

posed upon it by the government practice of printing books in parallel columns of English and French. Isn't it time to reconsider the rationale of this practice, especially when it results in shortening texts? Surely if persons are bilingual they don't need texts in both languages; and if they are not, surely a better practice would be to use the same format, book jacket, and so on, to provide companion editions, one French, one English. Admittedly in some government publications, brevity would be a virtue. But not in this one. I would like to see a new issue of this book presenting something like the full amount of research which obviously (from internal evidence) must have gone into it. Perhaps some major publisher in Canada will seize this opportunity. *Statues* deserves it. In the meantime, both authors deserve our thanks for so greatly enlarging our knowledge and understanding of the breadth and depth of architecture and sculpture in Canada.

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**Construction d'un musée Beaux-Arts /
Montréal 1912 /**

Building a Beaux-Arts Museum

Rosalind M. PEPALL

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts,
Montréal, 1986

186 pp., 65 b/w illus., \$15.00

The ostensible subject of this catalogue to a recent exhibition mounted by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is the design and construction of the gallery built in 1912 for the Art Association of Montreal (renamed the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1949). The exhibition and its publication are both a timely and a welcome project. The past decade has witnessed an explosive growth in museum construction and expansion both in Canada and abroad. The well-researched catalogue essay by the exhibition's guest curator, Rosalind M. Pepall, provides a useful historical perspective from which to consider these recent developments.

The catalogue draws upon a thorough review of local period literature and archival material, particularly the extensive archive of the Gallery's architects, Edward and William Maxwell, held by the Canadian Architecture Collection at McGill University. Pepall's catalogue locates and describes the building in the context of local and North American approaches to Beaux-Arts architecture and museum design, and provides a compelling description of the social forces which played so important a role in the selection of the site and the design of the new gallery.

The relevance of Pepall's study is heightened by contemporary events: the exhibition and the publication of the catalogue coincided with the announcement by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts of what became a highly controversial plan to enter into a joint-development project with Bell

Canada Enterprises. The project would have seen the Museum use its extraordinary powers of expropriation to promote corporate gentrification in order to acquire additional gallery and office space and to provide Bell Canada with a fashionable address for its head office.

Although the expansion proposal was eventually withdrawn in the face of vehement public opposition, the then director of the Museum, Alexander Gaudieri, in his foreword to the catalogue, was quick to note the striking similarities "between events surrounding the Museum's past expansion and building projects and those we are experiencing now."¹ Gaudieri's observation suggests that the decision to mount the exhibition may have been more than a gratuitous act in support of disinterested scholarship or an appropriate means of celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the opening of the Sherbrooke Street museum.

The increasing dependence of museums on corporate funding and sponsorship has been the subject of criticism by those who suggest that this "creeping privatization" is transforming museums into institutions which respond more to corporate interests than they do to either scholarly concerns or public needs.² It is a complex issue and it serves as a pertinent subtext for Pepall's portrait of an institution which, at the turn of the century, was "a private organization supported by its members and jealous of its private status."³ Indeed, it is difficult not to conclude that the Museum was little more than a private club catering to the cultural aspirations of Canada's wealthy corporate elite. Far from being disinterested philanthropists, these tycoons played an important and influential role in determining the site and design of the new gallery. Located in the heart of Montreal's Golden Square Mile, the gallery was to occupy a "most

desirable site . . . within strolling distance of their homes, away from the hubbub of commerce."⁴ Senator Robert Mackay who sold the site to the institution did so with the proviso that "only an Art Gallery be constructed on the site and that the plans of their building should be submitted to him."⁵

These supporters of the Art Association were familiar with the role of the architectural patron. As wealthy citizens they commissioned lavish city residences, summer houses and private clubs; as corporate leaders, they built offices and promoted the construction of commercial and industrial buildings. Their taste in architectural design was definite and well established, and emulated that of their American counterparts. Reflecting their predilection for the pomp and grandeur of Beaux-Arts architecture and what Pepall describes as their "little faith in the abilities of Canadian architects,"⁶ a closed competition for the design of the new art gallery was held. Edmund Wheelwright, a Boston-based architect trained at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, was appointed consulting architect. Three Montréal firms were invited to participate: the brothers Edward and William Maxwell, Percy Nobbs and the partnership of Hugh Valence and David Brown.

The decision of the Building Committee in favour of the Maxwells' proposal provoked charges of nepotism and the accusation that the winning entry had benefitted from privileged information which was unavailable to the other entrants. But while the Maxwells may have enjoyed and even benefitted from professional and personal contact with individual members of the Building Committee, their victory is not surprising. Their project, squarely within the Beaux-Arts tradition, not only reflected their own Beaux-Arts training and predis-

position, but conformed to the tastes and predilections of Wheelwright and the members of the Museum's Building Committee. It was the chosen architectural style of the North American plutocracy in its "Gilded Age."

