

Hazen Edward Sise and the History of Modern Architecture at McGill, 1949–1957

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Engagé en 1949 par l'Université McGill pour donner le cours sur l'histoire de l'architecture moderne, l'architecte natif de Montréal Hazen Edward Sise (1906–1974) prôna à ses étudiants et étudiantes les vertus du modernisme et leur décria le retard de l'architecture canadienne. Formé dans l'atelier de Le Corbusier et engagé dans la guerre d'Espagne, son expérience immédiate du mouvement moderne et ses opinions politiques influèrent grandement sur son enseignement. Faisant écho à une poignée d'historiens modernes novateurs dont la représentation tautologique du passé cherchait à revitaliser l'architecture du xx^e siècle, Sise enseigna l'histoire comme une forme d'instruction pratique, ambitionnant ainsi la transformation de l'architecture canadienne au travers de ses futurs praticiens.

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For Montreal, the 1960s was a period of significant economic, social, and political change. The sweeping transformations to Quebec's multi-lingual society, as the Quiet Revolution worked to separate Church from State and enact important reforms in the fields of health and education, were reflected in a series of bold architectural and urban projects that announced the city's decisive entry into the modern world.¹ Although much has been written about Montreal's postwar architecture and urbanism—from catalytic megaprojects like Place Victoria and Place Bonaventure, to its soaring highway interchanges, world-class metro, and Expo 67—surprisingly little has been said about the education of Montreal architects who contributed to these projects.² This is remarkable given the extent to which Montreal's homegrown architectural profession participated in the city's transformation and was willing to displace Montreal's historic fabric in pursuit of modernity.³

This essay focuses on the pedagogical framework of Montreal's postwar modernization by examining the university-based education of architects during the period preceding the Quiet Revolution. In particular, it discusses the School of Architecture at McGill University where, during the 1940s and 1950s, students were taught a version of architectural history that presented modern architecture as a victory over historicizing forces. Hired in 1949 to teach a course on the history of modern architecture, architect and Montreal native Hazen Edward Sise (1906–74) was a seminal figure in this regard. Drawing on his lecture notes, final examinations, and interviews conducted by McGill with former students, this study reveals how Sise employed architectural history as an operative force in his classroom. It also suggests that his efforts were complicit in one of Montreal's most enduring and contested legacies: a wave of destruction and rebuilding that swept across the city throughout the 1960s.⁴

By focusing on the education of modern architects rather than a specific set of building practices, this essay aims to draw architecture into a conversation with design culture at large. Not only does Montreal's experience exemplify changes to architectural education enacted across the country, it highlights the importance of educational practices in shaping socio-cultural attitudes toward the city and its heritage. These attitudes were central to the revolution in design thinking that swept Montreal during the 1960s, from industrial and graphic design to the fine arts.⁵ By linking the theory and practice of modern architecture in a non-prescriptive way, shifting historical attitudes provide a new axis of inquiry to address these different but related disciplines.⁶

1. André Lortie, ed., *The 60s: Montreal Thinks Big* (Montreal, 2004).

2. Together with the visionary (and controversial) economic policy of Mayor Jean Drapeau, an abundance of large inner-city real estate parcels, the decision to sell air rights over the Canadian National Railway, a permissive approach to zoning, and state intervention in education and finances are typically cited as precursors to Montreal's postwar urban building boom. See Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution: Historical Analysis of the Development of Montreal's Architecture and Urban Environment* (Montreal, 1981), 342–58; Robert K. Whelan, "The Politics of Urban Redevelopment

in Montreal: Regime Change from Drapeau to Doré," *Québec Studies* 12 (1991): 155–69; and Harold Kaplan, *Reform, Planning, and City Politics: Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto* (Toronto, 1982).

3. This view was certainly not without its detractors, and a growing preservation movement had begun to form as early as the 1950s. See France Vanlaethem, "The Ambivalence of Architectural Culture in Quebec and Canada, 1955–1975," *The Sixties: Passion, Politics, and Style*, ed. Dimitry Anastakis (Montreal, 2008), 127–44.

4. On the reception and social resilience engendered by Montreal's urban renewal see André Lortie, "Montreal 1960: The Singularities of a Metropolitan Archaetype," *The 60s*, ed. Lortie, 75–115.

5. Lydia Ferrabee Sharman, "Design and Innovation in Montreal through the 1960s and 1970s," *Material History Review* 61 (2005): 43–51.

6. See Jilly Traganou, "Architectural and Spatial Design Studies: Inscripting Architecture in Design Studies," *Journal of Design History* 22, 2 (2009): 173–81.

7. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* (New York, 1929); Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (New York, 1932); Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* (London, 1936); Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Catherine K. Bauer, *Modern Architecture in England* (New York, 1937); James M. Richards, *An Introduction to Modern Architecture* (London, 1940); Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, MA, 1941).

8. Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, trans. Giorgio Verrecchia (New York, 1980), 141–70.

9. *Ibid.*, 141; Panayotis Tournikiotis has argued similarly that the history of modern architecture has often been used to present a solution to our current concerns by projecting them onto the past. Panayotis Tournikiotis, *The Historiography of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA, 1999).

10. Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," *The Architectural Review* 118, 708 (December 1955): 355–61; Banham would later make a more explicit connection between Le Corbusier's use of textured concrete at his housing project in Marseille and the New Brutalism aesthetic, see *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* (London, 1966).

Moreover, this study suggests that a better understanding of how innovation and historical thinking are intertwined is needed in architectural and design scholarship that seeks to address Canada's past and present, as well as in educational settings where the survey course remains a primary mode of teaching history.

