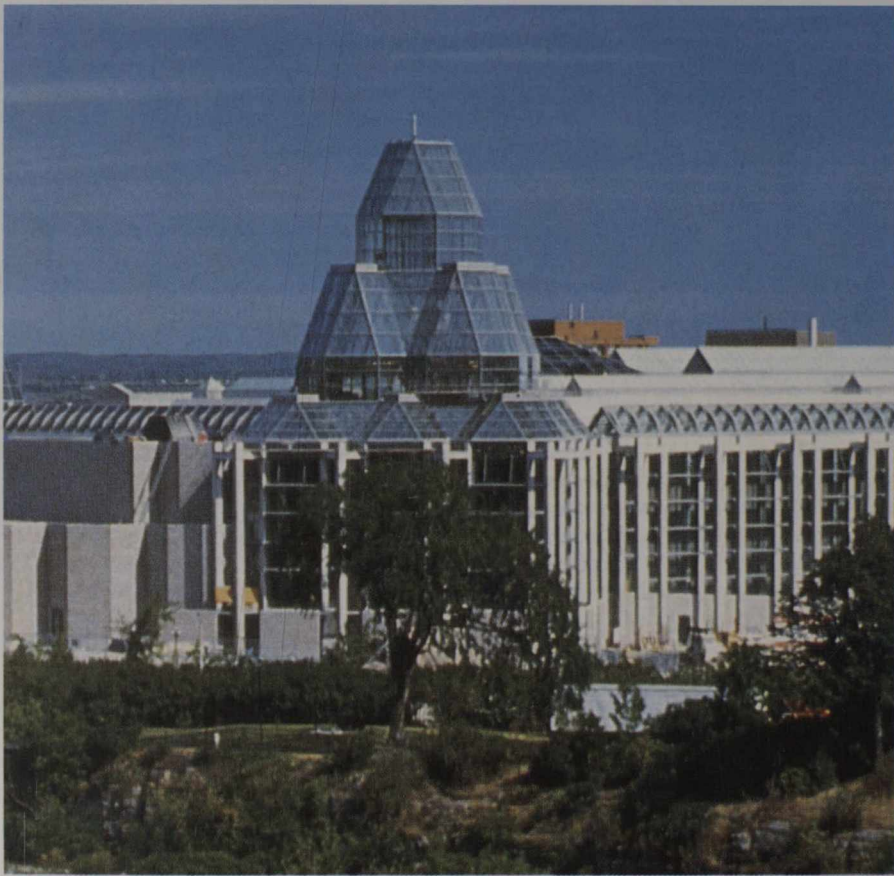


National gallery of Canada moves to a new site

The National Gallery of Canada is on the move. It has forsaken its premises on the corner of Elgin and Slater Streets in Ottawa, and its staff are busy preparing for its reopening in May in a handsome new building, designed by architect Moshe Safdie, on Sussex Drive.

This move to a permanent home represents a turning point in the history of the Gallery, which was founded in 1880 by the Governor General of the time, the Marquess of Lorne. The new Gallery will boast 3000 square metres of vaulted exhibition galleries surrounding two interior courtyards. The rooms will be illuminated by natural light descending through light-shafts to provide optimum viewing conditions.



The new National Gallery of Canada

The ground-floor galleries will be devoted to the Gallery's collection of historic Canadian art, where 800 paintings, sculptures and other works of art will be arranged both chronologically and regionally — from the early 18th century to the avant-garde of the 1960s.

The first-floor galleries will house the important European collection, together with a small complement of American and Asian works. All centuries will be represented, from the Middle Ages to the present day; while the two Asian galleries will be devoted principally to a collection of Indian, Nepali and Tibetan art amassed by the noted collector Nasli M Heeramaneck.

Contemporary art will be displayed in a two-storey wing of the Gallery, which includes a videotheque and a sculpture court.

Exhibition of European prints and drawings

The National Gallery is particularly proud of its extensive prints and drawings collections — the largest in Canada, with over 12000 works. Its photography collection is even larger, more than 16000 photographs in all, and ranks among the major international collections of its kind. The Gallery was one of the first public galleries to recognise photography as an art form and held its first photography exhibition as long ago as 1934.

The new Prints, Drawings and Photograph Galleries will feature rotating exhibitions from the permanent collection as well as touring exhibitions. The first of these — when the National Gallery opens in May — will be an exhibition of 20th-century European prints and drawings from the Gallery's own collection of European graphic arts.

Among the 45 outstanding pieces on view will be Cezanne's watercolour study for the coloured version of the *Large Bathers* lithograph (c1890-1895) and George Braque's etching *Fox* (1911). There will be two works by Paul Klee — the water colour *Wintery Mask* (1925) and the etching *Higher and Higher!* (1928) — which show the artist's fascination with folk and children's art.

Pablo Picasso will be represented by three works — two influenced by surrealism and a graceful neo-classical drawing from 1923 entitled *Three Female Nudes Dancing*; so will Henry Matisse, with *Study of a Woman's Back*, *Woman with a White Fox Boa* and *Dancer Resting in an Armchair*.

Also of considerable interest will be the Gallery's newly acquired prints, works by the Dutch artist M C Escher — donated by the artist's son — and Marc Chagall's masterpiece of colour lithography *Daphnis and Chloe*.

Major Degas exhibition planned for the summer

June also promises to be a particularly exciting month for art lovers. That's when the Gallery will host a major retrospective exhibition of works by Degas, in conjunction with the Réunion des Musées Nationaux in Paris and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The core of the exhibition will be the substantial holdings of the artist's work from two of the participating institutions, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and the Metropolitan. National Gallery staff in Ottawa have compiled the definitive catalogue of all the works borrowed for the exhibition.

About 376 works will be on display, including some of the artist's best known ones, such as *The Bellelli Family*, *The Cotton Market* and *The Rehearsal of the Ballet on Stage*, which is perhaps the most famous of all his dance pictures. There will also be works from the Gallery's own collection, notably *Portrait of a Woman with an Umbrella* (1887) and *Race Track* (c1895).

In the past century, Canada has built up an extensive collection of fine art, much of which has not been exhibited before because of a lack of space. The opening of a permanent home therefore represents an important addition to the Canadian cultural scene. ✻

