

Ladies and gentlemen:

As you know, the Venice Biennial will celebrate its centenary in 1995; the Biennial of Visual Arts and the Biennial of Architecture, to be held simultaneously from June 11 to October 15, will mark this event. Over the years, the Venice Biennial has established a reputation as a mecca of the arts. Its prestige attracts experts and other members of the artistic community, journalists and visitors from around the world. Participation in the Biennial by many Canadian artists, such as Jean-Paul Riopelle, Jack Shadbolt, Alex Colville, Guido Molinari, Michael Snow and, more recently, Geneviève Cadieux, has greatly contributed to their recognition on the international scene and, as a result, has placed Canada among the ranks of artistically avant-garde countries.

I take great pleasure in joining you here today to announce that Canada will be represented at the Visual Arts Biennial by Edward Poitras, a Native artist from Regina, and at the Architectural Biennial by Vancouver architects, John and Patricia Patkau, and a group of emerging architects yet to be chosen by competition.

Canada has participated in this prestigious event since 1952, and has had its own national pavilion since 1957.

My department, which is responsible for Canada's participation in both events, will provide a grant of \$57 500 to the Canadian Museum of Civilization towards the realization of the visual arts project, and an amount of \$75 000 to the Canadian Centre for Architecture for the architecture project. The National Gallery of Canada and the Canada Council are also helping to finance Canada's participation in the Visual Arts Biennial, contributing \$42 500 and \$20 000 respectively.

I am pleased to acknowledge that for the first time Canada will be represented by a Native artist at the Visual Arts Biennial of Venice. The Edward Poitras project was proposed by Gerald McMaster, curator at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and selected after a competition organized by the Canada Council on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Mr. Poitras was part of two major exhibitions, the Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art, organized by the National Gallery of Canada in 1989, and Indigena, organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1992. Mr. Poitras, like his predecessors, will be a worthy representative of Canada.

I am convinced that the exhibition by John and Patricia Patkau at the Architectural Biennial, along with the work of a group of emerging architects, will draw the attention of the international community to impressive Canadian achievements. John and Patricia Patkau are distinguished architects with a growing international