While the historiography of modern architecture is replete with cases in which historical writing has served as an explicit intervention in the present, the period from roughly 1932 to 1960 is surely the apogee of the trend. Following Henry-Russell Hitchcock's and Philip Johnson's MOMA Modern Architecture—International Exhibition (1932), a torrent of new history writing established the limits of modernity in architecture as roughly the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.⁷ Later coined "operative criticism" by the architectural critic Manfredo Tafuri, this new historiography credited a small group of mainly European architects with a series of revolutionary material and formal breakthroughs, offering them as proof of a definitive modern style.⁸ In Tafuri's view, the most important historians of the modern movement—"from Pevsner to Gideon"—were inheritors of a historiography whose "didactic quality" was the result of "planning past history by projecting it towards the future."⁹ Following the MOMA exhibition, in short order appeared Nikolaus Pevsner's landmark *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (1936), James Richards's *Introduction to Modern Architecture* (1940), and Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941). Taken together, these seminal texts asserted the ability of history to act as an operative force on the future of architectural practice. They also established a fashion for didactic historical writing that would last well into the postwar period, as seen in Reyner Banham's famous effort to transport Le Corbusier's *béton-brut* into a new movement of young British architects during the mid-1950s.¹⁰

The full effect of this historiography on the practice of architecture would not be felt in Canada, as in Britain, until after the Second World War. This is when it entered into the mainstream education of architects, but also when the challenges of postwar recovery started to be firmly addressed.¹¹ The School of Architecture at McGill University in Montreal was one of many architectural schools across North America that were reinventing themselves under the rubric of "modernism," with a curriculum modelled after the German Bauhaus.¹² As a result of institutional reforms begun in the early 1940s at McGill, the new historiography gained considerable influence over a generation of Canadian practitioners whose iconic postwar architecture and urbanism is a lasting testament to the effect of these pedagogical transformations.¹³

Architectural Education at McGill, 1930s–1940s

By the late 1930s, McGill's School of Architecture was facing a crisis. Under the long lasting directorship of Ramsay Traquair (1913–39) it had clung to a curriculum focused on classical drawing techniques and the traditional crafts.¹⁴ For Traquair, who taught all history courses, modernism in architecture extended from the Renaissance to the present, culminating in the Arts and Crafts, the Gothic and Greek revivals in Europe, and the colonial architecture of North America. In 1938, faced with declining enrolment figures, the university moved to phase out architectural education at McGill—a prospect that

11. Acute housing shortages as military personnel returned from overseas, long neglected infrastructures, and decaying inner city suburbs were among the problems facing architects as Canadian cities had languished after the onset of the Great Depression.

12. Founded in Weimar (1919–25) then moved to Dessau (1926–32), the Bauhaus was an influential art school where the fine arts were taught alongside craft and material-based investigations. Under the directorship of Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer, and Mies van der Rohe, experiments in teaching conducted at the Bauhaus emphasized a comprehensive approach to modern design. See Kenneth Frampton, “The Bauhaus: The Evolution of an Idea 1919–1932,” in *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 4th ed. (London, 2007), 123–29.

13. Although the influence of the German school in America is often linked with the introduction of the liberal arts into architectural education after 1937 when Walter Gropius arrived at Harvard, the effect of these changes on the historical curriculum were equally transformative. See Winfried Nerdinger, “From Bauhaus to Harvard: Walter Gropius and the Use of History,” *The History of History in American Schools of Architecture, 1865–1975*, ed. Gwendolyn Wright and Janet Parks (Princeton, 1990), 89–98; Eduard F. Sekler, “Sigfried Giedion at Harvard University,” *The Architectural Historian in America*, ed. Elisabeth B. Macdougall (Hanover, NH, 1990), 265–71.

14. Traquair, who was educated in Edinburgh and deeply influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, was appointed to McGill’s School of Architecture in 1913 and served as its director until 1939. His reluctance to embrace new methods was no doubt abetted by the school’s former director and current professor Percy Erskine Nobbs, who had expressed his own disdain for the nakedness and eclecticism of modern architecture in his *Design: A Treatise on the Discovery of Form* (London, 1937), advocating instead for a return to simple vernacular forms with the measured use of ornamentation. See Norbert Schoenauer, “McGill’s School of Architecture: A Retrospection,” *McGill Schools of Architecture and Urban Planning, Prospects*, ed. Ellen Leibovich (Montreal, 1987), 7–13.

15. Two real-estate appraisers were also among the signatories.

16. Memorandum to the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science, 10 January 1938, Volume 40, Fold-

prompted five Montreal-based architects to send an open letter to the university with recommendations to reform the architectural program.¹⁵ The school, they pointed out, was “seriously out of date.” They argued that, upon graduating, a student “must be a practical assistant knowing something of modern methods of building, rather than someone taught only the theories of eclectic design.”¹⁶ Among their recommendations was that McGill’s architecture “museum,” filled with castings of antique sculpture and ornament that were used in design exercises, be updated to illustrate contemporary materials and methods, and that teaching address the professional realities of practice, from construction to finances. They also recommended that an advisory committee of leading architects and designers be appointed to oversee curriculum changes and to serve as visiting studio critics.¹⁷ In 1941, the directorship was handed over to John Bland, who set out immediately to revise the outmoded curriculum in anticipation of a postwar building boom.¹⁸ Bland taught all history courses for the next eight years. With a renewed focus on engineering, housing, and town planning, the School introduced new classes like Gordon Webber’s Bauhaus-inspired *Elements of Design* in which students conducted free-hand experiments in colour, texture, and light.¹⁹

It was under the auspices of this new regime that, in 1949, Hazen Sise was hired to give a course on the history of modern architecture. | fig. 1 | A former student of the school and pupil of Traquair, Sise had raised his own bitter polemic against McGill in the midst of the 1930s crisis, complaining that, “an architectural school should prepare its students for the world of to-morrow, not for the world of to-day.”²⁰ Despite his earlier criticism, however, Sise was satisfied that with John Bland as director the right balance had been struck, and a new, modern era had indeed arrived at McGill. To Sise, Bland was “something of a sociologist, something of a mechanic and very much of an enthusiast.”²¹

Hazen Edward Sise

Hazen Sise was the first son of Paul F. Sise, a wealthy and influential Montreal businessman who was a director for the Royal Bank and Bell Telephone Company. In 1923, as a young man, he enrolled at the Royal Military College of Canada. This is where he discovered, in the depths of the military library, the collected works of British architect Sir Christopher Wren and became enamoured with architecture. Transferring to the School of Architecture at McGill in 1925, he remained for just two years before leaving to study architecture in Boston at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whose classical course of study (like McGill’s) was based on that of the famous École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.²²

er 4, Hazen Edward Sise Fonds, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter HESF-LAC).

17. Adding somewhat grimly after this last point that “we have been able to think of no one in Montreal qualified to meet the requirements.” Ibid.

