



The Confederation Centre of the Arts

August 16th, 2022

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Timeline

1957

Nothing is planned for the Canadian Centennial in 1967

1961

Funding was beginning to formalize

1962

National competition for the design of the memorial

1964

CCOA construction is completed *on time*



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- 1956 - Theatre burned down
- 1958 - Market Building burned down
- Need for a cultural space in Charlottetown and PEI had been growing



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- CCOA could not be a gift from the Federal government
- Funded per-capita by every Provincial and Federal government
- 30 cents per citizen = \$5.6 million



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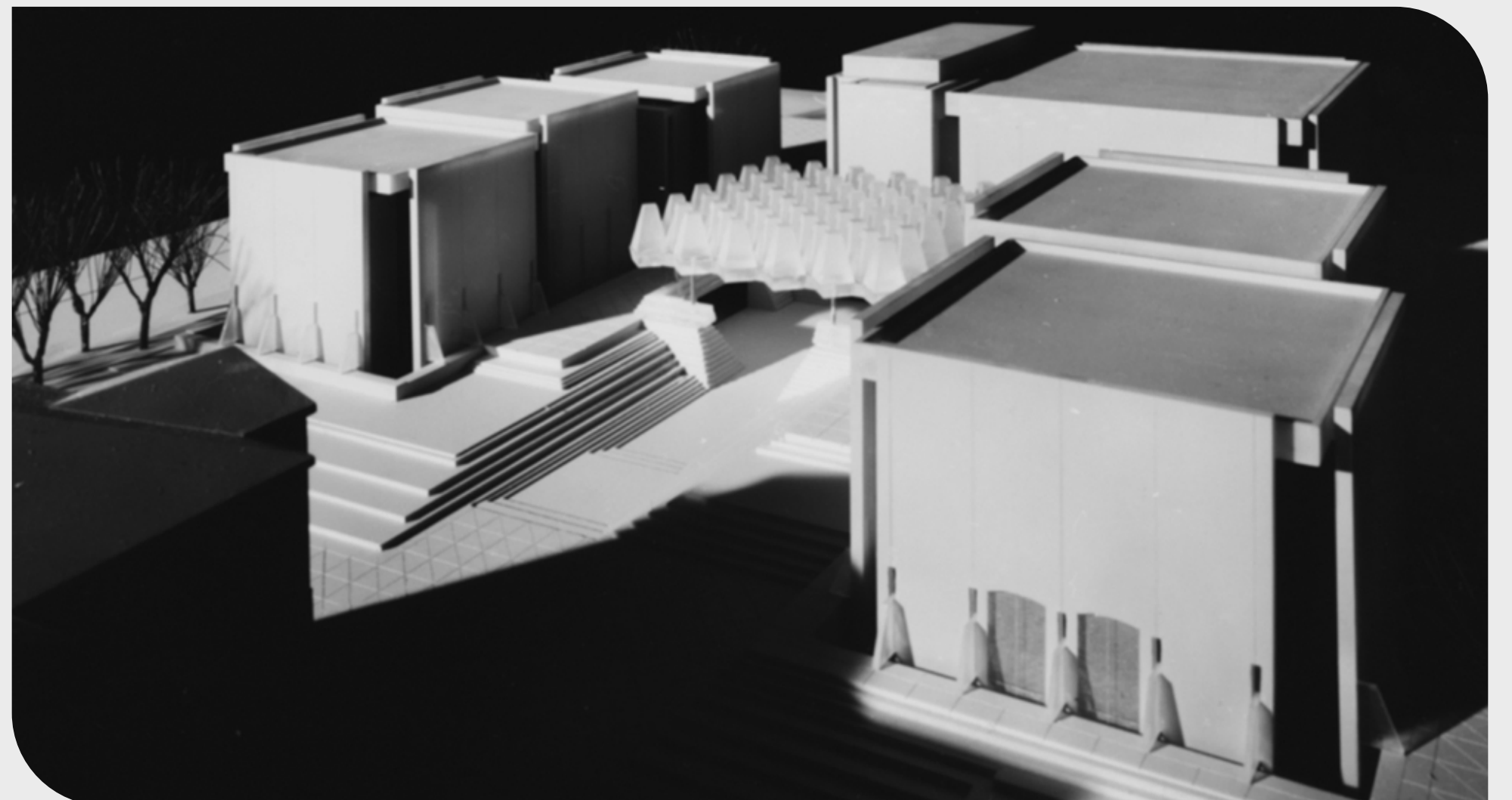
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- First hit of publicity for the CCOA
- Winning architects were from Montreal and also built several other notable Canadian buildings
 - National Arts Centre in Ottawa



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- Ribbon was cut October 7th 1964 by Queen Elizabeth II
- First show was a variety show that afternoon



"Confederation is a dynamic process - not frozen in time"



What is the problem with how we depict history?

