



VANCOUVERISM: WESTCOAST ARCHITECTURE + CITY-BUILDING

EXHIBITION SET TO OPEN JUNE 23 IN LONDON

For Release:

LONDON - From June 23rd to September 4th in London UK, Vancouver's architectural style will be on display at Canada House, Trafalgar Square. The Vancouverism: Westcoast Architecture + City-Building exhibit will be one of the highlights of the Embassy's Program of the London Festival of Architecture, which will take over the city June 20 to July 20. The exhibit, curated by architects and critics, Trevor Boddy and Dennis Sharp, will feature the works of Vancouver's most renowned architects, Arthur Erickson and Bing Thom, as well feature works by James K.M Cheng, and innovative engineers Fast + Epp who are recognized as global leaders in applications of sustainably-harvested engineered wood from British Columbia, Canada. The Exhibition will be open Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm and from 10pm – 6pm on Saturdays.

Vancouverism began over half a century ago in a single visionary sketch—Arthur Erickson's then entirely hypothetical *'Project 56'*—a massive range of housing sweeping up from English Bay on the visual scale of the snow-capped mountains behind. A decade later in came Erickson's 1965 MacMillan Bloedel Office Tower - perhaps the best example of a Brutalist style office tower, anywhere. By the mid-1970s, the same Vancouver-born architect's Robson Square won international praise as a downtown set-piece, combining lush gardens, government offices, space-framed law courts, and an Edwardian courthouse turned-art-gallery—a diverse range of uses filling three entire city blocks.

Two of Erickson's staff architects on the Robson Square design have since gone on to re-design to shape Vancouver and its suburbs with their own firms, and their work is featured in the London exhibition. Hong Kong-born Bing Thom is re-invigorating Vancouver's multi-ethnic suburbs with bold new public spaces, innovative architecture, and unexpected combinations of ever more intensive uses of land in Surrey Central City and Richmond's Aberdeen Centre.

One of the most anticipated features of the exhibition, conceived by Mr. Thom, will be a stunning demonstration of Canadian technical, design and entrepreneurial innovation as the corner of Canada House facing Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery of Great Britain will be temporarily wrapped with an undulating 200 foot long, 27-foot-high wooden wall.

Named the **"Trafalgar Square Demonstration Construction"** the stunning display will be constructed by frequent collaborators with architects Erickson and Thom, Fast + Epp and StructureCraft, the innovative engineering firm also responsible for the one-of-a-kind wood roof structure for the Richmond Speed Skating Oval in British Columbia. Their firm is increasingly recognized as a global leader in structural uses of sustainably-harvest B.C. engineered wood. While Beijing 2008 and London 2012 have opted for steel and concrete for their Olympic structures, Fast + Epp span six hectares with a roof for the Vancouver-Whistler 2010 Speed Skating Oval *almost entirely made of wood*. This major piece of Olympic design will have its public and media debut at the 'Vancouverism' exhibition.

On exhibit from architect James K.M. Cheng will be the newly opened Spectrum complex. Designed for Concord Pacific Developments it is four 40-storey condo towers built literally on top of a 'big box' Costco store, the kind of hybrid of building types and functions only found in Vancouver now, but of great international interest as cities conserve energy by pushing density to the limit. Spectrum is a superior architectural resolution of Vancouver's characteristic downtown housing configuration: the thin-condo-towers-on-continuous-townhouse-base urban 'typology'.

Vancouverism: Westcoast Architecture + City-Building highlights how one of North America's most unusual and creative young cities is being transformed with new designs, and in turn, now Vancouver's city-building ideas are now shaping urban development, from Dallas to Dubai. The exhibition features architectural drawings, detailed models, stunning photographs, world debut video installations and demonstration constructions of a serpentine structure made from sustainably-harvested British Columbia timber.

Green, global, and generous of spirit, *Vancouverism* shines a light of hope for diverse urban life dwelling in balance with nature. The exhibition will tour to other European cities later in the year. "Vancouverism: Westcoast Architecture + City-Building" is produced by Trevor Boddy. Presented by the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery of the University of British Columbia, and hosted by the Canadian High Commission, London as part of the 2008 London Festival of Architecture.

This exhibition has been generously supported by: British Columbia Forestry Innovation Investment, the Canada Wood Export Programme through Natural Resources Canada, StructureCraft Builders Inc., Bing Thom Architects Inc., Fast and Epp Structural Engineers, James KM Cheng Architects, the Canada Council for the Arts, Architecture Program, Aeroplan, the Western Red Cedar Export Association and in-kind support from the Canadian High Commission, London.

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For further information about the London Festival of Architecture visit: www.lfa2008.org.

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Media construction site tours are available from 10 June, upon prior booking, as well as interviews with the designers and Vancouverism creative director. In addition media are invited to attend an exclusive press preview of *Vancouverism* at 10am on June 23 at Canada House, Trafalgar Square, SW1Y 5BJ. Join the curators, architects, and engineers for an informal Q+A and take a tour of the exhibition. Breakfast will be served. To RSVP, please contact Jennifer Brown at the Canadian High Commission: jennifer.brown@international.gc.ca, tel: (0)207-258-6557

For more information and construction progress images, please contact:

Laura Ballance
Curve Communications
604.684.3170 ex. 109
604.771.5176 (mobile)
laura@curvecommunications.com

Jeremy Dunn
Curve Communications
604.684.3170 ex. 115
604.726.8350 (mobile)
jeremy@curvecommunications.com

LONDON:
Emma Lomas or Joel Derbyshire
Fuel PR +44 207 498 8211
emma@fuelrefuel.com