18. Having previously established his own successful architecture and planning practice in England, John Bland was appointed

director of McGill’s School of Architecture in 1941, a post he held until 1972, during which time the school was “transitioned” by the addition of new courses and faculty members. See Schoenauer, “McGill’s School of Architecture,” 14–15; Anne McDougall, “John Bland and the McGill School of Architecture,” *The Canadian Architect* (March 1988): 33–37.

19. Webber’s course was styled after László Moholy-Nagy’s preliminary course at the New Bauhaus in Chicago where Webber had been trained. Schoenauer, “McGill’s School of Architecture,” 16.

20. Hazen Sise, “The State of Architecture To-Day” (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), Volume 10, Folder 34, HESF-LAC.

21. Ibid.



Figure 1. Hazen Sise, 1955.
Photo: Gabriel Desmarais,
© Gabriel Desmarais.

22. On the profound influence that the Parisian school had over architectural education in North America at the beginning of the twentieth century see Joan Draper, "The Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Architectural Profession in the United States: The Case of John Galen Howard," *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession*, ed. Spiro Kostof, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, 2000), 209–37; Keith N. Morgan and Richard Cheek, "History in the Service of Design: American Architect-Historians, 1870–1940," *The Architectural Historian*, ed. Macdougall, 61–75.

23. Hazen Sise, Diary, February–March, 1930, Volume 9, Folder 11, HESF-LAC.

24. The Athens Charter was a document produced as a result of the 1933 CIAM congress. It consisted of ninety-four points that articulated an approach to modern urban planning by dividing the city into four functional parts: dwelling, recreation, work, and transportation. It was first published by Le Corbusier in 1943; see Le Corbusier, *La charte d'Athènes* (Paris, 1957). Of the nearly 100 participants at CIAM 4 in Athens, Sise was the only delegate from North America and presented an analysis of Los Angeles prepared by the Austrian-American architect Richard Neutra. Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960* (Cambridge, 2000), 77, 84, 316.

25. Hazen Sise, interview by Charles Hill, 1 February 1974, *Canadian Painting in the Thirties* Exhibition Records, National Gallery of Canada Fonds, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives.

"Now at 23," he wrote in his journal on 18 February 1930, "the world considers me educated—the finished product."²³ But he, evidently, did not. In search of a more fruitful education, Sise set out for Paris and became an apprentice in the atelier of renowned modernist architect Le Corbusier.

Sise then travelled to New York in 1933 where he found work in the office of George Howe and the Swiss-born architect William Lescaze. Returning to Europe shortly thereafter, he joined the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) and attended their fourth meeting in Athens, where he witnessed the drafting of their famous charter.²⁴ Travelling with the congress as they sailed from Marseille to Greece, the charismatic young Canadian and avid photographer befriended a group of artists and architects. These included Fernand Léger, László Moholy-Nagy, Alvar Aalto, and Sigfried Giedion. Sise did not know, of course, that these same men would soon become lionized by historians as the founders of the modern movement in architecture. In their company, Sise's fervour for modern architecture and youthful idealism quickly intensified; modernism, he believed, would emanate from Europe and arrive in Canada one day. In this belief, he was encouraged by Alvar Aalto, who spurred Sise's imagination and gave credence to the possibility of modern architecture in Canada by telling him each morning that "Canada is the Finland of America, Finland is the Canada of Europe!"²⁵

Following the CIAM congress, Sise moved to London where he took up a position in the office of the British modern architect and town planner Maxwell Fry. He remained there for the next three years, travelling in a circle of avant-garde European artists and architects and documenting their work. Photographs taken by Sise during this period are an important reminder of the intoxicating effect that architectural modernity had on the young Canadian. Little did he know that these same projects would later become the source material for his course on the history of modernism. | fig. 2, 3, 4 |

Like his European colleagues, Sise believed that a revolution in architecture was commensurate with sweeping social and political change, and that architecture had a role to play in catalyzing these cultural forces. Eager to participate in this historical process, in December 1936, he wrote to tell his father of his decision to go to Madrid as a volunteer member of the ambulance unit headed by the Canadian physician Norman Bethune.²⁶ The civil war in Spain had broken just five months earlier. Witness to the atrocities of war and the failing social revolution, the young Canadian's future-minded optimism soon infected his political views: "I sometimes suspect that you think I am motivated by a romantic, purely idealistic, urge to bring about a socialist society," he taunted his conservative father in a letter, "[socialism] will come, when the

26. Hazen Sise to Paul F. Sise, 4 December 1936, Volume 5, Folder 24, HESF-LAC. It was around this time, Sise claimed, that Alfred Barr offered him the directorship of the Architectural Department at New York's Museum of Modern Art, a position that had been vacated by Philip Johnson in 1934. A reasonable claim considering that

in 1937 the museum had commissioned a film produced by László Moholy-Nagy and Sise entitled *New Architecture for the London Zoo* featuring the work of Tecton architects and Berthold Lubetkin (The Museum of Modern Art, "Exhibit of Modern English Architecture," Press Release, 2 February 1937, Press Release Archives, MOMA).

Sise and Johnson were also well acquainted. In letters, Johnson's standard greeting was "Dear Hazie," and in 1953 when Johnson visited Montreal to give a lecture, Sise cautioned him that "[Montreal] has nothing much to offer in the way of modern architecture" (Hazen Sise to Philip Johnson, 5 December 1953, Volume 7, Folder 28, HESF-LAC).

Figure 2 Le Corbusier, *Villa Savoye*, ca. 1931. Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada, Hazen Edward Sise Fonds. Photo: Hazen Sise.



Figure 3. Jacobus J.P. Oud, *Kiefhoek Siedlung*, ca. 1930. Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada, Hazen Edward Sise Fonds. Photo: Hazen Sise.





Figure 4. Berthold Lubetkin, Penguin Pool at the London Zoo, ca. 1933. Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada, Hazen Edward Sise Fonds. Photo: Hazen Sise.



