"Reconstructing Two Immersive Multimedia Pavilions from Expo '67: The Christian Pavilion and the Telephone Pavilion"

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The multi- and single screen pavilion films of Expo 67 have been the subject of the "Canada and the Films of Expo '67" research group from Concordia and York Universities for the past two years. In addition to our pragmatic gathering of film elements, pavilion and film documentation and ephemera, journalistic reviews, academic and other reports and analyses, as well as our conducting of interviews with filmmakers, the project has also provided fertile ground for considering various facets of multimedia archiving and documentation of a recent large-scale, event-based phenomena such as Expo '67.

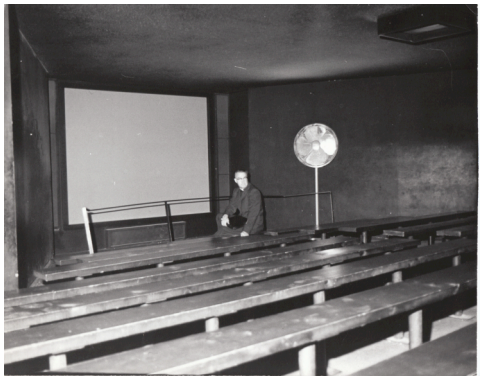
This brief, pre-conference paper introduces some of the issues that have emerged at this stage of our research, with regards to a comparative approach to two pavilions that I have been focusing on: the Christian Pavilion and The Telephone Pavilion. (Other films and pavilions being examined by the group include *Labyrinth*, *Polar Life*, *A Place to Stand* (in the Ontario Pavilion; as well as *Citerama* [part of the Man and His Community Pavilion], which my colleague Janine Marchessault will discuss, as well as others.) This paper establishes some descriptive background of the two pavilions being discussed as a backdrop for the conference paper. As outlined in my conclusion, these descriptions will be suggestive of some of the questions and challenges that the multi-media history of Expo '67 poses to archival research at this particular historical conjuncture.

The Christian Pavilion[1]

The Christian Pavilion was one of several private pavilions located on Île Notre Dame, in addition to Thematic Pavilions, National and Regional Pavilions that made up Expo '67. The Pavilion was flanked to the west by the United Nations Pavilion and its 155 national flags and,

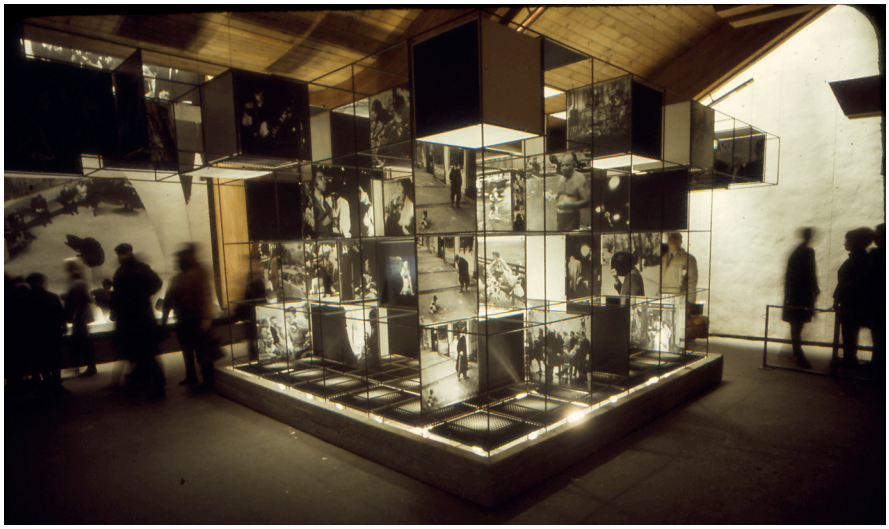
in an interesting twist, the controversial Indians of Canada Pavilion with its distinctive tipi-like structure, which had taken a critical view of colonization and featured the artwork of Alex Janvier, Norval Morrisseau, and other artists.[2] Documentation images clearly show the UN's flags and the Indian Pavilion's tipi crosspoles across the Christian Pavilion's garden, suggestive of a complex intertextual play between aboriginal and non-aboriginal nationhood*s*, colonial history, inter-national relations, and the Catholic Church's controversial role in this tightly-bound nexus. The Greek Pavilion, with its austere white cube architecture was situated to the immediate east. The butterfly-roofed structure was designed by Montreal architects Roger D'Astous and Jean-Paul Pothier at a cost of $1.3 million (architects who had designed numerous Catholic churches throughout Quebec), was considered relatively modest in cost, and created as a temporary structure as were most of the Expo '67 Pavilions. The Pavilion was co-sponsored by an ecumenical consortium of seven churches, comprised of Roman Catholic, United, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist and Greek Orthodox churches. As Gary Miedema's *For Canada's Sake: Public Religion: Centennial Celebrations and the Remaking of Canada in the 1960s* describes through his detailed examination of primary archival documents from the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, the final design was the result of complicated and often conflicting visions, discussions, and negotiations of involved constituencies: the Expo Corporation, and particularly Expo's CEO, Pierre Dupuy, with the representatives of each of the seven churches, and the Pavilion designers themselves. While Dupuy had strenuously attempted to restrict a didactic religious presence, the evangelical Sermons of Science had managed to ensure their presence, as they had at previous world's fairs.[3]

