

make sure not one of the thousands of pairs of mittens and boots coming through the doors each day gets separated from its owner.

Once inside, children will discover their own special Children's Museum. It's a place designed to give youngsters of all ages ample scope for their creativity and wit. Here, touching is the rule, rather than the exception. There are objects to climb on, to feel and hear, and even taste. For children who cannot get enough fresh air and exercise, the learning experience continues in a supervised outdoor play area.

Folk Art to Fine Art

While much of the museum departs from conventional exhibit philosophy, designers have retained some aspects of the traditional museum. One very large-scale exhibition hall has been reserved for major travelling exhibits from around the world. In the native art gallery, pieces from the museum's extensive collection of Canadian aboriginal art are on display. The gallery provides an inspiring encounter with the distinctive vision of past and present Canadian aboriginal artists — a vision admired throughout the world.

Nearby, a Native People's Exhibition Hall will show how archeologists are unravelling the mysteries of the past, retracing the steps of North America's first people in their journey from the Asian continent, thousands of years before the first Europeans. Visitors can see the natural environments where Canada's distinctive aboriginal cultures evolved and appreciate each culture's intimate relationship with the land.

From folk art to fine art, other aspects of Canada's cultural heritage are on view in the Folk Art and Traditions Exhibition Hall. These exhibits showcase the cultural dyna-

mics of a young nation that has welcomed the peoples of the world. Innovative contemporary dance and art give visitors a sense of the current Canadian cultural scene, while folk artists present the achievements of Canada's many ethnic traditions.

Computer Tutors

Throughout the museum, interactive computer terminals are ready to instruct, guide, help plan a day's visit, or research the museum's collections. Optical disk technology allows students and scholars to scan catalogues of the museum's entire collection via computer. Printers connected to the system in some areas of the museum will reproduce any photographs or text. And the "layered" databases being created to support studies at the museum will enable visitors, students, researchers and private collectors to explore subjects in as much depth as they require.

In fact, the museum is one of the most electronically sophisticated structures in the world, wired with hundreds of thousands of kilometres of electronic and fibre-optic cable networks. In addition to providing high-quality images throughout the

museum and networking with the various computer systems, this electronic wizardry soon will link the museum with the rest of Canada and the world.

Planners call the concept "electronic outreach." It allows Canadians everywhere to enjoy many special events at the museum via satellite links and television. And, through the services of the museum's "Médiatex," all the computerized inventories, databases and optical disk catalogues will eventually be accessible for study across Canada and abroad.

Museum with a Nightlife

If artists and performers play a key role in the museum's daytime educational mission, at night they take centre stage. After dark, the museum lets its hair down for an all-out entertainment experience — a nightlife rich in options and sparkling with high-tech pizzazz.

An evening here could start in one of the in-house restaurants — with fine cuisine from many cultural traditions and spectacular views of the cliffs and the Gothic spires of Parliament Hill. After dinner there's the dance and drama of heritage festivals, dazzling multi-media specta-

cles, a year-round light show — even a riverside theatre, where the show takes over the waterfront.

Mega Movies

Film-lovers will be amazed by the museum's Imax-Omnimax theatre — the first in the world to combine both of the Canadian-invented ultra-large screen formats in one cinema. Omnimax uses a semi-spherical screen to surround the viewer with the action. Audiences say the effect is so real that seat belts should be mandatory. Imax is the large format cinema discovered by the public at Montreal's Expo '67 and later installed at Ontario Place in Toronto and at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. The system projects high-quality images 21 m high.

The museum will be the second major international cultural attraction to open in Canada's capital in as many years. The first, a light-loving new home for the art collections of the National Gallery of Canada, premiered last spring.

The shape of a nation — Canada's new Museum of Civilization reflects the land and its people.

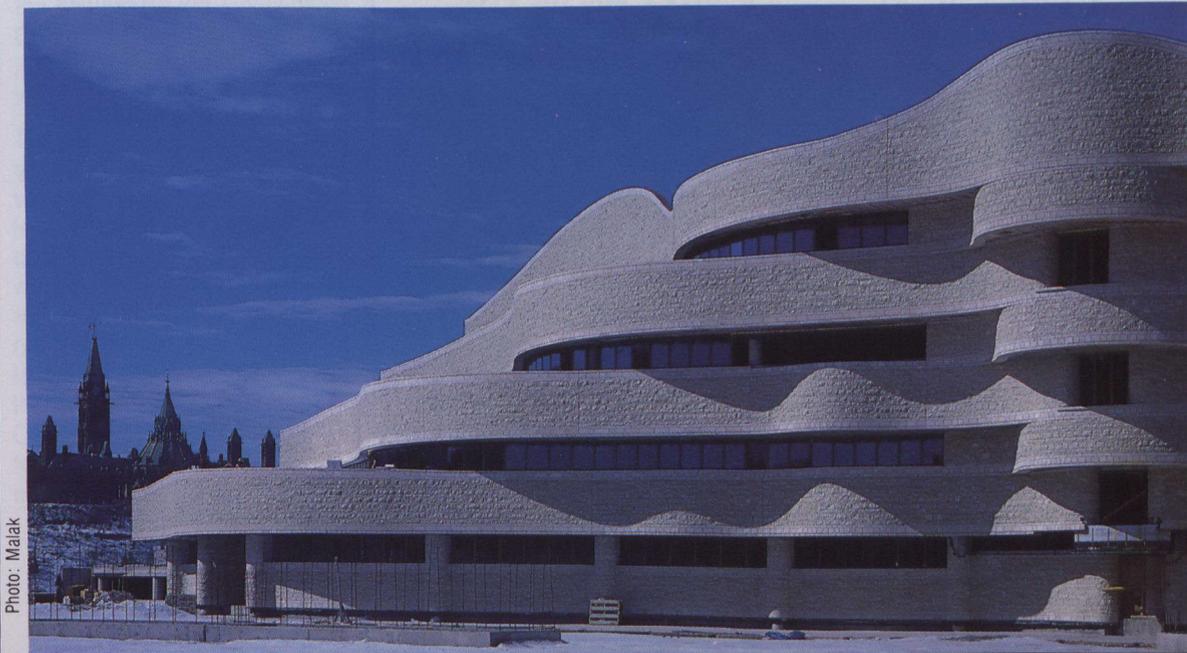


Photo: Malak