Figure 5. Refugees in Spain, ca. 1937. Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada, Hazen Edward Sise Fonds. Photo: Hazen Sise.

time is ripe, as the only possible alternative to the mess we now are in.”²⁷ He left Spain in 1937, just months before the dispossession of the Spanish Republic. For him, the urgency of the modernist project was redoubled and its equation with social and political justice affirmed. | fig. 5 |

Back home in Montreal in 1938, Sise turned his attention to promoting modern architecture in print and on the radio. In a series of radio talks commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Sise discussed topics as diverse as cooperatives, anarchism, and the Bauhaus—praising the latter as “the most important experiment in teaching modern design.”²⁸ He debated with Toronto architect Alvan Mathers over the future of Canadian architecture on CBM Radio in Montreal. He bemoaned the “appalling architectural chaos of the last eighty years with its ponderous stylistic revivals ... each inherently false, [and] loaded with gingerbread.”²⁹ As part of his sustained effort to transport modern European paradigms into Canadian architecture, Sise implored Canadian architects to look overseas for inspiration, promising them in his habitually passionate tone that “our path lies forward, not backward. The past is gone and done with and its dead hand lies heavily enough upon us.”³⁰

In 1941, Sise broadened the scope and diversity of his activities. He accepted a position producing motion pictures for the National Film Board (NFB) in Ottawa, where he acted as a tireless advocate for modern architecture and planning education. Two years later he was dispatched to Washington, DC, as a Film Officer attached to the Canadian Embassy.³¹ On his return to Ottawa in 1944, as a Film Board employee he completed a proposal for a sprawling new NFB building in Ottawa under the guidance of the organization’s first director, John Grierson.³² At the same time, Sise founded the Architectural Research Group of Ottawa (ARGO) together with a group of like-minded young architects. The collective researched and built a graphic display on modern city planning that toured across the country in 1946. It was through his involvement with ARGO and their Montreal counterpart, the Architectural Research Group (ARG), that Sise became better acquainted with John Bland who had recently been appointed director of the School of Architecture at McGill.³³

Unable to be present at the first postwar meeting of the CIAM held in Bridgewater, England in 1947, Sise arranged to have fellow ARGO member Peter Oberlander attend the congress and deliver a message on behalf of the Canadian group.³⁴ Rendering an optimistic prediction for the future of modern architecture in Canada, in the address Sise emphasized with uncanny foresight how the herculean task of transforming Canada’s building culture rested squarely on the shoulders of a new generation of young Canadian architects:

In Canada the so-called “modernists” are almost entirely confined to this [young] age-group. Many of them are acquainted in a general way with the past work of CIAM and they have great respect for it. But no one should be surprised that the CIAM itself should appear to them as a faraway and somewhat legendary body mostly composed of the olympian pioneers whose work they studied at architectural school. For them and for many like them in other countries, *the legend must be transformed into a living, working reality* [emphasis added].³⁵

History of Modern Architecture

As if predestined to be the executor of his own prognosis, Sise accepted an invitation from John Bland in 1949 to teach the History of Modern Architecture

27. Hazen Sise to Paul F. Sise, 3 November 1938, Volume 6, Folder 2, HESF-LAC.

28. Hazen Sise to D.W. Buchanan, 15 December 1938, Volume 6, Folder 13, HESF-LAC.

29. Hazen Sise, “The Future of Canadian Architecture” (unpublished manuscript, 1940), Volume 10, Folder 16, HESF-LAC.

30. Ibid.

31. In Washington, his political views and membership in the Canadian Communist Party caught up to him. He became friendly with a young woman by the name of Elizabeth Bentley, little suspecting that she was a Soviet operative sent to glean political intelligence from him, or that she would later name him as an informant in the ensuing FBI investigation. David Levy, *Stalin’s Man in Canada: Fred Rose and Soviet Espionage* (New York, 2011), 59.

32. The unbuilt proposal incorporated theatres, studios, workshops, and offices fitted neatly into the City Beautiful plan prepared by the French urban designer Jacques Gréber. Faithful to the CIAM charter, Sise prepared detailed studies of the site and its context, carefully separating buildings by type, analyzing traffic and circulation patterns, and dividing the area into three neighbourhood units each with their own business and shopping centres.

33. Bland, who was a member of the ARG in Montreal, had co-curated a similar exhibition on town planning in 1941, which Sise and a group of young artists and architects had assisted.

34. Peter Oberlander was a recent graduate of the School of Architecture at McGill and was working in London for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. His former classmate Blanche Lemco also joined him at the congress. Memorandum by Hazen Sise, 28 August 1947, Volume 40, Folder 3, HESF-LAC.

35. Ibid.

course at McGill. Seizing the opportunity to participate in the ongoing revolution of architectural education in Canada, he set about making history complicit with future practice by presenting it as part of a “scientifically framed humanistic education.”³⁶ Sise later noted in a letter to Bland that,

It's true that the subject is particularly congenial to me, but my acceptance was based on more than that. I had had the past good fortune to have known and worked with some of the more important of the figures in the modern movement; in a modest way I had had a part in architectural history-in-the-making. It seemed to me that, especially in the present, shockingly backward state of Canadian architecture, I had a special responsibility and could not refuse to do my best in this important aspect of architectural training.³⁷

In History of Modern Architecture, students were required to attend a series of lectures, prepare an essay in architectural history, and complete a final exam. Covering the development of architectural culture from the eighteenth century to the present, Sise's course was required of all students in their fifth year of the program. Just sixteen students attended his inaugural class. In 1952, the course was expanded to include fourth- and sixth-year students, and by 1957 the number of enrolled students swelled to over seventy-five.³⁸

Sise based his teachings on two seminal texts: Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* and Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time, and Architecture*.³⁹ Giedion's book was so central to Sise's thinking that he even photographed its pages for use in his class. Following these writers, Sise divided the content of his lectures into four themes: architectural theory, engineering facts, social and economic facts, and—the crux of his argument—unity. “From the end of Art Nouveau,” he proclaimed, “all significant work is ... the *conscious* unifying of Engineering [and] social facts with [Architectural] Theory into a new style.”⁴⁰ In his introductory lecture, Sise attacked the current state of architecture in Canada, explained that his course was “concerned with the conscience of the profession—still alive, but hardly kicking ... in Canada at the present,” then suggested how historical thinking could serve as a cure by answering two basic questions: “Where are we heading—architecturally speaking?” and, “Where *should we* be heading?”⁴¹

In his assertion that history offered a window onto the future as well as onto the past, Sise's triumphalist reading of modernism described how a series of breakthroughs in modern architecture were the inevitable result of earlier economic, social, and technological developments. Like the canonical authors on whom he based his course, the presentation of modernism as a struggle against uninspired popular taste, educational stalwarts, and an orthodox bureaucracy was the cornerstone of Sise's operative pedagogy and his belief that history—like revolution—could invigorate the future.