Pepall's essay contains a thorough and very welcome study of the Maxwell brothers' architectural training and early careers. Both brothers, we learn, were well versed in the vocabulary and design method of the Beaux-Arts. Edward, the senior partner, had worked in Boston with H.H. Richardson's successors, Shepley, Rutlan and Coolidge. William had been steeped in the style in Boston, where, in the office of Peabody and Stearnes, he had worked on drawings for that firm's entry in the New York Public Library competition, and subsequently in Paris where he studied in the atelier of Jean-Louis Pascal, a popular teacher and established practitioner in the traditions of the Beaux-Arts.

Pepall situates the Maxwells' gallery within the development of American Beaux-Arts-inspired museum design and notes its "uncanny resemblance"⁷ to Richard Morris Hunt's 1895 Fogg Museum at Harvard University. However, she is reluctant to propose any single building as a particular prototype. In fact, the Maxwells' design incorporated features which were well established in the Beaux-Arts approach to museum design: the symmetrical tripartite façade elevation, centralized plan, monumental entrance and central staircase all sumptuously ornamented with closely studied classical details. The gallery could almost be characterized as "American Beaux-Arts generic." However, if Pepall's analysis of the principal features of the program and design tends toward the generalization of the building as an example of a type, the analysis is enlivened by her sensitive appreciation of the rich decoration and ornate furnishing of the gallery, executed by arti-

sans of the Bromsgrove Guild.

Pepall places the Maxwells' 1912 gallery within a variety of interrelated contexts. These range from the social and biographical to local and international interpretations of Beaux-Arts architectural design and urban planning. Yet while this approach serves as a means of interpreting the subject and suggests directions for further investigation, the scope of the study remains problematic. Some twenty-four pages and eight illustrations are devoted to the Art Association of Montreal's first gallery, designed by John W. Hopkins and Daniel Wiley from 1877 to 1879, and to its enlargement and renovation by Andrew T. Taylor in 1892-93. However, the major expansions and renovations to the Maxwell building in 1938-39 by Fetherstonhaugh and Durnford and in 1973-76 by Fred Lebensold and Imre Reichman of ARCOP Associates, are passed over in silence. These were far from minor renovations and together they more than doubled the size of the gallery. An examination of these renovations and expansions would have served as a useful vehicle for evaluating the durability of the Maxwell design and its response to both shifts in architectural style and emerging needs and definitions of the fine-arts museum.

Nevertheless, the essay and the catalogue constitute a significant contribution to the literature. The well-illustrated catalogue includes reproductions of both a large number of the Maxwells' drawings for the gallery project and a well-chosen selection of photographs. The latter includes reproductions of a superb series of photographs by Montréal photographer Brian Merrett, which were specially commissioned for the exhibition.

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Notes

¹ Alexander V.J. GAUDIERI, "Foreword," *Construction d'un musée Beaux-Arts / Montréal 1912 / Building a Beaux-Arts Museum* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1986), p. 9.

² See, for example, *Art in America*, "Special Section: Museum Blockbusters," LXXVI, no. 6, pp. 18-37, and Douglas CRIMP, "The Art of Exhibition," *October*, XXX (Fall 1984), pp. 49-82.

³ PEPALL, p.83.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.99.

Uumajut: Animal Imagery in Inuit Art

Bernadette DRISCOLL

Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, 1985

134 pp., 12 colour, 171 b/w illus., \$17.00

Bernadette Driscoll's catalogue *Uumajut: Animal Imagery in Inuit Art* is a disappointing addition to a long line of publications by the Winnipeg Art Gallery on Inuit art. Despite a careful reading, one is left with an overwhelming sense of disjointedness in both the form and the content of the catalogue.

The text of the catalogue is divided into four sections. The first three consist of essays by well-known contributors to the field of Inuit studies: "Ancient Animals: The Dorset Collection from Brooman Point" by Robert McGhee; "Uumajut: Animal Imagery in Inuit Art and Spiritual Culture" by Bernadette Driscoll; and "Animals: Images, Forms, Ideas" by George Swinton. The final section includes three brief interviews with the Cape Dorset artists: Pauta Saila, Joannsie Salomonie and Kiawak Ashoona. Unfortunately, no introduction is given by the curator to explain the relationship of these essays either to each other or to the theme of the exhibition. Left to make these connections, the reader can only conclude that the thin thread tying one section to the next is their shared subject matter: animals.

In the first essay, "Ancient Animals: The Dorset Collection from Brooman Point," Robert McGhee examines a collection of eighty-one objects excavated from a site on the southern tip of Brooman Peninsula occupied by a group of Dorset Eskimos around 1000 A.D. His analysis reveals two points pertinent to the subject of the catalogue. First, forty-eight percent of the carvings uncovered were animal images. Second, he notes that stylistically the representations ranged from naturalistic to highly conventionalized. Here, the need for a covering essay by the curator to tie to-