- Lack of diverse perspectives
- Glorification of historical figures

We need to change our perception

- Re-assess how we depict historical figures
- Re-assess from who's perspective we are telling stories
- Re-assess why this part of history is valuable



Case Study: John A. Macdonald

First Canadian Prime Minister vs. Architect of the Residential School System


- It is difficult to dissociate historical figures from their positive contributions
- Macdonald is often presented as being the past, present and future of Canada but this ignores the passage of time between the creation of Canada and now
- Literally has been placed on a pedestal

How do you talk about history without talking about him?

- "it is not Macdonald 'who made us' but instead, a select group of intellectuals and advocates who makes and remakes Macdonald to sustain his relevance and importance"
- Celebrate *places* and *events* rather than people
- Depict historical figures accurately and objectively



Framework for History and Commemoration - Parks Canada 2019

- Written to guide Park Canada sites in response to TRCA 79
 - Four Priorities:
 - a. History of Indigenous Peoples
 - b. Environmental History
 - c. Diversity
 - d. Canada and the World
 - Key Practices
 - Craft big stories
 - *Address conflict and controversy*
 - *Seek opportunities for Indigenous peoples to share and communicate history on their own terms*
 - Realize that history is written from a worldview
 - Share authority
 - *Emphasize a full range of voice, perspectives and experience*
 - Acknowledge that humans have touched all heritage places
 - Recognize that power dynamics affect understandings of heritage places
 - *Explore the spectrum of powerful memories and meanings*
 - Appreciate that interpretations of the past are constantly evolving
 - Foundational Concepts of Historical Thinking:
 - what is important in history and why?
 - who or what influenced history and what were the repercussions?
 - what factors shape history?
 - how do we make sense of historical actors and events in their own time so that we don't view their actions only through contemporary lenses?
 - why is it important to understand historical people and events?
 - how do we understand the differences between today's values and beliefs, and those in the past?
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How does any of this apply to the CCOA?

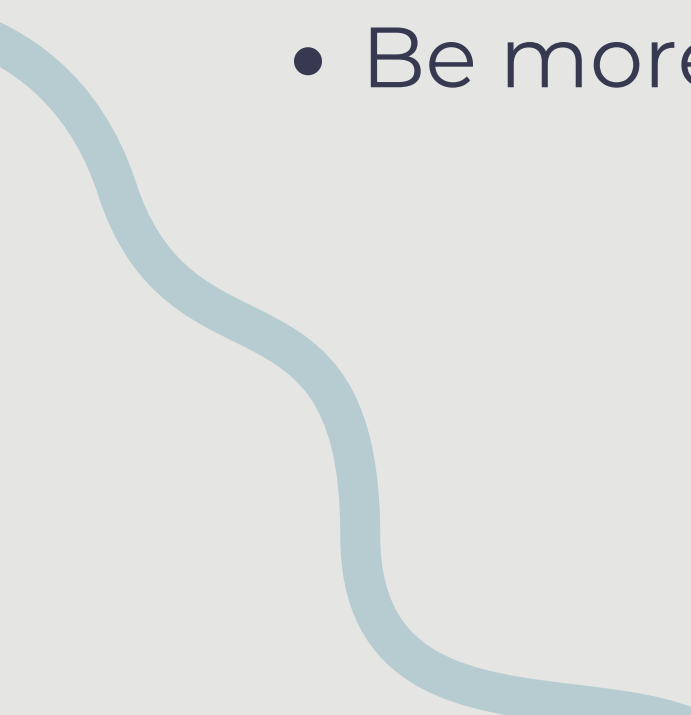
Vision: connecting artists, audiences, and communities through creativity, dialogue and collaboration as a leading Canadian arts centre

Mandate: a living monument to Canadian Confederation

Mission: inspire and engage, through visual and performing arts, to celebrate an evolving Canada



Suggestions:

- More art from across Canada
 - More art generally
 - Interactive history exhibition
 - Tell the story of Confederation with multiple perspectives through art/dioramas
 - Be more explicit about the goal/purpose of the CCOA
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THANK YOU

Some sources:

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