objects of everyday suddenly reveal their significance for social rites. Ruins and scattered remnants become part of a metaphysical stage, touched by Mediterranean light and penetrated by the inquisitive eyes of the artist.

### **Phyllis Lambert's Contributions to the Art of Photography**

This singular gift recognizes Phyllis Lambert's wide-ranging contributions to the art of photography. In 1970, she began photographing the greystone buildings of Montreal with Richard Pare and, with Pare as editor, made one of the most significant contributions to the United States Bicentennial celebrations, a corpus of photographs published in *Court House, A Photographic Document* (New York: Horizon Press, 1978). From 1974 onwards, her donations greatly enriched the holdings of the National Gallery of Canada through annual gifts and by a substantial donation of daguerreotypes and prints by Walker Evans.

In 1974, Phyllis Lambert began to form the extraordinary collection that became the basis of the CCA Photographs Collection. Comprising over 50,000 images and spanning the entire history of photography, it is both one of the outstanding collections in the world, and a unique collection in its field. With this corpus and related international exhibitions and catalogues – beginning with the pioneering *Photography and Architecture: 1839–1939* (CCA Callaway, 1982) – Lambert has established a field of discourse, the relationships

between photography and architecture, landscape and image, the city and its representation.

Finally, Phyllis Lambert continued to support contemporary photography by commissioning new work as Director of the CCA. Projects include *Terra Cotta* (1981–91), a study of Chicago's terra cotta façades by Bob Thall; Catherine Wagner's photographic studies of the *Louisiana World Exposition in New Orleans* (1984) and of Disney's theme parks (1995–96); *An Industrial Landscape Observed: The Lachine Canal in Montreal* (1985–86) by Clara Gutsche and David Miller; *Sighting the Université de Montréal* (1989) by Gabor Szilasi; *Viewing Olmsted: Photographs by Robert Burley, Lee Friedlander and Geoffrey James* (1989–95); and *Thinking with the Eyes*, an extended photographic essay on the works of Carlo Scarpa by Guido Guidi (1996–98).

## **Second Exhibition in CCA's Italian Season**

***32 Italian Photographers: A Tribute to Phyllis Lambert*** is the second exhibition in the CCA's Italian Season, a series of three shows and accompanying public programs launched in January 1999 that celebrate contemporary Italy, its architecture, its architects, and its photographers. The season also includes ***Photography and Transformations of the Contemporary City: Venezia-Marghera*** (on view until 25 April 1999) and ***Carlo Scarpa, Architect: Intervening With History***, which will run from 26 May through 31 October 1999.

**The CCA thanks the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the Italian Cultural Institute of Montreal as well as Bank of Montreal and Royal Bank for their support of the exhibition and the accompanying public programs.**

**The CCA gratefully acknowledges the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Conseil des arts de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal.**