In a brief interlude in one of his lectures titled “NOW and THEN,” Sise recalled how he had left McGill in disgust as a student in 1927 because of the “soul destroying” effect of its Beaux-Arts inspired curriculum.⁴² He specifically pointed to the lack of a body of critical writing and singled out Ramsay Traquair's series of courses on the history of architecture as vilifying evidence of the school's latent historicism.⁴³ In contrast, he presented modern architecture as a bold experiment that broke from the eclectic ambitions of revivalists by renewing the strength and simplicity of classical architecture through a commitment to function, structure, and economy. He taught his students

36. This expression was used by the Swiss-born architect Frederic Lasserre (1911–61) in 1949 to describe the ethos of educational reforms in Canada; see Fred Lasserre, “On Architectural Education,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of Canada* 26, 5 (May 1949): 133–35, 172. Sise and Lasserre were well acquainted, having met in London in 1933, where both were affiliated with the Modern Architectural Research Group. In 1944, Sise recommended Lasserre to the McGill School of Architecture, where he taught briefly before leaving to found a new school of architecture at the University of British Columbia in 1946. Impressed with his insight, Sise sent a copy of Lasserre's “On Architectural Education” to Sigfried Giedion as evidence of a new “trend” among Canadian schools ahead of the 1949 CIAM congress in Bergamo, Italy (Hazen Sise to Sigfried Giedion, 24 June 1949, Volume 26, Folder 17, HESF-LAC).

37. Hazen Sise to John Bland, 29 March 1952, Volume 40, Folder 2, HESF-LAC.

38. Figures compiled from a series of enrolment, grading, and attendance lists, 1949–57, Volume 40, Folder 2 & 3, HESF-LAC.

39. Other books listed in the course bibliography included James Richards's *Introduction to Modern Architecture* (1940), Lewis Mumford's *Technics and Civilization* (1934), and José Luis Sert's *Can our Cities Survive? An ABC of Urban Problems, their Analysis, their Solutions* (1942).

40. Hazen Sise, “History of Modern Architecture” (unpublished course notes, 1949–50), Volume 40, Folder 3, HESF-LAC. Emphasis in the original.

41. *Ibid.* Emphasis in the original.

42. *Ibid.*

43. On his curriculum vitae, next to “McGill School of Architecture 1925–27,” Sise added in parentheses, “Left McGill dissatisfied with architectural course taught at that time.” Despite his disdain for the former system of education at McGill, however, he remained indebted to Traquair's influence. Sise maintained a lively interest in the vernacular architecture of Quebec, including in his list of suggested readings American architect and preservationist James Marston Fitch's *American Building* (1947) and Traquair's *The Old Architecture of Quebec* (1947)—referring to the latter as “a product of our school & a model of scholarship.”

that the decisive materials of modern architecture were iron, glass, and reinforced concrete and proclaimed the significance of Le Corbusier's Domino house (1914–15): "nothing had such momentous importance as [Le Corbusier's] simple little drawing of the essential structure of a house with the floor slabs cantilevered out beyond the [columns]."44 Echoing Pevsner and Giedion, Sise introduced the "pioneers" of modern architecture: Walter Gropius, Jacobus Oud, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and—his own personal hero—Alvar Aalto. For Sise, these pioneer architects of the 1920s and 1930s exemplified the basic tenets of modern architecture in its purest form: the conception of buildings in terms of volume as opposed to mass, horizontal and vertical repetition as a basis of composition, flexibility in plan, and a technical perfection of finish and proportion that made ornament superfluous. He explained how by "reacting against the confusion [and] degenerate dishonesties of the past," these architects "knew they were on the right track; that their work was healthy [and] would be fruitful for the future," dismissing a lag in public appreciation for these modern experiments as a simple matter of "oversophistication."⁴⁵

He synthesized the problem in the following terms: "These architects were thinking in terms of the advanced tastes [and] living patterns of people like themselves—the middle class intelligentsia—they were offering Bach to the masses ... when the masses craved ... the human warmth of Puccini."⁴⁶

Projecting the lessons of these modern masters into the future—and into the Canadian context—Sise sought to inspire a more humane (and thus popular) modern architecture in Canada. He did this by directing his students toward four sources: Scandinavia (whence Alvar Aalto's promise of a "Finland in America" evidently still resounded), the expressive use of materials in vernacular buildings, the later work of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the use of non-geometric curves as an element of free planning.⁴⁷

Sise's politics coloured his perspective on architectural history in a more unique and personal manner. He recast architectural history as a political struggle between two forces: the first, a ruling minority who clung to the past and its imagery rather than face their own loss of power, and a second, larger group pressing for social change. "When a society is progressive," he told students, "the system of order is creative [and] in tune with social realities." He continued, "When men lose or feel they are losing effective power they look to the past for inspiration [and] what they find they apply symbolically [and] unrealistically—in a dead pedantic fashion—[and] in the end produce disorder."⁴⁸

Owing to these ideological beliefs, his views on revivalism were terse. Sise condemned the "curious aberrations" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for their "corrupting attitude." He cited Horace Walpole's "gothic frippery" as an example of aristocratic boredom, and called Augustus Pugin's confusion of the Gothic Revival with religious fervour "even more horrifying than before."⁴⁹ Quoting Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sise asserted further that a literary approach to building theory had elicited the rise of an "unconscious classicism," a "passion for mere effect," and even "shoddy construction."⁵⁰ The "psychological core" of the problem, he explained, was the need for modern man to identify himself with a heroic period from the past in order to reconcile his immense self-doubt arising from the promise of progress and the actual, horrible conditions of industrialization and rising class-consciousness.