From a garden in the exterior of the pavilion characterized by illuminated fountains, one entered three thematized interior areas, named and labeled 'zones.' Zone 1 represented "The World Around Us"; Zone 2, situated beneath the first level, was a small theatre seating 100 viewers where the film, *The Eighth Day*, a 'collage' film composed from existing newsreel and news photographs made by Gagnon, represented the "The Dark Side of Man"; finally, one ascended into Zone 3 following the film, uplifting and thematized as "The Light in the Darkness," which contained the only explicit references to Christianity in the Pavilion with its quotation of text from the Bible, "suggesting (but never insisting)…that God is involved in everyday life," as one Christian magazine journalist noted.[4] Oblique references to God were both the bane and the brilliance of the exhibition, eliciting extreme responses from the wide constituencies of viewers that made up the Pavilion audiences. As Reverend Jean Martucci remarked in the Pavilion's opening address, "The Holy Spirit's Gamble": "The Christian Pavilion is neither a believer's monologue nor a simple dialogue between Christians. Like Paul, at the Areopagus, it means to speak to the world. The Pavilion is therefore a proclamation of, as well as education in, faith and hope."[5] Rather than prayers being held within a chapel, he concludes, the Pavilion itself, constituted a prayer.


Interior of Theatre, Christian Pavilion. Photo: Canadian Centre for Ecumenism Library and Archives.

The Pavilion's modular exhibition design, its innovative use of photographs, audio and multimedia, as well as the broader humanist thematics, dramatically departed from previous religious participation at World Exhibitions, which had generally tended towards more literal and instrumental religious iconography to attract viewers and deliver clear religious liturgy. At New York's World Fair in 1964–65, for instance, the Vatican Pavilion exhibited objects from its enormous fine arts collection, including Michelangelo's celebrated marble *Pieta* (1499), which was dramatically displayed with a blue velvet backdrop and hundreds of simulated votive lights, available to visitors from one of three moving walkways set at various heights which enabled viewing at different speeds.

In July 1964 and 1965, the consortium of churches organizing Expo '67's Pavilion were themselves still discussing an evangelical theme that would be represented in "an exhibit area where biblical texts would be illustrated; a chapel where the Bible would be publicly read, where prayers could be offered and where special days of each denomination could be celebrated; an auditorium for special meetings of visiting organizations and for showing films; and a bookroom in which the various denominations could provide information on their churches in the city."[6] The proselytizing quality of this earlier plan challenged Expo's planners' desire to reduce a didactic religious presence at the fair, exemplified, for instance, by their denial of a Pavilion to the American evangelist, Billy Graham. Gagnon's proposal responded to a tender call in May 1965, and in departing radically from the churches' initial plan and being selected, it animates the dramatically shifting face and the contested terrain of religion in Canada and particularly Quebec, in the 1960s.[7] While another proposal, for instance, had called for "an over-lifesize figure of Jesus Christ welcoming people of the world," the final shape of the Pavilion clearly challenged traditional expectations of how Christianity would be publicly represented, and reflected the churches' ambitions to both reform and innovate their public image within this international forum.[8] Miedema's book details the disputed nature of these discussions, which resulted in the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church's withdrawal (although they are cited as participants in the Official Guide[9]) hinting at the contested, but ultimately consensual (if sometimes perplexed) approval of the pavilion's final design. In his article "McLuhanite Christianity at Expo 67" published in the Roman Catholic weekly, *Commonweal*, the American theologian and author of *The Secular City*, Harvey Cox succinctly writes: "…no overt religious symbolism. No open Bibles, no displays of historic crosses, no ecclesiastical robes, no pictures of religious leaders. I saw more gothic art in the Czech pavilion. The Christian one is a masterpiece of indirect communication."[10]



Interior of Christian Pavilion, Zone 1. Photo: National Gallery of Canada Archives.

