

Vancouver Premiere of *Arctic Adaptations: Nunavut at 15*

Architectural history of Canada's newest territory presented at Museum of Vancouver

VANCOUVER, BC – From the **Museum of Vancouver (MOV)** comes the Vancouver premiere of ***Arctic Adaptations: Nunavut at 15***, commemorating the establishment of Canada's newest, largest and most northerly territory. This investigation into the architectural history of Nunavut is on display **October 8 – December 13, 2015**.

The exhibition, which is organized and curated by Lateral Office, was originally shown in 2014 at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia. It is presented and coordinated by the Winnipeg Art Gallery with assistance from the Museums Assistance Program, department of Canadian Heritage, and presenting sponsor Manulife.

Visitors will delve into the realities of contemporary life in this sublime yet fragile region, exploring philosophies of adaptation, ingenuity, and the intersection of technology and tradition. Concepts will be illuminated through soapstone carvings of significant architectural works, topographic models and photographs of Nunavut's 25 communities, and replicas of structures enhanced by animations which suggest innovative solutions in the delivery of housing, health, arts, education, and recreation.

Arctic Adaptations surveys a recent architectural past, a current urbanizing present, and a projected near future of adaptive architecture in Nunavut. Today, there are almost 33,000 people living across two million square kilometres, making Nunavut one of the least densely populated regions in the world. These communities, located above the tree line and with no roads connecting them, range in population from 120 in the smallest hamlet to 7,000 in Nunavut's capital city of Iqaluit. The climate, geography, and people of Nunavut, as well as the wider Canadian Arctic, challenge the viability of a universalizing modernity.

Following the age of polar exploration in the 20th century, modern architecture encroached on this remote and vast region of Canada in the name of sovereignty, aboriginal affairs management, or trade, among others. Throughout the last 100 years, architecture, infrastructure, and settlements have been the tools for these acts. People have been re-located; trading posts, military infrastructure, and research stations have been built; and small settlements are now emerging as Arctic cities. Some have described this rapid confrontation with modernity as a transition "from igloos to internet" compressed into forty years. This abruptness has revealed powerful traits among its people—adaptation and resilience—qualities which modern architecture has often lacked. Few places exemplify the ability to adapt in the face of modernity better than Nunavut.

Coinciding with the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the territory, which changed Canada's map, *Arctic Adaptations* explores modernism's legacy within the contextual particularities of the North. The exhibition documents architectural history in this remarkable

but relatively unknown region of Canada, describes the contemporary realities of life in its communities, and examines a projected role for architecture moving forward. It argues that modern Inuit cultures continue to evolve and merge the traditional and the contemporary in unique and innovative ways, and questions whether architecture, which has largely failed this region—both technically and socially—can be equally innovative and adaptive.

Modernity is often fearful of the specificities of place and the premise of ‘the local’. Yet Nunavut seems to resist modernism’s universalizing tendency. This unique exhibition seeks to reveal acts of architectural resistance and identify an unrecognized modern Canadian North.

Media are invited to an exclusive curator tour of *Arctic Adaptations: Nunavut at 15*, with Lola Sheppard, on Wednesday, October 7 at 2:30pm. Phone interviews can also be arranged in advance.

Credits

Arctic Adaptations: Nunavut at 15 has been organized and curated by Lateral Office, with the support of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts. It is presented and coordinated by the Winnipeg Art Gallery with assistance for the Museums Assistance Program, department of Canadian Heritage, and presenting sponsor Manulife.

About Museum of Vancouver (museumofvancouver.ca)

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) is an award-winning authority on Vancouver’s history, sharing the region’s stories from its Aboriginal beginnings to contemporary topics. It creates engaging exhibitions and programs that encourage dialogue about what was, is, and can be Vancouver, serving as a gathering place that connects Vancouverites to each other, and Vancouver to the world.

LISTING INFORMATION

Arctic Adaptations: Nunavut at 15

Date:	October 8 – December 13, 2015
Venue:	Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, BC
Website:	museumofvancouver.ca
Images:	High-resolution images are available to download at: arcticadaptations.ca/press

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