44. Sise, "History of Modern Architecture."

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*

47. Confronted with the more vexing life and career of Frank Lloyd Wright, Sise had some unique, if not very helpful advice: "Faced with his rather incoherent [and] mystical writings, [and] the bewildering variety of his work," Sise explained about architects like Wright—whose "messianic" attitude he found "arrogant, unconventional [and] often tiresome"—"don't worry too much about what they say, but watch carefully what they do—for only in action is their touch sure [and] unambiguous." *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.* He even criticized Giedion for not adequately considering this fundamental aspect of modernity and included in his recommended reading list Conrad Waddington's *The Scientific Attitude* (Harmondsworth, 1941), in which Marxism and central planning were presented as scientific philosophy.

49. As in Pevsner's account, Greek Revival architecture was spared in Sise's view for preserving the modern values of strength and simplicity.

50. "We have naturally a veneration for antiquity; whatever building brings to our remembrance ancient customs and manners, such as the castles of the Barons of ancient chivalry, is sure to give us delight." Sir Joshua Reynolds, from his thirteenth Discourse of 1786. Pevsner used this same quotation in 1943 to argue that ruins were valued by nineteenth-century Romantics for their associational value; see Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture*, 7th ed. (Harmondsworth, 1963), 376.

In his view, history was a process in which architects and planners played a leading role by ordering and civilizing the seemingly blind forces of scientific invention and industrial progress against a “background of politics.” Architectural modernity, then, was not simply a stylistic choice but a politically minded opposition to the status quo and a necessary step in organizing the social and technological evolution of mankind.⁵¹ If the role of architectural history was to reveal how these proto-modern “masterworks” of the 1920s and 1930s reflected their religion, social circumstances, and means of production,⁵² then it followed that modern architecture in Canada could only attain its true form by embracing the future-minded spirit of the postwar era.

At the conclusion of his History of Modern Architecture course all students were required to pass a final examination. Like his lectures, the questions developed by Sise for this purpose were meant to impress upon students the merits of architectural modernity and its suitability to the Canadian context. Their answers were more or less implied in their formulation. In 1950, for example, one question was:

Why did the advent of reinforced concrete construction have such a stimulating and decisive effect on architectural style?⁵³

In 1952:

If you had the power to decree that all Canadian architects should design either in the manner of Frank Lloyd Wright or Mies van der Rohe, which would you choose to sponsor?⁵⁴

In 1955:

Why is Walter Gropius so greatly respected throughout the world today?⁵⁵

And in 1957, in a last-minute effort to ferret out any non-believers:

What do you think of the work and teachings of Le Corbusier?⁵⁶

If the intent of Sise’s course was to transform the contemporary practice of architecture in this country, what was its effect? As dubious as any measurement might seem, and considering that his course was only part of a curriculum wholly geared to the production of modern buildings, I would nevertheless argue that Sise’s impact on architectural culture in Montreal during the 1950s and 1960s was profound. In his nine years as a faculty member at McGill, Sise taught the history of modernism to a generation of young architects, many of who went on to leave their own indelible mark on the Canadian architectural scene. In his inaugural class in 1949, for example, was the talented young Arthur Erickson, next to whose name Sise jotted “B.C. Star” on his enrolment list, and whose 1965 campus plan for Simon Fraser University Sise later visited and photographed like a proud father to Erickson’s modernism.⁵⁷ | fig. 6 | In 1950, Sise counted among his students the future director of the Architectural Association in London, Alvin Boyarsky. Also in that class was Harold Ship who, in 1958, sketched a plan for a development project on Montreal’s Nuns’ Island that integrated towers and low-rise buildings on the site. Ship would later set a new tone for urban design in Montreal with his design for Alexis Nihon Plaza, completed in 1967, by connecting apartment towers and offices to a shopping concourse and a metro station below.

51. Sise’s presentation of modern architecture as a socio-political project almost certainly drew on Lewis Mumford’s assertion that modern technics had resulted from a conscious human desire to transform Western culture, not from external forces; see Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York, 1934).

52. According to the formula Walter Gropius and his committee on Architectural Education proposed at the 1949 CIAM congress in Bergamo.

53. Examination, 11 April 1950, Volume 40, Folder 2, HESF-LAC.

54. Examination, 19 December 1952, Volume 40, Folder 2, HESF-LAC.

55. Examination, September 1956, Volume 40, Folder 2, HESF-LAC.

56. Examination, 17 April 1957, Volume 40, Folder 2, HESF-LAC.

57. For his second term paper Erickson chose to write about the Art Deco Vancouver Art Gallery by the firm of Sharp and Thompson, the same gallery he would later help relocate as part of his Robson Square development project in 1983.



Figure 6. Arthur Erickson, Simon Fraser University, ca. 1965. Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada, Hazen Edward Sise Fonds. Photo: Hazen Sise.

Among those attending Sise's lectures in 1955 was the future Montreal-based artist and architect Melvin Charney. He later said about Sise that "what was wonderful about the man is ... he lived firsthand some of the incidents he talked about."⁵⁸ While enrolled in the History of Modern Architecture, Charney became interested in the work of Le Corbusier who, he then discovered, had used Montreal's grain elevators to illustrate his 1923 manifesto *Vers une architecture*. That same year, Charney began hopping ships that were travelling up the Lachine Canal to get a better view of the grain elevators, a building type that would figure prominently in his later writing on Quebec architecture.⁵⁹ | fig. 7, 8 | As witness to Montreal's postwar transformation, however, Charney's enthusiasm for modern architecture would quickly wane. As an artist and writer, he defended Quebec's rural building traditions against the onslaught of modernism and criticized the fervent attitude of reformers like Sise. In 1972 he even questioned the success of a decade's worth of rebuilding in an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts entitled *Montreal: Plus or Minus?* that showcased films and documentation of the city's irretrievable demolition.⁶⁰ Of course, not all graduates were impressed by Sise's lectures or his smartly cut suits and manicured good looks. | fig. 9 | In a series of interviews conducted by McGill's School of Architecture in the late 1990s in an attempt to document its history, alumni gave mixed reviews of Sise's course: one former student recalled how he had been "a great friend" and "the best [critic] I ever had,"⁶¹ and another testified that he was "very good" at teaching modern architecture,⁶² while one called him "a dilettante historian who taught by reading cue cards."⁶³ Looking back on his notes, Charney found that "the naïveté of some of [his] presentation was astounding."⁶⁴

Architectural Practice

For Sise, who was before all a practitioner and not a historian, his position at McGill presented him with an opportunity to intervene in the future of Canadian architecture. In a further effort to steer this future, Sise inducted

58. Melvin Charney, interview by Jim Donaldson, Jun 1999, Alumni Interviews, School of Architecture, McGill University (hereafter SAMU).