The Christian Pavilion exhibition featured over 300 hundred photographs of different styles and subject matter, in the genre of photojournalistic realism, photographs that were enlarged and mounted on cubes and modular grid structures, as well as displayed in murals, large-scale collages and different forms of projections. Most of the photographs exhibited in the pavilion were obtained from Magnum and Black Star photographic agencies in the US and included photographs by well-known photographers such as Cornell Capa, Robert Capa, Helen Levitt, and Bruce Davidson. Portraits of individuals, men and women of different ages and ethnicities were featured, as well as engaged in everyday leisure and professional activities; bullfighters, sailors, strippers, spaceships. As well, local Montreal-based photographer, John Max, was assigned to photograph some of New York's cityscape for the project. Audio-visual elements included projected slides and various mechanized apparatii that are evident in documentation images and from the planning documents that show spinning cylinders with close-up portraits that were horizontally segmented and rotated eyes, nose, and mouths, like children's flipbooks. Mirrored surfaces, such as those in an amusement park house of mirrors, brought viewers' own reflections into the interior visual landscape. These images were accompanied by a wild cacophony which filled the various areas through over 40 speakers that were spread out through the spaces: soundtracks of ambient sounds looped live into the exhibition spaces, recorded sounds of the everyday, original interviews in English and French, as well as modernist music compositions by John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen. *The Eighth Day*, created by Gagnon for the Christian Pavilion, was screened repeatedly in the small 100-person cinema in the lower area of the pavilion, in what came to be described as the hellish depths of Zone 2. While Zone 1's "The World Around Us" surrounded the viewer with still images and sounds that suggested everyday reality, the 14-minute, 16 mm black-and-white film which drew its title from Christian scripture in which humankind inherits earth from God on the eighth day, is constructed with existing newsreel footage and animated still images in a 'collage' technique, that composed a frenetic critique of war technologies and destruction. The majority of material elements from the Pavilion itself were left by Gagnon after his death in 2003, and are being deposited at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. Administrative documents are housed at the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, as well as at the National Archives of Canada.

The Telephone Pavilion

The Telephone Pavilion was located on Île Sainte-Hélène near the Iranian Pavilion and Man the Explorer complex. It was a 'private pavilion' sponsored by eight provincial telephone companies, as well as by Canada's national telephone company, Bell Canada. With a relatively simple design on one level, it consisted of an entrance lobby, circular theatre and exhibit area which described Canadian communications history and technology through interactive exhibits. The Telephone Pavilion is primarily remembered for its 360° Circle-Vision film, *Canada 67*, which was produced with Walt Disney film technology, and directed by Canadian documentary filmmaker Robert Barclay.

The pavilion design is characterized by a large cylinder that comprised the theatre, made of a structural steel and wood frame, with stucco and stained spruce. Designed by Toronto architect Gordon S. Adamson and Associates and David Barriot Boulva, the project architect out of Montreal, the exhibit designer was Bartell Inc. The exhibition hall contained four main activity areas. "Logic and Memory Games" offered games of skill where the visitor was invited to outwit a computer using the principles of telephone switching to play Tic-Tac-Toe, Age Guessing, and Tele-Quiz. In the "Enchanted Forest" children sat on toadstools and used Touch-Tone telephones to listen to their favourite Disney cartoon characters—Pinocchio, Snow White, Mickey Mouse and others—who appeared in colour in the middle of the forest's giant flowers; special handsets allowed parents to listen in on the interactions. After passing through the exhibit section dealing with contemporary communication technologies, was an area focused on the future, exploring developments in the phone industry that would ostensibly transform everyday communications. Here, the *Picturephone*, a visual telephone service was showcased, where 'journeys' to the Museum of Modern Science in Chicago, the Franklin Memorial Institute of Philadelphia or the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto could be made. A live animated stage presentation demonstrated how so-called 'housewives' could shop or bank and even control household appliances, through the wonders of telephone communications, including now recognizable functions such as "call forward."

