

## communiqué / press release

For immediate release

**The CCA presents *Phyllis Lambert: 75 Years At Work*, an exhibition retracing the exceptional career of its Founding Director Emeritus.**

**Selected from the CCA's collection and institutional archives and the Phyllis Lambert fonds, the exhibition traces the evolution of her ideas and her architectural, curatorial and editorial work on the occasion of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.**



Pier Associates. Composite photograph of Phyllis Lambert and David Fix in their studio, 403-409 East Illinois St. Chicago, USA, c. 1970. Reproduction Phyllis Lambert Archive, CCA © Pier Associates

Montréal, 17 January 2017 – The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) presents *Phyllis Lambert: 75 Years At Work* highlighting her deep commitment towards the city and the built environment and to intellectual research. From 18 January to 4 June 2017, the CCA's exhibition halls tell the story of her ideas and her architectural, curatorial and editorial work, with material drawn from the CCA Collection, its institutional archives, and the Phyllis Lambert fonds.

Lambert herself curates the exhibition, and the materials she has chosen give a chronological account of the great chapters and discoveries of her life: Her early work, the Seagram building, her architectural education and first steps in that profession, the Saidye Bronfman Centre project, photography missions, and conservation and restoration projects, both in Montreal and abroad, leading to the creation of the CCA. The selected archival material will reveal, through a series of case studies in chronological order, the constant radicalism of her life.

Known worldwide as an architect, author, researcher, lecturer, curator, architecture critic, patron of heritage, engaged citizen, activist, and founder of the CCA, Phyllis Lambert is constant in her insistence that "You must build things that express the best qualities of the society in which you live."

Phyllis Lambert received the *Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement* of the 14th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Jury president Paolo Baratta delivered a stirring homage on that occasion: "Phyllis Lambert has made a tremendous contribution to architecture. Without her work, one of the most perfect architectural projects of the 20th century—the Seagram Building in New York City—would never have seen the light of day. The founding of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal, dedicated to preserving the most important periods of architectural heritage and encouraging their study in the most ideal conditions reveals an extraordinary vision and a rare generosity." Head juror Rem Koolhaas added, "Architects make buildings—but Phyllis Lambert makes architects."

*Phyllis Lambert: 75 Years At Work* follows the 2007 exhibition *Happy Birthday*, which also celebrated Phyllis Lambert's character and vision with a selection of unique and unusual pieces drawn from the CCA Collection. Together, these two exhibitions illustrate Lambert's exceptional life and career, marked by innumerable prizes and distinctions for her contributions to architecture, conservation, and philanthropy.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Phyllis Lambert (born January 24, 1927 in Montreal) is an architect, author, scholar, and activist, and is the Founding Director Emeritus and formerly Director and Chair of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) which she established in Montreal in 1979.

Lambert first made architectural history as the Director of Planning of the Seagram Building (1954-58) in New York City. Actively engaged in advancing contemporary architecture, as well as the social issues of urban conservation, Lambert founded Héritage Montréal in 1975, and in 1979 was instrumental in establishing the Société d'Amélioration de Milton-Parc, the largest non-profit cooperative housing renovation project in Canada. In 1996, she formed the Fonds d'Investissement de Montréal (FIM), the only private investment fund in Canada participating in the revitalization of housing in low- and medium-income neighbourhoods. For 23 years, Lambert served on the Board of the Vieux Port de Montréal, where she established public consultation as an instrument of planning. Spearheading the revival of Montréal's downtown west quarter through the roundtable she initiated in 2005, Lambert's involvement in shaping the city continues also through the Institute of Policy Alternatives of Montréal (IPAM) which she presides. For her tenacious engagement in advancing the role of architecture in the

public realm, from Seagram to the CCA, Lambert received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale. In 2016, the Wolf Foundation in Israel bestowed upon Lambert its Wolf Prize in Arts for her six decades of championing innovation in building design and preservation of properties of patrimonial significance, and for invigorating the profession and research into architecture, which she infuses with intellectual doubt and political critique. Last year, she also received the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize 2016 Architecture Awards from The American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York.

## THE CCA

The CCA is an international research centre and museum founded on the conviction that architecture is a public concern. Based on its extensive Collection, exhibitions, programs, and research opportunities, the CCA is a leading voice in advancing knowledge, promoting public understanding, and widening thought and debate on architecture, its history, theory, practice, and role in society today.

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