

Memory requires spatial existence. The architecture of memory may be understood as a transformation process. This thesis provides the evolution of memories: the experience of life, space, and time. It searches through memory and history, for the cultural significance of Canada. The Musée de la Vie is a place where cultural identity is not dictated to us but rather a setting where one can clarify it for oneself.

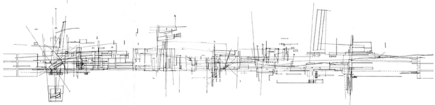
The current conventional museum is a place without walls displaying artifacts and objects of culture. What is required is a museum for the recollection of experience and images, the space becoming the metaphor.

The exploration began with the extraction of significant elements from drawings of Scarpa's Castelvecchio Museum and the Bronx cemetery. The primordial characteristics of each are explored and synthesized in order to create a 'new cultural institution' which would ultimately allow for a new cultural identity to be established and revealed. In the process of synthesis and transformation, attitudes towards cultural institutions have been altered: the museum is no longer a simple collection of objects; the spatial experience becomes the event which replaces the contemplation of artifacts. Memory becomes inhabitable; it is no longer approached as an externalized event. The next stage in the process of transformation is the drawing of the chosen site. Victoria Island is one of several islands in the Ottawa River; it lies in quiet isolation set between the activity centres of downtown Ottawa and Hull. The eastern tip of Victoria Island presents an interesting and intricate set of components. Most importantly, it shelters the ruins of the Caribie Mill.

The Musée de la Vie is comprised of four elements which represent the diversity of the Canadian cultural identity: war, religion, politics and wealth. The spaces created for each of these facets of Canadian life enable the recollection of the viewer's own attitude towards these dimensions of his/her experience. There are three stages of inhabitation. First memory: the existing ruins of the caribie mill, marked by a mechanistic tower made of obsolete historical fragments; second, moments: the political watch tower, a mechanistic tower/time pier, proving in search of peace; the chapel, a place for solitary worship, open to the sky between earth and the heavens; the war memorial, an all embracing element, connected with the water as a symbol of



Scarpa Translation



Scarpa Site Experimental

Canadians who fought on foreign shores, third, hopes the dreams of the children of the new generation seeded within the structure of the existing mill.

The museum strives to create a timeless place which captures the complexity and significance of a "Canadian" people. The thesis is a process rather than an end product; a constantly transforming work which never reaches a state of completion or mastery.