The prime attraction in the Pavilion was the film *Canada 67*—a 22-minute spectacular film of Canada that was filmed in Walt Disney's Circle-Vision 360°. The film was shot with nine cameras which were mounted on a special rig to ensure constant proximity and was transported by plane, boat, and a variety of land carriers. A four-man crew took 10 months to gather approximately 60 miles of 35mm colour film. The final film consisted of 80 scenes that

were screened to audiences of 1,200 viewers per showing. The 360° film installation was projected with nine projectors, each covering a 40° arc of the circular screen, making up a single 360° image and single horizon line that was a critical facet of the film's presentation. The screen itself was 23-feet high and 273-feet in circumference with the bottom edge of the screen elevated seven-feet from the floor. Both the presentation and much of the specialty-built equipment were designed by Walt Disney Productions. (The film projectors themselves were 35mm Simplex X-L units with 2500 watt xenon lamps operating from a 220-volt, 3-phase interlock system in conjunction with the Ampex 35mm dubbers. One of the comments made in Donald Theall's report on Expo for the National Film Board, concerned the fluctuation in projection luminosity, as no two xenon lamps which were used in the projectors matched exactly in brilliance or colour; therefore, variations in bulbs and reflections had to be taken into account during the original shooting.) A twelve-speaker stereophonic sound system played the soundtrack which was made up of French and English commentary, sound effects and an original musical score. The sound tracks for the film were recorded on two six-channel 35mm magnetic film systems, which were then reproduced in synchronization with the films through a speaker which was held behind each screen, and others were suspended from the ceiling.

Bird's eye view of the Telephone Pavilion Circlevision Theatre.

The various settings and scenes of the film consisted of numerous spectacular landscapes, some of which were shot from the air. These included: a plane ride over Niagara Falls, Canadian Mounties on horseback, and the Calgary Stampede, a National Hockey League game, the R.C.M.P. Musical Ride, the Quebec Winter Carnival, The Calgary Stampede, and other events and scenes that spanned the country. (The film allegedly made a brief appearance in January 1974 at the Magic Kingdom during an event entitled 'Salute to Canada,' but it has been otherwise unseen since 1967. The film was the basis for the film 'O Canada!' that played at Epcot from 1982-2007, which allegedly took some key sequences from the original 1967 version. The film was again recently remade in 2007 for the Canada Pavilion at Epcot, and features comedian Martin Short.)

The Telephone Pavilion is another instance wherein a complex multimedia event, consisting of objects and displays, audio recordings, video projections, and a multi-screen 35-mm film are left minimally documented in the form of 35-mm slides and some newsreel documentation

by Montreal-based Radio-Canada. The film's production under the technology and title of Walt Disney studios, has made access to the film elusive. While the subsequent remakes of the film in 1981 and 2007 circulate freely on YouTube through amateur video documentation (and commentary), the original 1967 version has not yet been accessed.

The general description of the pavilion is based on Expo 67's administrative information manuals, several essays from interdisciplinary perspectives, newspaper and magazine descriptions from the period, first-hand accounts from several sources, notably media scholar Donald Theall's unpublished report for the National Film Board, as well as visual and video documentation from assorted self-published, amateur documentation that is extensively available through various online network and content-sharing websites.

Conclusion

Occurring at the junction and transition between analog film, video and other digital media, and now within the current phenomena of social networking, self-publishing and content-sharing websites, our research-to-date has also given unexpected insight into a tension between conventional and amateur documentation. The unusual formats of the films themselves, multiscreen and specialized projection technologies, have produced issues of access with regards to existing archival repositories. The challenges of event-based multimedia to conventional archiving systems is further complicated by Expo 67 as a large-scale event produced by multiple stakeholders, resulting in scattered archives at resource-starved institutions such as the National Archives of Canada, the National Film Board, Cinematheque archives, and many others. The implications of radically shifting ownerships and structures of pavilion organizations themselves (in this paper, of the phone companies, and of the ecumenical consortium of churches sponsoring the Christian Pavilion), and even the temporary stewardship of Expo 67 itself have also impacted. The sites for research have been multiple, partial repositories at different physical sites with material objects such as plans, written commentary and publications, photographs, and film fragments. These contexts have combined with the digital duplication and circulation of official documentation that are sometimes unclassified, unlabeled (or in one instance, mis-labeled in the case of *Polar Life* at the Cinemathèque Québecoise) and thereby difficult to identify with any veracity or singular coherence. Finally, this official documentation is complemented by amateur visitor snapshots and Super-8 films that now proliferate on Expo fan sites, and content-sharing sites such as YouTube.[11]