59. Melvin Charney, "The Grain Elevators Revisited," *Architectural Design* (July 1967): 331, and "Towards a Definition of Architecture in Quebec," reprinted in *On Architecture: Melvin Charney, a Critical Anthology*, ed. Louis Martin (Montreal, 2013), 246–64.

60. Melvin Charney, *Montreal: Plus or Minus?* (Montreal, 1972).

61. Robert Flinn, interview by Jim Donaldson, Halifax, NS, Oct 1999, Alumni Interviews, SAMU.

62. Louis Papineau, interview by Jim Donaldson, Sainte-Adèle, QC, Aug 1999, Alumni Interviews, SAMU.

63. Adrian Sheppard, interview by Jim Donaldson, Montreal, QC, Jul 1999, Alumni Interviews, SAMU.

64. Charney, interview by Donaldson.



Figure 7. View of an unknown grain elevator, ca. 1930. Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada, Hazen Edward Sise Fonds. Photo: Hazen Sise.



Figure 8. View of a ship on the Lachine Canal with the Farine Ogilvie Flour Plant in the background, Montreal, Quebec, 1961. Montreal, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture. Photo: Melvin Charney. © Estate of Melvin Charney/SODRAC (2014).



Figure 9. Hazen Sise at the McGill School of Architecture, ca. 1950. Montreal, John Bland Canadian Architecture Collection, Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University. Photo: Gordon Webber.

65. In 1949 Sise wrote to Walter Gropius at Harvard University to recommend recent graduate Raymond Affleck for a scholarship to the Graduate School of Design, emphasizing to Gropius “what I feel to be a marked intellectual and temperamental aptitude for the practice of Modern Architecture.” Hazen Sise to Walter Gropius, 25 March 1949, Volume 21, Folder 14, HESF-LAC.

66. Sise and Bland, who were unable to be present, arranged to have Ann Luke, a recent graduate of the school and member of ARGOM, attend the congress on their behalf. Hazen Sise to Maxwell Fry, 17 May 1949, Volume 26, Folder 17, HESF-LAC.

67. Gilles Gagnon, interview by Jim Donaldson, Montreal, QC, November 1998, Alumni Interviews, SAMU.

68. Sise proposed dividing the fees so that he would retain 60% of the total and Desbarats 30%, with the remaining 10% to be divided according to their work load. In exchange, Sise proposed that should Desbarats undertake a similar-scale project for the city of Montreal, Sise would serve as his associate on that project.

69. Guy Desbarats, interview by Jim Donaldson, Georgeville, QC, 11 Nov 1998, Alumni Interviews, SAMU.

70. Others have suggested that the curved entry ramp recalls Le Corbusier’s ramp at Villa Savoye, or that it was Desbarats’s special interest in the vernacular architecture of Quebec that inspired the concrete butterfly roof. See, for instance, Cynthia Imogen Hammond, “Beaver Lake Stories and the Paradoxical Syntagma of Modern Heritage,” *Architecture & Ideas: Experimental Modernism 8* (2009): 50–69; Florent Plasse and Sophie Mankowski, “Le Mont Royal et le patrimoine moderne: la montagne moderne,” *Bulletin de docomomo Québec* 1 (2002). Although Desbarats was never enrolled in Sise’s course, his words are an uncanny reflection of Sise’s beliefs: “Aalto quickly became my hero, and still is. I think Canada misses the boat completely by not sharing the modesty and the inventiveness and the simplicity of Scandinavian architecture.” Desbarats, interview by Donaldson.

71. Also among the founding partners was recent McGill graduate Jean-Charles-Édouard Michaud, who left the practice in 1959. The name Arcop was adopted in 1971.

72. Both Place Bonaventure and Alexis Nihon Plaza gained notoriety

students into architectural practice through collaborative projects and encouraged them to pursue placement in prominent architectural firms and schools.⁶⁵ Together with other faculty, graduates, and students, he formed the Architectural Research Group of Montreal (ARGOM) in 1949. The collective immediately set on preparing a study on the recreational needs of greater Montreal, which they sent to the CIAM congress in Bergamo, Italy in that same year.⁶⁶ Always desirous to promote the career of young architects, on the occasion of the eighth CIAM congress in Hoddesdon, England, Sise even gave up his role as Canadian ambassador and sent a former student in his place.⁶⁷

In 1955, Sise asked recent graduate Guy Desbarats to join him as an associate in a project for a small skating pavilion next to Beaver Lake in Parc Mont Royal.⁶⁸ That same year, a sketch of the pavilion appeared in the inaugural issue of *The Canadian Architect*. | fig. 10 | The design of the pavilion, Desbarats later claimed, was primarily his own, with Sise providing feedback and criticism like in a studio setting.⁶⁹ Restored from 2006–07, the building has since been recognized as one of the first modernist buildings to be constructed in Montreal. Leaving questions of authorship aside, the pavilion, with its provocative butterfly roof of reinforced concrete, large expanses of aluminum curtain wall, Aaltoesque cedar-lined ceiling, and curving concrete ramp, was a victory for modern architecture in Montreal that reflected Sise’s prescription for a more humane modern architecture.⁷⁰

During the spring and summer of 1957, as the pavilion at Beaver Lake was being completed, Sise was forced to abandon his teaching duties due to his declining health. Despite leaving the McGill School of Architecture, however, his influence would continue to mould the urban landscape of his native Montreal. Together with former faculty colleague Fred Lebensold and recent graduates Guy Desbarats, Dimitri Dimakopoulos, and Raymond Affleck, Sise founded Architects in Co-Partnership (Arcop) in 1955. Inspired by the Architects’ Collaborative founded by Walter Gropius at Harvard, this was an architectural firm that would become one of Canada’s largest, with over one hundred fifty employees in the late 1960s.⁷¹ Arcop helped complete a series of major renewal projects across Montreal, including Place Ville-Marie in 1962, Place des Arts in 1963, and the “megastructure” Place Bonaventure—once the world’s second largest commercial building—in 1968, irrevocably transforming the city’s urban landscape.⁷² | fig. 11 | Through his practice, Sise was able to extend his influence further by offering promising new graduates employment at this thriving firm.⁷³ In the initiative to commemorate the centennial of Canada’s confederation in 1967, Arcop became nationally renowned through their work on a series of large-scale cultural centres across the country, including the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown in 1964 and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in 1969.

