



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada

## 2020 VENICE BIENNALE IN ARCHITECTURE: Call for Expression of Interest

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The Canada Council invites expression of interest to become Canada's official representation at the 2020 Venice Biennale of Architecture, a prestigious international platform for engagement with critical conversations about contemporary architecture. The Venice Biennale takes place primarily in two venues in the city; the Arsenale and the historic Giardini di Castello, where the Canada Pavilion is located. Canada's Pavilion is one of 30 national pavilions with permanent homes in the Giardini. After undergoing a year of renovations, the 1957 designed Canada Pavilion opened again in May of 2018 and will be the site of the Canadian representation at the 2020 Venice Biennale of Architecture. Cultural leaders, architects, artists and more than 350,000 visitors are expected to visit the Biennale from May to November 2020.

The proposed exhibition should demonstrate conceptual and design excellence, innovation and relevance to contemporary architectural thought in Canada and may include works of critical or design research in architecture, landscape or urban design.

The selected Presenter will be responsible for delivering the proposed project, without substantial alteration to the Canada Pavilion, while assuming responsibility for expenses incurred by the project beyond the funding provided by the Canada Council.

The Canada Council will contribute \$500,000 towards the exhibition. The total budget for the project (including all cash expenses related to the exhibition but not in-kind contributions) should not exceed \$800,000. Should the Presenter wish to increase the budget beyond this amount, prior approval must be obtained from the Canada Council, based on a reasonable guarantee that the additional funds have been secured through other public or private sources.

The Canada Council will act as Commissioner of the exhibition, and as such, will be responsible for securing agreements with the Venice Biennale in compliance with their cultural and organizational requirements. The Commissioner is also responsible for the hiring and oversight of a Venice Coordinator and the organization of an official inauguration event in collaboration with the Canadian Embassy in Rome. In this role, the Commissioner will manage invitations, communications, and media relations for the inauguration.

The Presenter will be responsible for all aspects of the exhibition from the conception and design to the production and project management of the exhibition.

This will include:

- Providing progress updates to the Commissioner throughout the various phases of work on the exhibition;
- Signing a sub-lease agreement with the National Gallery to cover actual and reasonable operation and maintenance expenses during the period of their use of the Canada Pavilion. These expenses include, but are not limited to, insurance, electricity, garbage disposal and a prorated contribution to the annual maintenance expenses that the National Gallery pays. The sub-lease will also include the financial, administrative and organizational responsibilities for the Presenter of returning the Pavilion to its original state after the exhibition is de-installed and having the work completed within a time frame agreeable to the National Gallery;
- Presenting exhibition plans to the National Gallery that fully describe how the project interfaces with, and is respectful of, the Canada Pavilion;
- Collaborating closely with the Venice Coordinator on all production matters related to the pavilion;
- Collaborating with the Embassy of Canada to Italy, Global Affairs, the National Gallery of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts (the Commissioner) as needed;
- Ensuring required permits are obtained from the Biennale, City of Venice and other relevant authorities;
- Coordinating with relevant authorities and service providers in Venice;
- Adhering to project deadlines required by the Biennale Office;
- Hiring of a production and/or project manager;
- Hiring of a producer (curator, designer, contractor, company etc.);
- Ensuring the Pavilion is staffed with attendants during the opening hours of the Biennale, for the duration of the exhibition;
- Payment of shipping, insurance, installation and dismantling of the exhibition;
- Payment of general liability insurance for the exhibition;
- Collaborating with the Commissioner on communications functions, including the development and maintenance of a bilingual project website and social media;
- Collaborating with the Commissioner and the Embassy of Canada to Italy in the promotion and preparation of the Inauguration event in Venice and in media relations ;
- Fundraising, sponsorship agreements, recognition, events

### **Eligible Applicants**

Applicants must be an incorporated Canadian organization, institution, or registered business. These include, but are not limited to, architectural firms, organizations and associations, schools of architecture, artist-run-centres, galleries and museums. The organization, institution, or business must be at least 75 percent Canadian-owned and have its head office and executive located in Canada.

The team must include professional expertise and experience in contemporary Canadian architecture. This includes, but is not limited to, architects, critics and curators of architecture, professors of architecture, landscape architects and urban designers.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate their ability to manage the responsibilities outlined and complete a project of this nature.

