

café

Toward an Architecture Policy for Canada

2019-2020

CANADIAN ARCHITECTURE FORUMS ON EDUCATION FORUMS CANADIENS D'ARCHITECTURE SUR L'ÉDUCATION POTENTIAL

What is the future of architecture? And how does architectural design, construction and understanding impact Canada's future? These questions raise myriad concerns, enthusiasms and scenarios for the discipline, profession and built environment. The following sub-themes suggest four ways to consider architecture's potential.

CREATIVE INDUSTRY

A creative Canada needs creative architecture. Architecture provides the enduring infrastructure that showcases other arts, enabling diverse modes of cultural production to thrive. Buildings and neighbourhoods can serve as creative hubs, fostering innovation and collaboration. Architecture itself teaches creativity, displaying innovation and histories of human ingenuity. Architecture plays a key role in projecting Canada's creativity on the world stage: consider Expo '67, Canada's UNESCO World Heritage sites, the Manitoba Hydro Building, and other distinguished works by Canadian architects at home and abroad.

COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP

Architecture is a collaborative art, involving many trades, consultants and community stakeholders. With increased specialization and complexity, and renewed dialogue with Indigenous Peoples, inclusive collaboration is more important than ever. Listening to and learning from others is paramount. So, too, is responsible and visionary leadership. Where groups with diverse needs consider complex circumstances and desires, the architect's mediating role and interpretive and synthesizing skills are essential to discovering and representing the common good.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Architectural knowledge is hybrid: equally technical, ethical and aesthetic. It intersects the natural, social and health sciences, engineering, arts and humanities. Its research methods, metrics and topics vary radically: from micro to macro; material to social; local to global; quantitative to cosmopoetic. These factors make architectural research rewarding, but also challenging and undervalued, since innovation often resides between and beyond typical mandates. With strategic research agendas, alliances and support, Canada can thrive as a knowing global leader in environmental stewardship, sustainable technologies and design excellence in support of human rights, reconciliation, and culturally enabling place-making.

EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE

Architecture schools are uniquely positioned to support experimental, visionary and provocative work. Mixing enthusiastic experts with optimistic and open-minded youths, academia balances real-world challenges with creative license, critical distance and historical perspective. Schools not only educate future architects, they are transformative crucibles where architecture's potential is holistically rethought and imaginatively renewed.

QUOTES THEMES QUESTIONS PROVOCATIONS POTENTIAL

To project architecture inherently means to propose, through the imagination, a better future for a society; it is inherently an ethical orientation, a promise.

– Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "Imagining a future" (2014)

The built environment has the potential to be a powerful agent for social and environmental change. As a profession, we need to make good on that promise.

– Elsa Lam, "State of the Nation," *Canadian Architect* (July 2019)

We have potential here in Canada to be able to transcend to a higher level of architecture.

– Raymond Moriyama, On establishing the RAIC International Prize, 2014

POTENTIAL is one of four themes - together with **PLACE, PEOPLE & PROSPERITY** - orienting CAFÉ conversations. Participants are encouraged to provide feedback on the following questions:

- Regarding architecture's POTENTIAL: what is most concerning? and exciting?
- How might an architecture policy help address these concerns and opportunities?
- What examples best demonstrate architecture's POTENTIAL?
- What strategies would invigorate public understanding of architecture's POTENTIAL?
- Are any key issues missing from the thematic summary of architecture & POTENTIAL?
- Other comments?