As recent, prolific scholarship on the phenomena of the archive and archiving has described, conventional archives are historically those affiliated with established institutional organizations and structures who caretake documentation of past activities (Steedman 2002). Media archives have initiated ever more complex issues about the ontology and very nature of archives, as well as epistemological questions concerning access, circulation, truth and authenticity, as scholars have begun to explore in interdisciplinary ways, such as José van Dijck (2007), Martin Hand (2008), Karen Ishizuka and Patricia Zimmerman (2008). Van Dijck underlines the sheer volume of data now manifested by digital media in all its forms. While Ishizuka and Zimmerman describe the alternate histories that have emerged to official film archives with the resurfacing and valuing of home movies. (Ishizuka, for instance, speaks

to the amateur movies from Japanese American internment camps, wherein in still and movie cameras were officially banned.)

As Maurice Halbwachs has upheld, collective memory is not unified, and Robert Rydell has demonstrated the contradictory discourses and memories that have effectively circulated at World Expositions since their inception in the mid-19th century (Rydell et. al. 2000). In the case of Expo 67, it is clear that the event and pavilions did not lend themselves to a singular archiving capacity, and that in practice, no singular institution, even of one individual pavilion, seems to have fully retained the archives of their own pavilion. From the perspective of media scholarship into some of these films and pavilions, questions of ontology and epistemology with regards to multimedia archives and media events, have come to the fore, at least in the interim while we await for some missing elements to emerge, and as we employ alternate methodologies such as interviewing and partial reconstructions to re-animate these live events.

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Endnotes

[1] This section is excerpted from Monika Kin Gagnon, "The Christian Pavilion at Expo '67: Notes from Charles Gagnon's Archive," in *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*. Eds. Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming 2009).
[2] Sherry Brydon, "The Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67," *American Indian Art Magazine* (summer 1997): 54–63 and *Expo 67* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons [Canada] Limited, 1968).
[3] Discussions about Sermons of Science at Expo '67 appear in Gary Miedema, *For Canada's Sake: Public Religion: Centennial Celebrations and the Remaking of Canada in the 1960s* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005) where he details some of these struggles and debates for their inclusion (pp. 152 and 155), and James Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) examines more broadly the history of religious representation in popular culture in the United States, including Sermons of Science at the Seattle World's Fair of 1962.
[4] Kenneth Bagnell, "What a Pavilion!" *The United Church Observer* (June 1 1967): 14.
[5] Reverend Jean Martucci, "The Holy Spirit's Gamble." Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, Christian Pavilion Archives.
[6] Miedema, 171.
[7] See Michael Gauvreau's *The Catholic Origins of Québec's Quiet Revolution 1931–1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 2005).
[8] Bagnell, 14.
[9] *Expo 67: official guide/Expo 67 : guide official* (Toronto: Maclean-Hunter, 1967), 187.
[10] Harvey Cox, "McLuhanite Christianity at Expo 67," *Commonweal* 86.10 (26 May 1967): 277–78.
[11] Websites initiated by collectors and fans provide rich, extensive (if idiosyncratic!) documentation and memorabilia of world fairs. See, for instance, the online World's Fair Museum at http://www.expomuseum.com/ (accessed May 15 2008). The original pavilion guide for the Vatican Pavilion at New York's World Fair in 1964–65 can be viewed at http://nywf64.com/vatican01.shtml (accessed May 15 2008), including magnificent photographs of the Pieta *in situ* at the fair, and Pavilion visitors on the *Pieta*'s moving walkways. Seattle's 1962 World Fair is discussed in James Gilbert, "Space Gothic at Seattle," *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). The 1958's Brussels' World Fairs site http://users.skynet.be/rentfarm/expo58/ (accessed May 15 2008), shows different views of the Holy See Pavilion (go to Foreign Pavilions, "Big Four," with USA, France and the USSR).

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Archival Collections

Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, Montreal
Christian Pavilion Archives

National Archives of Canada
Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exposition Papers

National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives
Charles Gagnon fonds