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For immediate release

Gilles Clément and Philippe Rahm ***Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow***

Montréal, 17 October 2006 —From **18 October 2006** to **10 June 2007** the Canadian Centre for Architecture presents ***Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow***, a major exhibition on the work of French horticultural engineer and landscape architect **Gilles Clément** and Swiss architect **Philippe Rahm**. At a time when it is of increasing urgency to reconsider the relationship between humans and our surroundings, Clément and Rahm have each developed unique approaches to an environmentally sound design practice.

Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow is the first showing of installations by Clément and Rahm in North America, and juxtaposes their distinctive concepts of natural landscapes and artificial environments. The exhibition proposes a shift in perspective that takes the environment, and not human demands on the environment, as the starting point for reflection.

Each architect developed ambitious new projects specifically for the exhibition, which are presented in the museum's main galleries. Gilles Clément includes photographic and sculptural installations, slide projections, and text panels to explore his concept of the Third Landscape (*Tiers paysage*), which presumes that the natural environment has been irreversibly altered by human intervention. His photographs document in detail a French field he has been tracking over time, as well as examples of Third Landscapes he found and recorded around the world. A central element of his installation is a large chandelier comprised of a mixture of detritus and self-seeded plants he gathered on an unused site in proximity to the CCA. Preserved in acrylic casts, the items are suspended from the ceiling in a cluster that reflects the surprising diversity of plants growing on the site as well as the range of human garbage – from cell phones and pens to hypodermic needles and packaging.

Philippe Rahm presents an interpretation of human interaction with the environment that is very different in concept and appearance. His *Interior Weather* explores the notion that form and function follow climate. One of two galleries is an enclosed, brightly lit, anonymous space where temperature, humidity, and light conditions are measured by sensors placed at regular intervals. The data is interpreted through images and narration in the adjacent gallery, proposing uses of the room based on the environmental

readings. The installation suggests the potential of climatic variations to generate new spatial practices and social behaviours, and in turn, new urban and architectural forms.

The projects of Gilles Clément and Philippe Rahm represent two approaches to environmentally conscious design practice that share many objectives despite their apparent differences in form and philosophy. In his concept of the Third Landscape, Clément proposes a strategy of allowing neglected spaces in the contemporary city to develop according to natural processes and with limited human intervention, in order to ensure the perpetuation of ecological biodiversity. Rahm on the other hand suggests that the close observation and documentation of fundamental environmental conditions like temperature, humidity, and light – all of which have a direct physical and emotional impact on human life – should guide the function of a space and human behaviour within it.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow broaches provocative issues such as energy consumption and natural resources, the question of limiting humanity's control of the environment given its immense technological capacity, the search for renewable resources and the optimal means to employ them. In determining an appropriate course of action, it becomes clear that the problematic of humanity's relationship to the environment is neither technological nor aesthetic, but ethical.

Curated by Giovanna Borasi, CCA Curator of Contemporary Architecture, the exhibition presents the work and ideas of Clément and Rahm through original installations accompanied by drawing, photography, projections, and artefacts. The exhibition also features a reading room with additional information on the architects and related topics, as well as a gallery devoted to video projections of interviews with Clément and Rahm conducted by the CCA.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A catalogue accompanies the exhibition, co-published by the CCA and Skira Publishers (Milan), and edited by Giovanna Borasi. With a foreword by CCA Director Mirko Zardini and an introduction by Borasi, the volume features text and image-based essays by Gilles Clément and Philippe Rahm outlining their work and installations at the CCA.

RELATED PROGRAM



The CCA presents a special lecture in parallel to *Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow*. Gilles Clément and Philippe Rahm discuss their installations in the exhibition as well as their distinctive approaches to the environment on **19 October at 6:30 pm** in the Paul Desmarais Theatre. Admission is free.

ABOUT THE ARCHITECTS

Born in France, Gilles Clément completed his studies in horticultural engineering at the École Nationale Supérieure du Paysage (ENSP) in Versailles in 1967, and later earned a degree in landscape design from the same school. Clément has designed numerous public and private parks and gardens in Europe and Asia, including the gardens of the Jean Nouvel designed Musée du quai Branly (2000), Grande Arche gardens at La Défense (1994), and Parc André Citroën (1992) in Paris; the gardens of the Domaine de Rayol (1988) and the Château de Blois (1987).

Clément has developed innovative concepts in which he overturns traditional formal gardening practices and adopts the principle of “working with and never against nature.” In addition to his practical research, he has written the books *Manifeste du Tiers paysage* (2004), *Le jardin en mouvement* (2001), *Le jardin planétaire* (1999), and *Thomas et le voyageur* (1997) among others.

Swiss architect Philippe Rahm studied at the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETHZ), earning his diploma in 1993. Together with Jean-Gilles Décosterd, Rahm founded the firm Décosterd & Rahm, associés in 1995, which represented Switzerland at the 8th Biennale of Architecture in Venice (2002) with the installation *Hormonorium*. Since 2004, he has practiced independently in Lausanne and Paris, and is currently at work on public and private projects in France, Poland, England, and Austria.

Rahm proposes to free architecture from its traditional determinants of function and program by using climatic conditions as tools to create architecture. He has participated in numerous exhibitions worldwide, notably at Kunsthaus Graz (2006); Centre Pompidou and the Centre culturel Suisse in Paris and the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (all 2005); Center for Contemporary Art Kitakyushu (2004); and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2001).

ABOUT THE CCA



Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow is the second in a series of thematic exhibitions organized by the CCA to explore contemporary issues in architecture with a specific focus on urban, social, and environmental concerns. It follows *Sense of the City* (2005-06), the groundbreaking exhibition dedicated to the sensory dimensions of urban life that have traditionally been ignored or repressed.

The CCA was founded in 1979 as a new form of cultural institution to build public awareness of the role of architecture in society, promote scholarly research in the field, and stimulate innovation in design practice.

The CCA is an international research centre and museum founded on the conviction that architecture is a public concern. Based on its extensive collections, 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.

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Information : www.cca.qc.ca/press