### **General Ineligibility**

The following activities are not eligible:

- activities proposed by someone under 18 years old;
- activities that are illegal according to the Criminal Code of Canada;
- artistic activities that are led by non-professionals;
- activities that are carried out to satisfy the course requirements of an educational institution (for non-course activities related to graduate studies, please contact a program officer);
- activities that directly support the delivery of an educational program or course;
- expenses that are already funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC);
- capital expenditures;
- contributions to endowment funds.

### **Installation**

The Canada Pavilion is owned by the National Gallery of Canada. All exhibition design plans and collateral material must be approved by the National Gallery before proceeding with construction/installation. The restored Canada Pavilion's architecture may not be significantly altered or concealed in any way. Permission to use the gardens or grounds surrounding the Canada Pavilion will be subject to the usual approval protocols of the appropriate Italian authorities (Municipality, Soprintendenza and/or Biennale).

The Canada Pavilion is shaped like a faceted half-donut or nautilus shell with a small, glazed interior courtyard. There is a sizable tree growing in the middle of the pavilion and another in the courtyard. This unique space needs to be taken into consideration from the onset of the project, and usually requires extensive creative and custom-built solutions for displaying works. Furthermore, the Pavilion is a listed building in Italy, meaning that its integrity as a work of architecture is to be preserved.

Interiors walls are mainly plastered masonry and glazing. Humidity seeps through the walls of the Pavilion and there is no real humidity control aside from some air conditioning. The damp climate of Venice and minimal environmental controls in the Pavilion require consideration as to what type of works can safely be displayed without risk of damage. The Biennale is open for six months and over this time materials such as drywall and MDF can become damp, soft or warped, so the Presenter must keep this in mind when selecting materials for construction and display.

The expansive amount of glazing on the inner wall facing the courtyard of the pavilion also presents a challenge for the incorporation of projections in the space. An exterior applied

system of temporary black-out shades is currently being developed for the glazing and will be available for use. These will be visible from the exterior so will affect the appearance of the building. An alternative is to build temporary walls to section off a portion of the space. Moisture, dust, and other environmental concerns often require equipment to be encased protecting from infiltrations.

No holes may be made in the floor or ceiling of the Pavilion. Any other changes to the Pavilion must be reversible at the end of the exhibition. The exposed ceiling joists offer the option of inserting custom-built elements for suspending works and exhibition structures.

### **Expression of Interest**

Expressions of Interest are limited to a single PDF document with a maximum number of fifteen 8 ½ by 11 pages, excluding cover sheets. Submissions must be submitted by e-mail by **11h59 p.m. EST on Monday, November 5, 2018** to [paoquang.yeh@canadacouncil.ca](mailto:paoquang.yeh@canadacouncil.ca)

Expression of Interest must include the following information:

- Name and contact information for architectural firm or organization making the submission
- CVs/Bios for key team members (staff, curator, designer, project manager, communications personnel, etc)
- Descriptions and illustrations of three relevant previous projects and/or exhibitions completed in the past 10 years by the proposed team
- A brief description of the artistic concept and framework, works of architecture and/or practitioner(s) to be presented; exhibition design strategy, intended impact of the project on the architecture community, target audience (if any), and the general public.

Expressions of Interest will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- architectural interest and relevance of ideas represented;
- capacity of the exhibition to capture the attention of a wide range of visitors and generate a stimulating conversation about contemporary Canadian architecture, at home and abroad;
- demonstrated capacity of the applicant to complete projects of this nature in an expedient, responsible, and professional manner.

### **Selection Process**

The selection process is two-fold: the Canada Council established selection committee will review the Expression of Interest and prepare a shortlist. The shortlisted candidates will be invited to develop their proposal and budget, as well present their project to the selection committee.

The selection committee comprises the following members:

- Mirko Zardini, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal (Quebec)
- Kitty Scott, Carol and Morton Rapp Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (Ontario)
- Sasa Radulovic, Architect, 5468796 architecture, Winnipeg (Manitoba)
- Manon Asselin, Architect, Atelier TAG, Montreal (Quebec)

5 November 2018	deadline for expressions of interest
Early January 2019	deadline for detailed proposal and budget
Late January 2019	interviews/presentations with selection committee

The selected proposal that will represent Canada at the 2020 Venice Biennale in Architecture will be announced at the end of February 2019.

**Further Information**

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