Sise’s departure from McGill in 1957 marked another important shift in historical thinking at that institution. It was on this occasion that John Bland hired Peter Collins, the school’s first trained architectural historian, who set about reformulating the history curriculum according to his own highly creative insights. In an abrupt shift, Collins challenged his predecessor’s narrow view of modern history, mocked its “credulous appetite for pseudo-scientific mumbo-jumbo,” and exposed Giedion’s fourth-dimensional “Space-Time” as

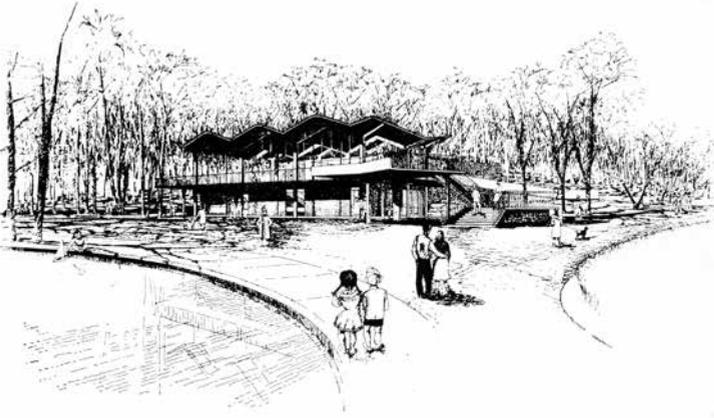


Figure 10. Hazen Sise and Guy Desbarats, Beaver Lake Pavilion, 1955, from *The Canadian Architect* 1 (Nov-Dec 1955): 75. Montreal, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture.

when Reyner Banham heralded them as examples of architectural “megastructures” in his history of 1960s “Mega-Montreal.” It was Banham, too, who recognized that architectural education at McGill had been an active participant in this “complete historical phenomenon.” Reyner Banham, *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London, 1976), 105–29.

73. Flinn, interview by Donaldson.
74. Peter Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (Montreal, 1965), 292–93; see also Annmarie Adams, “Peter Collins: A Study in Parallax,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 59, 2 (2005): 22–31.

75. Collins, *Changing Ideals*, 29–41, 295. Despite being “inclined to dispute certain formulations,” Sise held Collins’s work in high regard, nominating his book for the Hitchcock Medallion, which was awarded to Collins by the British Society of Architectural Historians in 1969. Hazen Sise to Rosanne Berry, 19 April 1966, Volume 34, Folder 1, HESF-LAC.

76. Sise, “History of Modern Architecture.”

77. See, for example, Leonardo Benevolo, *History of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA, 1971); Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (Princeton, 1976); Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (New York, 1980); William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (Oxford, 1982).

little more than an exploitation of the effects of parallax, “manifest in architecture ever since the first hypostyle hall was constructed.”⁷⁴ Cautioning that “modern architecture may be maimed and devitalized if we allow historians to breathe too heavily down practicing architects’ necks,” Collins argued that a didactic historical view constituted one of the most important developments in architectural thought over the last two centuries, linking earlier revivalist currents to the same 1930s historical experiments used systematically to condemn them.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Although by the 1960s some of the views advanced by pioneering modern historians were being openly challenged at McGill and other schools across Canada, their effect had already come into full force. In a rare moment of self-reflection, even Sise acknowledged the didactic ambitions of his course, admitting to students that “we inevitably make use of history—according to the necessities of what we find significant.”⁷⁶ For modern historians, historicity was also a primary argument for renewal. By depicting architectural modernity as an ideological victory over the past, new attitudes manifest in architectural education during the 1940s and 1950s became instrumental in shaping Canada’s postwar architecture and urbanism, driving a wedge between preservationists and modern innovators, and linking Canadian practitioners to a European and American avant-garde. In Montreal, where educators helped instrumentalize the ambitions of modern historians, the vigour with which the City undertook to reinvent itself during the postwar period is underscored by the operative force of these canonical writers.

The influence of these modern historians is not lost on architectural education and practice in Canada today. Although updated and transformed, a triumphalist reading of the history of modern architecture persists in many literary surveys still in use, as well as through the modern architecture survey course that remains central to the historical education of architects.⁷⁷ By reminding us how different representations of the past have influenced design in the present, this important chapter in the history of architectural

Figure 11. Architects in Co-Partnership (Arcop), Place Bonaventure, 1969. Quebec, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (Vieux-Montréal), Fonds ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, Série Office du film du Québec, E6.S7.S51. D690800. Photo: Gabor Szilasi.



education in Canada raises complex questions about current practices, at a time when the teaching of architectural history—and its relation to practice—is very much in question.⁷⁸

Rather than interpret modern architecture through a series of important projects executed by important historical figures, a newer generation of historians sees architectural modernity as a subjective experience shaped by uneven cultural change and involving multiple actors, geographies, and (often) divergent perspectives. The so-called “pioneers” of modernism are just one narrative extracted from a wellspring of interpretive possibilities. The significance of this paradigm shift and its effect on the practice of architecture is underestimated, I think. If, as Sarah Williams Goldhagen argues, ours is an age “suspicious of synthetic historical analyses and unifying frameworks meant to illuminate the past,”⁷⁹ it is imperative that we ask what role this more inclusive history can play in shaping our contemporary practice. We must try to understand what power it holds over our imagination if, instead of standing on an orderly row of pilotis, modern architecture seems to now stand on everything and anything all at once.

Whether current trends in teaching architectural history will produce practitioners that will be more sensitive to minority views, dissenting voices, the fringes of professionalism, and the plurality of architectural experience is a question best left to future historians. Rather than dismiss these modernist prophets as myopic, we should recognize in their ability to transform history into a blueprint for future action a compelling reminder of how innovation and historical thinking are intertwined. For contemporary scholars and educators, the powerful effects of this canonical literature underscore the critical importance of shifting educational paradigms in the interpretation and evaluation of design culture and architecture in Canada. ¶

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